

January 30, 2023



Serbia's Foreign Policy Drivers: Head or Heart?



Prepared By
Miranda Alsop & Benjamin Weber



Serbia's Foreign Policy Drivers: Head or Heart?

by TextOre analysts Miranda Alsop and Benjamin Weberⁱ

In broad terms, Serbia's relationship with Europe and Russia has been one of "head" versus "heart." Belgrade's "head" seems to know that there are practical benefits to Serbia's joining the European Union. Its "heart" is embittered by identity issues and historic grievances over Kosovo, which it cherishes as the cradle of Serbian civilisation.ⁱⁱ Belgrade's still-close relationship with Moscow is enabling of that outlook in more than merely cultural and ideological terms: with Russia's sanction-proof veto in the UN Security Council, Serbia holds a trump card in preventing Kosovo from achieving full recognition as an independent state. The current war in Ukraine has only increased the level of antagonism. Brussels is pressuring Belgrade (and the rest of the Western Balkans) to join Europe in actively opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which in turn has intensified Serbian animus against Europe. That said, Serbia's pragmatic streak shows in hedges like developing alternative energy sources beyond those supplied by Russia. Meanwhile, enduring enmity and intractable issues between Kosovo and Serbia create a potential flashpoint, one that Europe needs even less now that it is managing the regional and global challenges of war in Ukraine.

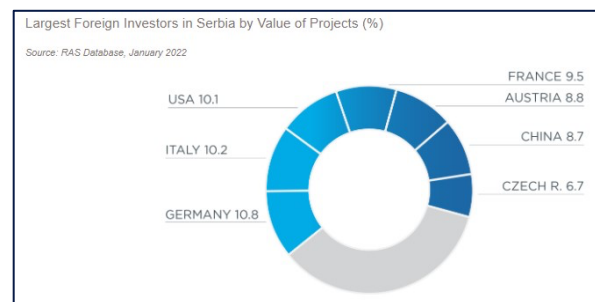
Since its final detachment from Yugoslavia, Serbia has generally proven able to put pragmatism ahead of ideology on nearly any issue other than Kosovo. Its "Four Pillars of Foreign Policy" strategy, articulated by then-President Boris Tadić in 2009, sets the European Union (EU) as the key pillar, with complementary "strategic partnerships" with Russia, China,ⁱⁱⁱ and the United States.^{iv,v} Serbia has even found a pragmatic modus vivendi with NATO: while not seeking membership, Serbia engages with the Alliance on a range of issues and programs.^{vi,vii} The current President of Serbia, Aleksandr Vučić, has striven to maintain this balanced policy. Kosovo remains a non-negotiable issue, although as was the case when Belgrade was attempting to forestall the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, its policy is largely reactive and defensive.



Belgrade's view is that its positions on Kosovo and EU membership are not incompatible, and it is the EU that has shown both an inconsistent interest in bringing the Western Balkans into the Union and a "double standard" on issues of territorial integrity. As recently as January, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić told the diplomatic corps in Belgrade that Serbia's core foreign policy goals remain "preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country [and] achievement of full membership in the EU."^{viii} Entry into the EU "has been the strategic goal of all the governments of Serbia over the last 20 years," Dačić contended, but Europe has not shown the

same enthusiasm for expansion into the Western Balkans and has been “inconsistent” in its commitment to territorial integrity.”^{ix} As Dačić has pointed out previously, the United States and Europe insist on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea and are unwilling to contemplate Catalonian succession, and the United States has said it will not recognize a sovereign Palestine pending a final resolution of issues with Israel.^x Belgrade contends therefore that a “double standard” is at work in the EU’s seeming insistence on Serbia recognizing Kosovo’s independence, rather than supporting the territorial integrity of Serbia.

Serbians have judged the EU to be a strategically beneficial partner, but not a friend, at least in the court of public opinion - 35% of Serbs are in favor of EU membership, while 44% are against.^{xi} This is despite the clear benefits brought by cooperation with the EU, particularly when compared with Russia. As an economic partner, the EU dwarfs Russia. Official Serbian statistics show that Serbia exported over € 16 billion to Europe. By contrast, 2022 bilateral trade with Russia was € 996.71 mil, or less than with Germany (3489.9), Italy (1844.6), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1819.7), Hungary (1285.5), and Romania (1108.0).^{xii} The EU has provided 67% of the total FDI inflow to Serbia since 2010 (valued at 15.4 billion euros). Brussels is also Serbia’s biggest donor, with more than 3 billion euros in non-refundable assistance.^{xiii}



Source: Razvojna agencija Srbije

By contrast, other than Gazprom Neft, the Russian shareholder of Serbia’s state NIS oil company (which reduced its stake to 50% in May),^{xiv} Russian FDI investments into Serbia are low. The National Bank of Serbia reported that 2021 FDI from Russia was € 11.3 million, compared with over € 18 billion from the EU.^{xv}

