

# An Emerging Border of an Emerging State? The Case of the IEBL and the Republika Srpska of Bosnia-Herzegovina

REMÉNYI Péter<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** *This article examines the geopolitical changes in the Balkan region that led to the emergence and evolution of Republika Srpska (RS), which now operates as a semi-autonomous state. During the Bosnian war, the corridors linking the historical Serb-inhabited areas, where the target of ethnic cleansing that fundamentally changed the area's ethnic composition. In the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA), those very corridors became the boundaries of the newly recognized Republika Srpska. Throughout postwar Bosnia, ethnicity affects nearly all aspects of daily life. Serbs are highly disadvantaged and Bosniaks are moving toward a majority. In the 15 years since DPA, Republika Srpska has sought to administratively control these ethnic divisions by enforcing DPA and Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) provisions and obstructing attempt to reduce decentralization. The IEBL, an informal border separating two ethnic communities, is one of the most contested divisions in the Western Balkans. Because of its roots in ethnic cleansing, the boundary line is a symbol of violent secessionism. In recent years, the IEBL has obstructed ethnic "re-mixing" as local RS authorities try to prevent internally displaced persons (IDPs) from relocating there.*

**Keywords:** *Bosnia-Herzegovina, Western Balkans, ethnocratic regime, ethnic homogenization, Inter-Entity Boundary Line, settlement system, Dayton Peace Accords.*

## **Introduction**

Yugoslavia's national disintegration was a milestone event in post-bipolar Europe. The aftermath was marred by civil war, the emergence of short-lived statelets, rapid and turbulent border changes, mass migration, and large scale devastation. Ultimately, seven successor states had emerged by 2010. Bosnia-Herzegovina has been the hub of the transition in the Western Balkans. Extreme decentralization and the creation of two 'almost-states' (so-called entities) was the price of the peace. Provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) – even 15 years after their drafting – still prevail, but in many ways, that agreement obscures progress in development. Because Bosnian Serbs rely on the DPA as a guarantee of their rights under changing demographic circumstances, consensus on change is hard to achieve. A major provision of the DPA is the Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), which divides the two parts of the country. Although the IEBL is a controlled border, the tensions between the entities it separates are so high, that the line creates an important division.

In this paper we argue that ethnic divisions still dominate the social-political economy of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Though the country outwardly portrays itself as a multicultural state, this belies a much more deeply divided reality. Ethnicity and ethnically based social structures affect nearly all aspects of daily life. As a result, ethnic communities are creating their own subnational structures. Even if the state itself can be considered a multicultural, the entities and cantons (the subnational territorial organizations) are highly exclusionary and ethnocratic<sup>2</sup>. These multiple ethnocratic regimes often have competing interests and hinder any unified plans 'state-building'. In our analysis we use demographic data, territorial planning documents, and prior research to support our arguments. We draw upon Yiftachel and Ghanem's work on "ethnocracies" and apply it to the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the phenomenon is seen at a subnational level. Many of the mechanism, however, are quite similar. We use Republika Srpska (RS) of Bosnia-Herzegovina as an example of how ethnocracy does not only operate on the state level but anywhere an ethnic

---

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Geography, Faculty of Sciences, University of Pécs.

<sup>2</sup> On this see: Oren Yiftachel and As'ad Ghanem. "Understanding 'ethnocratic' regimes: the politics of seizing contested territories", *Political Geography*, 23 (2004): 647-676.

community has exclusive rights over a given piece of land. In the case of the RS, those rights were provided by the DPA.

### ***Theoretical considerations.***

#### ***Measuring ethnic homogenization***

One of the most significant geopolitical effects from Yugoslavia's dissolution is the impact on ethnic composition. Previous mosaic structures have ceased to exist and many ethnic spaces and cities have become homogenized. This process has influenced how new regimes develop and has made ethnicity a prominent factor in the region's governance structures. Ethnic composition differs markedly by region. The migratory patterns cannot be readily discerned simply by comparing state-level percentages cross-sectionally at two points in time. A more nuanced and sensitive form of measurement is needed. Simpson's Ethnic Diversity Index (EDI) has been proposed as a promising measure of changes in ethnic composition. Though the EDI originated in the field of biology as a measure of biodiversity within an ecosystem, Péter Bajmócy adapted it for geographical analysis. He applied the EDI in Hungary to estimate the likelihood that a member of one ethnic group would meet someone from the same or different ethnic groups<sup>3</sup>. Applying the following mathematical formula, the EDI produces a value between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates a completely homogenous population while 1 indicates that each person is of different ethnicity.

$$EDI = \frac{L * (L - 1) / 2 - \sum_{i=1}^n e_i * (e_i - 1) / 2}{L * (L - 1) / 2}, \text{ where}$$

L: a population of municipality (or other spatial unit)

$e_1, e_2, \dots, e_n$ : number of persons belonging to the ethnic groups

EDI: ethnic diversity index

Comparing homogeneous ethnic populations using census data is problematic. The 1991 and 2002 census tools each used a different number of possible ethnic categories from which to choose. The state-level data, however, were comparable. So it is possible to compare the diversity indices and the extent of changes at that level, and also at the settlement level. To understand trends, it is necessary not only to compare the diversity index (EDI) itself but also its changes over time ( $\Delta$ EDI). The changes are a critical part of understanding the region's ethnic homogenization.

#### ***Investigating ethnocratic regimes***

Yiftachel and Ghanem introduced the term "ethnocracy" and described the defining characteristics of ethnocratic regimes. In their view, the central feature was a condition in which ethnicity "rules" and governs nearly all aspects (political, social, and economic) of citizens' daily lives. Ethnicity – more so than class or wealth – becomes the primary factor in distinguishing among members of the population. Yiftachel and Ghanem also suggest that ethnocratic regimes usually use economic development, plans and land tenure as means to maintain and regulate to their ethnic control over a territory<sup>4</sup>. Bosnia-Herzegovina, though not included in Yiftachel and Ghanem's original studies, would meet their definition of an ethnocracy. Bosnia, writ large, would not be considered a "typical" ethnocratic regime, since its official political and social structure is based on a balance among the three major ethnic groups. In practice, however, its two component entities do maintain ethnically based structures, and they are granted authority to do so by the Dayton Peace Accords. This ethnocratic orientation is evident each community's structures and institutions, including ethnically based political parties, ethnically based school curricula, and ethnically based universities. It is also apparent from the ethno-demographic changes

<sup>3</sup> Bajmócy, Péter. „A nemzetiségi és vallási szerkezet változása Magyarországon a XX. században”, in: *II. Magyar Földrajzi Konferencia*, (Szeged: SZTE Természeti Földrajzi és Geoinformatikai, 2004), 16p.

