

NEWS YEPPER



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By Ivan Ćubela

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Between the EU Future and Internal Relations

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Editorial

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Between the EU Future and Internal Relations

Discussing Bosnia and Herzegovina and analysing the current political and institutional situation at the internal level is impossible without a solid understanding of its structure, which emerged from the Dayton Peace Agreement.

At present, Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing a serious political crisis, which is evident in the political and institutional moves of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska (RS). Attempts to unilaterally "return" jurisdiction from the state to the entity level have created an environment that poses security threats. The political representatives of the Serbs aim to restore the "original" rights provided by the Dayton Peace Agreement, has taken unilateral steps toward revision, creating an unsettling atmosphere.

In March 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina got a conditional green light from European Council to open negotiations after a series of reforms implemented by the Council of Ministers, led by Chairwoman Borjana Krišto (HDZ BiH). However, geopolitical shifts particularly the situation in Eastern Europe and the arrival of a new US administration following the US elections have significantly impacted relations within Bosnia and Herzegovina. This has been

especially evident in the conflict between the unitary political forces based in Sarajevo (Bosniak political elites) and the separatist politicians based in Banja Luka (Serb political representatives). Only Croat political representatives have remained committed to continuing EU integration, viewing it as an option to ease tensions and make essential progress in the country.

Different conceptions of state organization as the biggest post-Dayton problem

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fundamental structural reality is that it is a plural or divided society, with strong ethnic, religious, and cultural groups organized within separate political entities. In divided societies, institutional design significantly impacts the question of representativeness. The question of representativeness is crucial for fragmented societies.

The starting point for creating a constitutional arrangement within the Dayton Peace Agreement was precisely the model of consociational democracy. This confirms that the framers were aware of the key structural fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a divided society, and that the majority form of democracy (majoritarian democracy) is inadequate for such a society, especially in the post-conflict period. Among the basic consociational elements, the legalization of three segments was implemented in the form of three constituent peoples: Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. The principle of ethnic quotas in state institutions was established, along with the right to protect vital national interests, proportional representation, and consensual

decision-making. However, the principle of segmental autonomy was undermined through asymmetric federalism.

The institutional structures have established cooperation mechanisms based on the principle of ethnic proportionality and parity. The central government oversees foreign policy, customs, monetary policy, trade, and migration policy, as well as airspace and international obligations. All other competencies, such as education policy, policing, natural resources, spatial and housing policies, culture, health, social welfare, and traffic, belong to the entities.

In reality, the complicated constitutional structure, which has enabled the formation of large coalitions among all three national segments, along with numerous interventions by the High Representatives, has contributed to the constant crisis of the political system.

Constant political crises – the main obstacle to EU integration

The political crisis that is currently in force and has been going on for some time did not start suddenly or "overnight". The cause itself should be sought in the specific rela-





tionship between High Representative Christian Schimdt and Milorad Dodik, the leader of Republika Srpska. Ever since the appointment of the High Representative in 2021, Serbian representatives in the governing contested the procedure for his appointment. Over time, these relations became more complex to the extent that the High Representative of the International Community in BiH, Christian Schmidt, annulled the anti-Dayton laws recently adopted by the National Assembly of the RS and amended the Criminal Code of BiH.

After the representatives of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the Law on the non-application of the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provides that the decisions of the highest judicial instance will not be applied in the territory of the entity, and the Law which provides for the non-publication of the decisions of the High Representative in the Official Gazette of the RS, Schmidt put these laws out of the procedure, after which he announced that he had amended the Criminal Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The imposition of the provisions of the BiH Criminal Law by HR Schmidt in 2023 actually enabled the initiation of a court process against the President of the Republic of Srpska Dodik, which recently resulted in a first-instance verdict in which he was sentenced to one year in prison and a six-year ban on political activity. That was the key moment and the trigger of the political crisis that has culminated to this day.

After that, Dodik embarks on political acrobatics in the National Assembly of the RS in which he suspends the competences of state institutions and unilaterally takes over the competence. In the meantime, the Constitutional Court declared those laws unconstitutional and temporarily invalidated them.

In next, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated a new procedure for violating the constitutional order and issued a central warrant for the arrest of Dodik, the President of the RS, Radovan Visković, the Prime Minister of the RS, and Nenad Stevandić, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the RS. However, state level institutions operating within state level police agencies assessed a high security risk in the case of Dodik's apprehension, which is why the multiple crisis has continued today.