That said, since Serbians believe that the EU’s insistence that relations between Serbia and Kosovo be normalized as condition for accession really means Serbia’s formal recognition of Kosovo’s independence, the EU and EU membership are unpopular.^{xvi} Jelena Subotić, a political scientist and member of the Belgrade Security Forum, argues that Serbians see the EU as an “other.”^{xvii} Its affinity with Russia on the other hand was revealed in the results of a poll by the Institute of European Affairs in 2022 where 76% of Serbs saw Russia as a “friend.”^{xviii} Serbia’s “othering” of the EU and West, coupled with attachment to Russia, is most prevalent on historical and identity issues. Vuk Vuksanović, a senior researcher at the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP), argues that Russia’s allure stems from its role as a counterweight to the West: it is not popular for what it is, but what it isn’t.^{xix}

Brussels has *not*, in fact, made Serbia recognizing an independent Kosovo a precondition for admission to the Union. The EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue seeks a “comprehensive legally-binding normalisation agreement between Kosovo and Serbia addressing outstanding issues in order for both Parties to progress on their respective European path,”^{xx} while the European Parliament declared that “normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo is a priority and

a precondition for the EU accession of both countries.”^{xxi} That said, while five members -- Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain -- have not recognized Kosovo independence, the others have, and the Serbs clearly see themselves on the defensive.

In fact, a bigger irritant at present may be Serbia’s position on Russia, part of a larger push by Brussels to see Belgrade align itself with the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy. Brussels now assesses that Serbia’s adherence to EU foreign policy in general has decreased from 64% in 2020 to 45% in 2022.^{xxii} The Tirana Declaration, issued on 6 December 2022 at the EU-Western Balkans summit, called on partners in the Western Balkans to “make swift and sustained progress towards full alignment with the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy.”^{xxiii} The EU Ambassador to Serbia, Emanuele Giafret, underlined the EU’s demands that accession candidates commit to the “harmonization of foreign policy, including restrictive measures,” noting that it “is of particular importance in the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine.”^{xxiv} Specifically, Belgrade is facing pressure to impose sanctions against Russia, with EU members emphatic that Serbia must now choose a side.^{xxv}

Brussels’ hard sell has ruffled feathers in Belgrade. Aleksandr Vulin, the former Interior Minister now serving as Director of the BIA (Serbia’s intelligence agency), commented rather pointedly that Serbia should reconsider its EU aspirations. “They are measuring our love for Europe by our hatred toward Russia,” Vulin told Serbian broadcaster RTS.^{xxvi} Speaking at his annual address on 4 January, Vučić stated that there will be no U-turn on Serbia’s decision on sanctions, and accused the EU of “brutally interfering” in Serbia’s internal affairs.^{xxvii}

Serbia’s foreign policy is not the only thing stalling alignment with EU and Western ideals. Since 2014, and Vučić’s election, there has been a slow but consistent democratic backsliding within the country. The political system does remain competitive - political parties can be established and operate freely. However, there are issues around opaque political funding and private donations. OSCE observers monitoring Serbia’s April 2022 presidential elections found challenges in disbursement of public funds for campaign activities, pressure on employees of state-run entities to support incumbents, and media coverage impacted by self-censorship by reporters concerned about “a climate of vilification of journalists.”^{xxviii} The ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) party has increased its influence over the media through state-run enterprises, which during elections results in the media covering the campaign activities of ruling parties more extensively than other political actors.^{xxix} Freedom House found that political influence over the media is growing and media outlets that are more critical of the government face threats, violence, and intimidation.^{xxx} Serbia also received its lowest score in a decade on the Corruption Index, receiving a rating of 38 out of 100.^{xxxi} Any further backsliding could itself harm Serbia’s integration with the EU, irrespective of Russia.

From its side, Russia exerts its influence over Serbia in three main ways: energy, soft power, and its supportive role on Kosovo. Russian President Vladimir Putin has tried to woo Vučić with promises of cheap gas, stronger bilateral relations, and increased trade.^{xxxii} Already reliant on Russian gas (85% of Serbian

imports), Serbia secured a 3-year uninterrupted supply of gas under preferential terms in May 2022.^{xxxiii} As part of the dialogue, Yuri Borisov, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, played on the shared Slavic identity, noting that Serbia receives the lowest price of gas due to the two nations being "fraternal people."^{xxxiv} Serbia has also emerged as a top destination for Russian emigres and Russian businesses looking to avoid the impact of sanctions. According to data from the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, more than 140,000 Russian citizens registered for permanent residence between February and October 2022.^{xxxv} As a result, between February and April alone more than 300 Russian-owned companies were registered in the country.^{xxxvi} Ljubodrag Savic, an economics professor in Belgrade, believes their arrival has fuelled the recovery of FDI in Serbia to pre-pandemic levels.^{xxxvii} Perhaps most importantly, Russia has been steadfast in opposing Kosovo's independence. Belgrade relies on Moscow's support particularly at the United Nations, where Russia's veto as a permanent member of the Security Council can block Kosovo's application for UN membership.^{xxxviii}

