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## Euroscepticism in Serbia

### Abstract

This article provides an overview of the rise of euroscepticism in Serbia. That rise has had two important incentives. The first incentive has been the recognition of Kosovo's secession (2008) by most EU countries. The second is making it clear to Belgrade in public that the precondition for further accession of Serbia to the EU is the factual recognition of Kosovo's secession (2011). According to an overview given in this article, the growth of euroscepticism is perceived in the public opinion in Serbia, in the attitudes of the political parties, in the publicists intended for a wider audience, as well as the academic publicists.

Key words: regional integration, democracy, sovereignty, elites, national identity.

There are three key terms used in this article with the following specific meanings (they are nominalistic, not essentialistic definitions). Euroenthusiasm is advocating for Serbia to enter the EU, i.e. an explicit or implicit attitude that the integration of Serbia into the EU is a desirable and inevitable process (i.e. the process that has no alternative). Euroscepticism is advocating for Serbia not to enter the EU, i.e. an explicit or implicit attitude that the integration of Serbia into the EU is an undesirable process that can be avoided (i.e. the process that has an alternative). Eurorealism is a standpoint that can be in favour of or

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against the accession of Serbia to the EU, but the one that emphasizes the claim that there are serious obstacles to Serbia's accession to the EU, making the success of that process extremely uncertain or even highly unlikely.

### EU Scepticism in Public Opinion

According to public opinion studies conducted in Serbia, support for the EU entry has dropped from 75 percent in April 2008 down to 52 percent in August 2011 (B92 2011). The decision made by Brussels not to give Serbia the candidate status (December 9, 2011) slumped the support for the EU entry, in the same month, to just 28 percent (Žigić 2011). Indeed, the Government's European Integrations Office in its research found that, between the end of September and end of December, the support for the EU entry even increased from 46 to 51 percent (KEI 2012: 4). However, having in mind very negative reactions of the public in Serbia to the rejection by Brussels from December 9, 2011 to grant Serbia candidacy, such academic finding does not seem very credible.

Even before the negative decision was received from Brussels, most citizens, according to the public opinion studies, had perceived the EU as an enemy. In times when 47,4 percent of citizens were in favor of the EU entry (October 2011; 37,5 percent against, 15,1 percent not sure), even 42,1 percent of them thought that the EU was an enemy formation (friendly considered by 27,7 percent, not sure 30,2 percent; Vukadinović 2011b). There were, therefore, many more of those who were in favor of the EU entry (47,4 percent), than those who thought that the EU was friendly towards Serbia (27,7 percent). This means that even those who were not sure whether or not the EU was a friend to Serbia, were still in favor of the Union entry. Refusal to accept Serbia's candidacy for the EU membership, until such time as the North of Kosovo, mainly inhabited by Serbs, is subdued to Pristina, definitely turned these "ambivalent" Serbs also against Brussels. Namely, the same research (Vukadinović 2011b) showed that, as long as the precondition for candidacy is to stop supporting Serbs in the North of Kosovo, 75,5 percent of respondents think that this precondition should be rejected (while only 9,2 percent think it should be accepted).

In other countries, EU candidate or member countries, the rise of euroscepticism has also been noted. In the EU15 in 1990, there were ten europhils per one eurosceptic, and in 2004 only three (Marković 2005: 57). Nonetheless, as the above-mentioned data show, the decrease in

euroenthusiasm in Serbia was dramatically fast, and comprised almost two-thirds of the Union entry supporters, for more than three years.

### EU Scepticism Amongst Political Parties and Social Authorities

The rise of euroscepticism in Serbia can also be seen in increased hostile attitudes of the opposition parties towards Brussels. Back in 2009, as Vukadinović observed with surprise (2009b), in the Serbian Parliament, there were parties that openly advocated that Serbia should recognise the secession of Kosovo, or those that denied legitimacy to the Serbian Constitution. However, there were no parties, even amongst the strongest opposition, that would openly oppose the Serbia's entry into the EU. Even the Serbian Radical Party (with 57 members in the Parliament with 250 places), which later became the strongest opponent of the Union, did not in principle have anything against Serbia's entry into the EU at that time – it only wanted that it be done "in a dignified manner". Today however, openly eurosceptic Democratic party of Serbia (with 20 members in the Parliament) until the middle of 2011, considered that Serbia should have entered the EU. The only thing that the DSS asked for was that "we previously clear out with our European friends within which borders they see and recognise Serbia".

Such an attitude of the opposition parties was mainly the consequence of the public opinion research which showed little euroscepticism amongst the citizens. Not wanting to go against the majority public opinion, politicians avoided to openly declare themselves eurosceptics. On the other side, as euroenthusiasm was the only attitude present in the public arena, the majority of citizens still, by inertia, declared themselves in favor of the entry into the EU. And so the peculiar *circulus vitiosus* was created (the "vicious circle"; Vukadinović 2010), which was broken only in 2011.

Of all the parliamentary parties today, the Serbian Radical Party went furthest in euroscepticism. On August 4, 2011, the SRS demanded that "the process of Serbia's candidacy for entry into the European Union was immediately stopped". On October 12, 2011, it took out all its members to parliament outside the building of the President of Serbia, to demonstrate against "the state's candidacy for membership in the European Union", and on December 9, 2011, members to parliament of this party, also outside the President of Serbia's building, demonstratively burnt the EU flag.

Up until 2008, the Democratic Party of Serbia was in the same group of pro-Brussels and euroenthusiastic parties. However, when most

EU countries recognised the secession of Kosovo (February – May 2008), the DSS stopped advocating for Serbia's accelerated Union entry, moving to the eurorealistic position. The leaders of this party predicted that Brussels shall, in a very short time, as a precondition for further Euro-integration of Serbia, bring forward the factual recognition of the secession/independence of Kosovo, which would stop all the integration processes. According to them, it is what happened when the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on August 23, 2011, said that Serbia could not count on being granted the candidate status until it "closes down the parallel structures in the North of Kosovo" (The statement, 2011). It was an order that Serbia should withdraw from the last part of Kosovo it has some control of. The DSS interpreted it as an open demand that Serbia should agree to the secession of Kosovo.

Therefore, the DSS president Vojislav Koštunica made a turn in the other half of 2011, and publicly accused the EU that "it is misusing the trust of Serbia" and that "it does not see Serbia as its partner, but as a country whose part of the territory should be taken away" (Koštunica 2011). Finally, on December 4, 2011, Koštunica made a speech that was interpreted by analysts as "the first public, clear and unambiguous programme declaration that the DSS no longer supports any kind of the official integration process towards the European Union" (Pavić 2011). "Our goal, therefore, should no longer include the membership of Serbia in the EU", said Koštunica back then, as the "issue of Serbia's membership in the EU is being taken off the agenda", so now "we must find the new path for Serbia". True, the DSS did not burn the EU flag, like the SRS, however, since then, it has become openly hostile towards Brussels and every further process of Serbia's integration into the European Union.