<sup>4</sup> Yiftachel and Ghanem: 650.

(homogenization) that has occurred in recent decades, and from scholarly fieldwork as well<sup>5</sup>. As we will show, the Inter Entity Border Line (IEBL), which emerged from the DPA, mirrors the former frontline, reinforcing ethnic divisions and facilitating the ethnocratic governance at subnational level. Moreover, ethnically based school curricula<sup>6</sup> hinder attempts at pluralism or coexistence, and support ethnocratic controls.

The DPA, we argue, provided a legitimizing foundation for the region's ethnically based governance and segregation of institutional, political and economic systems<sup>7</sup>. According to DPA provisions, the IEBL itself lacks any strong dividing power. It has no border control, no regulation of inter-entity traffic, and no internal customs or tariffs. Instead, the boundary functions as a symbolic division between two antagonistic, ethnically based entities<sup>8</sup>. Applying Yiftachel and Ghanem's concept of ethnocracy to Republika Srpska, we document the evolution and characteristics of its ethnically based structures. We also emphasize that, in this instance, ethnocracy does not operate as state-level program for ethnic supremacy, but rather as a subnational trend to strengthen separatism. We consider how a Serbian 'counter-ethnocracy' may have emerged to check the growing power of the Bosniak population, and how this impedes unified state-building efforts.

### ***The demographic impact of Yugoslavia's breakup***

#### *Changes within population*

We consider the changes of population in numbers the most important demographical alteration of the breakup of Yugoslavia, which affected Bosnia-Herzegovina seriously. The Wars of Yugoslav Succession created the largest population of displaced Europeans since WWII. The overall population declined in war-affected regions (which were predominantly Bosnian), but increased in the less conflict-ridden areas, due in part to the influx of refugees. Proportionally, the population of Croatian Krajinas declined most significantly because the expelled Serbian population was only partially replaced by Croatian settlers. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the regions experiencing significant population declines were as follow: settlements in Central Bosnia, the Bosnian Krajinas, settlements along the Drina and the area known as the Posavina corridor. The Serbian, Bosniak and Croatian ethnic regions adjoin the Central Bosnian settlements, suggesting that maximum ethnic diversity presents not only two- but three-sided struggles. The areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina insulated from armed conflict did not suffer from a significant population decline, and also accepted large numbers of refugees from less fortunate areas. Banja Luka and Bijeljina, the western part of the Posavina Flatland, became the most desirable refuge for Serbians, while the Posavina corridor's southern rim became a shelter for the Muslim population. Herzegovina's eastern settlements grew in number due to Serbian migration and the western ones due to Croatian settlers. The area was not severely impacted by war; and even before the war the area was less ethnically diverse, so relatively few people fled or were displaced.

#### ***Ethnic homogenization***

The primary objectives of the war that accompanied Yugoslavia's breakup were: to secure political independence in the occupied areas; to satisfy nationalist territorial needs; and to homogenize the possessed and the occupied territories. Ethnic homogenization and cleansing, therefore, was not a side-effect of the war like in many other cases, but the aim itself. Before 1991, the region's ethnic composition was more diverse than that of any other European country. We are not arguing that Yugoslavia's dissolution was a direct consequence of ethnic tensions, nor do we think that ancient ethnic hatreds caused the conflict, but once it broke out, ethnically based

<sup>5</sup> Juhász, Adrienn Lilla. „A boszniai gócpont: a folytonosság és átmenet keresztútján”, *Külföldi Szemle*, (spring 2008): 47-71.

<sup>6</sup> Juhász 52, and Michelle Alfaro. Returnee Monitoring Study: Minority returnees to the Republika Srpska – Bosnia and Herzegovina, no place: UNHCR, 2000. iv.

<sup>7</sup> Recently on this see e.g.: Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western. „The Death of Dayton. How to stop Bosnia from falling apart”, *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 5 (September/October 2009): 69-83.

<sup>8</sup> On othering see e.g.: Henk Van Houtum and Ton Van Naerssen. „Bordering, ordering and othering”, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 93/2 (2002): 125-136.

territorial power was its main driving force. Conversely, the main obstacle to peaceful separation was the mismatch between ethnic and administrative borders and in Bosnia-Herzegovina the lack of ethnically homogenous territories, which could have been a base for territorial political formations. Indeed, the armed conflicts resulted in ethnic-based conflicts, ethnic cleansing and homogenization. The fear and the conflict itself forced millions to leave their homes. This forced migration was ethnically based and generally, though not in all affected regions, led to ethnic homogenization of the area. As a result, the multicultural region of the Western Balkans has disappeared, just as have the ethnic mosaic structures of several areas.

The statistically provable homogenization is not as discernible within larger territorial units such as the Western Balkans or the federal republics, but is quite evident at territorial and settlement meso-levels (such as entities, counties, municipalities) level. The ethnic homogeneity of the former state, writ large, has barely changed. The succession states of former Yugoslavia - Slovenia excluded - show only a 0.3% increase in their homogenization index. The data suggest that the war did not change the ethnic proportions and ethnic diversity of the entire region. In fact, the degree of ethnic homogenization of the former Yugoslavia is rather insignificant. Within the individual succession states and the territorial units, however, the changes have been substantial.

The change of ethnic diversity index of Yugoslav succession states and other sub national territorial formations between 1991 and 2004.

