European Integration in Higher Education in the Western Balkan Countries

A review of literature

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Abstract

The aim of this report is to review theoretical and empirical material about the relationship between (a) European initiatives in higher education and more general European integration process and (b) national policy developments in the Western Balkan countries (WBC). The report roughly covers the period from late 80s (seen to be the beginning of the end of SFRY) until present day, though some references are made to developments before 80s, where necessary. The report focuses on three types of scholarly sources: (a) more general studies on European integration and Europeanization of public policy, predominantly belonging to comparative politics, policy analysis and international relations, (b) studies on European integration and Europeanization in higher education and (c) studies mapping higher education policy developments since the end of 90s and early 2010s until present day in the countries under study. The report ultimately provides an overview of identified knowledge gaps, discussion of a number of research challenges and suggestions on how to overcome them.

Keywords: Western Balkans, research, higher education, European integration

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Abbreviations

BFUG – Bologna Follow Up Group

CEEPUS - Central European Exchange Program for University Studies

CoE – Council of Europe

ECTS – European Credit Transfer System

EI – Education International

ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (formerly European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)

ESU – European Students' Union (formerly ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe)

EUA – European University Association

EURASHE – European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

GER – gross enrolment ration

HEI – higher education institution

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

Non-uni – non-university higher education institutions

NPM – New Public Management

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OMC – Open Method of Coordination

R&D – research and development

Uni – university higher education institutions

WB – Western Balkans

WBC – Western Balkan countries

Introduction[2]

> *Few national higher education systems or policies can claim to operate in total isolation from their international environment. Systemic changes and policy shifts in higher education are linked in various ways to what is happening in the international arena, as well as to developments in other national systems.* (Gornitzka, 2006, p. 19)

That no higher education system is an island, as proposed in the quote above, is applicable to the countries of the Western Balkans[3]. National higher education policy development in what is now six or seven different countries[4] seems to be very much influenced by two major European initiatives in higher education – the Bologna Process and the developments around and following the EU's Lisbon Strategy – both related to the project of establishing a "Europe of Knowledge" (Elken, Gornitzka, Maassen, & Vukasović, 2011). The influence of European initiatives on national policy making is, on the one hand, due to the aspirations of each of these countries with respect to joining the European Union (EU). Croatia is scheduled to become a member in 2013, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have been granted candidate status, while Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (if seen as an independent country) are all seen as credible future members (Vachudová, 2009) in different stages of the accession process, which also determines the possibility for these countries to influence these European initiatives. Furthermore, the European developments in higher education are seen to have a transformative character in general: "The European higher education area may be set to transform the European states' higher education institutions as fundamentally as the nation state changed the medieval universities" (Corbett, 2005, p. 192).

The aim of this report is to review theoretical and empirical material about the relationship between (a) European initiatives in higher education and more general European integration process and (b) national policy developments in the Western Balkan countries (WBC). The countries in focus exhibit some similarities with other countries in the Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe[5]: first and foremost in

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[3] In line with the definition used also within the NORGLOBAL programme, Western Balkan here refers to the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (here not indicating any position towards its statehood), Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Slovenia is not considered as part of the Western Balkans, at least for the NORGLOBAL programme and this review purposes.

[4] The difference is due to the disputed status of Kosovo. While all of the other WB countries as well as the majority of the EU members and EEA countries have recognised Kosovo as an independent country, Serbia still considers Kosovo to be part of its territory.

[5] Here referring primarily to some of the new EU member states, i.e.: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and, though with somewhat different relevance, Slovenia.

terms of some aspects of their Communist heritage, though the Communism in what used to be the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY)[6] is often seen to be different (one could argue milder) than Communism in the former USSR or countries that were part of the Warsaw Pact. Albania, as will be discussed earlier, can be seen as a special case of extreme isolationism. One further similarity is in relation to the fact that their economic and political transition has been strongly marked with the idea of "return to Europe" (Héritier, 2005). Countries that once belonged to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have one additional similarity: they have a common historical background in terms of public policy in general and higher education in particular, and there are rather strong connections between policy communities in different countries (although less intensive during war conflicts in the 90s). The report roughly covers the period from late 80s (seen to be the beginning of the end of SFRY) until present day, though some references are made to developments before 80s, where necessary.

The report focuses on three types of scholarly sources: (a) more general studies on European integration and Europeanization of public policy, predominantly belonging to comparative politics, policy analysis and international relations, (b) studies on European integration and Europeanization in higher education and (c) studies mapping higher education policy developments since the end of 90s and early 2010s until present day in the countries under study. Part Two of the report starts with a presentation of systems of higher education in the Western Balkan countries, including brief historical notes, and continues with a discussion of the Communist legacy and implications of the turbulent 90s on higher education. It ends with information on EU accession and participation of WB countries in the Bologna Process. Part Three of the report focuses on theoretical perspectives on European integration and Europeanization applied to higher education, addressing the *shaping and taking* (Börzel, 2003) of European level processes and the system and institutional level responses to them, as well as addressing processes of policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996) and policy convergence (Heinze & Knill, 2008). Part Four of the report provides a review of scholarly literature on higher education changes in the WBC (books, peer-reviewed journals and conference papers), but limited only to those published in English. Search for literature presented in Part Four was done using Web of Science's SSCI and A&HCI data bases, as well as Google Scholar and using country names, "Balkan", "South East Europe*", "higher education", "academi*" and "university*" as key words (overview of numbers of hits for each search is given in the Appendix 2). Very little of this literature has a clear theoretical or conceptual framework. Therefore, Part Four does not make a direct application of concepts presented in Part Three on the region, but does indicate where such applications can be made. Nevertheless, the literature does testify to the amount of information and understanding currently available on higher education and research in the WBC. The conclusion (Part Five) provides an overview of identified knowledge gaps, discussion of a number of research challenges and suggestions on how to overcome them.

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[6] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (see footnotes 1 and 2), Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

Western Balkan countries: specificities, similarities and differences

Brief historical overview and basic data on HE in the WBC

Compared to their Western European counterparts, universities in the Western Balkans are rather young: higher education in the region essentially developed after WWII. Exceptions are the flagship universities of Croatia and Serbia. University of Zagreb was founded in 1874 although a predecessor institution dates back to 1669 and University of Belgrade was founded in 1905 with predecessor institution dating back to 1808 (Šoljan, 1991). When it comes to higher education in the former Yugoslavia, it was under direct jurisdiction of the constituent republics[7] since the 70s when the federal ministry of education was abolished, although a plethora of federal commissions as well as a federal association of universities were in place to ensure policy coordination (Mandic, 1992, p. 815; Šoljan, 1991, pp. 141-142). Changes in organisation of higher education followed the overall changes in line with the self-management principles, which lead to disintegration of universities and awarding independent legal status to the faculties. Given that, apart from the universities, there were also independent research institutes, the separation of teaching and research was quite prominent (though not as significant as in the case of USSR), even within one institution, i.e. between units and/or individual staff more involved in teaching and units and/or staff more involved in research (Šoljan, 1991). All other universities (public and private) in the region, including universities in Albania (Konomi, 1992), were founded after WWII.

Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the available data on selected indicators for higher education and research[8]. However, an analysis of the state of affairs with respect to higher education and research, both in terms of comparison within the WBC and in terms of comparison of the WBC with some other parts of Europe is rather difficult, due to lack of data. An additional concern is the reliability of existing data, since some of the WB countries are not necessarily following international standards and guidelines with respect to collection of statistical data (e.g. Eurostat) as well as due to the differences between higher education and research systems. For example, gross-enrolment ratio for some of the countries was calculated including the non-university higher education institutions (polytechnics), given that these may be considered as part of the higher education system. This may not be the case in all of countries and it is difficult to determine what is the case for a particular system. In a similar way, it is not

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[7] Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia (and Slovenia) had the status of a republic in the former Yugoslavia. Kosovo and Vojvodina were autonomous provinces of Serbia.

[8] The indicators were chosen from a set of system level higher education and research indicators, normalized for size of country or population, reported in various international data bases. The principle was to maximise the availability of data. This means that for other system level indicators data was not available for a higher number of countries presented here.

entirely clear what the "researcher" category includes in different countries[9]. However, if the available data is taken at face value, then it can be noted that the WBC is lagging behind Slovenia (one of the countries of former Yugoslavia), as well as some of the post-Communist countries in the region, not to mention old EU member states and Norway, in terms of massification of higher education. The lagging is less pronounced when it comes to expenditure for higher education and research, as well as number of researchers per million people.

Table 1 – Comparative overview of some higher education and research indicators for WBC and a selection of other European countries in 2007. Sources: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, World Bank data base

Country		GER[10]	Expenditure per student (% of GDP per capita)	R&D expenditure (% of GDP)	Researchers (per million people)
Albania		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Federation	35%	n/a	0.03	197
	Republika Srpska				
Croatia		49%	25.2	0.81	1 384
Kosovo[11]		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Macedonia		40%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Montenegro		45%	n/a	1.1	n/a
Serbia		50%	40.1 (2008)	0.35	1 196
Austria		60%	47.4	2.54	3 813
Bulgaria		53%	18.9	0.48	1 466
Italy		66%	22.1	1.18	1 568
Norway		74%	47.3	1.64	5 247
Portugal		62%	26.7 (2008)	1.21	2 648
Romania		64%	26.2	0.53	877
Slovenia		87%	n/a	1.45	3 109

Table 2 presents a short overview of higher education systems of the WBC, in terms of numbers of higher education institutions (university and non-university, public and private) as well as numbers of students and ratio between number of students and number of teachers. Kosovo is here presented separately from Serbia, although the data on higher education in the north of Kosovo (where higher

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[9] According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, this is supposed to include "professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods, or systems and in the management of the projects concerned", and does include PhD students.