During 2011, a clear eurorealistic, and a somewhat eurosceptic stand was taken by the Serbian Orthodox Church. As a response to the demands of Berlin and Brussels that "the parallel structures in the North of Kosovo should be abolished" the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church (a kind of authority of the Serbian Church), on December 2, 2011, issued a statement in which it asked the President and the Prime Minister of Serbia "not to abandon the Serbian people of the old Serbia" – i.e. of Kosovo – "for the chimera called the candidate country status for the membership in the European Union". "To the responsible state government and political elite of Serbia", according to the statement of the Church "Serbia and Serbian people as a whole do not have an alternative, and everything else, including the idealised and mythologised European Union, does have an alternative" (SAS 2011). In this statement, the Church admitted that the membership in the EU

is "a good will and idea", but it pointed out that the European Union "has already been hit by the deepest crises and at risk of a breakup", so the membership in such Union should not be paid by "giving up on Kosovo and Metohija – directly or crawling, nonetheless" (SAS 2011).

## EU Scepticism in Publicistics

A powerful change happened in the euro-scepticism direction during 2011 within a part of publicistics in Serbia. It is useful to know that, between 2000 and 2008, all media and almost all commentators and analysts were believers in euro-enthusiasm. Serbia's EU membership seemed as a goal with no alternative to the entire Serbian public. Those rare dissonant tones that could be heard regarding this issue before 2008, were more euro-realistic than euro-sceptic.

Probably the first serious and argued euro-realistic text was written in September 2006 by Miroslav Jovanović, who has a PhD in economics and is an expert in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; Jovanović 2006; extended version Jovanović 2007). He warned the Serbian public, which at that time expected that Serbia would become a full member of the EU by 2014, that "the new EU enlargements are not priority for the EU". The European Union itself, according to Jovanović, is in "a deep constitutional, administrative, governing, and political crisis, and it has "problems related to the monetary union". Predicting that this crisis would generate "some sort of a layered or maybe 'shortened' EU", Jovanović warned the public in Serbia that "country preparations for the EU entry are linked with very high costs, risks and uncertainty". "Along that road", Jovanović wrote, "Serbia can offer, willingly or unwillingly, serious and in a long term irreversible things and rights, without guarantees that, at the end of the process, it will access the EU". Although he pointed out that "staying outside the EU could represent an even bigger risk, uncertainty and danger", Jovanović strongly opposed the "manner in which the road to the EU is being presented to or imposed on the people in Serbia. In a way, it is done in a neo-communist manner. Until 1989, the official leading political idea in the former Yugoslavia was communism. That red star has now been replaced with the yellow EU star".

This Jovanović's analysis, however, was not published in some "mainstream" media, but on the NSPM website ([www.nspm.rs](http://www.nspm.rs)). Shorter comments with clear euro-realistic warnings could usually be found on that portal (Vukadinović 2006; Antić 2006), but such articles

could rarely be found in the major media in Serbia. The only exception was the reputable daily newspaper *Politika*, in which the two chief commentators from NSPM, Vukadinović and Antonić, occasionally published as guest commentators.

However, the first major break-through of eurorealism, even euroscepticism as well, into the main media happened in the beginning of 2008. The announcement of the secession of Kosovo, which took place under the patronate of the USA and some EU countries, led to part of the Serbian public sobering up from unrealistic euroenthusiasm. In January 2008, several articles with highly eurorealistic argumentation were published in a prominent political weekly newspaper NIN, (Samardžić 2008a; Ivanović 2008; Ćirjaković 2008).

Amongst these articles in NIN, especially distinctive was a text written by a NIN journalist at that time, Zoran Ćirjaković, "Time for the third path". It warns that "it is likely that our membership in the EU would more depend on the obstinacy of Brussels, Paris or London than on the cooperation of Belgrade". It criticises the "political and economic elite" in Serbia which "cannot envisage a democratic and developed Serbia 'outside Europe'". In his text Ćirjaković accused the Serbian elite of the fact that "Serbia, during the past seven years, was irresponsibly leading a one-way politics, which implied that the EU membership was a certainty and that it was only a matter of time. Should possible non-European perspective of Serbia even have been mentioned, it was stigmatised as giving up 'the European path' and returning to Milošević's time" (2008).

Some moderate eurorealistic articles at the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008 were published in the Serbian Church journal *Pravoslavlje* (Živković 2007), and the daily newspaper *Politika* (Mekina 2008). The NSPM portal also continued to publish commentaries of the similar orientation (Radun 2008; Vučinić 2008; Anđelković 2008; Papan 2008). Still, when a conservative Christian non-governmental organisation – *Dveri srpske* - published a special edition of its magazine in April 2008, in which it collected texts that slightly problematised the inevitability of "the EU path of Serbia" (*Dveri srpske*, year 10, number 37: "EU – the myth or reality"), it showed that there were few explicitly eurosceptic texts. The great majority, out of total 29 Serbian authors included in the selection of this magazine, was comprised of eurorealistic or allusive eurosceptic articles. Only two authors expressed an open opposition to Serbia's entry into the EU. Both of them came from the movement of Christian traditionalists.

Hieromonk Petar (Dragojlović), in his text "God-man Christ or European Union" (originally published in *Pravoslavlje*), claimed that

”at the beginning of this 2008, so-called EU offers to Serbia and the Serbian people nothing else than what the Satan himself offered to the God-man Christ on the Mountain of Temptation. The Brussels Union offers to us to give up on God, because of the current economic problems (...), and enter the ‘big deal’ with the new world order and its creator Lucifer” (Dragojlović 2008). Vladimir Dimitrijević warned that ”the European Union was a globalist creation, in which nothing but misery and defeat await the Serbs”, accusing the EU that it ”downgraded the Serbian industry for forty years”, and that ”it allows Albanians to burn down churches and monasteries and be unpunished”, in other words that it ”helps those evildoers to ethnically clean Kosovo of Serbs” (Dimitrijević 2008).