**Table 1**

<b>Republic / entity / autonomous area</b>	<b>ΔEDI (pp)</b>
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	-5
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	-22
Bosnian Serb Republic	-26
CROATIA	-18
MACEDONIA	2
MONTENEGRO	11
SERBIA PRIOR 2008 (Serbia Proper + Vojvodina + Kosovo)	1
SERBIA AFTER 2008 (Serbia Proper + Vojvodina)	-5
SERBIA PROPER	-4
KOSOVO	-13
VOJVODINA	-9
ex-YUGOSLAVIA (EXCLUDING SLOVENIA)	-0,3

*Source:* statistical institutions

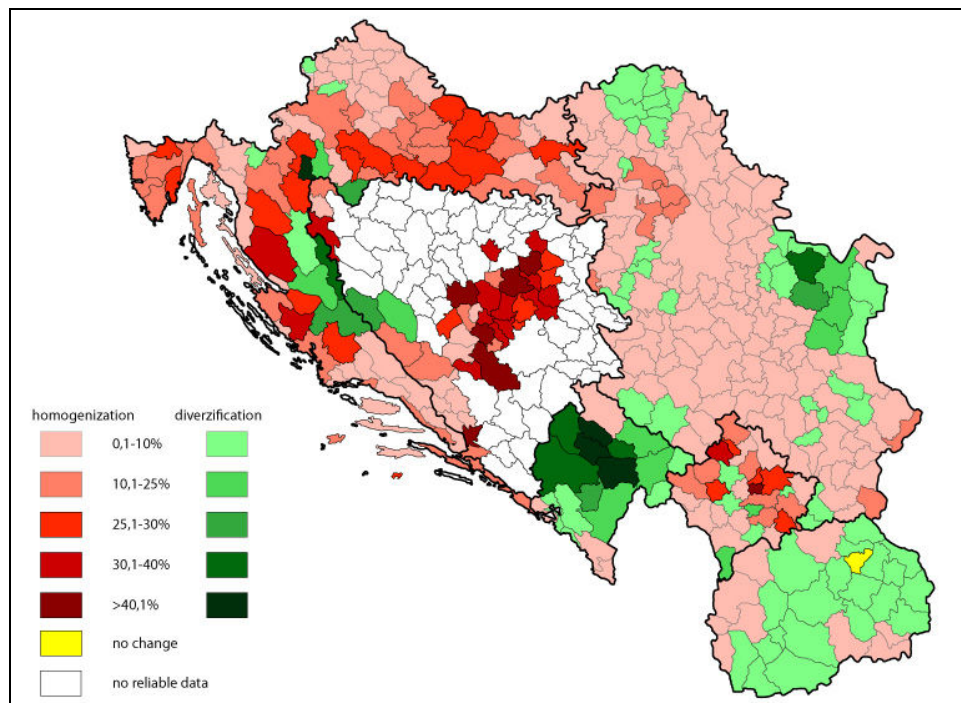
Using the ethnic diversity index, the Yugoslav successor states can be grouped into two categories, according to the degree of change: *minor*, suggesting the change easily explainable by natural processes such as assimilation or the cessation of “Yugoslav” as a category, or *considerable*, reflecting the result of significant homogenization. In Croatia and Kosovo ethnic homogenization occurred mainly because the majority drove out the minorities by force. Serbs were expelled *en masse* from both regions and from Kosovo, and the population of Albanians naturally grew more quickly.

Serbia’s population has homogenized slightly, probably as a result of several converging trends, including changes in the number of people choosing “Yugoslav” as their ethnic category in the 2002 census, the relocation of Serbians driven out of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and the natural process of assimilation of such minorities as Hungarians, Slovaks and other minority groups. As several studies have shown<sup>9</sup>, a large proportion of the Serbian-bound refugees from former Yugoslavian successor states settled in Vojvodina. This trend, along with an increase in Hungarians leaving the territory, probably explains the 9% drop in Vojvodina’s diversity index. The

<sup>9</sup> Kicošev, Saša and Kocsis, Károly. „A menekültügy társadalmi-demográfiai aspektusai a Vajdaságban.” *Regio*, 9, 3. (1998): 63-74.

absolute value of this rate may seem small, but Vojvodina shows more homogenization than other war-hit entities in the former Yugoslav region.

Ethnic diversity in Macedonia and Montenegro have also increased, but for different reasons. One quarter of Macedonia's population are Albans, and as a result of their higher reproductive rate and opposition to assimilation, the country shows a pattern of growing ethnic diversity. In Montenegro, the pursuit of independence divided the society because the choice of ethnic identity, had political implications and vice versa. Despite the fact that no official data exist on ethnic representation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is reasonable to assume that diversity at the state level has changed little, and that the 5% rate approximates that of Serbia. Though, at the state level, ethnic structures changed very little, they were much more apparent at subnational levels. DPA ushered in an extreme and legitimized version of separation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbs enjoy a majority in Republika Srpska, while the Federation's other two major ethnic groups enjoy an absolute majority in their respective jurisdictions. Further homogenization is evident in the cantons, reflecting pervasive ethnic segregation throughout the country.



**Fig. 1.** Ethnic homogenization of successor states of former Yugoslavia (based on alterations of ethnic diversity index) between 1991 and early 2000.