Several Serbian government officials remain close to Moscow and supportive of pro-Russian narratives in the bilateral relationship. On 1 December, Aleksandr Vulin, considered by other members of the Serbian government to be "Moscow's man," was appointed the new director of the BIA.^{xxxix} As noted above, he is a sharp critic of the EU and its positions both on Kosovo independence and Russian sanctions. Speaking with *Vecerni Novosti* in October 2022, he said "The question is not whether we want to join the EU, but whether the EU wants Serbia. Judging by the insane blackmail they are exposing us to recognize Kosovo, abolish [Bosnia's ethnic Serbian enclave the] Republika Srpska and impose sanctions on Russia, they don't want us." He concluded by saying "the sooner we accept that they don't want us and that we don't belong there, the better off we will be".^{xl} Vulin's anti-EU sentiment is accompanied with reports that, as Minister of Police, he wiretapped a meeting of Russian opposition members in Belgrade, presumably at Moscow's request.^{xli} When he moved to his current position, the pro-Western opposition party Movement of Free Citizens (PSG) Party released a statement warning that his appointment "will completely stop" the BIA's cooperation with Western security agencies and will contribute to the "international isolation of Serbia".^{xlii}

The Territorial Integrity Paradox

The irony of relying on Russia, which has violated the territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia by armed force and which has a controversial presence in Moldova, as a guarantor of its territorial integrity is likely no more lost on the Serbians than it is on anyone else. Serbia itself has not given Russia the same support: as far back as 2009, then-President Tadić declined to endorse Putin's contention that Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were justified by Kosovo's break from Serbia and subsequent recognition by much of the West as an independent state.^{xliii} Serbia has also voted in support of successive UN resolutions to oppose Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including to remove Russia from the UN Human Rights Council.^{xliiv} Speaking to media on the margins of the 2022 UN General Assembly session, then-Foreign Minister Nikola Selaković explicitly rejected Russian-held "referenda" in territories captured from Ukraine as "completely contrary to our national interests, our policy of preserving territorial integrity and sovereignty and commitment to the principle of inviolability of borders."^{xliiv}

Though it rejected Russia’s justifications for the war in Ukraine, Belgrade’s dialogue with Moscow on other issues continues at senior levels. Then-Foreign Minister Nikola Selaković and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov signed the “Plan of Consultations Between the MFA of Serbia and the MFA of Russia for 2023-2024” on the margins of the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2022, occasioning sharp rebukes from members of the EU Parliament.^{xlvi}

Describing himself as a “keen supporter” of Serbia’s EU access, Rapporteur for Serbia Vladimír Bilčík decried the agreement as “a major blow to accession process in the Western Balkans.”^{xlvii} His colleague, Rapporteur for Kosovo Viola von Cramon, called the agreement a “serious scandal” that might justify freezing accession talks, “as entering the EU does not go through Moscow.”^{xlviii} Speaking with reporters, Selaković portrayed the dialogue as a long-standing consultation that did not include security matters. “I would not see anything fundamentally objectionable in that plan, especially when it is attacked by those who have not even seen it.”^{xlix}



Serbia’s refusal to impose sanctions against Russia is rooted in what it claims is its need to preserve its own national interests.ⁱ 50% of Serbians support the government’s decision to refrain from imposing sanctions against Russia and to remain “neutral,” even if it were to incur secondary sanctions as a result, according to a study released by Demostat, a Belgrade-based polling agency.ⁱⁱ This “neutrality” may be rooted more than in cultural affinity for Russia. Srećko Mihailović, lead researcher on the Demostat study, said this preference for neutrality reflects a trend deep-rooted since the Cold War, when from the 1950s Marshal Josip Tito, then President of Yugoslavia tried to keep his communist state non-aligned with either the Warsaw Pact countries or with countries in the West.ⁱⁱⁱ The “concept of neutrality and bloc non-alignment endures in the minds of Serbian citizens regardless of everything that has happened in the meantime,” said Mihailović.^{liii}

That said, those national interests extend to energy diversification. While President Vučić has never publicly questioned the benefits of close energy cooperation with Russia, Serbian eagerness for energy diversification suggests Belgrade is happy to reduce its energy dependence on Russian imports. Vučić has supported Serbia’s participation in EU-led LNG projects in Greece and has announced plans to “invest €12 billion in energy infrastructure” to diversify sources and transport routes of energy imports.^{liv} The EU has already made progress here, as funding from the European Commission and the European Investment Bank is being used to develop the Bulgaria-Serbia Interconnector.^{lv} The pipeline, which should be complete by the end of 2023, will improve Serbia’s import options significantly. Serbia has shown interest in developing its solar and hydropower capacity as well, which would involve cooperation with U.S. firms.^{lvi,lvii}

