

# NEW WINE, OLD BOTTLES, OR BOTH? REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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## Introduction

The objective of this paper is to examine the process of regional integration among the countries that border on the Mediterranean. This objective immediately raises the question as to whether, and if so to what extent, the Mediterranean area constitutes a 'region' comparable to, for example, Latin America or Western Europe. This question will be addressed at the outset; and then the prospects for integration will be considered in the light of theories that have been elaborated to 'explain' or 'predict' integration in other parts of the world. Such an analysis involves discussion of, *inter alia*, underlying motivations, background conditions, perceptions of key actors, and transnational interactions, not to mention the role of external actors whose intentions for the region may be as important, if not more important, than the ambitions, aspirations, achievements and actions of governments within the region.

The Mediterranean is clearly a region in a *geographical* sense if in no other. Even at this level, however, it provides a rationale for concerns about security, it offers possibilities for intensification of trade relationships based on physical proximity, and it highlights the need for solutions, based on reciprocity, to common problems such as environmental pollution, illegal migration, conservation of marine resources, and communications networks. The extent to which a group of countries that are geographically proximate embark on a process of regional integration normally reflects ambient economic and political realities. Thus the decisions of Mexico and Canada to join the North American Free Trade Area were taken in the context of an economic globalisation that compelled both countries, with some reluctance in each case and for different reasons, to capitalise on their existing geographical proximity and translate that proximity into an economic advantage. Likewise, the countries of east and central Europe who, prior to 1989, had led a separate economic and political existence despite

their proximity to western Europe, suddenly found that proximity an advantage, and a rationale for their absorption into both NATO and the EU. Indeed, in both cases, enlargement has followed geographical proximity to a remarkable degree. The translation of geographical proximity into economic interdependence, political cooperation or a 'security community' is determined by a nexus of factors, some internal and some external, which alter perceptions. The thrust towards regional integration in the Mediterranean is anchored firmly in the current preoccupation with globalisation and the concomitant process of regionalisation. If globalisation is defined in terms of technological change, increasingly mobile foreign investment, and a loosening of control that governments have hitherto been able to exert over firms and markets, then it follows that states will seek mutually supportive survival strategies. This need for survival is exacerbated by new threats accompanying globalisation: contemporary security issues that are now defined in demographic, ethnic, environmental and cultural terms. One obvious reaction to globalisation is a regionalisation whose basic rationale is survival rooted in geographical proximity. This regionalisation encompasses countries at different levels of development (eg NAFTA, Mercosur, ASEAN) and is not necessarily predicated on the notion of a 'common civilisation' such as lay behind the Treaty of Rome and is now being consciously nurtured in the enlargement process of the EU towards eastern Europe. Regionalisation can be defined as a process that leads to cooperation and the adoption of common rules, regulations and policies between states. This process can arise out of perceptions of economic advantage, or enhanced security, that are based on the logic of geographical proximity. The process is not automatic but must be nudged forward by conscious political decisions taken by actors who perceive the national interest as being best safeguarded in a regional setting. Evidence of growing interdependence, and subjective perceptions of an increasing sense of regional identity are both cause and effect of a crystallisation in regional cooperation. The role of external actors cannot be discounted. It is well-established that the early steps in West European integration were greatly encouraged, although sometimes reluctantly taken, by the insistence of the USA that Marshall aid should be distributed by Europeans themselves through institutions

that were predicated on a certain amount of cooperation. Likewise, in the Barcelona Process (discussed below) EU relations with the Mediterranean countries are based on expectations of intra-regional cooperation that exceed what is likely to be achieved in reality.