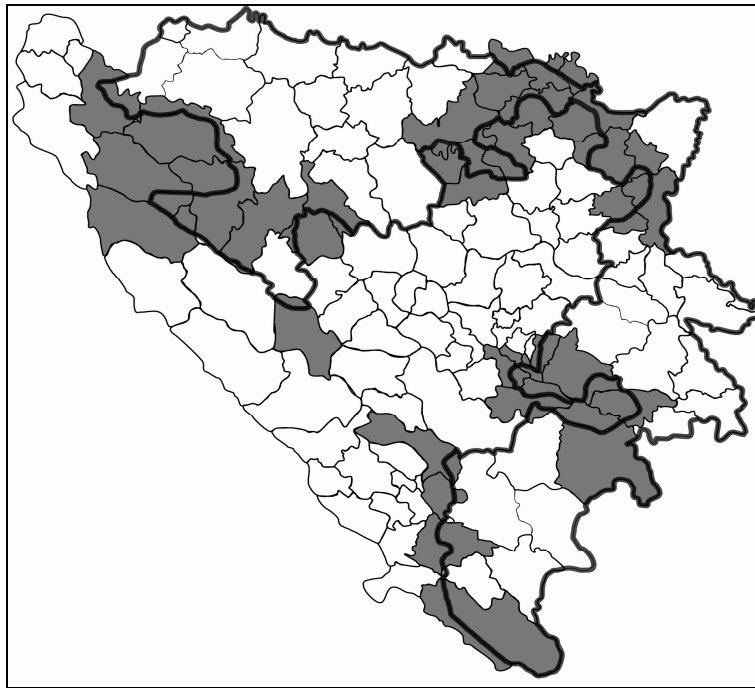
**Source:** own calculations from data and estimates of statistic institutions. Cartography: Á Németh

Analysing ethnic homogenization at the municipal level, reveals several other types of areas. Municipalities that were hardest hit by armed conflict (e.g. Slavonia, Kosovo, several parts of Croatian and Bosnian Krajinas, Central Bosnia, and the majority of the Bosnian Serb Republic) show the greatest degree of homogenization. In these areas, homogenization was caused primarily by minorities leaving the regions. In Dalmatia, Istria and Novi Sad the absolute value of the minorities has not declined; there has, however, been a growth in the majority group. These are relatively peaceful destination areas for a large number of refugees. In contrast, in areas where the local majority was not the state majority, the change in ethnic diversity increased. Examples include the core territories of the Croatian and Bosnian Krajinas, where Serbs comprised 90% of the population before and during the war. The majority of Serbs did not flee and there was influx of Croatian refugees.

In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina's homogenization, the major ethnic groups were spatially segregated either at entity levels (Serbs – non-Serbs); at cantonal levels (Croats – Bosniaks within the Federation); or at municipal levels (Serbs – Croats – Bosniaks within the multiethnic cantons of the Federation). This ethnic pattern has changed only slightly after repatriation, when approximately half a million refugees and internally displaced persons returned to areas not controlled by their own ethnic group. In many instances, however, repatriation is only 'theoretical', since in the pre-war territories many fundamental rights (social, economic, security, dignity etc.) are missing.<sup>10</sup> The entity level homogenization was a foundation for ethnic separatism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unfortunately, the DPA created boundaries permitting ethnic groups to maintain control over certain areas, which facilitates territorial separatism.

***The IEBL and its impact on spatial structures***

The IEBL affects many facets of daily life among Bosnian citizens. As we noted, it is an international agreement that contributes to territorial separatism. It runs more than 1000 km across the country, cutting across several municipalities. Although IEBL is not guarded and does not regulate traffic across its boundaries, in many ways, it functions as a barrier between the ethnocratically controlled entities on either side. The units are parsed into four main groupings, which are concentrated around Brčko-Doboj, Sarajevo-Foča, Mostar-Trebinje, and Jajce-Kupres-Glamoč-Petrovac. Three of these concentrations mirror the corridors created by ethnic cleansing: the first is the Posavina and North Drina corridor, the second is in South Drina, while the other is connected to a corridor not included in our survey, and located outside the territory of the RS. This latter corridor links the Bosniak core area to the exclave of Bihać.



**Fig. 2.** *Municipalities cut by the IEBL (cartography: Andor Vég)*

Beyond the ethnic structures already discussed are those created by the settlement networks. Those networks determine how the ethnic spatial structures are populated. To understand the

<sup>10</sup> Huma Haider, "The Politicisation of Humanitarian Assistance: Refugee and IDP Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, 2000. <http://jha.ac/2010/04/26/the-politicisation-of-humanitarian-assistance-refugee-and-idp-policy-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>

demographic shifts in the region, simply knowing where and in what proportions the respective ethnic groups live is insufficient. Settlement structures determines the spatiality, spatial organisation, and spatial processes of a given state or entity. Adding this knowledge of settlement structures to data on other ethnic structures allows a clearer forecast of emerging spatial processes in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Network data also illuminate the internal spatial organisation processes of the respective entities.

The DPA produced a complex state structure that fundamentally transformed the urban network and the spatial division of labour. IEBL boundaries - with few exceptions, such as the Posavina and Goražde corridors) – were based on the area's ethnic composition in 1995<sup>11</sup>. This implies that the international community, at least indirectly, accepted ethnic homogenization/cleansing as a way of gaining control over a territory. This assertion is consistent with the the International Court of Justice's decision on the Srebrenica massacre, stating that the act was a genocide, but that Serbia could not be held responsible for it.<sup>12</sup> Negative effects of ethnic transformation were also visible in the settlement network. Communication across the IEBL came to a standstill. The hinterland areas especially suffered. DPA divided each of the hinterlands macro-regions (Figure 5.). Towns and cities were destroyed, leaving areas with no real centre.