Serbia's relationship with Kosovo is a major factor that threatens to push it further from the EU, a schism that Russia tries hard to exploit. Vučić focused on this issue during his 4 January address, declaring that “we are prepared to talk about a countless number of compromise solutions, but they also have to compromise, there can be no humiliation of Serbia”.^{lviii} With such distance between the two sides, the normalization process has shifted focus from trying to facilitate a final agreement to putting out daily fires between the two sides. The EU has attempted to achieve normalization of relations through the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue.^{lix} However, outside this official framework, little progress has been made and there has been criticism of the EU's lack of vision and tangible commitment. The EU-facilitated dialogue has brokered over 30 agreements,^{lx} but the objectives have not really been realized, leaving both countries in a stalemate.^{lxi} Continued tensions between them propels Serbian-Russian relations, as Serbia relies on Russia as a counterweight to the EU on the matter.

Kosovo and the Western Balkans are on the EU's agenda, but they have never been the top priority, argues Dimitar Bechev from Carnegie Europe.^{lxii} Tefta Kelmendi, from the European Council on Foreign Relations, opined that both sides have “held the other hostage” and that neither side has taken a constructive approach to the EU-backed dialogue, or encouraged their publics to support negotiations. The two countries have resisted addressing the wider, more sensitive issues, and instead have focused on small, divisive, technical issues.^{lxiii} Berdnard Nikaj, also from the European Council on Foreign Relations, argues that this relative deadlock persists because neither Pristina nor Belgrade see the process as working for their benefit. Pristina sees further negotiations as being concessions, whereas Belgrade believes prolonging the negotiations serves its goal of reversing Kosovo's independence.^{lxiv}



Source: KFOR Official Twitter (@NATO – KFOR)

With the war in Ukraine, a flare-up in the Western Balkans is the last thing Europe needs, but recent events highlight that if left unresolved, these seemingly minor technical issues can quickly escalate into political crisis. A case in point is a confrontation arising from the most mundane of matters: license plates. In November, the suspension of the head of the Serb-majority northern municipalities for failing to implement a government decision that banned Serbs living in Kosovo from using Belgrade-registered license plates prompted ethnic Serbian Members of Parliament, mayors, judges and over 500 police officers to resign collectively from their positions.^{lxv} Amid flaring tensions, Serbian Minister of Defence Miloš Vučević announced that President Vučić had ordered the Serbian armed forces to be put on “the highest level of combat readiness.”^{lxvi} The EU, the United States, and NATO's Kosovo Force (K-FOR) managed to diffuse the situation

before it escalated beyond roadblocks at the border.^{lxvii} Although crisis was averted this time, the event highlights deeply rooted resentment can turn minor problems into major conflicts.

Key Factors Shaping Future Developments:

- **The war in Ukraine has reduced the space for Serbia to continue to balance its European aspirations with its traditional friendship with Russia.** That said, Serbia may judge a diplomatically uncomfortable status quo to be preferable to compromising its interests by aligning more closely with either camp. While Europe can keep Serbia at arm's length, Belgrade has seemed content to wait for EU membership on its own terms anyway. Moscow has not (yet) demanded greater Serbian support for the war in Ukraine, and indeed may be willing to continue to back up Serbia at the UN simply to spite the Western allies.
- **For Europe, managing Serbian-Kosovo relations is critical to avoiding a crisis that would threaten its ability to stay focused on Ukraine.** The war in Ukraine may have increased the EU's sense of urgency to integrate Western Balkans for this reason.^{lxviii} To bring both Serbia and Kosovo into the fold will require a reframing of the "comprehensive legally-binding normalisation agreement" in a way that convinces Serbia that its concerns and interests will be respected without compromise to Kosovo's status as an independent state.^{lxix}
- **Other than its willingness to block Kosovo's accession to the UN, Russia's best card with Serbia remains its energy resources.** In addition to changing the conversation on Kosovo, enabling Serbia's energy diversification is the best way to move Belgrade from a relationship of dependency to one of choice with Moscow.

ⁱ The opinions and characterizations in this piece are the authors' own, and for Mr. Weber's part do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. government, his former employer.