However, after the secession of Kosovo – which was recognised by 22 EU countries – many authors in this almanac, moved from the position of eurorealism to open euroscepticism. That evolution took place during 2008 and 2009. Good examples are the already mentioned guest commentators of *Politika*, Antić and Vukadinović. First of all, in his two eurorealistic articles published in *Politika* (Antić 2008g; 2008a), criticising the ”Brussels Eurocrats”, Antić claimed ”that there is no chance that Serbia would enter the EU and keep at least the formal sovereignty over Kosovo”, and therefore it is ”time we started saying goodbye to the EU” (Antić 2008g). Then, with regards to the failure of the Irish referendum, he introduced the readers of *Politika* with the key eurosceptic argument – the claim that no democratic legitimacy of the Brussels managing structures exists (Antić 2008v). Having strongly criticised the decision taken by the authorities to unilaterally implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (which was ”frozen” by Brussels after the signing; Antić 2008b), Antić warned that Serbia is trading its current real interests for a vague promise of the EU acceptance which is to take place in some unspecified time (Antić 2009a). Given that his column in *Politika* was cancelled three weeks after this text had been published, Antić continued to write in a weekly publication *Pečat* (which from the very establishment in 2008 had eurorealistic orientation). In a series of criticisms of the ”Washington and Brussels bureaucracy” (Antić 2011a), in this paper he particularly condemned the Brussels ”reports on Serbia’s progress” in the process of eurointegrations, calling them ”the emanation of the worst kind of bureaucratic voluntarism and decisionism” (Antić 2009b).

Vukadinović began his evolution from eurorealist to eurosceptic also writing about the illusoriness of ”both Kosovo and the EU” politics, and warned that Brussels and Washington would very soon demand

from Belgrade to choose either one of them (Vukadinović 2008v; 2008b). However, no country would "sacrifice its national interests and the remainings of its national self-respect for a highly uncertain and subsequent boarding on the last wagon of the already overcrowded European train" (Vukadinović 2008g). For that reason, as Vukadinović predicted back in 2008, "on its European road Serbia would not move further from its 'candidate status' and, eventually, the Schengen white list" (Vukadinović 2008a). But, as Vukadinović warns the year after (2009a), if Serbia itself keeps the illusion that it can have both Kosovo and the EU, it will find itself in a situation to lose both. As "people who are not capable of making a clear choice between a territorial integrity and (...) a membership in an indeed important international association, (...) deserves to lose both". "In Serbia, an unusual sort of eurofanatics has been conceived who love the European Union more than their mother or father – let alone the state and the homeland", criticised Vukadinović (2009b). "I only wonder whether and when will Serbs realize that the hard Serbian shirt is still closer to them than the European coat?" (ibid.).

Until 2010, Vukadinović had come to the position to think that "it is no longer an issue whether the EU has an alternative or not, but the issue is whether, at this point and from Serbia's standpoint, the EU is still a realistic alternative at all" (Vukadinović 2010). He called for "us to think about alternative solutions. Russia, China, BRICS, Turkey, the non-aligned..." (Vukadinović 2010). Finally, in 2011, Vukadinović publicly declared himself a "eurosceptic", indicating that "all the countries which entered the European Union in the recent time have drastically increased their debt within a few years time (the Czech Republic from 21,3 to 76 billion dollars, Slovakia from 10 to 70, Poland from 57 to 201, Latvia from 0,8 to 38 billion dollars...) and that this – and not the mere membership – is what provided them with the statistical growth" (Vukadinović 2011v). For Serbia, the EU entry "is not even purely economically a profitable story anymore", he claimed (Vukadinović 2011v). If we know what the true interests of Serbia are, and if we have in mind a "continued arrogant and blackmailing behaviour of the Brussels administration and some of the most powerful EU member countries towards Serbia", "then I am a little embarrassed that the support to the EU in Serbia is not a lot less intensive", Vukadinović wrote (2011g). Hence the issue of "not so much the reasons for the decline of support to the EU entry, but the reasons why that support in Serbia is still this relatively high" should be dealt with (Vukadinović 2011g).

It should be said that in Politika, besides the articles of the mentioned authors, during 2009 some other eurorealistic, and some eurosceptic

texts too could be read. The first ones include an article written by Boško Mijatović (2009), in which he indicates that Brussels thinks Serbia "will give up in front of the door of Europe and that in the dilemma 'Europe or Kosovo' it will choose Europe". It is a serious mistake of Brussels', Mijatović thinks, as Serbia certainly will not do it. Therefore, it is a great probability that "the process of membership will stay dug in: neither can Serbia recognise Kosovo nor can the leading EU countries withdraw the precondition of recognition for the continuation of the process". Hence Mijatović suggests that Serbia "change the track and go from the main track to the alternative one", i.e. to start "closer connection to the European Union, but without membership, something similar to what Norway and Switzerland are doing".

On the other side, during 2009 in *Politika* we can also find a euro-sceptic comment by Siniša Ljepojević (2009), under a characteristic title "Democratic deficit of the European Union". In the comment, for the first time, the readers of *Politika* are introduced to a more detailed information about non-democratic elements of the Brussels structures. For example, "70 percent of decisions are made at the closed meetings of 'secret' 300 working groups of the EU Council, 15 percent of decisions are made by the Committee of the standing representatives of the EU members and the remaining 15 percent are made by the Council of Ministers". "Members of national delegations can't even sit in the same room as their leaders", says Ljepojević, but "two EU bureaucrats come out every 20 minutes and inform national delegations about what is being discussed behind the closed doors". "It is a serious democratic deficit of the EU", concludes Ljepojević.

However, after 2009 in *Politika*, except for Vukadinović's, we practically don't find serious euro-sceptic analytical text or comments anymore. They are not to be found, up until the end of 2011, in other mainstream media either – except in the already mentioned weekly *Pečat*. More serious euro-sceptic analyses at that period of time showed up mostly on websites, like NSPM (written by Branko Pavlović, Saša Gajić, and the already mentioned Vukadinović and Antičić), and on the website of Slobodan Jovanović Fund (by authors Milan Damjanac, Siniša Ljepojević, Slobodan Reljić and Radivoje Ognjanović). By the persuasiveness of the analysis, as well as the use of mostly British euro-sceptic sources, however, a series of euro-sceptical articles written by Nenad Vukićević stand out, published on the *Srpski nacionalisti* website.

In his article "Poslednji referendum" (The Last Referendum) (2009), Vukićević describes non-democratic circumstances in which

the repeated referendum was held in Ireland, and explains why after this one there will be no more popular voting (Vukićević 2009b). In an extensive article "Zašto smo protiv Evropske unije?" (Why are we against the European Union?), Vukićević is presenting the main eurosceptic arguments in a systematic manner: "a serious 'democratic deficit' of the EU, or lack of democratic legitimacy of the most relevant bodies in Brussels, 'ignoring the people's will', or neglecting the results of the referendum (in France, Netherlands and Ireland), the existence of a "bureaucratic army" of 170.000 people (which "eats about 8 billion euros a year"), the existence of systemic corruption (the reason for which "the European court for 15 years now in a row has refused to sign the report on the European Union budget implementation"), spending enormous amounts of funds for the EU propaganda ("more than 2 billion euros" a year), suppression of freedom of speech ("any re-examination of the facts from the wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia is forbidden in the European Union"), and, finally, de-sovereignization of national countries ("unlike the declarative advocating for decentralisation, the European Union represents the biggest centralisation project in the territory of Europe ever launched"; Vukićević 2009a). These arguments Vukićević further discusses in the article "Narodna volja i EU" (People's will and the EU), in which he gives a detailed overview of the referendums in the EU countries, but also the reviews of ignoring their "undesirable" results by estranged political elites (Vukićević 2010b). Also, in "Mit o (anti) korupciji u EU" (The myth about (anti) corruption in the EU), Vukićević (2010a) gives the reasons against the claim that the EU entry leads to the decrease of the level of corruption in a country.