[10] GER – Gross enrolment ratio – ratio between (a) the total number of students enrolled into higher education regardless of their age and (b) the size of the cohort (i.e. number of people of age corresponding to traditional age of higher education students, in most cases falling between 18 and 25 years of age).

[11] See footnotes 2 and 3.

education institutions are at the moment operating according to higher education legislation in Serbia) is presented twice: once under Kosovo and once under Serbia.

Table 2 – Systems of higher education in the WBC (data compiled on the basis of Ivošević and Miklavič (2009), Vukasović (2011), national Bologna reports for 2009 and www.herdata.org)

Country		Uni	Non-uni[12]	Public	Private	Total HEI		Students		Student teacher ratio
Albania		28	24	24	28	52		90 000		n/a
BiH	Federation	13	6	6	13	19	39	68 000	100 000	n/a
	Republika Srpska	4	16	4	16	20		32 000		
Croatia		10	41	23	28	51		160 000		23:1
Kosovo [13,14,15]		15	27	12	30	42		n/a		n/a
Macedonia [16]		15/16	11	4/5	22	26/27		65 000		n/a
Montenegro		3	7	1	9	10		22 000		29:1
Serbia [17]		17	72	57	32	89		202 000		29:1
TOTAL		105/106	204	131/132	178	309/310		639 000*		-

*not including Kosovo

Communist legacy and the developments during the 90s

As previously indicated, the countries under study have all gone through a Communist period, starting with the end of WWII and ending roughly in late 80s or early 90s. Six/seven countries have been part of a federal system until early 1990s in what was then called the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia[18]. As of late 40s and early 50s, Yugoslavia manoeuvred its existence between the East and the West and was neither part of the NATO nor part of the Warsaw Pact, which ensured favourable relationships to both sides in the Cold War as well as good trade relations and loans (in particular from the West). It was also one of the founders of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement (including countries in Africa, Latin America, Middle East, South and South-East Asia), founded in 1961 Belgrade. Albania on the other hand, ruled until 1990 by a hard-line Communist regime established by Enver Hoxha, was rather isolated, both

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[12] Includes polytechnics, academies of applied sciences, but also independent faculties.

[13] See footnotes 1 and 2.

[14] As of July 2008. It was not clear which HEIs were accredited.

[15] Includes also the University in Prishtina/Kosovska Mitrovica, as well as some academies of applied sciences in the North of Kosovo.

[16] One public university was not accredited in July 2011.

[17] Includes also the University in Pristina/Kosovska Mitrovica, as well as some academies of applied sciences in the North of Kosovo.

[18] From now on referred to as "former Yugoslavia".

economically and politically and at the end of the 20th century was one of the poorest European countries.

The end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall also meant the end of Communism in the countries under study. The dissolution of the former Yugoslavia was marked by (1) a series of wars fought on the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, last of which ended in late 1995, (2) a peaceful independence by Macedonia in the early 90s, (3) an armed conflict in Kosovo between Serbian forces (army, police and paramilitary forces) and the Kosovo Liberation Army followed by NATO intervention and withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo in the summer of 1999, all of which in 2008 culminated in Kosovo declaring independence from Serbia and (4) the independence referendum in Montenegro in 2006. In most of the countries that emerged from the former Yugoslavia, the process of democratization lagged behind other Central European countries, including Slovenia. According to the Freedom House democracy index, which uses four criteria to assess the democratic deficit of a country[19], all of the countries of the Western Balkans have been marked as either flawed democracies or hybrid regimes in 2010[20].

The 90s in Albania were a period of instability both in economic and political terms, which included several economic crises (most notably in 1992 and late 1996) as well as an armed rebellion in 1997. Albania and Macedonia were also affected by the conflict in Kosovo, given that significant number of Albanians from Kosovo found refuge there, especially in 1998 and 1999, while Macedonia also went through a period of internal ethnic conflicts in 2001. All of this slowed down and in some cases completely blocked political and economic transition, and therefore also affected the relationship with the European Union (Freyburg & Richter, 2010; Subotić, 2010, 2011), in line with an expectation that "countries need to democratize first in order for Europeanization of domestic political space to start taking place" (Dolenec, 2008, p. 23).

Such complex political, economic and social situation affected higher education policy development as well. Some of the countries of the former Yugoslavia essentially spent the entire 90s in a form of international isolation (internally or externally inflicted) with quite limited communication with the international academic community and with almost non-existent relationship with the European structures focusing on higher education, which also implies almost no access to European programmes in higher education or research (be that through the EU or the Council of Europe). This was also the time of rather limited policy development. In Bosnia and Macedonia there was virtually no policy

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[19] See www.freedomhouse.org for more information. The four criteria are: (a) free and fair national elections, (b) security of voters, (c) influence of foreign powers on government and (d) capability of civil servants to implement policies. Alternative ways of assessing the democratic character of a country can be found in Croissant and Merkel (2004) and Merkel (2004).

[20] See http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy_Index_2010_web.pdf (page accessed 3 April 2012)

development in higher education[21]. In Croatia there were attempts to introduce reforms, albeit with significant difficulties with respect to implementation (see Orosz (2008)). In Serbia, the regime largely focused on diminishing the democratizing role of higher education in society and, after a series of student protests and smaller-scale academic strikes, introduced regulation which abolished institutional autonomy and academic freedom in 1998. In Albania, although a Law on higher education was adopted in 1994, the bulk of the reforms had to be postponed until rather recently, due to aforementioned internal instability. In Montenegro, there were legislative changes in 1992 and 1994 but no other significant policy development took place during the 90s. Kosovo has been, in the period under study, marked with a dual higher education system. Until the end of 90s this duality was expressed through one official Serbian and one unofficial Albanian higher education system (given that Albanian students and professors were expelled from Serbian controlled universities in Kosovo in the early 90s). From 1999 onwards, the duality is again demonstrated in what some would argue are two parallel systems – one in the north part of Kosovo where there is still a Serbian majority and one in the rest of Kosovo. This duality, together with the differences in terms of positions towards Kosovo's statehood, also affects the perception whether higher education institutions in Kosovo participate in the Bologna Process or not (see below).

The aforementioned complex conflict situation in the region naturally implied difficult diplomatic relations and by extension also largely impeded official cooperation between higher education institutions, although there are indications of maintained communication between individuals or smaller research groups, as well as indications of policy transfer[22]. Finally, the countries share a number of challenges with respect to their higher education systems. Apart from the general lagging behind with respect to education attainment, gross enrolment ratio and student/staff ratio presented earlier, additional challenges include the consequences of brain drain, not only limited to the 90s[23] as well as fast massification of higher education with limited to none expansion of capacity during the 90s, which also lead to problems with duration of studies and high drop-out rates (for examples from Croatia and Serbia see Vidović and Bjeliš (2006) and Vukasović (2007) respectively).

2000s: Bologna and EU accession

By and large end of the 90s and beginning of the 2000s marks a new beginning for most of the WB countries. There are two primary reasons for this. The first one is the regime change in Croatia (late

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[21] First legislation on higher education after independence of Macedonia, was adopted in 2000 (Petkovska, 2011). The first Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted in 2007.

[22] Informal interviews as well as public statements of decision-makers indicate policy borrowing in terms of legislative changes, as well as borrowing between universities or between departments in terms of responses to external pressures to reform.

[23] See special issue of Higher Education in Europe (2004, vol. 29, issue 3) or special issue of South-East Europe Review (2003, issue 4) dedicated to brain drain.

1999, early 2000) and Serbia (late 2000), and effects this produced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro. The second one is the EU's initiative targeting the region with a long-term conflict prevention strategy – the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe[24] – which was launched on 10 June 1999 (one day before the official end of the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

In the 2000s, in all of the WB countries, Bologna related reforms of higher education took place, including changes in legislation and, less often, changes in funding arrangements, as well as changes in curricula. These changes have been mapped in a number of policy reports prepared by various international organizations, which, while they may provide some useful data about higher education in the WBC, given their nature, should be primarily seen as perspectives by different stakeholders on higher education. The methodology of data collection in said reports (data is reported by different interested parties) provides opportunities for window-dressing (see reference to Veiga and Amaral, 2006 in section 3.a). Furthermore, some of the reports can be seen as legitimising particular policy proposals or legitimising the existence of the organization publishing it. Nevertheless, the reports do testify to some of the changes that have taken place and also highlight importance of some initiatives (e.g. TEMPUS) for higher education changes[25].