ⁱⁱ As expressed by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic in October 2018, "Serbia was created in Kosovo, the first Serbian capital was there, the Serbian Patriarchate is there. In Kosovo, there was a famous battle with the Turks in which Europe defended itself. We were under the Turks for five centuries. They expelled the Serbs and brought in Islamized Albanians and accordingly the number of inhabitants is different today. In the 14th century, the capital of Serbia was in Kosovo. This is Prizren, where only 23 Serbs live today. What is that but ethnic cleansing... If churches are demolished, monasteries are burned, cemeteries are destroyed, how can we accept that?" "Minister Dacic in Timisoara at the "Security Challenges in the Balkans" conference," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website [in Serbian; translation via Google], 09 October 2018, <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/node/544>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Belgrade's relations with Beijing became a "comprehensive strategic partnership" in 2016, and Serbia has been an active participant in China's "Belt and Road" engagement with Central Europe. That engagement has been another source of friction, with a European Parliament Resolution criticizing Serbia for allowing Chinese firms to use labor practices at odds with EU law. "China," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website [in English], <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/foreign-policy/bilateral-cooperation/china>; "中华人民共和国和塞尔维亚共和国关于建立全面战略伙伴关系的联合声明 (全文)," PRC Government official website [in Chinese], 19 June 2016, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-06/19/content_5083565.htm; European Parliament, "Forced labour in the Linglong factory and environmental protests in Serbia," Resolution (2021/3020(RSP)) of 16 December 2021 [in English], https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/243623/EP%20resolution%20Linglong%20and%20environmental%20protests%2016_Dec-2021_EN.pdf

^{iv} "Tadić on Serbia's "four pillars of diplomacy," b92 [in English], 30 August 2009, https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2009&mm=08&dd=30&nav_id=61454

^v Norbert Beckmann-Dierkes, "Serbian Foreign Policy in the Wake of the War in Ukraine", Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, <https://www.kas.de/en/country-reports/detail/-/content/serbian-foreign-policy-in-the-wake-of-the-war-in-ukraine>

^{vi} "Partnership for Peace," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website [in English], <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/foreign-policy/security-policy/partnership-peace>

^{vii} Popular opinion in Serbia shows continued animosity toward NATO, the alliance's bombing raids have not been forgotten. However, on a political and strategic level, the Serbian government cooperates with NATO. Cooperation has increased steadily since 2006 and in 2015 deepened further when Serbia agreed its first Individual Partnership Action Plan. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with Serbia", 23 May 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topocs_50100.htm

^{viii} "Speech by Minister Dačić at New Year reception," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website [in English], 13 January 2023, <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/press-service/statements/speech-minister-dacic-new-year-reception>

^{ix} Ibid.

^x "Minister Dacic in Timisoara at the "Security Challenges in the Balkans" conference," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website [in Serbian; translation via Google], 09 October 2018, <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/node/544>.

^{xi} The poll was conducted by Ipsos (formerly Ipsos MORI) and first published in the Blic newspaper. Blic, "For the first time in history, the majority of Serbian citizens are against joining the EU. A survey taken by Ipsos: The Key reason for this is the pressure from Brussels that suffer because of Russia", 21 April 2022, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/prvi-put-u-istoriji-vecina-gradjana-srbije-protiv-ulaska-u-eu-veliko-istravanje/71wlnbr>

^{xii} Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, "Statistics of external trade," Statistical Release Number 358 - Year LXXII [in English], 29 December 2022, <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2022/PdfE/G20221358.pdf>

^{xiii} Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, "EU Partnership with Serbia: EU best partner and biggest donor for 20 years – and in the front line against Covid-19", 24 April 2020, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/serbia/eu-partnership-serbia-eu-best-partner-and-biggest-donor-20-years—and-front_en?s=227

^{xiv} Interfax, "Gazprom Neft reduces stake in Serbia's NIS to 50%, Gazprom obtains 6.15%", "11 May 2022", <https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/79039/>

^{xv} 2021 statistics selected for comparison to capture pre-war environment; recent statistics may indicate FDI that actually represents capital flight from Russia. "Balance of Payments," National Bank of Serbia official website [in English], https://nbs.rs/en/drugi-nivo-naviqacije/statistika/platni_bilans/

^{xvi} Blic, "For the first time in history, the majority of Serbian citizens are against joining the EU. A survey taken by Ipsos: The Key reason for this is the pressure from Brussels that suffer because of Russia", 21 April 2022, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/prvi-put-u-istoriji-vecina-gradjana-srbije-protiv-ulaska-u-eu-veliko-istravanje/71wlnbr>

^{xvii} Jelena Subotić, "Europe is a State of mind: identity and Europeanization in the Balkans", *International Studies Quarterly*, 2011, PP309-330, <https://philarchive.org/archive/PATEA1>