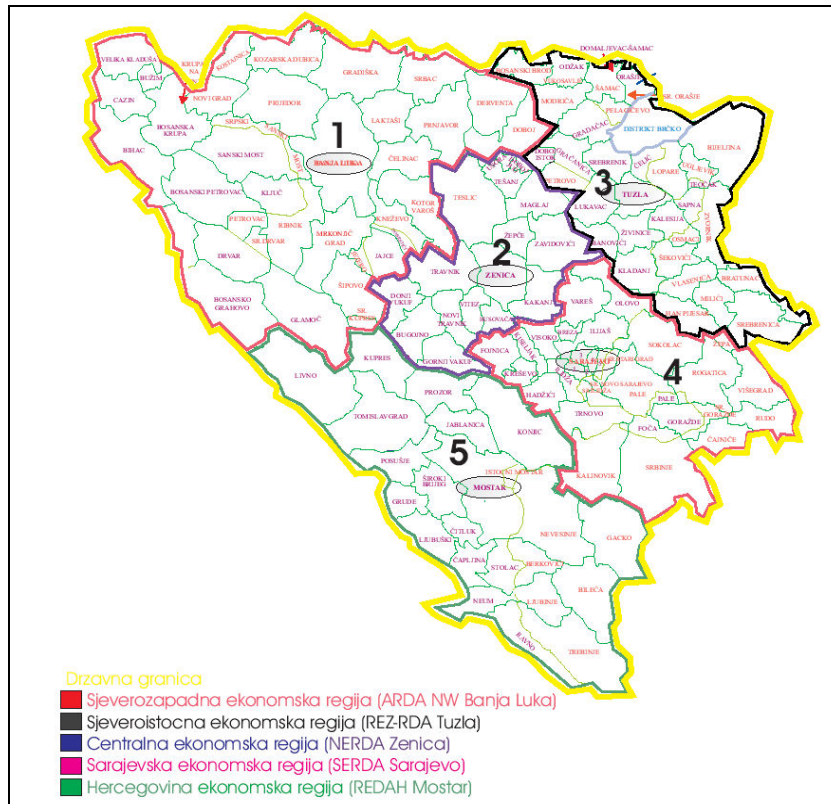
**Fig. 3.** Map from the regional development plan of Republika Srpska. Prostorni plan Republike Srpske do 2015.

DPA consolidation was a slow process, affected both by domestic (elections, economic processes) and international events. All three nations had to reconsider the territorial issues and the problems these posed for the settlement network. The Croat community approached the spatial processes mindful of the expanding autonomy of the cantons they inhabited. In contrast, the Bosniak

<sup>11</sup> **Midhat Aganović and Želimir Jovanović**, "Bosnia and Herzegovina spatial structures and regional policies". *Vision Planet Project Interreg II.C International Adriatic Conference*, 1999 Trieste. <http://www2.units.it/vplanet/atti/Aganovic.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Juhász, 56.

community tried to ignore the *de facto* divisions, to treat the IEBL as a virtual border and to implement spatial policy without considering IEBL. To them, regionalisation is a tool for maintaining the integrity of the country (Figure 4). The Serb party, however, insisted on claiming the rights and areas allocated to them in the DPA. They were motivated to keep the communities segregated and to maintain only the most tenuous possible relations between the entities. The designs of both the Serb and the Bosniak parties are evident in their planning documents. In RS spatial development maps, the FBiH is not even visible (fig 3.), while in the regional development maps made in the FBiH, the IEBL is so pale that it is virtually undetectable (fig 4.). The content of the plans also differed. The FBiH regularly regards the state as a single unit (e.g.: borders of the macro-regions), while in the plans of the RS the IEBL is treated almost as a state border, standing in the way of spatial structures.



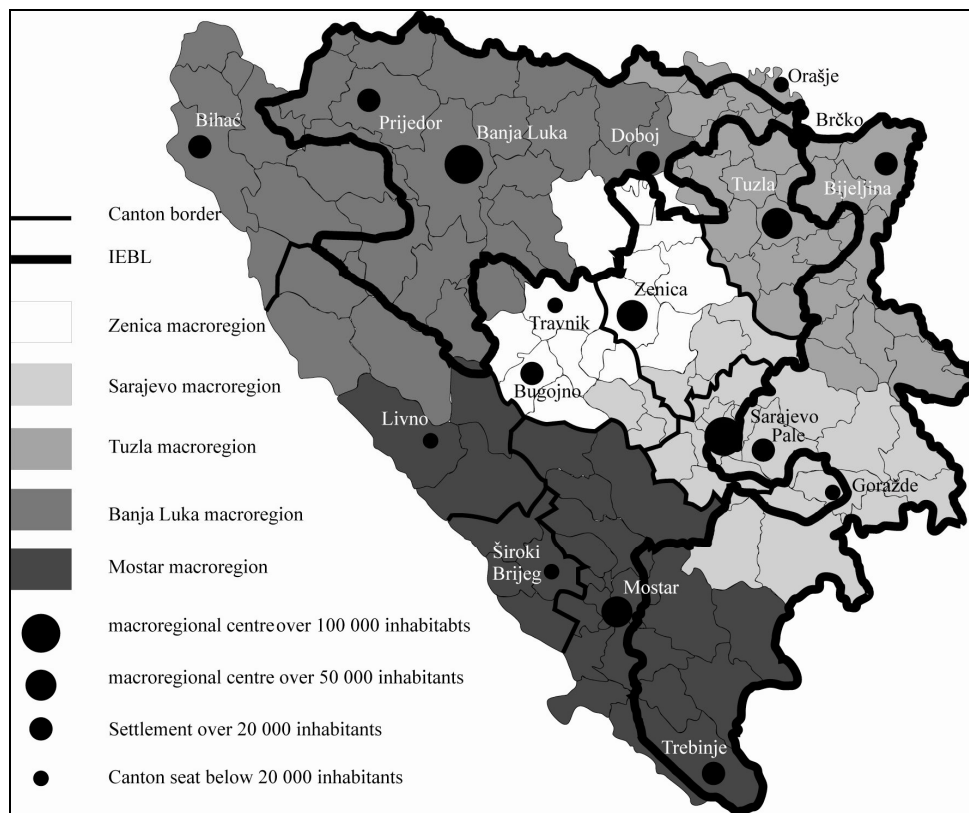
**Fig. 4.** Economic regions of BiH, Izvor Federalni zavod za programiranje razvoja, 2004.

#### ***The impact of the Inter Entity Boundary Line on the settlement network***

Banja Luka, the centre of the RS and possible capital of a potentially sovereign state, has made more progress in the settlement hierarchy than any other city (municipality) in the past decade. Though the general Bosnian population declined, the population of Banja Luka did not. Instead, because it avoided direct war actions and received many Serb refugees, the city's occupancy rose from 195,000 in 1991 to 225,000 in 2004). Banja Luka as the centre of the RS is the country's "quasi capital city". For nearly half (49%) of the Bosnian territory, the *de facto* capital city now is not Sarajevo but Banja Luka. Sarajevo is not a state capital, but it is the seat of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which covers 51% of the territory. This effect of the DPA has further decentralized decision making in the country, so that it is divided Banja Luka and Sarajevo.