Bosniak unitarism versus Serbian separatism – a solution in federalism advocated by Croatian representatives

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no consensus among the three constituent peoples or their political representatives on whether the state should survive and how it should be regulated. Discussions about the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina increasingly emphasize the need for its reorganization, as the current political, economic, and business situation is unsustainable in the long term. Although the “West” hoped that the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement would calm social tensions, the situation has actually become much more complicated in the years since. Since the signing of the Dayton

Peace Agreement, it has become clear that the main cause of the dysfunction within society is the inability to establish the legitimacy of the state and fully support its sovereignty.

In fact, many Bosniak parties, particularly those in the “political Sarajevo,” justify their hegemonic position as the fundamental Bosnian and Herzegovinian people. They do not shy away from using legal and political power to express their fundamentalism and self-proclaimed patriotism. Bosniak nationalism, framed as a civic (one man, one vote) vision for BiH, has proven to be extremely dangerous for the survival of Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though it is ostensibly aimed at strengthening it. The best example of such a pseudo-civic narrative was demonstrated in the general elections of 2006, 2010, 2018, and 2022, where a Croat member of the Presidency was elected with Bosniak votes. The Federation of BiH functions as a single electoral unit, which allows Bosniaks, due to their larger demographic size, to elect representatives for Croats in key political bodies.

Without a doubt, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs serious political reforms, especially on the internal front. Without significant electoral reforms that guarantee equal representation and the protection of constitutive rights for all three national segments, without endangering the autonomy of national rights, Bosnia and Herzegovina will not make any meaningful progress. It will continue to be plagued by weak institutions and internal instability.

Ivan Čubela
Vice President of MHDZ BiH

Op-ed:

European military renaissance and Ukraine as part of it

The unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine and the return of Donald Trump to the White House, with his chaotic foreign and security policies, have exposed Europe's vulnerability in its security doctrine, where Washington has played a key role.

For decades, European Union member states have not spent enough on their own defence. The Russian invasion has undoubtedly led to increased defence spending in many European countries, especially Poland and the Baltic states. Nevertheless, the task of spending 2% of GDP on defence remains challenging for many countries.

Potentially, Europe has a large population and sufficient funds to continue supporting Ukraine and ensuring its own defence. Yet, to achieve a real transformation, Europe needs three key elements:

1. Budget

For decades, the European defence sector has suffered from underfunding, with many EU members opting to purchase American military products instead of investing in their own industries. However, in recent months, we have witnessed a shift.

The European Commission has proposed a plan called *Rearm Europe*, which includes five major initiatives. These proposals include suspending the EU's strict budget rules to allow member states to ramp up defence spending and creating a new instrument that provides €150 billion in loans for defence investment. In total, the plan unveils €800 billion in funding. Notably, European leaders have responded with unprecedented speed—*Rearm Europe* was presented on 3 March and endorsed just three days later, on 6 March.

One of last week's most significant developments was a deal struck by CDU leader Friedrich Merz with the SPD and Greens to create a €500 billion special fund for infrastructure projects outside of normal budgetary spending, which will also be used to boost military expenditures. This move by Germany's political leadership signals a shift in sentiment across the continent.

Another major event was French President Emmanuel Macron's proposal to initiate discussions on extending the protection of France's nuclear arsenal to its European allies—an idea that, just a year ago, would have been unimaginable.

2. Experience

Funding is crucial and marks the first step in transformation, but experience is equally important in shaping this process effectively, considering the latest developments in defence technologies and tactics. Ukraine can play a vital role in this regard.

For the past three years, Kyiv has been engaged in a new-age war, where drones and advanced software—such as AI—play a key role. Ukraine has gained significant expertise in expanding its defence industry with the support of private companies. Today, Ukrainian manufacturers can produce drones using entirely domestically sourced components at competitive prices.

Moreover, the battlefield experience of Ukrainian soldiers could be invaluable for European troops, many of whom have not fought against a peer adversary in more than half a century.





3. Willingness to Defend

Money and strategy are essential, but without the will to defend Europe and its democratic values, they mean nothing. Some Europeans, particularly those living far from Russia, may feel a false sense of security. However, this is an illusion. Russia has mastered hybrid warfare, employing cyberattacks, psychological operations, and espionage to destabilise adversaries.

EU member states should launch initiatives to elevate the prestige of military service and consider reinstating mandatory conscription to address the issue of manpower shortages in European armies.

Additionally, to ensure an efficient rearmament process, the EU should abolish the right of veto, which often hampers decision-making during crises. Some countries exploit their veto power to benefit Russia or its oligarchs. Eliminating this obstacle is particularly crucial for accelerating the EU enlargement process, as certain nations use it to advance historical grievances or self-interest, rather than prioritising a pragmatic approach to integration.