-
- ^{xviii} Serbian Monitor, “Declining support for Russia among people in Serbia”, 14 March 2022, https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/declining-support-for-russia-among-people-in-serbia/#google_vignette
- ^{xix} European Western Balkans, “BCSP Panel Discussion: Russian influence in Serbia maintained by the local elites”, 14 December 2022, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2022/12/14/bcsp-panel-discussion-russian-influence-in-serbia-maintained-by-the-local-elites/>
- ^{xx} European External Action Service, “Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue,” European Union official website [in English], https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/belgrade-pristina-dialogue_en
- ^{xxi} European Parliament, “resolution of 25 March 2021 on the 2019-2020 Commission reports on Serbia” (2019/2175(INI)) Texts Adopted, 25 March 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0115_EN.html
- ^{xxii} European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, “Serbia Report 2022”, 12 October 2022, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/serbia-report-2022_en
- ^{xxiii} “Standing together with the EU is a clear sign of Partners’ strategic orientation, now more than ever, as Russia escalates its war of aggression against Ukraine. A common vision of the future involves mutual responsibilities and shared values. As we deepen our cooperation with Partners, we urge them to make swift and sustained progress towards full alignment with the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and to act accordingly, including on EU restrictive measures. We commend those Western Balkans Partners that are already demonstrating their strategic commitment in this regard by fully aligning with the EU CFSP and encourage those that have not done so to follow suit.” “Tirana Declaration, 6 December 2022,” European Council official website [in English], 06 December 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/60568/tirana-declaration-en.pdf>
- ^{xxiv} Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “First DPM and FM Dačić with the Head of the Delegation and the Ambassador of EU to Serbia”, 10 November 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/press-service/news/first-dpm-and-fm-dacic-head-delegation-and-ambassador-eu-serbia>
- ^{xxv} Nikola Kiš, “Germany say Serbia has to pick EU or Moscow”, 1 November 2022, <https://brusselsmorning.com/germany-says-serbia-has-to-pick-eu-or-moscow/27602/>
- ^{xxvi} RTS, “Vulin: We choose our own friends, every Russophobia ends in Serbophobia”, 21 April 2022, <https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/politika/4787296/vulin-sami-biramo-prijatelje-rusofobija-zavrshi-srbofobija.html>
- ^{xxvii} YouTube, “Vučić: I tell foreigners – there are no domesticated wolves at the circus, and neither is Vučić”, 4 January 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1GO48wRTVg>; BNE Intellinews, “Serbian President Vucic says he won’t stand for another term”, 5 January 2023, <https://www.intellinews.com/serbian-president-vucic-says-he-won-t-stand-for-another-term-266068/?source=serbia>
- ^{xxviii} OSCEPA, “Serbia’s elections offered diverse political options, but shortcomings led to an uneven playing field, international observers say”, 4 April 2022, <https://www.oscepa.org/en/news-a-media/press-releases/2022/serbia-s-elections-offered-diverse-political-options-but-shortcomings-led-to-an-uneven-playing-field-international-observers-say>
- ^{xxix} BTI Transformation Index, “Serbia Country Report 2022”, <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SRB>
- ^{xxx} Freedom House, Serbia Report 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2022>; BTI Transformation Index, “Serbia Country Report 2022”, <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SRB>
- ^{xxxi} Transparency International, Serbia, <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/serbia>
- ^{xxxii} President of the Russian Federation, “Telephone conversation with Serbian Preident Aleksandar Vucic”, 29 May 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68524>
- ^{xxxiii} President of Russia, “Telephone conversation with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic”, 29 May 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68524>; Euractiv, “Vucic strikes ‘favourable’ gas deal with Putin”, 30 May 2020, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/vucic-strikes-favourable-gas-deal-with-putin/>
- ^{xxxiv} Gazeta, “Borisov, Serbia will receive one of the lowest gas prices”, 16 June 2022, https://www.gazeta.ru/business/news/2022/06/16/17944556.shtml?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.ru%2Fnews%2Fsearch%3Ftext%3D
- ^{xxxv} PDF document from the Serbian Ministry of the Interior. Twitter, “Michael Martens”, 23 December 2022, <https://twitter.com/Andric1961/status/1606231496808857602/photo/1>
- ^{xxxvi} Exit News, “Nearly 300 Russian-owned firms registered in Serbia since Ukraine Invasion”, 7 April 2022, <https://exit.al/en/nearly-300-russian-owned-firms-registered-in-serbia-since-ukraine-invasion/>
- ^{xxxvii} RFERL, “Serbia records big year for foreign direct investment, despite Ukraine war”, 11 January 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-fdi-russia-ukraine-war/32218795.html>
- ^{xxxviii} Russia United Nations, “Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations”, <https://russiaun.ru>
- ^{xxxix} BNE Intellinews, “Pro-Russian ex-interior minister to head Serbia’s intelligence service”, 1 December 2022, <https://intellinews.com/pro-russian-ex-interior-minister-to-head-serbia-s-intelligence-service-264070/>