In an RS move toward sovereignty, there are few options for a capital city that would serve that goal better than Banja Luka. It has a sizable population base (almost 15% of the inhabitants of

the RS live in Banja Luka) is home to many of the state's institutions and functions. Its location, however, poses some physical geographical challenges that could make it more difficult to govern eastern and the southern areas. Banja Luka could be a perfect capital city for a West Bosnian Serb Republic (Bosanska Krajina), which would end somewhere near Brčko, but it might be much more difficult to impose its influence on the Drina River area. Moreover, there is the obstacle posed by tensions between the Banja Luka and the Pale lobbies, which fall along party lines and can affect relationships with the West and Serbia.



**Fig. 5.** Bosnia and Herzegovina these days

(Source: Federalni Zavod za Programiranje Razvoja, ed.: Reményi P.)

The other Bosnian macro-regional centres (Tuzla, Mostar, Zenica) were in the reverse situation, having lost a significant part of their hinterlands, and becoming much more peripheral. The revival of their spatial relations was more than uncertain. During DPA negotiations, all these centers were included in the FBiH and their mutilated hinterlands were left without real centres. Banja Luka also lost a large part of its former region, but it “inherited” territories allocated to the Bosnian Serb Republic, which previously belonged to the Tuzla region. Before the war, the detached regions were only loosely connected to Banja Luka<sup>13</sup>, but this provided them with two sub-regional centres to nurture (Prijedor and Bijać). The situation was much more favourable, however, for the settlements annexed to the other side of the border. These settlements assumed many of the functions of the regional centres. Specifically, these include small and medium-sized towns of the Bosnian Serb Republic. Dobo, Bijeljina, or Trebinje were not previously centre regions, but had become functional centres in the Serb part of the hinterlands of Tuzla and Mostar. They gained spatial organising power, also facilitated by the RS regional development programmes. Pale's situation was less decisive. It is a regional sub-centre

<sup>13</sup>Veljko Rogić, „The Changing Urban Pattern in Yugoslavia”, in: *An Historical Geography of the Balkans*, ed. Frances W. Carter, (London: Academic Press, 1977.), 429.

and may have shown the largest growth in population (from 6,000 to 20,000), primarily because it welcomed Serb refugees from Sarajevo. Pale, however, still carried the burden of being known the seat of the Bosnian Serb war government. In the end, the Banja Luka lobby prevailed, and the institutions of the central part of the country moved to Banja Luka.

Among the former centres that lost their hinterlands, the Drina River area was the most disadvantaged. It sits on a narrow strip of between a state border and an administrative-ethnic boundary, without real centres or adequate transportation infrastructure. Before the war, because the area lacked major centres, functions were held in Sarajevo and Tuzla. Now Bijeljina, Zvornik and Pale are attempting to take over these roles. The city of Brčko, positioned at the confluence of the Drina and the Sava Rivers, could assume centre or sub-centre role, but it is blocked by its special legal status. Like the Drina River area, Eastern Herzegovina remained without a centre. Its natural centre, Mostar, one of the main scenes of the Bosniak-Croat opposition, is now outside the territory of the federation. The other potential centres with a viable location (Dubrovnik, Nikšić) have become cities in a different state. Without any developed centre, the small town Trebinje tries to satisfy the demands of the region for central functions.

#### ***Different group dynamics in Bosnia-Herzegovina***

A number of factors affect the spatial composition of ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 2009, the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina's population grew by 1%, while the population of Republika Srpska *declined* 2.2%<sup>14</sup>. Croats and Serbs both have adjacent and accessible 'home' countries, but Bosniaks do not. Croats and Serbs, can, therefore, more easily move abroad. Moreover, the economic situation in BiH is much less favourable than in neighboring countries.

Demographic trend data suggest that Bosniaks are moving toward a majority, which will affect not only demographic statistics, but will also lead to increased demand for resources, power and space. DPA, which delineates entities on ethnic basis, will serve as a check on Bosniak expansion. Republika Srpska also maintains an ethnocratic regime, where serious decisions (and even ones on municipal level) are usually made to favor ethnic (Serb) interests. So it is crucial for Serbs to support the force of DPA, to retain their control over 49% of the country's territory. Bosniaks, on the other hand, are motivated to reform or even terminate the DPA, to centralize the state and to break ethnocratic governance in the Republika Srpska. Those changes would allow Bosniaks to gain territorial control, to increase their resources, and enhance their power. In essence, Bosniaks have an offensive strategy, while the Serbs are left on the defensive. Again, DPA contributes to this tension. The treaty, *de facto*, legalizes territorial ownership gained during the armed conflict, at least implicitly legitimizes ethnic cleansing and homogenization, and endorses Republika Srpska's war gains. Serbs control 49% of the territory. Croats have no designated entity (although they were also belligerents). As a result, Bosniaks were forced to further decentralize their 51% of the country and "share" it together with the Croats<sup>15</sup>.

The Croat situation is somewhat distinctive. They possess no designated entity of their own, and there are few of them than there Bosniaks or Serbs. As a matter of law, the Federation belongs jointly to Croats and Bosniaks, but as a practical matter, Bosniaks dominate the area because their population is larger and growing more quickly. Croats tried to create their own entity in 2001, but with no success. The international community rebuffed their effort. This left the Croats to create their ethnoterritorial structures within the cantons, and to await outcome of the Bosniak-Serb competition.

#### ***Spatial planning as a tool for ethnoterritorial control***

The situation described above suggests that currently RS is not sufficiently prepared to provide spatial distribution or adequate services for the population – and, therefore, to become a sovereign state. RS is making progress, however, especially in strengthening its urban network. The Republic's regionalisation and urban development plans are generally designed to strengthen this urban network, and to create an infrastructure that organizes the various settlements into a functioning

<sup>14</sup> From the Statistical offices of FBiH and RS 2011 at: <http://www.fzs.ba/> and <http://www.rzs.rs.ba/>

<sup>15</sup> Juhász, 48.

network. The RS development plan for creating separate entities lacks any spatial rationality. For example, a number of planned territorial centres are less than 50 kilometres away from the “real” centres on the other side of the IEBL. Without a rational basis, the document is an empty effort to demonstrate its preparation for sovereignty.