Compared with other 'regions', the prospects for integration in the Mediterranean may be considered more problematic. Firstly, despite the fact that different levels of economic development need not necessarily be a hindrance to the integration process, especially if these differences reflect a degree of *complementarity*, the countries of the Mediterranean littoral exhibit wide divergences in GDP per capita combined with similar handicaps and mutually competing exports. These differences are reinforced by cultural contrasts: the Mediterranean stands at the intersection of at least three major religious traditions and although Huntington's clash of civilisations may have been widely discounted in the international relations literature, it would be unwise to rule out the possibility that events *outside* the Mediterranean region may impinge on the cultural interface that runs *inside* it. The benign scenario that portrays the Mediterranean as a cultural entrepot within which a dialogue between major civilisations can, and must, take place, is plausible but it cannot be taken for granted. Secondly, there is an inherent danger that attempts to create a Mediterranean regional identity based on economic cooperation will be perceived as suspect in Arab countries. On the one hand, the creation of a Mediterranean identity risks dividing the Arab world between those involved in that process, and those who are not; and, on the other hand, any set of relationships based on economic interdependence in this context cannot help being asymmetrical (Joffe 2001) given the north-south dynamic that underpins the whole process. Thirdly, some Islamic states are themselves prey to internal schisms and fluid notions of national identity in which, in particular, the tensions between secular and religious conceptions of the state are as yet unresolved. Fourthly, although it is rarely articulated in Euro-Med communiqués, the fate of Mediterranean regional integration is not unconnected to the fate of the "road map" in the Middle East. The twists and turns in this political cartography are inextricably linked to the prospects for navigating successfully the economic shoals and sharks that lurk beneath the unfolding

Barcelona Process. Finally, the global shifts following the events of September 11 and, in particular, the redefinition of US foreign policy, may make the process that the EU is trying to promote in the Mediterranean all but impossible. Much depends on how, and to what extent, the EU and the United States are able to work as partners in mitigating the Middle East crisis specifically, and the alleged threat of “international terror” more generally. The United States now views the world, but especially the Middle East, through a new lens, and one consequence of this is a reluctance on the part of Washington to support, even tacitly, EU attempts to moderate or mollify extreme political regimes in the “outer ring”: Iran, Syria, Iraq.

### **Regional integration theory: an overview**

We turn now to consider four theoretical perspectives that have made a contribution to an understanding of regional integration: federalism, neofunctionalism, transactionalism, and social constructivism. Clearly, this is not an exhaustive list but, as will be argued later, these perspectives seem most likely to throw light on the progress (or otherwise) of regional integration in the Mediterranean area.

Federalism is perhaps the oldest of the theoretical frameworks within which the European integration process has been examined and analysed. However, federalism can be distinguished from other conceptual approaches in a number of ways. Firstly, federalism has been as much a political project as a purely academic preoccupation. Secondly, therefore, its proponents and practitioners have been politicians and political scientists, with the result that its appeal and its profile have been broader than theories such as neofunctionalism or transactionalism (both of which are discussed below). Thirdly, federalism is an elastic concept which means, for some observers at least, that it can be dangerously ambiguous or a sort of “concept for all seasons,” from which protagonists of opposing views can draw sustenance. At its heart, federalism connotes the separation of political authority at distinct levels but the way in which this is done, and the consequences of doing so, can be very variable. By maintaining a balance between central and

‘regional’ authority, one may be accused of allocating ‘excessive’ power to the ‘centre’ (a British view, for example, of federalism in its EU context) or one might equally feel that the allocation of authority to the regions is excessive (for example, in cases where such regional authority prevents progress being made on issues that are widely regarded as desirable in the territories of the other federalised units). For the purposes of our discussion here, however, the emphasis of federalists is on institutions. Unlike (neo)functionalists who see political boundaries being blurred, federalists view them as being delineated more clearly and their relationship to each other more clearly defined albeit in a new way. Thus the institutions of the EU (Parliament, Court and Commission) are perceived by federalists as being necessary prerequisites for the emergence of a more integrated political system at the European level. Federalism is about politics, and it assumes that society needs the security of institutions, and defined power allocations, in contrast to neofunctionalists who see society as being malleable and open to persuasion towards new foci of loyalty and new sources of authority. Clearly, the distinction between federalism and functionalism is not watertight in the sense that neofunctionalists see the supranational aspects of EU institutions as being the objects of new loyalties, as well as vehicles through which new transnational policies are formulated and implemented. The federalist belief that institutions can be flexible enough to cater for integration in a region characterised more by diversity than homogeneity is relevant to our discussion although the historical record does not support the view that federalism is always, or even often, a sufficient mechanism for overcoming deeply divided societies. Federalism in Nigeria or Rhodesia/Nyasaland has not been an encouraging role-model.