That said, a report commissioned by the European Commission on the effectiveness of the programme claims that the "Tempus [programme] has achieved notable progress in helping develop curricula in line with the Bologna principles" and contributed to internationalization of universities (Commission, 2008, p. 34). In the same manner, the importance of academic staff mobility, improved cooperation between universities and industry is highlighted[26]. It is claimed that "Enormous progress has been made in implementing Bologna principles and Tempus has been instrumental in supporting faculties and universities in this process" (Commission, 2008, p. 44). The Bologna related reforms have been, according to the European Commission "fully implemented in all or most study fields" in all of the WB countries except for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia where one sees "extensive but gradual introduction" (Commission, 2010, p. 20). According to the same source, with respect to the introduction of the ECTS, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are leading, and use of ECTS is part of higher education legislation in all of the WB countries. The same goes for the Diploma Supplement which seems to be issued in the vast majority of study programmes (at least this is what is claimed in the report), while differences appear in terms of independence of quality assurance structures. According to the report, the WB countries are lagging behind requirements concerning the implementation of the national qualifications framework, similar to most of the other European countries (Commission, 2010). The participation of WB countries in the TEMPUS programme however is not balanced: in relation to size of the higher education system, Macedonia is leading while, for example, Albania seems to be less active than Montenegro (Zgaga, 2008).

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[24] http://www.stabilitypact.org/ (page accessed 3 April 2012)

[25] The importance of the TEMPUS programme is discussed in more theoretical terms in Part Three.

[26] Cf. sections 3.c and 3.d about importance of participation in epistemic communities and issue networks for Europeanization and policy transfer in higher education.

OECD conducted regional higher education reviews in 2003 (2003a, 2003b) and indicated that in all of the countries higher education reforms were under way. Bologna Process stocktaking done for the Leuven Ministerial Summit in 2009 indicated that Croatia was most advanced with respect to implementation, while Albania was least advanced (Rauhvargers, Deane, & Pauwels, 2009). A different assessment highlighted that Serbia was a country with "high levels of activity compared to other 'late joiners'" (Westerheijden et al., 2010, p. 31). According to the Trends 2010 report of the European University Association, attitudes of higher education institutions (though it was not always clear who is responding on behalf of the institutions) towards the Bologna Process were largely positive, with as much as 85% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthemore, Bologna was in 2010 still seen as important for national higher education policy in most of the WB countries, though Croatia gave priority to internationalization (Sursock et al., 2010). For the European Students' Union however the major issues for concern are (a) student mobility, in absolute terms, in terms of the balance between incoming and outgoing students and in terms of social mobility and (b) lack of adequate student participation (ESU, 2010).

At present, when it comes to the relationship with the EU, all countries under study are strongly focused on joining. None of the countries is currently a member of the EU and also none of the countries were amongst the original signatories of the Bologna Declaration in 1999. Croatia is expected to become a full member of the EU on 1 July 2013 and joined the Bologna Process in 2001. Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia were granted EU candidate status in 2005, 2010 and 2012 respectively; all joined the Bologna Process in 2003[27]. The other two/three countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo[28] – are in the so-called pre-accession stage, with a number of political and economic agreements with the EU, some of which are not fully in force yet due to various administrative or political reasons. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna Process in 2003 as well. Kosovo's status with respect to the Bologna Process is a complex matter. On the one hand, if one follows the position of Kosovo being an independent state, than it is *de jure* not part of the Bologna Process, due to the fact that participation in the process is limited to the signatories of the European Cultural Convention[29] which Kosovo cannot sign due to its still disputed statehood. However, one could argue that Kosovo is partly involved in the process through activities of various international organizations (such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and through various cooperation programmes of the EU (e.g. TEMPUS[30]). On the other hand, if one considers that Kosovo is part of Serbia, than an argument can be made that higher education in Kosovo is represented in the Bologna Process through

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[27] Montenegro joined the Bologna Process as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, an asymmetric federation with Serbia. Montenegro gained independence in 2006 after a referendum and its status in the Bologna Process was confirmed at the London Ministerial Summit in 2007.

[28] See footnotes 2 and 3.

[29] http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/018.htm (page accessed 1 February 2012)

[30] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/index_en.php (page accessed 2 February 2012)

Serbia, even though a significant part of higher education institutions in Kosovo does not operate according to Serbian higher education legislation and is not funded from the Serbian budget.

In sum, the countries that are in the focus of this report exhibit both similarities and differences with respect to higher education, as a consequence of their historical background and post-Communist heritage. Furthermore, the countries also exhibit some differences in terms of their positions towards the EU and participation in policy arenas focusing on higher education and research on the European level and hence may also be different in terms of their participation in European integration processes as well as the extent and mechanisms of Europeanization of higher education.

Theoretical perspectives on European integration and Europeanization of higher education – implications for WBC

To provide a fuller understanding of the European integration and Europeanization processes in the area of higher education, this section starts with a short description of two main developments, or rather two main pillars of European integration in higher education (P. Maassen & Musselin, 2009): the Bologna Process and the developments related to EU's Lisbon strategy (including subsequent developments, e.g. Modernization Agenda, Horizon 2020 etc.). This is then followed up by a brief theoretical account of how European integration and shaping EU (and by extension European) level processes (i.e. bottom-up perspective) works in the area of higher education and what the possibilities for the countries of the Western Balkans are in terms of influencing these processes. Given that these possibilities, as will be discussed, are rather limited, more attention is put on the processes of taking European level processes into the national context, i.e. the process of Europeanization of systems of higher education (i.e. top-down perspective). This part of the report ends with considerations of processes of policy transfer and policy convergence and their relationship to the processes of European integration and Europeanization of higher education.

European initiatives in higher education[31]

As Neave and Maassen claim (2007, p. 135): "… to study any single process of European integration in isolation is problematic. Under some conditions, as Bologna and Lisbon demonstrate, reform processes interact and intertwine, if not integrate, as several partially interconnected developments intersect, cross and meld". This is in line with the view that the European initiatives in higher education can be

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[31] For a comprehensive literature review on Europe of Knowledge and the relationship between European integration and transformation of higher education, see Elken et al. (2011) See also Maassen and Olsen (2007) for a more detailed analysis of the Bologna and Lisbon processes, as well as for a proposal of a research agenda.

seen "less as a grandstand European integration than as many smaller, composite and intricate processes of change" (Elken et al., 2011, p. 3).

Although increasingly connected and in most cases complementary (Corbett, 2011; Gornitzka, 2010; Keeling, 2006)[32], the two initiatives are different in several important aspects. The EU process connected to the Lisbon Strategy and the Modernization Agenda is a largely supranational process, where a number of instruments have been developed, ranging from legally binding directives in the areas of recognition of qualifications in regulated professions (Beerkens, 2008), through decisions which have more the nature of recommendations (e.g. in the area of qualification frameworks), through developing various instruments and allocating funding to a number of cooperation programmes, such as the Lifelong learning programme and the framework programmes focusing on research cooperation. Although EU competences have been steadily increasing in the area of education and research (Pollack, 2000), the principle of subsidiarity is still formally in force. However, despite or perhaps because of this principle, a number of inter-related policy networks have emerged – some existing on the European level including the European Commission, Council of Europe and various transnational stakeholder organizations (e.g. those working as representatives of students – the European Students' Union, or representatives of universities – the European University Association) and some essentially linking the European level and national or local level administration (Gornitzka, 2009). This also implied (or necessitated) the use of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for coordination of policy, which was introduced in EU Lisbon Summit in 2000 as consisting of "setting of common objectives, establishing indicators and benchmarks for comparing best practices and performance, and translating the common objectives into national and regional policies" (Gornitzka, 2007, p. 155).

Such networked approach to higher education creates a multi-level multi-actor governance arrangement and to some extent challenges the subsidiarity principle of the EU, given that the common objectives developed through OMC may also be seen in the national or regional contexts as more binding than they actually are. Furthermore, it potentially opens up the space for more active participation of EU candidate and pre-accession countries in higher education policy discussion of the EU, and it also provides the EU an opportunity to develop a set of instruments that can (and are often explicitly designed to) have an impact on higher education systems or institutions in the countries that are not (yet) members of the EU. For example, various EU cooperation programmes are gradually opened up for countries as they progress towards EU membership. The first programmes to become open for non-EU countries are higher education specific TEMPUS programmes and, once the country is recognised as a potential candidate, parts of the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance[33]) funds. At the same time countries in this pre-accession stage are also eligible for framework programmes in

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[32] Corbett (2005, 2011) provides a detailed account on the expansion of higher education activities of the EU and the merging (or taking over) of the Bologna Process in the first half of the 2000s.

[33] http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/instrument-pre-accession_en.htm (page accessed 2 February 2012)

research. Once a candidate, a country also becomes eligible for the entire Lifelong Learning Programme[34] and, once a full member, for funds aiming at strengthening cohesion and balanced regional development (which in 2011 amounted to 32.9 billion Euros). Apart from monetary incentives, which can be seen as quite significant given the relatively weak economic situation in the countries under study, such programmes also offer opportunities for networking and sharing of information and experience and therefore policy transferred (discussed in section 3.d), both between the Western Balkan countries and the EU, as well as amongst the Western Balkan countries themselves.