### EU Scepticism in Academic Periodicals

When it comes to academic periodicals, up until 2011 there was almost an absolute monopoly of the euroenthusiastic discourse in Serbia. It is not only that the "European path of Serbia" was not more seriously problematized in the regular production of academic periodicals, but the "Službeni Glasnik" (Official Gazette), a rich state publishing company, started in October 2008 a special journal called Challenges of the European Integrations (ISSN 1820-9459, until the beginning of 2012, 17 volumes were published). The "challenges" from the journal's title, were perceived only as the challenges of the prescribed standards implemented from the outside, mostly from Brussels, to Serbia.

This unanimity became nevertheless more often disrupted after 2008, and after 2010 in academic periodicals somewhat stronger

presence of euroscepticism also appeared. The first more serious breakthrough of euroscepticism in the scientific periodicals occurred after the secession of Kosovo and its recognition by most EU countries. Accordingly, the first three texts, in the 1-2 issue for 2008 of the academic journal *Nova srpska politička misao* (New Serbian Political Thought) (ISSN 1450-7382), were extremely critical towards Brussels. The first text by Radmila Nakarada, carries a characteristic title "Nevropski odgovor na evropski problem" (Non-European response to the European problem). She accused the EU that "with its incoherent and inconsistent politics, breaking the international law (The UN Charter, The final act from Helsinki), imposing solutions, participation in illegal NATO bombardment (...) it had a fatal influence on the outcomes of the Yugoslav crises and the Kosovo plot" (Nakarada 2008: 8; 9). She claimed that "the EU elite (...) once again chose a non-European response for Kosovo problem" (11). The author, namely, drew attention that there is a certain "perception of Serbia" in Brussels, expressed through "a structural need that it is entirely pacificated as a potential 'disturbing' regional factor" (12). Not wanting Serbia to become a dangerous precedent for other small countries in Europe, according to the author, by disciplining Serbia, Brussels is trying to "crystalize the inner power system of the EU, to win and demonstrate the instruments of disciplining the member countries. The destiny of Serbia certainly can do nothing else but have a disciplinary effect on others"(13). That is why the EU elite is so unforgiving and hard on Serbia, Radmila Nakarada argues.

In another text, published in the mentioned NSPM volume, Bogdana Koljević claims that, by giving support to the secession of the Albanised Kosovo, the EU betrayed itself and its fundamental principles. "By recognising the self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo and Metohija", the authors writes, "Europe showed at the same time that it is capable to throw away not only its own values which it is built on (normative framework), but also its legal and political principles it is based on, and that it can't respect the formal democratic proceduralism either. With the Kosovo precedent, Europe decided to breach the acts of its own 'social agreement'" (Koljević 2008: 27). The point is that "the issue of democracy appears as structurally connected to the issue of the rule of law over again and in the new context", as "every aspect of breaching or an unspecified suspension of the legal norms and procedures consequently also endangers and disturbs democracy"(29). Therefore, by enthronement of illegality and principles of the finished act, having applied the force in the case of Kosovo, the EU "most seriously brought into question the very European democracy" (29), "bringing into

question its own democratic tradition, adhering to the new forms of the (post) sovereign union” (30).

Finally, in the third article of this issue of NSPM, Slobodan Samardžić, who is a professor at the Belgrade Faculty for Political Sciences teaching the subjects of ”European relationships” and ”European Union”, has considered the issue of Kosovo as a ”classic case of secession” in details and in the context of the EU relations towards Serbia (Samardžić 2008: 34). He reminds that the secession has no basis in the international law, which is why the ”only remaining way to justify it is that it is the case so individual and unique that even the international law could not be therein applied” (34). It is exactly the tactics, according to Samardžić, that was chosen by Brussels. Already from the Martti Ahtisaari Plan (March 2007), ”the European Union started using the phrase *sui generis* case in its official documents”, and thus ”actively supported the idea of Kosovo independence” (35). Samardžić goes on to point out that the phrase *sui generis* case, in the EU documents, was for the first time used in the Council conclusions on the Western Balkans from June 18, 2007, and that from there on it was regularly used as a sort of introduction and preparation for the secession, until it was actually proclaimed on February 17, 2008 (35). Such a disguised hostility of Brussels towards Serbia’s legitimate national interests, as Samardžić indicates, has to reflect on the future relations between Belgrade and Brussels.

It should be said that the articles criticising Brussels were also published in the following issues of NSPM (Mirković 2009; Kljakić 2010), while publication of euroenthusiastic articles in this journal was completely stopped. Therefore, it could be said that, in 2008, the NSPM made a clear turn towards euroscepticism. A similar occurrence could be noticed in the academic periodicals published by The Institute for Political Studies, from Belgrade. There are three journals – Nacionalni interes (National Interest) (ISSN 1452-2152), Politička revija (Political Review) (ISSN 1451-4281) and Srpska politička misao (Serbian Political Thought) (ISSN 1450-5460).

It is interesting that already the first issue of Nacionalni interes (started in 2005), published a principally anti-Brussels text by Srđo Trifković, ”Srpski nacionalni interes i izazovi 21. veka” (Serbian national interest and the challenges of the 21st century). Trifković, who also wrote ”Programski zadaci” (Programme tasks) of this journal (printed on pages 235-237, of the first issue), claimed that ”in the modern West, post-national integralism has become a dominating ideology of the rulling elites which control not only the levers of the state apparatus, but also the key media, administrative and financial and academic

institutions” (Trifković 2005: 95). By the term ”modern West”, Trifković meant ”America on one side, and the European Union on the other” (96). Both powers, as the author indicates, ”perceive the Serbs as a concept, an abstracted antithesis of themselves”, so ”by cutting down the Serbs, the ideological concept of post-national integralism is being self-verified” (95). Trifković did not draw concrete political conclusions from his strong anti-Brussels and anti-Washington postulates, however, from his overall exposition, came out a clear (although only implicit) eurosceptic view.