- ^{xi} Verlin Novosit, “Vulin answered Berbošković: Whenever Germany spoke on behalf of Europe, that story did not have a happy ending”, 14 October 2022, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1163147/vulin-odgovorio-berboškovic-kad-god-nemacka-govorila-me-evrope-prica-nije-imala-srecan-kraj>
- ^{xii} One of the targeted individuals, Russian writer, historian, and now political prisoner, Vladimir Kara-Murza, claimed Vulin personally took the transcripts to Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary to Russia’s Security Council. Twitter, “Bill Browder”, 12 January 2022, <https://twitter.com/billbrowder/status/1481340044019257345>
Milenko Vasović, “Vulin is perfect choice for Serbian President’s dirty work”, Balkan Insights, 16 December 2022, <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/12/16/vulin-is-perfect-choice-for-serbian-presidents-dirty-work/>
- ^{xiii} Twitter, “Slobodni Gradani”, 1 December 2022, <https://twitter.com/pokretslobodnih/status/1598318247329374209>
- ^{xiii} “Tadić on Serbia’s “four pillars of diplomacy,” b92 [in English], 30 August 2009
- ^{xiv} For the 2014 resolution on Crimea (A/RES/68/262 “Territorial integrity of Ukraine,” 27 March 2014, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/767565?ln=en>), a vote for Serbia is not recorded. Serbia voted in favor of all of: A/RES/ES-11/1 “Aggression against Ukraine,” 02 March 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3959039?ln=en>; A/RES/ES-11/2 “Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine,” 24 March 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3965954?ln=en>; A/RES/ES-11/3 “Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council,” 07 April 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3967778?ln=en>; A/RES/ES-11/4 “Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,” 12, October 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3990400?ln=en>; Serbia abstained on the resolution discussing reparations for Ukraine. A/RES/ES-11/5 “Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine,” 14 November 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3994052?ln=en>
- ^{xv} “Selaković: Najintenzivnija spoljnopolićka nedelja u dužem periodu,” 25 September 2022.
- ^{xvi} Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (@MFASerbia) on Twitter, 23 September 2022, <https://twitter.com/MFASerbia/status/1573391054174306305>
- ^{xvii} Vladimír Bilčík MEP (@VladoBilci) on Twitter, 25 September 2022, https://twitter.com/VladoBilcik/status/1573956602058706944?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1573956602058706944%7Ctwgr%5Ee3810ba3d2b73c059405cf148af1759bfa969c8%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fn1info.rs%2Fenglish%2Fnews%2Fmeps-criticise-signing-of-consultation-plan-between-serbia-and-russia%2F
- ^{xviii} Viola von Cramon MEP (@Violavon) on Twitter, 24 September 2022, https://twitter.com/ViolavonCramon/status/1573758277078454272?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1573758277078454272%7Ctwgr%5Ee3810ba3d2b73c059405cf148af1759bfa969c8%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fn1info.rs%2Fenglish%2Fnews%2Fmeps-criticise-signing-of-consultation-plan-between-serbia-and-russia%2F
- ^{xix} “Selaković: Najintenzivnija spoljnopolićka nedelja u dužem periodu,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website [in Serbian; translation via Google], 25 September 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/lat/mediji/vesti/selakovic-najintenzivnija-spoljnopolićka-nedelja-u-duzem-periodu>
- ⁱ Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić argues that Serbia is under the “strongest pressure” since 1999. Though, he and Vučić will only do what is “best for Serbia”. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Strongest Pressures on Serbia Since 1999!”, 30 November 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/press-service/interviews/strongest-pressures-serbia-1999>
- ⁱⁱ Demostat, “Research Presentation: Pre-election opinion of citizens of Serbia – March 2022”, 30 May 2022, <https://demostat.rs/sr/vesti/istrazivanja/prezentacija-istrazivanja-predizborno-mnjenje-gradana-srbije-mart-2022/1453>
- ⁱⁱⁱ The Wilson Centre, “From Alignment to Non-Alignment: Yugoslavia Discovers the Third World”, 5 June 2019, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/alignment-to-non-alignment-yugoslavia-discovers-the-third-world>
- ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Aleks Eror, “For Serbia’s Vučić, the big challenge comes after election day”, Politico, 3 April 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/serbia-election-2022-president-aleksandar-vucic-russia-ukraine-war/>
- ^{liv} Zoran Radosavljević, “Serbia’s Vucic lays out €12bn energy investment plan after oil ban”, 10 October 2022, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/serbias-vucic-lays-out-e12bn-energy-investment-plan-after-oil-ban/>
- ^{lv} European Commission, “Statement by President von der Leyen on the occasion of her official visit to Serbia”, 28 October 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_22_6470
- ^{lvi} ““These meetings [with American interlocutors] also speak of the establishment of new dynamics of relations with the USA and our commitment to improving those relations. Those talks concerned the topic of energy, energy diversification, with a special emphasis on the plans for the construction of solar parks and wind generators, the construction of the Đerdap 3 hydroelectric plant, which, due to relations with our neighbor Romania and their international relations, contact and position, can only be built by the USA. And in third place is the construction of the Serbia-Bulgaria and Serbia-North Macedonia interconnectors,” Selaković said.” “Selaković: Najintenzivnija spoljnopolićka nedelja u dužem periodu,” 25 September 2022.
- ^{lvii} International Trade Administration of the United States, “Serbia – Country Commercial Guide”, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/serbia-energy>; “Vučić in Greece on the construction of an LNG terminal: Thanks to the EU, an important project for the Balkans”, N1 Belgrade, 3 May 2022, <https://n1info.rs/biznis/vucic-u-poseti-grckoj-na-pocetku-gradnje-terminala-za-gas/>