Functionalist and neo-functionalist theories have probably been more influential than any other for offering a discourse within which regional integration processes are initiated, sustained and challenged. Concepts such as “spillover” and the modes of thinking along the lines of “transferring loyalties” to new centres, and seeking the right “background conditions” have permeated our thinking and have affected theoretical insights into the integration process far beyond the boundaries of neofunctional orthodoxy, or

orthodoxies, as neofunctionalism, like any self-respecting religion is rife with schisms, and revisionism. At its heart, neofunctionalism is based on a number of guiding principles: firstly, an emphasis on incremental cooperation starting with non-contentious but significant sectors and a preference for economics over politics; secondly, the desirability of guiding the process through supranational institutions thus removing the key decisions from the emotive arena of national politics; thirdly, the integration of strategic economic sectors leading inexorably to the integration of related sectors until such time that the economic sectors are so intertwined that the desire (and capacity) for conflict will have disappeared (or at least the cost/benefit ratios of conflict and consensus will have tilted irrevocably towards the latter); fourthly, as supranational authority is increased by being effective, the loyalties of decision-makers and the people they represent will shift outside the national arena; fifthly, as economic integration deepens it will require further institutional elaboration to sustain or extend it; sixthly, therefore, political integration is perceived as being inevitable and consequential to economic integration. The advent of the Single Market (SEM) in 1993 in the EU illustrates some of these points. The Cockburn White Paper of 1985 (that later became the legislative basis for the SEM) proposed nearly 300 measures that would be necessary to bring about the SEM. Each of these measures was in itself unobjectionable but cumulatively they added up to a transformation of the EU economy. In order to bring about these measures, however, other institutional measures were needed and these appeared in, although they were not the primary reason for, the signing of the Single European Act in 1986 and the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Neofunctionalism is therefore neatly reflected in the image of Gulliver in the land of Lilliput where he was tied to the ground by hundreds of threads each of which he could have easily broken, but which, collectively and cumulatively, held him prisoner. If we transpose 'national sovereignty' for Gulliver we can envisage hundreds of EU directives helping to render national sovereignty helpless in the face of a labyrinthine European *acquis*! What also emerges from the neofunctionalist perspective is the emphasis on welfare: high politics is kept out of the picture as long as possible and then gently subsumed into a pattern of irreversible cooperation that already exists.

Transactionalism is a school of integration theory which is identified most closely with the work of Karl Deutsch and places emphasis on the amounts of communication between national units. The early work of Deutsch on nation-building (Deutsch 1966) portrayed emerging national identity as essentially the intensification of communication. At the supranational level, Deutsch saw essentially the same mobilisation process taking place whereby intensified interactions between national communities fostered a sense of trust and hence a feeling of security. International integration was thus seen to be a process whereby nations eschewed the use of violence as a means of resolving disputes. For Deutsch there were two types of security community: the 'amalgamated' and the 'pluralistic'. The amalgamated security community involved the formal merger of separate political units (usually states) into a larger unit through some kind of institutional fusion; while a pluralistic security community was seen to be composed of entities where the constituent governments remained separate and where there was no overarching authority to control or distribute resources. These models approximate to federations or confederations, respectively, or more accurately to the distinction between *gemeinschaft* (a community) and *gesellschaft* (a society). Whereas the latter model seems less integrated than the former, it is according to Deutsch more likely to survive the various external and internal challenges to which such integrated entities are prone such as global shocks; or the uneven distribution of benefits within the integrated community. A *gemeinschaft* is based on a feeling of kinship, the development of 'we-feelings', while a *gesellschaft* is based on more utilitarian motivations and relationships that are more rational than emotional. As long as the bargains that lie at the base of a *gesellschaft* are not unduly disturbed, it will survive. There is scope for negotiating solutions to conflicts; and by upgrading the common interest a conflict does not necessarily have a zero-sum outcome. In other words, its members expect less and are therefore content with less, than might be the case in a *gemeinschaft* where betrayals of mutual loyalty are potentially more harmful, and more difficult to repair, if only because there is less 'space' for mutual readjustment and conflicts do tend to result in zero-sum outcomes. Deutsch placed greatest reliance on the interactions (or 'transactions') between societies as indicators of

their propensity to become integrated. Mutual relevance was a reflection of the amount of transactions between two societies. This could be most usefully expressed as a percentage of transactions with third countries. Thus, if trade between A and B is rising more rapidly than the trade between A or B with C, one could see the level of mutual relevance between A and B as being on the increase. What Deutsch did not appreciate enough, perhaps, was that the intrinsic value of the interactions was important. On the eve of World War I, for example, it is known that interactions between Germany and Britain were of increasing intensity but the result was war. On the other hand, rising trade between Britain and the EEC in the 1960s led eventually to British accession to the Community.

