The significance of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the security and development of the European Union

The European Union’s policy toward Bosnia and Herzegovina has arrived at a crisis point. The country has long been lagging behind the neighbours on the road to European integration. Suggestions are being voiced, aimed at initiating a new approach to Bosnia on the part of the EU, one which would result in the reform of the political system and the introduction of the necessary reforms. Such an approach, however, must take into account the specific features of the country. A historical analysis of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s geopolitical significance in Europe demonstrates which factors formed Bosnian society over the centuries and how its geographic location, at the border of circles of civilisations, has influenced the origins of a country which is borderland, bridge and buffer. It is the historical legacy which influences issues specific to Bosnia, such as Islamic fundamentalism or ethnic resentments. At the same time, however, it is this legacy which has given birth to an unusual, diversified society and a tradition of peaceful co-existence. It is therefore worthwhile asking the question as to why the European Union should not leave Bosnia to herself? There are several answers, which touch upon both the ambitions of the Union itself to perform an ever more significant role in the world, as well as its responsibility for its near neighbourhood, since destabilisation of the latter has an impact on the security of the entire continent. The article presents possible scenarios for future developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and posits a question as to whether the country has any alternative to integration with Europe.