Communication and transportation systems are essential to a well-functioning urban network. Cities serve as hubs within territories, but they can only serve that role effectively if supported by an adequate infrastructure. The shape of the RS is geopolitically unfavourable, and much of the pre-war infrastructure – which was not even designed for the shape of the RS - was interrupted by the IEBL. In fact, there are several “hotspots” where the narrowing of communication corridors could potentiate future conflicts. As the foundation for a functional, sovereign state, however, communication infrastructure is essential. RS spatial development plans purport to address this problem. Transportation poses another challenge. Currently, several RS areas are inaccessible by major transport routes (such bottlenecks include the Posavina and South Drina corridors as well as Doboј and Mrkonjić Grad districts). The RS development plan contains large-scale plans for eliminating these bottlenecks and for connecting to Serbia without disrupting any other entity. Several transport development zones (such as the Posavina motorway, Eastern Herzegovinan railway, Serbia-Sarajevo railway) coincide with conflict the “hotspots” and with the “genocide-corridors” mentioned earlier. These are critical areas for the RS – their control allows the entity to operate, and their loss could lead to territorial fragmentation.

Compounding the problems of its awkward shape, RS orography also impedes large-scale infrastructure development. Making progress along the Drina River and in Eastern Herzegovina requires substantial funding and professional skill. For this reason, mega-investments along the Northern and Southern reaches of the Drina River are no longer on the agenda. Currently, the plan is to strengthen east-west relations, which are connected in the territory of Serbia by existing north-south tracks.



**Fig. 6.** Road development plan of Republika Srpska. Prostorni plan Republike Srpske do 2015.

### *Top-down vs. bottom-up state building*

Multiple state-building efforts are occurring simultaneously in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 'main' effort is that initiated by the international community after the 1995 peace treaty. It is calls for by peace implementation followed by peacekeeping, institution and capacity building and infrastructure reconstruction. All efforts are designed to facilitate a functioning state, with attendant reforms and centralization. The effort is funded by international donors, institutions and aid from other countries. This initiative focuses on strengthening a centralized state through minority returns, currency reforms, political reforms and creating an army, and tax and security system. But there remains much to do before it can be transformed into an effective state. A second line of state-building efforts in the Republika Srpska – though more limited – are being undertaken by the Croat community. The interests and motivations of governance in the Serb controlled half of the country are much different than those in the Federation. Croat plans took form in the mid-1980s, but extended beyond typical post-conflict reconstructions efforts. Instead, the efforts were designed to create an ethnically homogenous entity under Croat control. This process was interrupted by international forces, which enforced peace upon the warring parties. After 1995, they began a new wave of state-building, which clings to DPA and IEBL provisions that actually help them to maintain control of territory they gained during the war. In essence, just as ethnocratic regimes do in order to gain control over territory, they create an environment in which ethnicity becomes the dominant social/political factor in all realms of daily life. Classic ethnocratic regimes already possess control and recognized authority over demarcated territories. The RS initiatives are trying to create an ethnically based independent or semi-independent entity, which may weaken and further fragment and already fragile state.

### *Conclusions*

In this paper we focused on Bosnia-Herzegovina - one of Europe's most troubled and fractious countries. Recent trends, however, suggest that it may not be moving toward unified state reforms, but instead that it may be becoming even more divided. Plagued by longstanding armed conflict, a highly decentralized and ethnically based system of governance was introduced as a measure to stop the in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Those measures accomplished their short-term objective; they stopped the hostilities. But the vestiges of that system are now impeding state development and reinforcing ethnic segregation. The bifurcating inter entity border line was drawn without consideration of historical or economic considerations, transportation routes, settlement structures, or divisions of labor. Although the IEBL is not – and did not intend to be - a state border, the subnational ethnic governances and inter-ethnic tensions make it a strong dividing line. Ethnic segregation caused by the civil war was irreversible. Fifteen years after the conflict, fewer than a half million of the minorities displaced by the conflict returned, and many of those did not remain. Demographic trend projects suggest that Bosniaks are moving steadily toward a majority. That will expand Bosniak influences on politics and economics, and multiply their demand on the resources (especially land). To mitigate the growing Bosniak influence, Serbs maintain a subnational ethnocratic regime to exercise control over their 49% of the country and exclude non-Serb citizens from accessing public goods. Regional planning and the vision of the common state are tools used by the elite of Republika Srpska to maintain their exclusive control over the entity and to create spatial structures position them to seek wider autonomy or independence. It is clear that multiple – sometimes competing – state-building efforts are occurring simultaneously in Bosnia-Herzegovina. One aims to create, with external help, a unified, centralized and effective Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the other aims to create and preserve, mainly relying on internal resources, a (semi-)independent Serbian state.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Aganović, Midhat and Jovanović, Želimir (1999), "Bosnia and Herzegovina spatial structures and regional policies". *Vision Planet Project Interreg II.C International Adriatic Conference*, Trieste. <http://www2.units.it/vplanet/atti/Aganovic.htm> last accessed: 2011-05-07