Contrary to the EU initiatives in higher education, the Bologna Process possesses almost no administrative capacity[35] and does not have its own funding facilitating the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. It started as a voluntary initiative with national ministries responsible for higher education steering the process through the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG). The European Commission is the only supranational organization that is a full member of the BFUG, with all other transnational organizations (EUA, ESU, EURASHE, EI, Business Europe and CoE) having an observer status. This dilutes the intergovernmental character of the Bologna Process and does establish a link to the Commission's administrative capacity and EU financial resources. Furthermore, characterization of the Bologna Process as strictly voluntary may be a bit misleading given that many countries found it necessary to commit themselves to Bologna goals (Ravinet, 2008). The Bologna Process, borrowing from the EU, also relies on OMC and reports assessing the progress of Bologna in different countries and institutions, though suffering from some methodological weaknesses (Veiga & Amaral, 2006), are regularly published. The Process is also marked with significant ambiguity which is often seen as necessary for any agreement to take place amongst such a diverse group of countries (Ravinet, 2008) but also leads to significant diversity in terms of implementation of outcomes (Westerheijden et al., 2010) as well as an opportunity for using the Bologna Process for national policy makers to promote their own policy preferences under the Bologna umbrella (Gornitzka, 2006; Musselin, 2009).

Both processes are essentially "moving targets" (Gornitzka, 2007; Kehm, Huisman, & Stensaker, 2009; Neave & Maassen, 2007) – the policy content and policy instruments are continuously being developed and actors involved in the processes (both individual and collective) are also not completely fixed. Coupled with the fact that the status of the WBC with respect to the EU is also not completely fixed (a country can progress towards full membership), a number of challenges for studying both the bottom-up and top-down perspective emerges, which is the focus of the following subsections.

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[34] Before 2007 Socrates programme, more information on http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm (page accessed 2 February 2012)

[35] Only in the running up to the Ministerial Summit in 2005 was there a central secretariat and it has been rotating every two years, including a complete change of rather small staff. Until July 2012 the Secretariat was in Romania with less than 10 employees.

Shaping European policies on higher education and research - assessing WBC potential

Most of the literature on European integration and shaping European policies focuses on EU member states and analyses, amongst other, the motivation for and conditions under which member states can successfully upload their policy preferences to the European (almost exclusively implying EU) level[36]. This perspective focuses on the role of member states governments and sees that "[A]t the domestic level, actors pressure their national executives to shape EU policies in a way that favour their interests. At the European level, the member state governments push for European policies that satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing their adverse consequences at the domestic level" (Börzel, 2003, p. 4). Therefore, if the idea is to maximize benefits and minimize costs of adapting to a European policy preference, an effective strategy is to try to upload domestic policy preferences to the European level (ibid.). The extent to which such a strategy will be successful largely depends on the political and administrative capacity of the country in question, including factors such as number of votes in the EU parliament, EU budget contribution, administrative resources, financial means and staff-power to successfully lobby within EU structures (ibid.). However, uploading is directly tied to the official status of a country with respect to the EU and therefore is essentially not directly possible for countries outside the EU (i.e. candidate and pre-accession countries) (Héritier, 2005). That said, when it comes to EU initiatives in higher education, countries that are outside the EU (and EEA) have almost no possibility to influence them and therefore it can be said that WB countries have almost no opportunity to shape EU level policy in the area of higher education and research. In theory, a member state can take up policy preferences of such countries and upload them on their behalf to the European level so it would be interesting to investigate whether, for example, Slovenia as, on the one hand, currently the only member of the EU and, on the other hand, a country with significant historical commonalities with the bulk of the WBC is in any way using this (theoretical) opportunity, and if so, what is its rationale and strategy.

When it comes to shaping the Bologna Process, due to its intergovernmental and non-EU character, the possibilities for uploading the preferences are more significant than in the case of the Lisbon Strategy (and related EU developments). Given the previously discussed linkages between Bologna and Lisbon, one could also argue that participation in Bologna can be seen as an entrance point for non-EU countries into EU higher education policy arena. In theory, all of the WBC, given that they are at present signatories of the Bologna Declaration and full members of the Bologna Follow Up Group, can contribute to shaping the Bologna Process as much as any other country participating in it. However, it seems they in general choose not to. Neither the Ministerial Summits nor the official Bologna seminars have so far been organised in the WBC, while non-EU countries such as Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine hosted several official Bologna seminars already. Hosting of seminars does not necessarily guarantee

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[36] For a short overview of developments of top-down and bottom-up approaches in European integration and Europeanization studies see e.g. Börzel (2003)

uploading of preferences to the European level, but it does provide an opportunity to do so, through setting the focus of the seminars and thus influencing agenda-setting[37]. Another possibility in uploading the preferences is through the follow-up working structure of the Bologna Process. In the currently nine working groups and networks within the Bologna Process, three have no participants from WBC. Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro participate in four of them, Serbia in three, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in two. For reasons explained earlier, depending on the understanding of its statehood, Kosovo is either not allowed to participate in official Bologna structures or can be seen to participate through Serbia, both of which lead to the same outcome – Kosovo having an extremely limited influence on the Bologna Process. Furthermore, national representation of the WB countries in the Bologna Follow Up Group and the related working structures is rather unstable: individuals representing these countries change more frequently than others, often reflecting changes in domestic political coalitions and therefore changes in the ministries responsible for higher education. Such instability of national representation potentially limits the possibility for them to influence the process, including the process of drafting the official statements from ministerial conferences. Even regional level activities, such as the so-called *Novi Sad initiative*[38], which is gathering universities and national higher education authorities from the WB countries, as well as several other members of the BFUG (CoE, ESU, EUA, EI and UNESCO), seem to largely take European policy preferences as a given and focus more on facilitating the implementation of these preferences and addressing regional specificities than on actively influencing European policies.

In summary, unlike the EU member states, the WB countries have so far, due to official status with respect to the EU, lack of political and administrative capacity or lack of willingness to become involved, exerted almost no influence and uploaded almost no higher education policy preferences to the European level. This lack of uploading has been identified in other areas as well (Anastasakis, 2005). Unlike their EU member states counterparts, the WB countries are limited to taking European policy preferences into their domestic contexts, which has implications on the mechanisms and expected outcomes of Europeanization of higher education and research in these countries, which are the focus of the next section.

Taking European policies on higher education and research – implications for Europeanization in the WBC

Following the top-down perspective on European integration processes, expressed both in comparative politics and international relations literature (Börzel & Risse, 2000, 2003; Radaelli, 2003) and in higher education literature (Musselin, 2009; Pabian, 2009), Europeanization of higher education is understood here to be "the [process of] institutionalization of formal and informal rules developed in a process that

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[37] It also provides an opportunity for domestic use of European processes, which is addressed in section 3.c.
[38] http://www.nsinitiative.uns.ac.rs/index.html (page accessed on 19 March 2012)

involves a supranational or an intergovernmental body (such as the European Union – EU, the Council of Europe – CoE or the Bologna Follow Up Group – BFUG). The process of institutionalization of said formal and informal rules (or adaptation to the European rules) can take place at the macro level (higher education system), meso level (universities and their organizational units) or micro level (individual academics, students, administrative staff etc.)" (Vukasović, unpublished paper).

This understanding of Europeanization reflects the view that the two main European initiatives likely to lead to more Europeanized higher education and research are (1) the EU process connected to the Lisbon Strategy and the Modernization Agenda and (2) the Bologna Process steered by the Bologna Follow Up Group and supported, amongst other, by the Council of Europe[39]. The linkage to formal European structures is necessary in order to distinguish between changes taking place in response to such European developments and changes taking place in response to more general processes of globalization or internationalization.

Two theoretical perspectives on Europeanization, deemed applicable to old members, new members, candidate countries and even beyond the EU (Börzel & Risse, 2003; Schimmelfennig, 2009; Sedelmeier, 2011) have been developed in the international relations and comparative politics literature. These two perspectives, external incentives and social learning, rely on two different strands of institutionalism, rationalist and sociological. The former postulates that the process of Europeanization follows the logic of consequence and the latter that it follows the logic of appropriateness (Börzel & Risse, 2000). Each defines a set of factors that, if present, are expected to facilitate the process of Europeanization. The factors include:

- Within the external incentives (logic of consequence) perspective: clarity of demand, conditionality of rewards, density of veto players, balance between power and information asymmetry, administrative capacity and strength of institutional legacies;
- Within the social learning (logic of appropriateness) perspective: legitimacy of demand or process through which demand was defined, resonance between European and domestic rules, identity, participation in epistemic communities or issue networks, internationalization of the domestic policy arena[40].

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[39] Partly due to the fact that most of the former Yugoslav countries are not full members of the EU, the Council of Europe has had a more significant role in the higher education reforms in these countries, than in other post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, let alone old EU member states. This is particularly true for Bosnia and Herzegovina where the Council of Europe had a multi-year project focusing on reforms of higher education within which a Framework Law on Higher Education was finally adopted on the level of the entire country.

[40] For a more detailed discussion of these factors in the context of higher education, see Vukasović (unpublished paper).

Some of the mediating factors are related to the nature of European initiatives (e.g. clarity or legitimacy of demand, credibility of rewards), while other factors are more related to the characteristics of a domestic setting (e.g. strength of institutional legacies, density of veto players, identity etc.).

When it comes to Europeanization in the area of higher education, the specificity lies firstly, as discussed above, in the relatively weaker competences and capacity of European level structures involved in these initiatives compared to other public policy areas. Further specificity of Europeanization of higher education is due to the specific nature of higher education institutions, in particular their bottom-heaviness, loose-coupling, significant professional autonomy and inertia (Clark, 1983; Musselin, 2005; Weick, 1976). On the basis of this, Vukasović (unpublished paper) developed a set of expectations about Europeanization of higher education on macro (system) and meso (organizational/university) level, which are summarized in Table 3. As illustrated on the case of Europeanization of quality assurance in higher education (ibid.), the theoretical perspectives on Europeanization in general seem to provide a framework useful for accounting for the diversity of national responses to these European initiatives.