By Dinara Habibullaieva,
SM President and

Ostap Denysenko,
SM Member

Past Events

New Episode Alert! The YEPP Show – Episode 2 is Here!

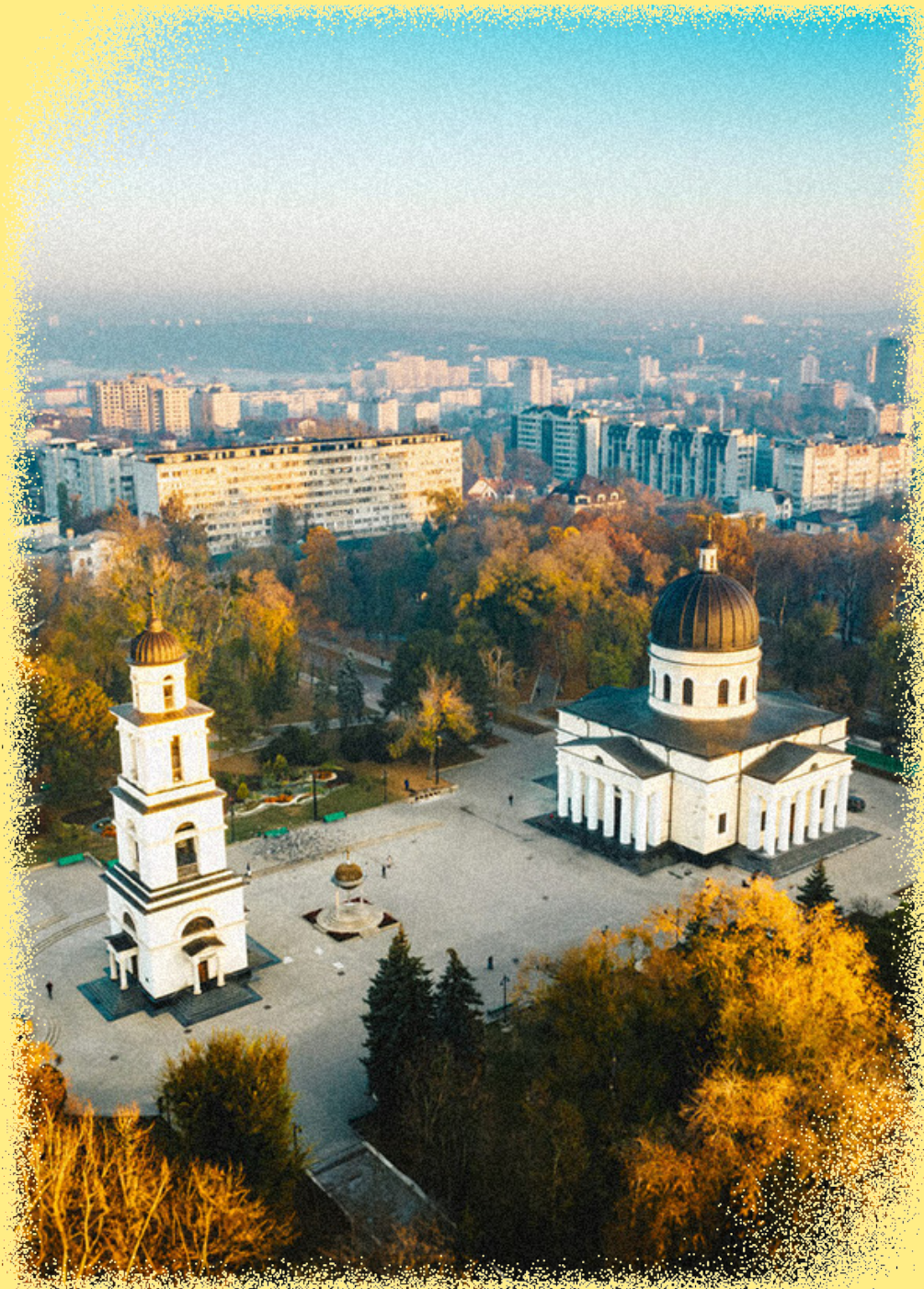
In this episode, we're joined by **Sophia Kircher**, a **Member of the European Parliament and Vice Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism**, for an in-depth discussion on the future of **transportation and interconnectivity within the EU**. We explore key topics such as **youth advantages in pricing, single ticketing**, and how Europe is working toward a more seamless and accessible travel experience.

Additionally, our YEPP First Vice President had to face the **Hell YEPP Test**, where she put her knowledge of our organization to the test in a fun and challenging segment.

How can young people benefit from these changes? What steps are being taken to make travel more affordable and convenient? Tune in now to find out.