Constructivism has become increasingly influential within international relations and, by extension, and more recently, in the field of European integration. Although there are now various constructivist approaches which generate their own internal discourses, the common denominator is a belief that the structures of world politics are social rather than material, or more subjective than objective. State identities for example are, therefore from this perspective not static but dynamic, variable, fluid, and constantly changing. (Knutsen 1997:281-2). Constructivists treat interests as socially constructed, as derivatives of processes of social interaction. Likewise identities are socially constructed so that an actor's interpretation of reality around him is based on interactions. All this challenges much of the contemporary theoretical literature on European integration: any theory that privileges the state, or institutions, or interests, imposes constraints and pre-selects priorities. The researcher needs to think more about ideas, shared beliefs, general discourses, and the outcomes of communication between individual actors.

### **The implications of integration theory for the Mediterranean**

In this final section we reflect on the implications of regional integration theory for the Mediterranean. There at least four major themes to be considered: "background conditions"; the prospects for neofunctionalist "spillover"; the role of institutions; and the role of 'external actors' in the integration process.



Several writers have remarked on the lack of homogeneity in the Mediterranean area (Calleya 2000; Attina 2002). We have noted already that three religious traditions intersect in the Mediterranean basin, as do a multiplicity of political systems and ideologies, not to mention wide disparities in economic and social development. Kahmann (2001) has noted that the Human Development Index (HDI) rankings, for example, in the Mediterranean exhibit wide gaps . The HDI is composed by the United Nations annually and is an aggregate measure of life expectancy, adult literacy, educational participation rates at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and GDP per capita. In these rankings Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands rank 4, 5 and 8 respectively while Algeria Egypt and Morocco rank 100, 105, and 112 . There is however a small overlap between the EU and the Mediterranean inasmuch as Israel, and Cyprus, rank above Portugal. Neofunctionalists have been especially concerned with background conditions although Deutsch did not neglect this concept in his analysis of the circumstances in which transactions and levels of mutual trust might evolve between communities that were integrating. Haas, however, faced with the familiar conundrum as to why integration had proceeded much further in Europe than elsewhere in the world, asserted that background conditions were a key part of the explanation. For Haas (1961) there were three key features that were likely to encourage regional integration: pluralistic social structures; substantial economic development, and ‘common ideological patterns’ among the participating units. In addition to these features, Haas believed that the integration process was also facilitated by the existence of supranational agencies with specific competences to upgrade the common interest. Moreover, if mass opinion was cognisant and, therefore supportive, of the benefits of integration, the process could potentially ‘spill over’ into new sectors. Reflecting later writing by Taylor (1993) which exploits consociational theory to argue that national elites espouse and control integration to preserve and bolster their own predominance in the national arena, Haas saw regional integration as most likely to prosper if it was clearly identified with, and led by, rational national actors following policies linked to perceptions of their own best interests. Later refinements of Haas’ work on background conditions included a new emphasis on the importance of *perceptions* as a

catalyst for structural conditions such as those proposed by Haas. Nye (1971), for example, suggested, firstly, that expectations of the benefits flowing from integration would be vital; secondly, he saw perceptions of external threat as being helpful; and thirdly if the costs of integration were deemed to be low it was more likely that elites would pursue policies conducive to deeper integration irrespective of, or at least with less concern for, the alleged benefits.

In the context of the Mediterranean region, these theoretical observations on background conditions have mixed implications. Clearly, if social, political and economic homogeneity among the units to be integrated is essential, the prospects for integration within the Mediterranean, or even between the Mediterranean and the EU, are rather unpromising. The fact that all the governments of the original Six were of a Christian Democratic complexion is often cited as one reason for their easy integration in the Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and later the European Economic Community (EEC) but it must be remembered also that diversity (or complementarity) can also be propitious. The need for an extended market for its industrial exports made the development of the EEC (and the later Single Market) a logical policy goal for West Germany in the 1960s. Likewise, the need for an extended market for its agricultural surpluses made the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy a logical objective for France. The reciprocity between French and German interests has always been at the core of the European integration project and this lends some support to the argument that reciprocity (based more on complementarity than similarity) can be helpful to the integration process. Perceptions of benefits that may flow from the integration project are also central to its future prospects in the Mediterranean. However, such perceptions argue more strongly in favour of EU-Mediterranean integration than intra-Mediterranean convergence. On its part, the EU sees the Barcelona process as a matter of stabilisation on its southern frontier, as a means to control migration or render it less necessary, and as a way of enhancing its influence in the Middle East. For the southern Mediterranean countries in particular the Barcelona process is essentially about economic development and increased prospects for trade: the bulk