The expectations, as presented in Table 3, refer to a set of factors related to European rules (clarity, legitimacy etc.) and a set of factors related to the domestic polity, policy and politics. Thus, they may provide a possible explanation of both the diversity of Europeanization outcomes in the same aspects of higher education but between higher education systems (as was already noted in other public policy areas in the WB, see Anastasakis (2005)), as well as diversity of Europeanization outcomes within the one single system but in terms of different aspects of higher education. Given the extent of similarities and differences between WB countries as well as similarities and differences of WB countries compared to other post-Communist countries or EU-15 countries, research on higher education in the WBC may provide an empirical base for a finer testing of these Europeanization expectations (an issue that will be further addressed in Part Five).

Table 3 – General expectations about Europeanization of higher education systems and institutions (Vukasović, unpublished paper)

External incentives perspective (Logic of consequence) More Europeanization is expected in:	Social learning perspective (Logic of appropriateness) More Europeanization is expected in:
▪ Areas of higher education where adaptation at the grass-root level is not required, due to less information asymmetry in favour of the entity. ▪ Aspects of higher education in which clearer European rules exist. ▪ Areas of higher education where additional funding from eu is explicitly or implicitly connected to a set	▪ Areas of higher education where the European rules have been developed through a process that is seen as legitimate by actors relevant for adaptation. ▪ Areas where European rules resonate more with existing rules at the macro or meso level. ▪ Areas of higher education policy, systems and

of European rules.	institutions in which actors relevant for adaptation can more easily identify themselves and their own preferences with European rules.
• Higher education systems and institutions which are, due to domestic circumstances, in more need of such additional funding.	
• Areas where particular actors (in most cases academic staff) cannot act as veto players and where they would not incur significant adoption costs.	• Systems or universities in which actors relevant for adaptation have been participating in European (or other transnational) epistemic communities or issue networks, e.g. Joint projects, thematic networks in higher education, European stakeholder organisations (EUA, ESU, EURASHE, EI, ENQA) etc.
• Systems or universities that do have a high administrative capacity necessary to adapt to more technical and complex European rules.	
• Areas of higher education which are not marked by strong institutional legacies, i.e. in which existing rules are not taken for granted.	• Previously more internationalised systems (macro) or universities (meso), and/or in areas of higher education where participation of international experts or reference to foreign solutions existed prior to the Bologna Process or the Lisbon Strategy.

However, the expectations about Europeanization presented in Table 3 need to be complemented by a discussion on the nature of Europeanization outcomes, i.e. the expectations of more Europeanization need to be conceptualized and operationalized more clearly. In this respect, the more general Europeanization literature identifies four possible outcomes of Europeanization: (1) inertia, (2) absorption, (3) accommodation and (4) transformation (Börzel & Risse, 2000). Inertia implies lack of change, at least in the short-term perspective, through lags in implementation or simple resistance to induced change. However, in the mid- to long-term perspective, inertia may prove to be impossible to sustain and can eventually result in transformation, which highlights the connection between identification of outcomes of change and choice of time period to be observed. Absorption implies low degree of change, i.e. superficial incorporation of European policies and ideas into the organisational arena, with no change of domestic structures, process and policies. Accommodation implies a medium degree of change, where policies, institutions, structures and processes will go through an adaptation process, but their key characteristics and underlying rationale will not be changed. Finally, transformation implies a so-called third degree of change (as identified by Hall (1993)), where existing institutions are replaced by substantially new ones and the underlying rationale, norms, values and belief systems are changed as well. Absorption, accommodation and transformation essentially lead to the system of the higher education institution becoming more European, although to different extents. In some cases, it is also possible that the European adaptational pressures will induce retrenchment or defiance (Oliver, 1991). Although the current state of research on higher education in the WBC does not allow for a clear assessment of the extent of change through Europeanization, it is nevertheless important to keep in mind this distinction for further studies.

Furthermore, it is necessary to clarify what are the outcomes of Europeanization one focuses on, or in other terms, what effects of European integration one sees with respect to national level policies on higher education and research. This can be analysed in terms of focusing on effects on policy (and policy instruments) and focusing on politics and polity, following Falkner (2003). Although they do constitute Europeanization in terms of institutionalization of formal rules developed on the European level, changes in policy instruments, in particular in terms of "laying down the law", "revisions of national legal frameworks" as response to the Bologna Process and "legal side effects" of participation in EU programmes (Gornitzka, Maassen, Olsen, & Stensaker, 2007, p. 200) need to be seen primarily as outputs of a policy process on the national level. As such, it would be misleading to see such developments as simple outcomes of Europeanization or impact of European integration, since in order to do so one essentially needs to analyse implementation of said instruments down to the micro level in higher education and provide solid causal mechanisms that link identified outcomes with adoption of new legislation. This would also fit the call for more in depth analysis of higher education change dynamics, focusing on structures as well as cultures, rhetoric as well as performance (Gornitzka et al., 2007). As will be presented in Part Four, such studies are unfortunately lacking, in particular for the WBC.

This also draws the attention to instances of re-nationalization of European policy preferences. As was indicated earlier in the presentation of possible outcomes, Europeanization does not necessarily amount to simple substitution of old (domestic) rules by new (European) ones. The formal and informal rules being downloaded from the European level are open for different interpretations by different actors and significant translation and layering is possible in the course of their institutionalization. This also leaves room for re-nationalization, the situation in which national actors take the opportunity to promote their particular policy preferences under the European umbrella, and room for a variety of unintended effects, the latter being quite common in any policy implementation process (Gornitzka, 2006; Musselin, 2009). Therefore, a situation in which European integration processes in higher education and research largely coincide with the (delayed) beginning of political and economic transition in the WBC is opening up a possibility to explore processes of re-nationalization in more depth. On the one hand, this is a context where prior institutional legacies are weakened and strong European preferences exist (see Part 2 and 4), therefore leading to an expectation of less re-nationalization. On the other hand, it is also a context where the scope and depth of necessary reform is wider than said European preferences and where system level policy actors may seek to boost legitimacy of their policy preferences by linking them to a European process, therefore leading to an expectation of more re-nationalization.

Taking all of this into account and given such range of possibilities of Europeanization outcomes it comes as no surprise that what can be identified is piecemeal convergence[41] and persistent diversity in some aspects of higher education, including in the WBC (Westerheijden et al., 2010; Witte, 2009). Piecemeal

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[41] See 3.d for further discussion of the concept of policy convergence.

convergence (sometimes labelled as "patchwork Europeanization") was also identified in other public sectors (Cowles, Caporaso, & Risse, 2001), including those in which the EU has stronger competences.

Finally, as was acknowledged in more general Europeanization literature (Vachudová, 2005) as well as in studies focusing on higher education (Pabian, 2009), a temporal dimension is important given that mechanisms of Europeanization may play out differently in different stages of the post-communist European integration process. Thus, it can be expected that what comes first is *transitological Europeanization*, marked with the already mentioned idea of "return to Europe" (Héritier, 2005) where isomorphisms between domestic and European preferences appear due to normative pressures or, in other words, where Europeanization follows the logic of appropriateness. This is expected to be followed by *accession Europeanization* where the focus is on access to resources and EU requirements for accession, therefore implying coercive isomorphism and actors following the logic of consequence. Although requirements linked to the Bologna Process and the EU's Lisbon Strategy are not as strong as in the areas that are the core of the *acquis*, as was discussed earlier, there are consequences of non-compliance, at least in the naming and shaming practice introduced through e.g. Bologna Stocktaking Reports. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated in Part Four, it is also important to focus on perceived consequences of non-compliance and not only on the real adaptation pressures (Trondal, 2002). Finally, once a country becomes a member, the *membership Europeanization* stage beings, in which the focus is on sustainability of Europeanization effects. In this stage, the country's possibility for uploading of policy preferences also becomes possible therefore diluting a bit the top-down character of Europeanization and leading more to a situation in which mutual transformation of the European and national level exists. Studying potential Europeanization of higher education systems in the WBC essentially allows for studying both the transitological and accession Europeanization (and testing the expectation of the sequence between them). By inclusion of Slovenia in the sample or by extension of the research timeframe some more years in the future (e.g. sufficiently after Croatia becomes a member), would also allow for studying membership Europeanization.

Policy transfer and horizontal policy convergence – providing a map for developments in WBC?

The previous two sections focused largely on the relationship between European and national level policy developments. However, external influences on policy development in a particular higher education system are not necessarily due to pressures from a higher governance level, but can also happen through policy transfer and may result in horizontal policy convergence.

Policy transfer, although sometimes considered to be yet another form of Europeanization (see e.g. lesson-drawing model of Europeanization in Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005)) is here treated separately, in order to avoid stretching of the concept of Europeanization and to provide consistency with the definition of Europeanization presented earlier in the report. Policy transfer is therefore understood as "a process whereby knowledge about policies, administrative arrangement, institutions, ideas and so on are used across time and/or space in the development of policies, institutions, and so on

elsewhere" (Bomberg & Peterson, 2000, p. 10), but without necessarily linking this to a particular formal structure. As such, policy transfer is usually a voluntary process, although it should be noted that usage of OMC-like mechanisms and shaming and blaming practices adds a coercive dimension. It should largely be seen as an intentional activity in which various policy entrepreneurs, which may or may not be part of governmental structures, interact through epistemic communities or supranational organizations (ibid.). Given this, a policy transfer perspective shares some facilitating factors with Europeanization perspectives.