Don't miss this insightful conversation—listen on Spotify or watch on YouTube now.





YEPP Future events

CM in Moldova

YEPP will gather in Chişinău, Moldova from 8-11 May for its second Council Meeting of 2025. For the event YEPP will collaborate with PAS Youth, a dynamic political organisation that played a pivotal role in the campaign for the recent EU membership referendum and the re-election of pro-European leader Maia Sandu. As the event coincides with Europe Day, discussions will focus on the current situation in Eastern European countries and the aspirations of EU membership candidates. This gathering will be an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to European values at a critical time for the region.

/pas/ youth

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Deadline: 31st of March.



News from EU Bubble

News from the past week

The journalist in the room. Trump Cabinet Members mistakenly invited The Atlantic's Editor-in-Chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, to a private (unauthorised) Signal chat. Within the chat, White House National Security Adviser Michael Waltz and another top EU official were discussing and praising a bombardment on the Houthis in Yemen. The chat included Vice President JD Vance, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. According to a memorandum recently released by the White House, officials are not authorised to discuss sensitive matters on non-governmental channels.

Ceasefire in Ukraine. Russian and US officials met in Riyadh this week to discuss ceasefire negotiations in Ukraine. Talks on Monday focused on a Black Sea maritime ceasefire deal and followed negotiations on Sunday between Ukrainian representatives and American diplomats. At the same time, a Russian missile strike damaged a school and a hospital in Ukraine, wounding at least 88 people.

Legislative pipeline

The **Union of Skills** is a European Commission initiative aimed at addressing labor shortages, improving workforce competitiveness, and preparing Europe for the digital and green transitions. With €150 billion invested in 2021-2027 in education and skills development, it focuses on digital literacy, STEM education, and cross-border qualification recognition. Key initiatives include the Skills Portability Initiative to facilitate mobility, the Reinforced Pact for Skills to upskill workers in strategic sectors, and the EU Talent Pool to attract skilled professionals.

On 20 March, the **European Council** met to discuss competitiveness, energy, and defence. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented the White Paper on Defence to European leaders. The document urges Member States to make significant investments in defence, procure defence systems, and enhance the readiness of the European defence industry. Heads of government also reviewed measures to reduce energy prices and boost the competitiveness of SMEs. Finally, the European Council hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

In May 2024, the **European Commission** approved 47 projects to implement the Critical Raw Materials Act, which sets benchmarks for 2030 to enhance production capacity in Europe and reduce dependence on foreign critical raw materials. Executive Vice-President of the Commission in charge of Trade, Stéphane Séjourné, presented the strategy on Wednesday. The plan aims to reduce reliance on foreign actors, particularly China, in production, refining, and recycling while boosting domestic capacity.

What's next

The **2025 EPP Congress in Valencia**, taking place on April 29-30 and co-hosted by Partido Popular, will be a key event for our political family. Delegates from across Europe will gather to elect the new EPP presidency, shaping the leadership that will guide the party through the challenges ahead. Pressing issues such as Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, economic instability, and the rise of populism and extremism will be discussed, reaffirming EPP's commitment to a strong, democratic, and prosperous Europe.

On Wednesday, the **German Bundestag** met for the first time since the federal election on 23 February, which saw the CDU-CSU (EPP) emerge as the largest party. CDU leader Friedrich Merz, the chancellor-in-waiting, is leading negotiations with the SPD to form a new government. If talks proceed as expected, the new government is set to be sworn in before May.

Next week, during its plenary session, the **European Parliament** will debate a resolution in support of an agreement between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina on cooperation between the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and the judicial authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the initiative's promoters, this agreement will facilitate the transfer of personal data between the parties and enhance the prosecution of organised crime and terrorism.

Get to Know: CDJA, The Netherlands



The Christendemocratisch Jongeren Appèl (CDJA) is one of the largest political youth organisations in the Netherlands, with around 2,000 members. Founded in 1981 through the merger of ARJOS, CHJO, and the KVP-jongerenorganisatie, CDJA has been at the forefront of Dutch youth politics ever since. CDJA is the youth organisation of the CDA, the Netherlands' main Christian Democratic party. While aligned with the CDA, CDJA is an independent organisation with its own positions and priorities.

CDJA is a political home to young people with Christian democratic and conservative values. We stand for freedom, security, and solidarity. With a European heart, we believe in both individual and societal responsibility. Our guiding principles reflect a belief in growth instead of stagnation and an economy that works for the people, where effort is rewarded.

We believe this generation has a responsibility to pass on a better country to the next. That means making choices today that protect tomorrow: safeguarding our environment, keeping our finances in order, and ensuring future generations have the freedom and opportunity to shape their future.