of Mediterranean trade is with the EU and not among the countries of the region, giving rise to a familiar “hub and spoke” pattern of economic activity that is not conducive to integration in the region itself. From the point of view of perceptions one could argue therefore that the EU-Mediterranean process is based on reciprocal interests being served. There are however other perceptions that may militate against greater integration: divergent views on the Middle East that go deeper than mere foreign policy options; a reluctance to implement some of the societal changes advocated by the EU; a reluctance that reflects a deeper suspicion of Eurocentric cultural imperialism; and intra-Mediterranean rivalry between countries enjoying differentially advantageous bilateral ties with the EU.

The prospects for the quintessentially neofunctionalist concept of ‘spillover’ lie at the heart of many of the European Unions’s relationships with third countries. The ALFA programme provides educational and technical expertise in Latin America; the TEMPUS programme has been concerned with educational mobility in east and central Europe, while the PHARE programme has underpinned the infrastructural framework for enlargement in the same region. The two latter programmes act as partners to, and supporters of, the intensification of trade and investment flows between the two parts of Europe. Although not an EU applicant, Norway receives the benefits of the Socrates student exchange programme. More recently (2003) Turkey has begun to participate in a Jean Monnet scheme providing one-year internships for Turkish nationals in EU countries, thus preparing them to play a role in their own country’s integration into the EU.

At a more modest level, the *modus operandi* of the Barcelona process lends some credence to the idea that different segments of the relationship between the EU and the Mediterranean are interdependent although the assumption must be that progress will be easier in some areas than others. For that reason, sectors are kept reasonably distinct. At the apex of the functional divisions, there are institutions (perhaps too strong a word) to which authority for promoting progress and monitoring difficulties is allocated. The principal mechanism through which the Barcelona process is

implemented is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This was established by the Barcelona Declaration signed in 1995 at a meeting attended by the fifteen members of the EU and twelve Mediterranean countries. The Partnership spans not only a wide range of countries but also a wide range of issues. The political and security chapter can be regarded as ambitious in that it calls on signatories to uphold democratic values such as good governance, human rights, the rule of law, pluralism and self-determination, and support the legitimacy of the state itself. With a view to creating a zone of peace and security, the members commit themselves to security-building measures. The chapter on society and culture emphasises the development of human resources, dialogue and respect between different cultures and religions, and toleration amongst minorities within Mediterranean societies. The key chapter is the economic one where the year 2010 is the target date for the achievement of a Mediterranean free trade area involving the gradual reduction of tariff barriers, and programmes of economic assistance. The principal instrument for economic assistance is MEDA. The first MEDA programme (MEDA I) provided 3400 million euro for the period 1996-1999; and was succeeded by MEDA II (2000-2006) which has been allocated 5350 million euro and concentrates on the preparation of partners for the implementation of free trade agreements and on integration among the Mediterranean countries themselves. The overall aim is to create the right conditions for increased trade within and between the region and the EU, and to stimulate foreign direct investment. The progress of free trade is based on a series of bilateral agreements between the EU and partner countries in the region (all partners except Syria now have such agreements). The development of trade pacts *within* the region has been much slower although the Agadir Agreement between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia which was initialled in January 2003 is a step in this direction. Speaking on 17 January 2003, Commissioner Lamy conceded that the “South-South dimension” of the Mediterranean region needed to be enhanced but that the Agadir Agreement was a “decisive building block in this respect”. To coordinate the EU-Mediterranean Partnership there is a fairly light institutional structure. The principal steering body of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is the Euro-Mediterranean Committee which consists