Further similarity with Europeanization perspectives lies in the necessity to make a distinction between (a) simple copying that can go as far as copying wording in the legislation, (b) emulation in terms of accepting particular solutions as the best practice but formulating in own words, (c) synthesis and hybridization which involves combining solutions from several different countries to develop a solution deemed to be best suited for domestic needs and (d) using policy developments in other countries as source of inspiration for domestic developments (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). Same authors also advocate for a finer understanding of the object of policy transfer and distinguish between six objects: (1) policy goals, structure and content, (2) policy instruments and administrative techniques, (3) institutions, (4) ideology, (5) ideas, attitudes and concepts and (6) negative lessons.

Following Heinze and Knill (2008), policy convergence in terms of national policies becoming similar to each other without reference to a particular model is labelled *sigma convergence* (i.e. what has so far been referred to here as horizontal convergence). As opposed to this, if a European model is present, one should refer to *delta convergence* (or vertical convergence). Given the definition used in this report, Europeanization of higher education is a case of delta convergence and Heinze and Knill's hypotheses related to delta policy convergence (ibid.) largely reflect the elements of the two theoretical perspectives on Europeanization presented in Table 3. With respect to horizontal policy convergence, in developing a set of six hypotheses, Heinze and Knill focused on similarity of languages, similarity of university cultures, prior similarity of higher education policies, similarity of governmental policy preference, similarity of problem pressures and similarity of socio-economic structures in accounting for more horizontal policy convergence. The hypotheses of what drives horizontal policy convergence have been supported by empirical analysis of national policy developments in countries other than WBC (Voegtle, Knill, & Dobbins, 2011), including some post-Communist countries (Dobbins & Knill, 2009). Heinze and Knill (2008) do not see the Bologna Process as promoting a model for higher education policy development, but as a "transnational communication platform", in line with the claim that the "Bologna Process did not introduce the policies it promotes, rather it bundles policies perceived as best practices and structures their discussion and implementation efforts for European countries" (Voegtle et al., 2011, p. 83). However, the choice to use in this review the Bologna Process as a formal structure promoting a set of informal and formal rules (see definition of Europeanization in part 3.c) was largely informed by the perception of the process by the WB countries (discussed in Part Two and Part Four) as well as the lack of possibilities for WB countries to influence the process of "bundling policies" (see discussion in Part 3.b).

Here, and in connection to previous sections in Part Three, it should be noted that Heinze and Knill (2008) do allow for both vertical and horizontal policy convergence under the Bologna umbrella – vertical in areas in which Bologna explicitly promotes particular solutions (e.g. use of ECTS, participation of students or international experts in quality assurance procedures) and horizontal in areas in which Bologna does not promote particular solutions (e.g. funding, academic staff working conditions etc.). Therefore, studying policy developments in the countries that are the focus of this report, in particular in a comparative longitudinal perspective, would provide grounds for exploring these hypotheses. However, it should be noted that the context of the study would not allow for evaluation of the impact of the Bologna Process as a communication platform, or rather, if the focus is only on the WBC, it would not be possible to assess whether identified horizontal policy convergence would be possible if there was no Bologna, since changes in the higher education policies in the WBC coincided with and are strongly embedded in the Bologna Process.

As will be demonstrated in Part Four of this report, studies using explicitly a policy convergence framework are lacking for the WBC, although even a superficial consideration of the factors used by Heinze and Knill (2008) – similarity of languages, university cultures, higher education policies, problem pressures and socio-economic structures – contributes towards an expectation of significant policy convergence in the WBC. Given that WB countries that once belonged to SFRY also exhibit an additional similarity (being once a part of a federal system), studies of potential policy convergence in higher education policy between ex-SFRY countries could potentially also allow for testing of the relative importance of a federal structure on higher education policy convergence.

Changes of higher education in the WB countries

As was previously indicated, studies of higher education policy change in the WBC are comparatively scarce, in particular those available in the English language and including an explicit theoretical or conceptual framework. This part of the report provides a review of various texts focusing on national policy developments in the WBC published in scholarly journals, books or as master and PhD theses. The review focuses on main findings and, where stated, indicating main theoretical approaches and exploring links with the literature discussion in Part Three. It is organised by levels: first focusing on system (macro) level changes, then on institutional (meso) level and then on unit or department (micro) level.

System – macro level studies

There is a small number of studies on higher education changes in the region that employ a clearly comparative perspective. Most of them have been produced rather recently and have been clearly

connected to the Centre for Education Policy from Belgrade[42]. Two of these studies focused on teacher education and reforms of higher education study programmes for teachers. The first study (Pantić, 2008) analysed perceptions of importance of various teacher competences, by directly borrowing the methodology of the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project. As a follow up, although the primary topic was teacher education for inclusive education, based on seven country reports Pantić et al. (2010) also discuss challenges in reshaping pre-service teacher education, in particular with respect to implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Another study, focusing on financing of higher education (Vukasović, 2009), provided both a comparative overview of developments in this area in Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia[43], as well as a case study of implications of unchanged financial arrangements originating back to the early 90s existing in the context where a new "Bologna" legislation was adopted in Serbia. Finally, the latest study focuses on Croatia and Serbia[44], and using principal-agent framework, amongst other maps changes in research policies which seem to reflect countries' position towards the European Research Area and efforts to further accession to the EU also through research policy (Branković & Šabić, 2011).

Apart from this, there are studies focusing on some common challenges for higher education in the WBC, such as corruption (Heyneman, Anderson, & Nuraliyeva, 2008) and brain drain, the first comparing Croatia and Serbia, and the latter not explicitly comparative, but including cases from Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia (Nikolovska, 2004; Pifat-Mrzljak, Juroš, & Vizek-Vidović, 2004; Zindović-Vukadinović, 2004). Neither focuses on European integration in or Europeanization of higher education and research, but both highlight legislative changes that took place in the 2000s, particularly in reference to Bologna. In addition, they also discuss implications of brain drain and corruption for implementation of reforms, testifying to some extent to the importance of administrative capacity and potential of epistemic communities for changes in higher education (see Part Three, in particular section 3.c.).

The linkages between higher education reforms and overall political transformation are particularly highlighted by Kozma (2008) who maps legislative changes in two WB countries (Croatia and Serbia), claiming that the temporal sorting of the Bologna Process and political transformation provide an opportunity for and do seem to lead to re-nationalization of European pressures (cf. Part Three, in particular references to Gornitzka (2006) and Musselin (2009) in 3.c.). He also explores the relationship between regional and European integration, given that in the first two stages of political transformation

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[42] This number is likely to increase soon, given that the Center for Education Policy Studies from Ljubljana coordinates an ESF-EUROHESC funded project on diversity, equity and productivity (the so-called DEP project) in which responses to internationalization of higher education are also in focus. For more information see: http://www.pef.uni-lj.si/ceps/projekti/dep/dep_e.htm (page accessed 15 April 2012).

[43] Slovenia, within the framework of this report considered not to be WBC, was also included.

[44] See previous footnote.

– the so-called "breaking away" and "becoming independent" stages – these two integration processes clash and compete, while in the third stage – "new political integration" – they are essentially seen to complement each other, as hinted already in 2001 (Marga, 2001)[45]. As more and more countries move towards the third stage, regional initiatives such as the aforementioned Novi Sad initiative seem to become possible, also increasing opportunities for policy transfer, not only through epistemic communities clearly linked to EU, but also through other programmes such as CEEPUS[46] (Messmann & Barrows, 2001).

When it comes to studies focusing on individual countries, Nelaj (2009) focuses on policy and practice of higher education governance in <u>Albania</u> by conducting a comparative analysis of three universities as well as an analysis of system level changes. He highlights differences with respect to implementation of new higher education legislation (developed with reference to the Bologna Process), testifying also to the lack of clarity of demand (in this case of national reforms inspired by the European processes) as well as strength of institutional legacies. Mehmeti (2006) studied the challenges in implementing students and staff mobility in Albanian universities, in particular in terms of limited development of policy instruments (such as legislation and funding). Furthermore, implications of the new approach to mobility – organised mobility through EU programmes – on changes in higher education are also discussed, in particular in terms of the (expected) effects increased mobility can have on curriculum development and university management. Changes in higher education, or rather the links between transition and massification and related implications for funding of higher education in Albania are also explored in a study by Pere and Minxhozi (2011), and although without a clear reference to European integration or Europeanization, the study does indicate some ambitions in terms of policy transfer from Western Europe. However, it does not go beyond mere descriptions of funding systems, i.e. possible challenges in copying ready-made policy solutions from other different contexts are not discussed in detail. The study is therefore somewhat normative, similar to another study focusing on academic staff (Spiro, 2003). Spiro clearly states that the implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Albania is seen as part and parcel of European accession processes but also links the Bologna Process and European integration to wider processes of globalization.