- Alfaro, Michelle (2000), *Returnee Monitoring Study: Minority returnees to the Republika Srpska – Bosnia and Herzegovina*. no place: UNHCR.
- Bajmócy, Péter (2004), „A nemzetiségi és vallási szerkezet változása Magyarországon a XX. században.” in *II. Magyar Földrajzi Konferencia*, 16 p. Szeged: SZTE Természeti Földrajzi és Geoinformatikai Tanszék.
- Haider, Huma (2000), “The Politicisation of Humanitarian Assistance: Refugee and IDP Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. <http://jha.ac/2010/04/26/the-politicisation-of-humanitarian-assistance-refugee-and-idp-policy-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/> last accessed: 2011-04-07
- Houtum, Henk van and Naerssen, Ton van (2002), „Bordering, ordering and othering.” in *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 93, 2: 125–136.
- Juhász, Adrienn Lilla (2008), „A boszniai gócpont: a folytonosság és átmenet keresztútján.” *Külföldi Szemle*, (spring): 47–71.
- Kicošev, Saša and Kocsis, Károly (1998), „A menekültügy társadalmi-demográfiai aspektusai a Vajdaságban.” *Regio*, 9, 3: 63-74.
- McMahon, Patrice C. and Western, Jon (2009), „The Death of Dayton. How to stop Bosnia from falling apart.” *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 5 (September/October): 69-83.
- Reményi, Péter (2006), „Átalakuló városhálózat Bosznia-Hercegovinában”. in *A Balatontól az Adriáig*, edited by Pap, Norbert, 231-240. Pécs: Lomart Kiadó.
- Rogić, Veljko (1977), „The Changing Urban Pattern in Yugoslavia”. In: *An Historical Geography of the Balkans*, edited by Frances W. Carter, 409–436. London: Academic Press.
- Urbanistički zavod Republike Srpske 2008: Prostorni plan Republike Srpske do 2015. godine, Banja Luka.
- Yiftachel, Oren and Ghanem As’ad. „Understanding ‘ethnocratic’ regimes: the politics of seizing contested territories.” *Political Geography*, 23 (2004): 647-676.
- Federalni Zavod za Programiranje Razvoja 2004: Prilog 1. Karte regija BiH <http://www.fzzpr.gov.ba/Bos/Bosanski.htm> downloaded: 18 June 2010.

**Ljiljana MANIC** is Ph.D. in Cultural Studies and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Culture and Media, Megatrend University, Belgrade. Publications: “The Role of the Mass Media in Promoting Philanthropy”, in: *Yearbook of the Faculty of Culture and Media*, Megatrend University, Belgrade, no 3, January, 2011; *Типологија и развој непрофитних организација у Србији (Typology of Non profit Organizations in Serbia)*, Yearbook of the Faculty of Culture and Media, Megatrend University, Belgrade, No. 2, 2010. E-mail: ljmanic@megatrend.edu.rs

**Ludovic NICA** has a Master Diploma in “Euroregional Studies and Cross-border Relations” at University of Oradea; National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, Master Diploma in “European Policy and Economy”; “Moldova și perspectiva aderării la UE”, *European Union: poartă spre noi membri*, Oradea: University of Oradea, 2010, 113-120; nik\_28rx@yahoo.com.

**Anca OLTEAN** is research assistant at the Institute for Euroregional Studies within the University of Oradea and Ph.D candidate in History. “Israel in the European neighbourhood policy” in Ioan Horga, Grigore Silași, Istvan Suli-Zakar, Stanislaw Sagan (ed.), *Intercultural dialogue and European Neighbourhood Policy*, University of Oradea Press, 2009, p. 261-269. E-mail: olteananca@hotmail.com

**Monica OPROIU** is Ph.D candidate in Political Sciences at the NSPSPA, with a thesis focusing on the European Union and conflict resolution in its wider neighbourhood. She is working also as a researcher at the Center for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning in Bucharest. Publications: Monica Oproiu, Iulian Chifu (eds). “The Russian-Georgian War. The decision-makers’ reactions during the crisis” (Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2010). E-mail: oproiu.monica@gmail.com

**Philippe PERCHOC** est docteur en science politique de l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (CERI). Assistant académique au Collège d'Europe, Bruges, et Président et rédacteur en chef du group de débats *Nouvelle Europe*. Ouvrages recentes: « Le compromis mémoriel européen. Une étude balte », dans BONNARD, P. & MINK, G., *L'Europe et ses gisements mémoriels* (Paris : Houdiard, 2010); „L'identité européenne par les frontières”, in: Alexandravicius, P., *L'Europe en tant que puissance mondiale*, Presses de l'Université Romeris, Vilnius, pp. 137-148. Translated in Lithuanian, Europos galia pasaulyje: kolektyvinė monografija. E-mail: p.perchoc@gmail.com

**Adriana POPESCU** has a Master Diploma in “Euroregional Studies and Cross-border Relations” at University of Oradea; National School of Political and Administrative Studies, Bucharest, Master Diploma in “European Policy and Economy”. Publications: “Uniunea Europeană – o comunitate de securitate în formare”, in: *European Union: poartă spre noi membri*, Oradea: University of Oradea, 2010, 70-83, unvadi\_20@yahoo.com.

**REMÉNYI Péter** is Lecturer, PhD, Department of Political Geography and Regional Development, Institute of Geography, Faculty of Sciences, University of Pécs. Publications: „International institutional co-operations in the border areas of Hungary and Serbia”, in: *Megatrend Review. The international review of applied economics*, 7 (1) (2010): 119-140; „Etnikai homogenizáció a volt Jugoszláviában” (Ethnic homogenization in the former Yugoslavia), in: *Balkán Füzetek Különszám I*, (2009): 122-129; REMÉNYI P. and VÉGH A. 2006: „Az ezredforduló határkérdései, határváltozásai a Nyugat-Balkánon” („Border issues and border changes in the Western Balkans at the turn of the millennium”). *Földrajzi Értesítő (Hungarian Geographical Bulletin)*, LV. évf. 1–2. sz. pp. 195–211. E-mail: remko@gamma.ttk.pte.hu

**Giulia PRELZ OLTRAMONTI** is a PhD candidate in Political Sciences at Université libre de Bruxelles and a Visiting fellow at the Centre d'Etude de la Vie Politique. She holds a MA degree in Conflict, Security and Development from King’s College London and a BA degree in European Social and Political Studies from University College London. Publications: ““Engagement Through Cooperation”: coming too late”, in translation: ‘ « Géorgie: L’engagement par la coopération»: un train de retard’, *Caucas.com*, Tbilisi, April 2011 ([http://www.caucas.com/home/breve\\_contenu.php?id=614](http://www.caucas.com/home/breve_contenu.php?id=614)). E-mail: gprelzol@ulb.ac.be)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.