Completely explicit euroscepticism, however, at least when it comes to this journal, is found in an article by Miroslav Ivanović called ”Borba za Evropu” (Fight for Europe). It was published in the fourth volume of *Nacionalni interes*, which was printed out after the secession of Kosovo had been proclaimed (Ivanović 2008). Ivanović, who advocated strong eurosceptic views back in the previous decade (Ivanović 1996), also in this text claims that Serbia ”in a cultural and civilisational sense does not belong to Europe”, but that it is a part of the ”separate, Slavic-Byzantine civilisation” (Ivanović 2008: 109). In his opinion, there is a clear material and statutory stratification based on a cultural and civilisational principle in the EU, and that the Serbs, as a foreign element, have no perspective in it. ”It means”, Ivanović explains, ”that the Slavs will only be an ethnic material for other’s culture, whereas in the stratification of the European society we will take, *eo ipso*, the corresponding lower stratas of society. We will be below the Roman-German peoples, and above the Roma, Turks and many Asian-African newcomers, sharing with them manual labour and participating in a mass-culture intended for the lower layers” (113).

Basically, according to Ivanović, Serbia has no political or economic interest to enter the EU (109). Ivanović is surprised by how it is possible that in Serbia ”there is no organised political force, movement or party, which would publicly oppose Europe”, that is the EU entry (110). He protests that the ”information area is under eurointegralist control 98 percent”, which is why ”there is no room for a different opinion anymore, except for in the books and expert magazines” (119). ”This generation of intellectuals and politicians”, Ivanović is bittered, ”by its servility to Europe, its active participation in surrendering our destiny into the European hands, will be labelled in the far future as most responsible for disintegration and decadence of the Serbian people” (111).

Immediately after Ivanović’s article was published in this issue of the journal, a text titled ”Gde je Evropa” (Where is Europe), written by Miloš Knežević, the chief editor of *Nacionalni interes* journal, was

printed. (Knežević 2008b). In this text, the author subjects to harsh criticism "vulgar Euro-ism" (a word game, which signifies a blind love towards Brussels, but also love for the main EU currency). "Europe is too often reduced to the euro, not the euroism", Knežević says, so "euroists over here (...) believe in the rich European Union that (...) financially abundantly helps the impoverished Serbia" (128). Knežević firmly rejects reduction of Europe to the EU, advocating for the "European plurality" made up of "Europe of the West" and "Europe of the East". The first one is made up of the EU, and the other one of Russia, and around these two a "Union of Slavic and non-Slavic peoples in the East of Europe" should be created" (164-165). A similar critical distance towards Brussels Knežević manifests in another text published in the same year, in *Politička revija* journal (Knežević 2008a).

It is exactly the question of whether a unique Europe, made up of the EU and Russia, is possible, that an article by Zoran Milošević published in *Politička revija* (Milošević 2008), was dedicated to. According to Milošević, "the European Union wants (...) to integrate Russia into the Union (but not as an integral country in its present size)" (1044). "Namely, the European Union does not support the territorial sovereignty of Russia and wants that this big country be broken down into more 'independent states'" (1043). "The European Union strives, together with the USA, to break down Russia into three parts and reach to its natural resources, to de-nationalise the Russians and turn them into some obedient shapeless mass" (1049). Also, as the author considers, "general market of the European Union is still closed to a certain extent for the Russian goods and capital", and the EU "is trying to destroy the production of certain commodities in Russia", "actively working on destabilisation of the Russian economy, especially in the area of trading in the Eastern Europe countries" (1046). Although the author did not draw concrete eurosceptic conclusions at that time, when it comes to Serbia, his text was critical of Brussels and it opened the door to such conclusions as well.

In the same issue of *Politička revija* journal, Petar Matić discusses the issue of the EU "democratic deficit" (Matić 2008). He concludes that such deficit certainly exists, and believes that "the EU democratic deficit is a result of insufficiently defined interinstitutional relations and the inability of the EP (The European Parliament – S. A) to independently create legislative system" (1067). However, in Matić's opinion, "transferring more competencies to the EP and a unified election system would lead to narrowing the gap between the political elite of the Union and its citizens, along with the strengthening of the European awareness and identity" (ibid.). Although he recognises

this important weakness of the EU, Matić is not a eurosceptic, and believes that the EU democratic deficit could be overcome by further democratisation of decision-making in Brussels/Strasbourg.

It could thus be said that 2008 was also a sort of a turning point for the Institute for Political Studies journals in the treatment of the EU and Brussels. Since that year, namely, in these journals, we have found many more eurosceptic texts than before. However, as the politics of Brussels towards Serbia has not changed, from 2010 in these journals explicit eurosceptic texts show up as well. Although they do not make the majority of articles dedicated to the EU yet, with their sharpness they differ from the usual "Euro-integrational academic confection", widely present in the rest of the academic periodicals in Serbia.

Likewise, Mile Rakić expresses his surprise in *Politička revija* (2010) that "the European Union is referred to as a source of the modern democracy today. However, with just a superficial analysis of the state of democracy in the European Union, a different conclusion is drawn. Democratic European Union is (not) generally a democracy. The law that the citizens of the European Union live under is not created by the European Parliament; that law is created by the European Commission. The European Commission is not chosen just by the citizens alone. (...) The citizens choose members of the European Parliament. However, the European Parliament today has a minor role on many important issues" (Rakić 2010: 289). This author is even strictly qualifying the EU as "an empire with imperialistic intentions and non-democratic structures. Economic rights of the European Union states are lower than e.g. of the federal states of the USA." (290). Rakić takes "the current situation in Greece" as an example, which is a "result of an open dictatorship", as "the financial politics in Greece is made in Brussels and is implemented by Brussels in Greece" (*ibid.*). Brussels today does not ask the Greek anything, the author argues, just as much as it did not care for the will of the French, Dutch and the Irish expressed in the referendum earlier (290).

All that, according to Rakić, should be taken into consideration when possible benefits of the EU membership are being evaluated in Serbia. At the same time, the author advises, the profits that Germany or Britain gained from the EU should not be considered, but the results of the real counterparts of Serbia - Bulgaria and Poland. Poland's EU entry, Rakić claims, caused this country "catastrophic consequences economically" (290). For example, by lifting customs barriers, Polish farmers ended up in a difficult position and were "forced to close their farms. It is also important that four million Poles, mostly young

people, and educated personnel, left the country since 2006 because they couldn't find employment in Poland" (291). In addition to these unfavourable economic consequences, according to Rakić, it should also be taken into consideration that "today Serbia is facing a few key preconditions for membership which could be labelled as the direct destroyers of Serbia as a national country. These preconditions have never been set to any other country before" (293). The most painful of these preconditions is to recognise the secession of the Albanised Kosovo. "It is unacceptable that Serbia's interests should be sacrificed for the accession to the European Union", the author warns, and added that "indeed there are negative aspects of Serbia's entry into the European Union" (297). Rakić even concludes that "a part of the price of the European Union entry, which more or less we have to pay, for us can also be fatal" (297).