For us, 'stewardship' isn't just about preserving what we have—it's about creating room for growth, even in an ageing

society. That requires solid public finances, sustainable policies, and the courage to think long-term instead of short-term political gain.

CDJA plays an active role in shaping political debate in the Netherlands. We hold seats on the national and regional boards of the CDA, giving us direct influence on the party's direction and decisions. CDJA has been highly effective in drafting and securing the adoption of resolutions at CDA congresses, compelling the CDA to act on key issues.

One notable success was CDJA's push to make the return of the basic student grant a dealbreaker in coalition negotiations. This goal was ultimately achieved with the grant's reintroduction in 2023.

Despite the rise of extreme voices in parliament, CDJA often represents the voice of reason, regularly featuring in political talk shows, media interviews, and social media campaigns. Our international engagement is just as strong: as a founding member of YEPP, CDJA plays an influential role in European youth politics, frequently submitting amendments and maintaining strong bilateral cooperation with like-minded organisations.

Now that the CDA is in opposition, CDJA embraces the role of responsible and

constructive opposition. In a time when populism and polarisation dominate Dutch politics, we stand for a democratic ethos rooted in dialogue, solutions, and long-term vision. We oppose where needed, but always with a focus on stability, accountability, and the common good. For CDJA, opposition is not about protest for protest's sake—it's about offering credible alternatives and defending the values of freedom, solidarity, and stewardship.

CDJA is more than just a political movement—it's also a training ground for future leaders. We offer training programmes and workshops in areas such as resolution writing, campaigning, debating, and social media. Many of our alumni have gone on to become ministers, parliamentarians, and local councillors. In fact, during the last municipal elections, the CDA had the highest number of young councillors elected.

Currently, CDJA is headed by Joanne Sloof, who has been serving a two-year term since December 2024. In 2025, CDJA is focusing on the reintroduction of conscription, inspired by Austria's Wehrpflicht und Zivildienst model. At the same time, we are launching a nationwide campaign to cut through the red tape that is holding back the development of much-needed housing and infrastructure.

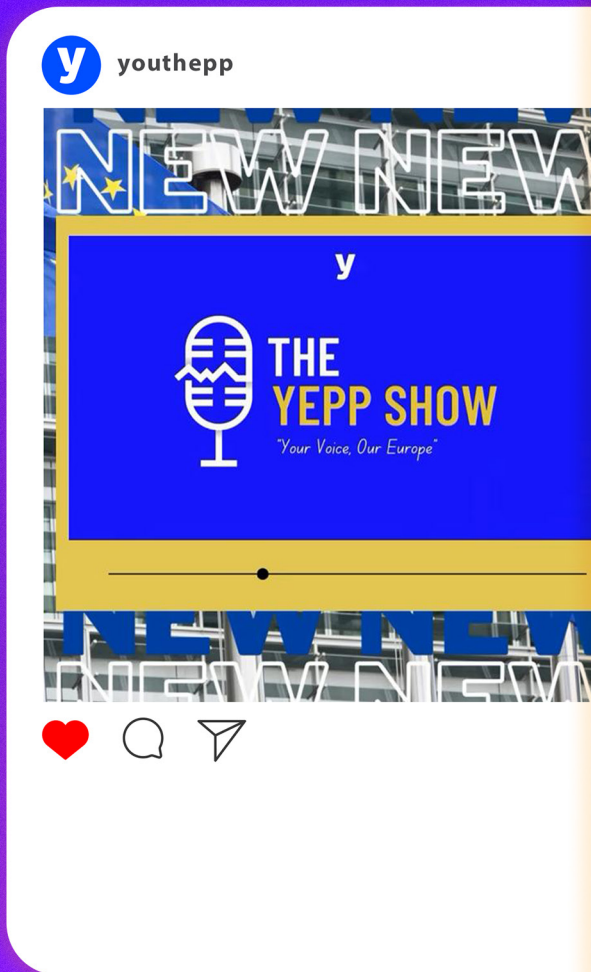
Looking ahead to the 2026 municipal elections, we are preparing a new generation of young candidates to stand in municipalities across the country. And if a snap election comes in 2025, CDJA will be ready to run a successful campaign, building on our strong poll numbers and the growing momentum behind our story.

With our motto "Party & Politics", CDJA is an accessible and dynamic youth organisation where members can challenge themselves intellectually, make a local, national, or international impact, develop new skills, and meet new people—all while having a lot of fun.

By Sjors Verhage,
International Secretary of CDJA



Social Media Highlights



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