One of the few system level studies of higher education in <u>Bosnia and Herzegovina</u> (Tiplić & Welle-Strand, 2006) is particularly interesting for the whole region as well since it sees Bosnia as "miniature Balkans" highlighting its internal diversity and significant fragmentation of higher education governance, but focusing also on the externally imposed reforms, pushed forwards in Bosnia largely by various international agencies, including the Council of Europe. Similar challenges of fragmentation are also identified by Temple (2002, p. 22) in what he calls a "governance oxymoron" or the existence of "centralized decentralization". Thus, changes of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina are seen to

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[45] C.f. section 3.c. and three Europeanization stages by Pabian (2009).

[46] http://www.ceepus.info/ (page accessed 9 April 2012)

be primarily influenced externally by the Bologna Process and globalization and internally by the multi-ethnicity (Jurin, 2003), the latter essentially leading to the aforementioned fragmentation.

Changes in <u>Croatian</u> higher education system are covered through two studies focusing on (a) EU's passive leverage (or the attraction of the prospects of EU membership, see Mohoric (2011)) or (b) imposition of market perspective on higher education and discursive and practical reconfiguration or Croatian higher education in light of the Bologna Process (Doolan, 2011). What is common for both of these studies are the claims (a) that higher education reforms in line with the Bologna Declaration are seen as part of EU accession processes, are promoted even if they have "potential to provoke negative externalities and occasionally even harm ... intended beneficiaries due to the lack of adequate capacities" (Mohorić, 2011, p. i) and (b) that the processes are characterized by re-nationalization. The scope of changes expected to be implemented as part of the Bologna Process and the difficulties in implementation of many of these changes are also highlighted by Orosz (2008), whose analysis, though not explicitly, includes some elements of Europeanization models discussed in Part Three, namely importance of administrative capacity, rewards, epistemic communities and legitimacy of demand. However, it also acknowledges that some reform ideas were present in the Croatian policy arena even before the Bologna Process (implementation of credits and introduction of quality assurance mechanisms). Given that these changes could have reflected the anticipation of Croatian higher education policy makers of inclusion in the EU's Erasmus Programme, it can still fall under the label of Europeanization. Moreover, given that none of these initiatives were implemented due to lack of capacity, the lack of change (or rather the lack of Europeanization) fits well with the Europeanization expectations presented earlier. Finally, in the guise of a scholarly study (given that it was published by a peer reviewed journal), Currie et al. (2005) present "an action plan" for quality assurance of higher education in Croatia, essentially promoting policy transfer, again with rather limited analysis of the challenges of such a process. Similar to other authors who are involved more in promoting a particular reform template than in rigorous analysis of development and implementation of policy, they also see the Bologna Process as a necessary lever to push forward domestic reforms (cf. re-nationalization), therefore also indicating that some changes promoted (and implemented?) in Croatia clearly fall outside of the Bologna Process.

The only study, as far as the author is aware, that focuses on higher education in <u>Kosovo</u> (Bache & Taylor, 2003) dates back to the early 2000s and is essentially a scholarly reflection on policy transfer and policy diffusion in a situation of asymmetric interdependences written by those who were directly involved in discussions of higher education policy in Kosovo. The study highlights various aspects of policy resistance and draws attention to the existence of the so-called "hidden transcripts", practice in which the dominated party, in this case various domestic actors in the Kosovo higher education policy arena, "sells" different stories to different international audiences, therefore decreasing or buffering the pressure to reform by delaying changes. The study therefore does resonate with Europeanization perspectives since it also includes references to institutional legacies, veto players, epistemic communities, importance of resources, clarity of demand etc., but also links the lack of implementation of "externally imposed" practices to the fact that the previous system was also oppressive and that the

local actors have learned how to "sabotage" such pressures. In contrast to Pabian (2009), the study claims that in the first stage of policy transfer the process is coercive, while only later it becomes more voluntaristic.

The use of Bologna as the "guiding principle" (Stojanov & Angeloska-Galevska, 2006, p. 52) for changing higher education legislation and accreditation standards is also present in Macedonia, as well as the situation in which "governmental and institutional actors have viewed the Bologna Declaration in the context of European integration and EU membership" (ibid, p. 50-51). The study highlights that the perception of Bologna within the national policy area shifted in time from threat to an "an excellent opportunity for pushing national reform projects" (p. 51), but also identifies problems in implementation due to strong institutional legacies, lack of administrative infrastructure and capacity, and information asymmetry due to bottom-heaviness of higher education institutions. Changes in Macedonian higher education inspired by the Bologna Process are also reflected in the changes in the relationship between the state and the universities in a study by Petkovska (2011), which claims that there is a significant mismatch between formal and operational autonomy. This mismatch is primarily evident between what is foreseen through legislation and what universities seem to be able to do, but the study also claims that more convergence towards European trends (understood in the study to be an increase in both formal and operational autonomy) is expected.

When it comes to Serbia, a recent study focused on power, politics and discourse in higher education reforms, highlighting lack of uniformity and existence of contestation with respect to reforms as well as higher education policy vulnerability to or embeddedness in more general political struggles (Baćević, 2008, 2010). This potentially provides the motivation for looking into the legitimacy of reform processes, changes in opportunity structures and actors' preferences and behaviour, in particular those actors that can act as veto players. Decision-making is also in the focus of a study on the development of the Law on higher education from 2005 (Branković, 2010), focusing on the preferences of and the relationship between the main actors in the process (governmental, university and student representatives), looking into the logics of their actions, as well as exploring external factors affecting their behaviour. The study highlights that national context is important, since it provides evidence for a lesser influence of external processes than can be initially assumed from simple observation of European pressures and position of the country with respect to European structures. In a similar vein, Čučković (2006b) focuses on individual actors in change processes. She in particular highlights the importance of student organizations in shaping the reform of higher education and, even though not explicitly, provides data on the link between rise of the student participation principle in the Bologna Process and use of this by the student organizations in Serbia to strengthen their position in the national policy arena. The same author also conducted a small comparative study of Serbia and a non-WBC post-Communist country (Lithuania), analyzing implications of the Bologna Process for both systems of higher education (Čučković, 2005). The main conclusions were that Lithuania was better prepared for Bologna, since it started to reform its higher education already in the early 90s (at the start of its own political and economic transition), while Serbia is still seen to be on "the periphery of the European movement to reform higher education" (ibid, p. 71). The study also reiterated the "catching up with the moving

target" perspective and vulnerability of reform process to political changes, highlighting the advantage of Lithuania due to its position towards the EU. Finally, complexities of changes in governance arrangements as well as what happens when the processes of political and economic transition coincide with an increasing focus on quality assurance and with European initiatives in the area of higher education is the focus of a case study of introduction of accreditation of higher education institutions in programmes in Serbia by Lažetić (2009). The study traces the causes for developments in Serbia to, on the one hand, the influence of the Bologna Process, and, on the other hand, more internal logic of the system linked with the growth of private higher education sector in Serbia after 2000.

Institutional – meso level studies

The number of studies focusing on higher education institutions, either comparative or single case study, is even smaller than number of studies focusing on national policy developments. One such comparative study focuses changes in 9 universities in the WBC (Miclea, 2003): University of Banja Luka, University of Montenegro, University of Niš, University of Novi Sad, University of Prishtina, University of Skopje, University of Split, University of Tirana and University of Zagreb. It describes challenges facing these universities at the beginning of the Bologna implementation, in particular with respect to curriculum development, introduction of ECTS and internationalization. Although it does not go deeper in analytical terms, the study is useful since it provides a snapshot of the situation in these universities in 2003.

Similar to the special issue of Higher Education in Europe on brain drain (see previous subsection), there was also a special issue focusing on entrepreneurship and including examples from Croatia and Serbia (Stanković, 2006; Turajlić, 2006; Vidović & Bjeliš, 2006). Although the focus is not on Europeanization of higher education and research, some of the changes in the universities are discussed as part of the Bologna package, even including observations that it was a "welcome[d] coincidence" that the Bologna Process was pushing for reforms at the same time that the reforms of a university in Serbia were "necessary anyway" (Stanković, 2006, p. 118). A similar largely descriptive approach is evident in accounts of introduction of quality assurance procedures in two Serbian universities - Novi Sad and Niš – and, again, while not providing analytical observations, they do provide useful information necessary for the mapping of the process of change (Milenković, 2003; Stanković, 2003).

While, as previously said, most of the studies on changes on the institutional level are atheoretical, a number of master or doctoral theses recently completed do include explicit analytical frameworks. Tiplić (2008), for example, in a comparative study of University of Sarajevo and University of Tuzla, focuses on managing organizational change in situations of institutional upheaval, reflecting deep political, social, economic and cultural change. Although other WB countries may not have not experienced institutional

upheaval to the same extent[47], the concept as such and the relevance of European initiatives in the ensuing institutional vacuum (or extremely weak institutional legacies and low legitimacy of existing institutions) may provide a useful framework for analysing changes in universities in other WB countries. Another study focusing on the University of Tuzla (Faginović, 2005), studies how the university balances its roles in different social contexts (local, national, European and global), especially given that the local and national context in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina is further complicated by the aforementioned diversity and fragmentation. The strong focus on European processes in higher education policy development is evident also in this study, given the claim that a "country such as BiH[48], characterised by a low level of economic development, must take the road towards European integration" (ibid, p. 85).

Issues of governance and role of leadership in organisational change are also in the focus of a case study of the University of Arts in Serbia which is, comparatively speaking, one of the smallest universities in the region (Čučković, 2006a). The study focuses on how changes in the university and the actors' understanding of the role and function of university are framed in terms of structural, political, human resource and symbolic aspects. The fragmentation of the university as an organization (an already mentioned specificity of higher education institutions in the region, in particular former Yugoslavia) is apparent in this case as well.