On the other side, in *Srpska politička misao* (2010), Milomir Stepić is deliberating on the relationship between Serbia and the EU, and points out to our "two-decade military-political confrontation with the EU and NATO". Hostility of the EU and NATO towards Serbia "culminated by giving direct support to creation, and thereafter recognition of the independence of the self-proclaimed Arbanasi state-like creation *Republika e Kosovës*" (Stepić 2010: 36). Stepić warns that, in our public, "even the pragmatic reasons of the Serbian 'European path' without alternative are often not considered from the standpoint of multidimensional consequences in the future (even the economic ones)" (37). He thinks that there are at least two realistic alternatives to "Euro-atlantic integrations" (the EU and NATO). One is the possibility that Serbia "becomes part of the interest sphere of one and/or the other regional powers, Germany and Turkey", and the other is the possibility that Serbia becomes "part of the strategic pro-Russian trans-Balkan 'wedge' for breaking the American circle around Russia and dismantling American trans-atlantic bridgehead in Europe" (38-39). In this article, Stepić himself does not explicitly reveal his own preferences, remaining predominantly on eurorealistic positions.

However, immediately following Stepić's article, in the same issue of *Srpska politička misao*, comes an article by Momčilo Subotić called "Srbija i Evropska unija" (Serbia and the European Union). In this article, Subotić strongly criticises "Euroutopism" which, according to him, rules in the official politics in Serbia (Subotić 2010: 43-46), where the author openly advocates for "the European identity and consolidation, based on the formula EU + Russia". However, Subotić immediately adds that this solution formula is being "spoiled" and "undermined" by the USA (53). The point is, according to Subotić, that

"America's forcing of Turkey is done primarily with the aim to disturb the European 'entity'" (58). More precisely, "supported by the USA, it (Turkey – S. A) actually has a dual purpose: to occupy through its imperialistic aspirations the territory of the European Turkey and to be the American point of support towards the Russian East" (59). In accordance with Stepić's other realistic alternative exactly does Subotić warns of "a possibility that Serbia, moving towards the EU, will end up in a renewed Ottoman Empire" (43).

A possible EU anti-Russian orientation is re-considered by Zoran Milošević, in the *Politička revija* journal (2011). Unlike the mentioned author's text from 2008, which had no direct euro-sceptic point, this text by Milošević is openly euro-sceptic. Milošević is of an opinion that the EU and the USA pursue a clear and long-term anti-Russian politics, one that Serbia would have to adopt should it become an EU member. This, according to him, would lead to the cooling of relations with Russia, withdrawal of the Russian support to Serbia with regards to the Kosovo issue, and to Serbia definitely losing Kosovo. "By entering the European Union", Milošević says, "every country ceases to formulate its own politics independently and accepts an obligation to adapt it (also) to the interests of the USA and the leading countries of the European Union" (Milošević 2011: 159). Using some examples of the Eastern-European countries which became members of the EU and NATO, Milošević is showing that "smaller countries cannot resist the pressures from Brussels and Washington, and almost always give up their national interest to the benefit of the more powerful countries" (159). Since foreign politics of the USA and the EU is "without fail anti-Russian", the author warns, "in the case of Serbia it has significant consequences for its territorial integrity (Kosmet)" (159). "For Serbia, it would be more acceptable", as Milošević suggests "to develop an alternative to the European Union rather than to follow Brussels obediently. When this is added by other arguments against the European Union that exist (its servitude to the USA interests, its bureaucracy and a lack of democracy), insisting on the independent path of the Serbian Kosmet to the European Union, then it is much clearer" (177). "Clearer" meaning, obviously, that Serbia should not seek EU membership.

It is not only with Milošević, but also with some other analysts of the Institute for Political Studies, that an evolution in views of the EU is perceived. An interesting example is Jelena Todorović, a young researcher from this Institute. Her initial articles, that showed immediately quite a high level of awareness and competency, moved around in the usual euro-enthusiastic matrix. Based on that cliché, Serbia's EU entry is implied as a desirable and definitive orientation,

the problem remaining the concrete technicalities and successful adjustment of the Serbian society to the emerging circumstances. Such Todorović's approach could be noticed in the titles of her work, which were published in the IPS journals: "Regionalizam – budućnost Evropske unije?" (Regionalism - the future of the European Union?) (Todorović 2008), "Jačanje administrativnih kapaciteta kao uslov članstva u Evropskoj uniji" (Administrative capacity building as a precondition for the European Union membership) (Todorović 2009a), "Uloga Evropske unije u izgradnji mira" (Role of the European Union in peace-building) (2009b), "Politika azila u Evropskoj uniji" (European Union Asylum Policy) (Todorović 2010v) and "Uloga instrumenata pretpristupne pomoći u procesu pridruživanja Evropskoj uniji" (The role of the instruments for pre-accession assistance in the European Union association process) (Todorović 2010g).

However, in 2010, Todorović starts to publish texts with somewhat different topics, and orientation too. Thus she writes an article called "Evroskepticizam u zemljama Evropske unije" (Euro-scepticism in the European Union countries) (Todorović 2010a), in which she treats this standpoint as a normal political/social preference. While in the most part of euroenthusiastic publicistics in Serbia euro-scepticism was a synonym for backwardness, inferiority, reactionism, and also (latent) fascism, Todorović considered this viewpoint neutrally and did not choose according to it. In the following text called "Institucionalne novine u Evropskoj uniji nakon usvajanja Lisabonskog ugovora" (Institutional novelties in the European Union after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty) (Todorović 2010b), this author is expressing her first stronger criticism about Brussels.

Namely, talking of the Lisbon Treaty – which replaced the rejected Constitutional Treaty on referendums in France and Holland – Todorović says that it was "created by bureaucrats" who "could not allow that it should fail so they started lobbying and persuading Ireland to hold another referendum after a certain period of time" (315). She also concludes that "the Treaty was imposed from above" to the European people, implying that "it is exactly this lack of legitimacy that will be the cause of potential dissatisfaction of the EU citizens" (315). Since "the citizens did not have the chance to express their opinion about this Treaty", the Treaty of Lisbon, according to Todorović, could be "the time bomb for which it is not known when it will explode" (315).