^{lviii} YouTube, “Vučić: I tell foreigners – there are no domesticated wolves at the circus, and neither is Vučić”, 4 January 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1GO48wRTVg>; BNE Intellinews, “Serbian President Vucic says he won’t stand for another term”, 5 January 2023, <https://www.intellinews.com/serbian-president-vucic-says-he-won-t-stand-for-another-term-266068/?source=serbia>

^{lix} European Union External Action, “Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue”, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/belgrade-pristina-dialogue_en

^{lx} The Dialogue, “Regional Representation and Cooperation”, <https://dialogue-info.com/regional-representation-and-cooperation-2/>

^{lxi} Kosovo’s current government has been noncommittal to dialogue on the Serb-Majority municipalities (ASM). As a result, Serbia continues to block its international recognition and accession to international organizations – it will not commit to a final agreement until a creation of an Association of ASM. However, Kosovo is fearful it will give the regions greater autonomy and Belgrade stronger influence over Kosovo’s territory. (SOURCE.); Balkan’s Policy Research Group, “Kosovo’s Participation and Representation in Regional Organizations”, October 2021, <https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Kosovos-Participation-and-Representation-in-Regional-Organizations-eng-021121-web.pdf>

^{lxii} Dimitar Bechev, “What has stopped EU enlargement in the Western Balkans?”, Carnegie Europe, 20 June 2022, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/06/20/what-has-stopped-eu-enlargement-in-western-balkans-pub-87348>

^{lxiii} On 5 November 2022, Kosovo Serb MPs, mayors, judges, and over 500 police officer collectively resigned their positions. This followed Kosovo’s national police director suspending the head of the Serb-majority northern municipalities for failing to implement a Kosovo government decision that said Serbian-issued car licence plates must be converted to Kosovo-issued plates. Prime Minister’s Office (Kosovo), “85th Government Meeting”, 29 June 2022, <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/85th-government-meeting/>; Tefta Kelmendi, “Licence to operate: How the EU can counter Russia and ease tensions between Kosovo and Serbia”, European Council on Foreign Relations, 17 November 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/licence-to-operate-how-the-eu-can-counter-russia-and-ease-tensions-between-kosovo-and-serbia/>; The Crisis Group, “Relaunching the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue”, 25 January 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/balkans/kosovo/262-relaunching-kosovo-serbia-dialogue>; Prishtina Insight, “Another Kosovo Serb Car With RKS Plates Burned”, 3 November 2022, <https://prishtinainsight.com/another-kosovo-serb-car-with-rks-plates-burned/>

^{lxiv} Bernard Nikaj, “Conditions for peace: The EU’s role in the dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia”, European Council on Foreign Relations, 7 December 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/conditions-for-peace-the-eus-role-in-the-dialogue-process-between-kosovo-and-serbia/>

^{lxv} Prime Minister’s Office (Kosovo), “85th Government Meeting”, 29 June 2022, <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/blog/mbledhja-e-85-te-e-qeverise/>; Tefta Kelmendi, “License to Operate: How the EU can counter Russia and ease tensions between Serbia and Kosovo”, European Council on Foreign Relations, 17 November 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/licence-to-operate-how-the-eu-can-counter-russia-and-ease-tensions-between-kosovo-and-serbia/>

^{lxvi} Twitter, “Miloš Vučević”, 26 December 2022, <https://twitter.com/VucevicM/status/1607489549982380032>

^{lxvii} “Diplomacy prevailed in de-escalating tensions in north Kosovo. Violence never be a solution. Welcome responsible leadership of President Vučić and Prime Minister Kurti. Great, EU, US & NATO_KFOR teamwork. Thanks to all involved! We now need urgent progress in dialogue”. Twitter, “Josep Borrell Fontelles”. 29 December 2022, https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1608466942838407169?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwqr%5Etweet

^{lxviii} European Council Conclusions, “Brussels – 23/24 June 2022”, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-24-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

^{lxix} One step towards this might be encouraging Kosovo to permit the establishment of the Association of Serbian Municipalities (ASM), a semi-autonomous community of ethnic Serbs that would operate under Kosovo law. Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement on creating the ASM under the 2013 Brussels Agreement. Since then, Kosovo has been non-committal to the agreement, maintaining that it infringes on its sovereignty. The Government of the Republic of Serbia, “Brussels Agreement”, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/cinjenice/en/120394>; The Dialogue, “Association / Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities”, <https://dialogue-info.com/association-community-of-serb-majority-municipalities/>



textore.net
(571) 321-2013
inquiries@textore.net