The issue of fragmentation, or rather disintegration is part of a case study on disciplinary differences with respect to entrepreneurialism at the University of Novi Sad (Šabić, 2009), highlighting that while the initial status of faculties as independent legal entities was introduced by the government in the 70s in the former Yugoslavia, it was the basic differences between disciplinary cultures, and implications of these differences on organization of departments and faculties, that contributed to further disintegration. Finally, a study on the responses of vocational higher education institutions to accreditation pressures (largely introduced as part and parcel of the Bologna reforms in Serbia) was the focus of another master thesis by Maric (2008). In this study, Maric highlighted the need for increased transparency as well as fine-tuning of accreditation standards in order to boost legitimacy of the entire accreditation process and facilitate the strengthening of an authentic quality culture within higher education institutions.

Department – micro level studies

In the course of reviewing literature for this report, only two studies focusing on changes on the departmental level were found, both in essence being more reflections of concerned or motivated practitioners, than full scale studies employing a solid analytical framework and a robust empirical base.

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[47] Even though there are arguments that the fall of Communism and the ensuing transition is, per definition, a situation of institutional upheaval (Newman, 2000).

[48] Often used abbreviation for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One of them focuses on response of sociology as a disciplinary community to the Bologna Process in Croatia (Tomić-Koludrović, 2008) and highlights that, while there are challenges with respect to the implementation of Bologna, including a rather general dilemma on how to conform to strict national guidelines with respect to curricular reform while promoting critical thinking in the said curricula, it should not be neglected that the Bologna can also be useful in revealing some deficiencies of the discipline (both in education and research terms). The other is a rather informative micro-case description focusing on introduction of student centred learning and peer assessment in a small number of subjects in one faculty of the University of Belgrade (Quarrie, 2007). Again, the study lacks a clear analytical character, but is a useful account on how change unfolds at the grass root level and what the importance of individual actors and their immersion in a particular epistemic community is in order for change to take place.

As was demonstrated above, the scholarly literature on changes of higher education systems and institutions is largely atheoretical in nature. However, there is one additional similarity – all studies, descriptive and analytical alike – place clearly their accounts in the context of reforms motivated by more general societal transformation and the idea of "returning to Europe" (Héritier, 2005) and by more specific European initiatives in higher education. Therefore, following Tomusk's (2008) view that the Bologna Process (and the European integration process more generally) is essentially promoting a centre-periphery dynamic in which WBC is the periphery continuously trying to catch up, it should be stated that such dynamics is reproduced (or even enforced) by "insider accomplices" – national and institutional decision-makers, as well as stakeholder representatives and interest groups.

Research challenges

As this report demonstrates, the WB countries are primarily similar in terms of the embeddedness of higher education policy development in European processes, such as the Bologna Process and EU's Lisbon Agenda. Further similarities, though to a lesser extent, include some commonalities with respect to Communist heritage, with a clear distinction between Albania and the countries that were part of the former Yugoslavia. In addition, as was indicated in Part Two, the countries are also somewhat different with respect to the size of their higher education systems (number of students and institutions), participation rate (expressed as GER) as well as investment into higher education and research capacity.

Maassen (2009) identified the so-called "double-isolatedness" of higher education research in the context of European integration processes: (1) isolation from more general integration processes and (2) isolation from theoretical insights from more traditional social sciences. In the case of the Western Balkan countries, lack of scholarly attention to higher education further hampers understanding of higher education dynamics and understanding of implications of the aforementioned similarities and differences between the countries for higher education policy and organizational change. This is even more problematic given that the WB countries offer an almost quasi-experimental setting for studying the mechanisms and scope of Europeanization of higher education systems and institutions (i.e.

downloading processes or vertical policy convergence). The quasi-experimental setting exists due to the differences in the position of countries towards the EU as well as very limited participation in European policy processes, providing a setting that is rather clean from the "noise" that processes of uploading policy preferences may introduce to causal mechanisms of Europeanization. Furthermore, some similarities between the countries may facilitate policy transfer – historical background, similarity of languages, socio-economic situation etc.; while some differences may impede it – political conflicts, some of which are still rather significant, differences in starting positions for higher education changes as well as differences in position towards the EU. That said, the WB countries also provide interesting cases for studying policy transfer and horizontal policy convergence, which is, so far, a neglected research topic.

Thus, one of the research challenges is related to the significant lack of qualitative and quantitative data. Compared to more consolidated democracies, the system level policy processes as well as organizational change processes are rather underdocumented, implying a strong dependence of higher education research on personal accounts of these processes by various actors involved. Few studies already conducted on higher education in the WB countries do hint towards the importance of historical circumstances and path dependencies, which further raises the urgency of mapping some of the more interesting system and institutional level processes through combining document analysis and interviews with decision-makers, change actors and, potentially, also those opposing changes.

Related to this, the additional challenge is to provide a solid basis for further higher education research by first addressing some of the core themes for higher education research. These may include, in particular in the context of this project:

On the system/macro level:

- Change in governance arrangements, in particular the potential link with the diffusion of NPM (New Public Management), commercialization of higher education, market steering mechanisms, focus on quality assurance and accountability etc. These processes have been extensively studied in other contexts, and insights from the WB countries may contribute both empirically (by adding data from a poorly studied region) and theoretically, given the specificities of the contexts discussed in Part Two;
- Nature of decision-making process, in particular use of models from abroad, given the strong embeddedness of higher education in European integration processes and the weakness (or decreased legitimacy) of previous institutional arrangements, the latter in some cases bordering on situations of institutional upheaval. This also implies that further decision-making process go in parallel with changes in actors' constellations and preferences;
- Changes in the basic characteristics of higher education systems, for example the relationship between the public and private sector or between the academic and vocational sector, policy responses to massification of higher education etc.

On the institutional/meso level:

- Organizational change process, in particular in terms of responses to environmental pressures (coming from either the European or national/system level) and in terms of institutional strategic development, as well as internal decision-making processes and (changes in) institutional actors' constellations;
- Interpretation and enforcement of the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, and, if necessary, changes in said interpretation and enforcement;
- Tensions between tendencies for integration and tendencies (and current state) of fragmentation of higher education institutions.

A further challenge facing higher education research in the WB countries is, to some extent, also an advantage. Researchers of higher education in the region should strive to benefit from being, relatively speaking, late comers into higher education research and avoid the afore-mentioned double-isolatedness. This would imply that future studies of higher education in the WBC should employ clearer and more explicit analytical/conceptual frameworks and try to link the theoretical perspectives employed to studies on the region to the theoretical perspectives used for studying higher education in other parts of Europe and worldwide. On the one hand, this would also necessitate pooling of research capacity, since this report (and more generally the project as such) indicate that some research capacity exists, though rather fragmented between countries, universities, research centres and disciplines.

Finally, the response to the previous challenge is linked to the final research challenge. As said previously, the WB countries are in some aspects rather similar and in some other aspects rather different. Therefore, striking a right balance between focusing on similarities and differences within the WBC and similarities and differences of WBC (both as a region and individually) with other countries is essential. This balance has a double importance. First of all, without adequate treatment of said similarities and differences, WB higher education studies would not be able to contribute in theoretical terms to the more general higher education research. Secondly, understating or overstating these similarities and differences would also weaken the understanding of higher education systems and institutions in the region and therefore potentially lead astray higher education policy development.

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Appendix 1 – Internet sources on higher education in the WBC

1. "European Integration of Higher Education and Research in the Western Balkans" project: www.herdata.org

2. South East European Educational Cooperation Network: www.see-educoop.net

3. Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe: http://www.erisee.org/

4. Novi Sad Initiative: www.nsinitiative.uns.ac.rs

5. Centre for Education Policy (CEP), Belgrade, Serbia: http://www.cep.edu.rs/en

6. Centre for Education Policy Studies (CEPS), Ljubljana, Slovenia: http://ceps.pef.uni-lj.si/eng.htm

7. Institute for the Development of Education (IRO), Zagreb, Croatia: http://www.iro.hr/en/

8. Centre for Educational Research and Development, Institute for Social Research (CERD/IDIZ), Zagreb, Croatia: www.idi.hr/cerd/

9. Universitas – Association for Higher Education Development, Rijeka, Croatia: http://www.universitas.hr/

Appendix 2 – Number of hits in Web of Science's SSCI and A&HCI data bases

Note: not all of the hits were strictly related to higher education (despite the use of keywords) and many hits were to publications not written in English. This may indicate problems with allocation of keywords as well as differences between the countries in terms of indexing of national journals in international data bases (compare for example number of hits for Croatia and Serbia).

Key words combinations	Number of hits
Higher education AND Balkan	7
Universit* AND Balkan	21
Academi* AND Balkan	10
Higher education AND South East* Europe	16
Universit* AND South East* Europe	14
Academi* AND South East* Europe	12
Either of the three[49] AND Albania	41
Either of the three AND Bosnia and Herzegovina	86
Either of the three AND Croatia	404
Either of the three AND Kosov*	40
Either of the three AND Macedonia[50]	67
Either of the three AND Montenegro	9
Either of the three AND Serbia	97

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[49] "Higher education", "universit*" or "academi*"
[50] Some hits were actually for Greece