Finally, in an article from 2011 called "Srbija i politika uslovljavanja Evropske unije" (Serbia and the European Union conditionality policy), Todorović takes the strongest attitude towards Brussels. She named

the EU "the great stipulator" (184), claiming that "conditionality today represents the basics of the EU relations with third countries" (186). It is particularly noticeable in the relations between the EU and the Western Balkans countries, to which Brussels applies "a multidimensional approach to conditionality" (192). Serbia is a particular target of conditionality, because, according to Todorović, "the history of Serbia and the EU relations can be described as a constant extortion or the politics of constant pressure" (193). That politics, in principle, can be characterised as "redefining of conditions", or as "frequently setting unrealistic conditions, in order to be harder to achieve" (194). "From Serbia's position, it can be said that it often seems as though the EU purposely sets up the scale high in terms of the conditions that need to be fulfilled to keep the candidate countries and potential candidates further from membership because it is suffering from 'the enlargement fatigue'", the author claims. "Although the EU officials deny it, the Western Balkans countries are discriminated compared to the Central and Eastern Europe countries because of the uncertainty of membership and numerous additional conditions", writes Todorović, and added that "such EU politics provokes anger of both the citizens and political officials, and leads to the rise of euro-scepticism in these countries" (197).

Of course, Todorović did not take openly euro-sceptic positions. However, it is evident that in only three years she evolved from (implicit) Euro-enthusiasm, to (explicit) Euro-realism. It shows not only the author's personal process of development, but also the influence that the wrongful politics of Brussels towards Serbia has on the fall of Euro-enthusiasm amongst not only the common population but also amongst the academic elite.

A similar process can be noticed after 2008 in other academic institutions. For example, the Institute of European Studies from Belgrade – an academic institution specialised in the EU studies – in the second half of the nineties and the first half of the past decade, published monographs that were very much inclined to the Euro-integration processes. A good example is an anthology of an associate of this Institute under a characteristic title: *Kako ubrzati pridruživanje Republike Srbije Evropskoj uniji* (How to speed up integration of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union) (edited by Jovan Teokarević, 2004). However, already in the anthology called *Evropa i Zapadni Balkan posle velikog proširenja* (Europe and the Western Balkans after the big enlargement) (edited by Slobodan G. Marković, 2005) a considerable dose of euro-realism is noticed. It can be found in a text by Slobodan G. Marković "Euro-scepticizam nakon velikog proširenja Evropske

unije” (Euroscepticism after the big enlargement of the European Union), also in an article written by Miša Đurković ”Krizna evropske konstitucionalizacije” (European constitutionalisation crises), and in an addition by Radmila Nakarada ”Evropska unija i globalizacija” (The European Union and globalisation). Five years later, however, in an anthology called ”Srbija u predvorju Evropske unije: iskušenja i moguće ishodište” (Serbia in the lobby of the European Union: challenges and possible outcomes) (edited by Gordana Živković, 2010), a strong mixture of euroscepticism and eurorealism dominates in almost every text. Implicit euroscepticism is present in articles comprising half of the book (Slobodan Antonić, ”EU skepticizam u Srbiji” EU scepticism in Serbia; Miloš Knežević, ”Proevropski pragmatizam i evrokriticizam” Pro-European pragmatism and Eurocriticism; Miša Đurković, ”Politika nove američke administracije i pitanje pridruživanja Srbije Evropskoj uniji” Politics of the new American administration and the issue of Serbia’s accession to the European Union”; Saša Gajić, ”Evropeizacija i tradicija” Europeanisation and tradition; Gordana Živković, ”Evropska unija i nacionalni identitet” The European Union and national identity; and Radmila Nakarada, ”Spoljne i unutrašnje pretpostavke transformacije srpske države” Foreign and internal assumptions of the transformation of the Serbian state). So this Institute also made a turn around to a more criticising approach towards Brussels and the Eurointegration processes. It could be said that here the attitude of Brussels with regards to the Kosovo issue was the factor which had a decisive influence on how the value orientation of researches from this Institution changed towards the EU.

## EU Scepticism in Literature

It is interesting that two serious eurosceptic books were published in Serbia already in 2008: Argumenti protiv Evropske unije (Arguments against the European Union), by Dejan Mirović, and Evroskepticizam: 111 evroskeptičnih fragmenata ((Euroscepticism: 111 Eurosceptic fragments), by Miloš Knežević. Although published after the secession of Kosovo, they do not put emphasis on ”Kosovo” eurosceptic argument, but on economic, cultural and psychological reasons. That is why these books may be evaluated as a certain step forward in the eurosceptic argumentation development.

Dejan Mirović gives several reasons why Serbia should not access the EU. The first reason is that the EU is an expensive and bureaucratised superstate, in which only an illusion of democracy exists. The European

Union is not governed by democratic institutions, but a rich and estranged bureaucracy which makes all the most important decisions. The bureaucracy of Brussels is one of the most corrupt administration structures in the world, Mirković thinks. It was exactly because of the corruption that the whole European Commission (the government) resigned in 1999. On its fifth work anniversary (2008), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) issued a report on the fraud and corruption in the amount of more than five billion Euros.

In general, Milošević warns, the EU today is an overnormed bureaucratized state. There are regulations for everything. For example, regulation 548/89 determines the "night shirt" (nightdress), as a "shirt intended to cover the upper part of the body reaching down to mid-thigh, with short sleeves and a neckline". The second regulation determines that "a nightdress can only be worn at night", and the third that "a nightdress can only be used in bed" (32). Such over-normity, according to Mirović, results in practically everything having to be negotiated with Brussels. This puts small countries in a very inferior position, like Serbia, which access the EU afterwards. For example, wines in the EU can only be traded if they originate from those vineyards that have the so-called planting right, since there is a prohibition to plant the new vineyards, and the new member countries get their quotas of vineyards. It means that, in negotiations with Brussels, a country should fight out the best possible quota. However, it was also not easy for countries which, in their ambitions to access the EU, enjoyed full sympathy of Brussels. Hungary, for example, when negotiating the quotas, was granted only 25 percent of the required cattle food which they could produce, 41 percent of the totally required quantity of tomato, 39 percent of bovine animals, etc (24-5). Because of these and other measures, as Mirović suggests, agricultural production in countries accessing the EU is significantly dropping. Along with Hungary and Poland, a good example is Bulgaria too, which used to be the biggest Eastern European producer of vegetables, and today it is forced to import cucumbers and potato from the EU (29). Taking into account a clear indisposition of Brussels towards Serbia's accelerated association to the EU, it is obvious, says Mirović, that Serbia will be forced to accept extremely unfavourable conditions of the accession, which will seriously damage primarily its most productive industry – agriculture.

In general, the overall EU economic politics towards the candidates for membership, warns Mirović, is consisted in the fact that the importation of goods from the EU is stimulated to the maximum, and that the most profitable local companies are taken over. For that purpose

the candidates are first required to lift all the customs duties towards the EU, as well as indebtedness of candidate countries is encouraged, in order to increase the current purchasing power of the people thus giving jobs to the EU companies. It was such politics, for example, that made Poland, which had a foreign trade surplus of 2 billion dollars in 1991, to reach a deficit of 13 billion dollars by 2000, and Hungary, which had a surplus of 350 million in 1990, came to a deficit of 2 billion dollars by 2000 (56).