of the EU Troika (the current and incoming Presidents of the EU, the High Representative of the CFSP, and the European Commission) plus a representative of each Mediterranean partner country. It is chaired by the Council Presidency. In addition, foreign ministers meet periodically to review progress and plan future strategy. *Ad hoc* ministerial conferences deal with sectoral issues and conferences for senior officials, civil society representatives and parliamentarians are held to address specific policy issues. A Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum holds annual sessions and provides a space where civil society can debate the broad goals and priorities of the Barcelona Process. This policy-making structure and the interweaving of political, economic, security, and cultural themes in the Barcelona Process reflect both the federalist tenet that institutions are necessary to coordinate the integration process and the neofunctionalist credo that political problems are made more tractable by increasing economic interdependence. At the heart of neofunctionalism there is the assumption that if states are heavily involved with each other through trade and investment, the costs of conflict are increased as are the rewards of consensus. In May 2003 President Prodi announced two further refinements for the Barcelona Process which strengthen the interdependence of political, cultural and economic relationships in the Mediterranean Basin. A Euro-Mediterranean Bank will enhance a sense of “co-ownership” in the region and will reinforce the amount and the quality of economic assistance being offered. Likewise a Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures is intended to ameliorate societal cleavages that hamper economic integration and political pluralism. “It is crucial” Prodi continued “that we focus on awareness of diversity and acceptance of the ‘other’ especially among the young. Within the Union we must look for new solutions – solutions that are positive – for dealing with problems of immigration. We must link the issue of immigration and relations between different cultures to the fundamental values of European citizenship. We must reach out to the workplace and schools, and get our message across in the media”(Euromed Report 22 May 2003).

If it is true, as neofunctionalists have argued, that integration ‘spills over’ from economic interdependence to other types of integration,

the pattern of economic relations in the Mediterranean tends to privilege north-south integration at the expense of south-south interactions. There are several reasons why this is so. Firstly, the underlying assumption of the Barcelona process that all partners are equally committed to regional cooperation as a means of achieving stability and security has been undermined by sharply divergent attitudes towards the Middle East. Secondly, if it is true as neofunctionalists believe that regional integration takes place most easily between countries characterised by pluralism and liberal democracy embedded in a free market economy, there is again a mixture of political regime in the Mediterranean area that militates against such a transformation. Indeed one writer has gone further and argued that the EU is not really interested in encouraging democratic transformation in the southern Mediterranean because it would lead to too much instability and the menace of more overtly islamist governments:

Even though the EU would not regret the overthrow of any of the non-democratic regimes in the region, it fears the period of transition that would follow such an overthrow. In all non-democratic MTCs the democratic elite is small and weak so it can be presumed that the democrats would not have the strength to replace the old regimes immediately. Chaos, civil war or takeover by radical Islamists – these are the threats as perceived by the EU (Junemann, A. in Xuereb P.G. 1998:115)

Finally, we consider the role of external actors in the regional integration process. In principle there are two possibilities here. On the one hand we can envisage an external actor encouraging a regional grouping to coalesce in order to provide additional security and commercial benefits. The United States is widely and correctly assumed to have been interested in, and a strong advocate of, European regional integration in the 1950s partly because Europe would provide a security “buffer” against the Soviet Union, and partly because the United States needed a bloc with which to trade, and in which to invest. On the other hand we can envisage an external actor participating itself in the integration process. The EU seems to play that role in the Mediterranean. Although some lip service is paid to the idea of the Mediterranean *qua* Mediterranean

integrating among its own members, the reality is that the EU is creating a zone of cooperation and stability in which it plays a leading part. The fact is that the bulk of the trade in the Mediterranean is with the EU and relatively little is conducted among the Mediterranean littoral states themselves. The relatively disappointing record so far of intra-Mediterranean collaboration should not surprise us: the efforts to produce a Central European Free Trade Area in the 1990s fell on deaf ears as each CEEC competed to strengthen its links with the external actor – the European Union. Likewise, EU rhetoric regarding the Balkan stability programme is couched in terms of self-reliance, regional cooperation and transnational contacts all with a view to promoting the desirability of “greater integration” in the Balkan region. The truth is that the Balkan states don’t want to integrate with each other. They are more interested in, and will benefit more obviously from, integration with the EU. Hence the efforts of Croatia (for example) but later Serbia-Montenegro to pursue relentlessly the path towards EU membership.

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