The story about local manufacturers coming out on the EU market is just a myth, warns Mirović. The EU market has been occupied for a long time and the positions of local powerful manufacturers are so strong that the weak newcomers simply cannot push them out. A myth is also the claim about European salaries in companies purchased by capitalists from the EU. When Volkswagen bought Škoda (1996), it recovered the invested funds in two years time, and started making 100 million euros a year, however the workers' wages remained one third of the German worker's salary for the same types of jobs. A myth is also the statement that the EU entry entails prevention of emigration of educated and younger labour force, claims Mirović. After Poland entered the EU in 2004, two million people have left this country, one million from Bulgaria, and two million from Romania. A myth is also that the process of accession to the EU involves getting piles of money from the European funds, suggests the author. Assistance from the EU is primarily intended to fund "friendly" media, institutions and organisations, and when it comes to the economy, most part of it ends up in the bank accounts of the European companies. For example, most funds from the FAP programme went to logistics support to the Volkswagen investments in the Czech Republic and Fiat in Poland (92).

For all this, warns Mirović, Serbia needs to thoroughly consider whether it needs the EU at all. "Economically, but also spiritually, the EU poses a greater danger for Serbia than NATO. As a project and idea, the EU is more subtle and dangerous than NATO. It is more seductive. Behind it, the face of Washington is not clearly seen, as is the case with NATO" (350). Therefore, it is the responsibility of all the intellectuals in Serbia, according to Mirović, to stand up to the EU propaganda, to unmask the EU myths and help this people to look at its position and interests rationally.

Miloš Knežević, who published books about the problem of the European politics, culture and new institutions before (Knežević 2005; 2001), in his book called *Evroskepticizam* (Euro scepticism) emphasizes

three issues: pushing out modern national countries on behalf of the feudal or artificial "European" regions; cultural exclusivity, even cultural racism towards everything that does not belong to a certain European conception; and systematic humiliation of (pre) candidates for EU membership, Serbia in particular, with the aim to change their cultural (national) identity (Knežević 2008: 20-21).

Brussels wants the European countries to weaken and disappear, argues Knežević, it wants to fragmentise them and empty them of their real powers, in order to deal only with atomized, pre-modern (feudal) or recently tailored regions. Secondly, to the Brussels Eurocratic elite only EU is the true Europe. They divide Europeans into "civilised" and "barbaric" or, in other words, the "real Europeans" and those that live "outside the walls of pseudo-Empire", as Knežević says (36). The EU enlargement is not perceived as a pluralistic enrichment of the Federation with new, autonomous people, but as an enlargement of the Empire with the new feudal provinces, new consumers – tax payers. Hence the EU enlargement has a form of internal colonialism, in Knežević's opinion. "Pre-candidate countries and nations are sidelined and humiliated beings coming from the European semi-suburban areas", Knežević warns, "subjected to extensive social and political engineering" (53). Pre-candidates are required to "behave in a candidate manner" (53), or to act as future members. It serves as a symbolic acknowledgement of their own cultural and civilizational inferiority and, at the same time, a covenant recognition of the eternal cultural primacy of the "true" (Western) Europeans.

Hence comes the famous waiting room for admittance into the EU, argues Knežević. The waiting room gives real masters, who calmly sit and have lunches in their castle saloons, the feeling of power. But it should also permanently fix one status, a relationship. One waits as long as the "waiting party" succeeds to convince the master that their relationship of master-servant will be continued and when a servant is finally allowed to enter the lounge. Hence, especially for suspicious and disobedient "waiting parties", such as Serbia, "aging in the European waiting room" is anticipated (54). A disobedient "waiting party" must, through the "process of Europeanisation" actually lose its will, dignity and self-respect. And if it shows dissatisfaction or disobedience, like Serbia, such "waiting party" is evicted even from the waiting room, and left like a dog in the rain until it humbly and squealing asks to be allowed back into the waiting room (65).

It should be said that the eurosceptic arguments, brought out in these two books, have shown maturing of the social awareness and

development of argumentative capacities of a eurosceptic population. By the number of circulated copies, they certainly did not achieve a significant influence on the public, however they did, in a good way, open the discussion about Serbia's EU entry. Even though two translations of books with eurorealistic orientation have been published after these books, (Taylor 2010; Gunther 2011), and certain local writers devoted parts of their books to present their eurosceptic positions (Ranković 2009; particularly 69-72; Ranković 2011; particularly 62; 124-134; Koljević 2011; Milošević and Dimitrijević 2011), Mirović's and Knežević's books have, until today, remained the only comprehensive and argumentatively completely developed eurosceptic books in Serbia.

## Conclusion

The fundamental weakness of a eurosceptic position in Serbia is certainly the lack of closer consideration of the following issue – what is an alternative to Serbia's accession to the EU? True, there are publicistic articles (Mirović 2011b; 2011a; Antonić 2011b; Anđelković 2008), as well as economic programmes of political parties (DSS, 2009) which appeal to Serbia to turn to strategic partnership with Russia, permanently remaining in the candidate status for the EU entry. The EU entry would, according to these authors, automatically close the free passage to the Russian market for Serbia, as the Free Trade Agreement with Russia from August 28, 2000 would cease to exist. However, if it should keep its candidate status, Serbia would, according to these authors, not only be able to use part of the EU funds but at the same time it could attract the capital that, because of the strict EU conditions, can't go directly into the market there. On the other side, economic attachment onto the "Russian locomotive" would provide Serbia with more political independence from both Brussels and Washington.

The problem, however, is that this or some other alternative has not been considered in more details in an academic work, or even better, a book (study, monograph). Taking an alternative into consideration is, namely, an important factor in eurosceptic argumentation, since one social option can only be seriously criticised after it has been confronted with a real alternative. Serbia, as a state and society, has to think what it will do if things go wrong, or in other words, what "exit strategy" will it implement. Although most of the Serbian political elite for now sincerely wants to join the EU, for the time being it is not considering what to do if its aim fails. Such attitude is always frivolous and far from

the European ideals – because every serious country has an exit strategy and strategic alternative.

However, it is important that, in the confrontation of euro-sceptics and euro-enthusiasts in Serbia, there be as many arguments as possible, and as little propaganda and manipulation. The role of the "public intellectuals" is to remember all arguments, pros and cons, to pass them through the filter of rationality, and present them to the public in a systematic manner. The review of this euro-sceptic publicistic shows that its protagonists, although in great minority, have still managed to present the Serbian public with euro-sceptic arguments, with rationality and systemacy. Perhaps it is now the time that "Euro-enthusiasts" critically reviewed these arguments, in order that a rational discussion about the most important strategic issue of Serbia today is continued within the society.

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