

COMPASS FINAL INTEGRAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Serbia's Relations with the EU and China 2024-2025: Political, Security, and Economic Domains



Ivona Lađevac, Branislav Đorđević, Sanja Filipović,
Katarina Zakić, Aleksandar Mitić, Nenad Stekić, Pavle Nedić

COMPASS FINAL INTEGRAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Serbia's Relations with the EU and China 2024-2025: Political, Security, and Economic Domains

Belgrade, December 2025

COMPASS FINAL INTERFRAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Serbia's Relations with the EU and China 2024-2025: Political, Security, and Economic Domains

Authors:

Ivona Lađevac, Branislav Đorđević, Sanja Filipović, Katarina Zakić, Aleksandar Mitić, Nenad Stekić, Pavle Nedić

Publisher:

Institute of International Politics and Economics, 25 Makedonska St., 11000, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

For the Publisher:

Prof. Dr. Branislav Đorđević,
IIPE Director

Layout:

Luka Ivanović

First published:

December 20, 2025

Available formats:

PDF

Data size:

PDF – 1,7 mb

To cite this Report:

Ivona Lađevac, Branislav Đorđević, Sanja Filipović, Katarina Zakić, Aleksandar Mitić, Nenad Stekić, Pavle Nedić. 2025. "Serbia's relations with the EU and China 2024-2025: Political, security, and economic domains, COMPASS Final Integral Scientific Report", Belgrade: Institute of International Politics and Economics.

Belgrade, 2025 ©


Contents

Introduction	6
Economy Cooperation Between Serbia and the EU/PR China	10
Political & Security Cooperation Between Serbia and the EU/PR China	18
COMPASS Risk Assessment – Matrixes of COMPASS	38
Media and Dissemination Report of the Compass Project	46
Report from the final conference	63



01

Introduction



The COMPASS project, formally titled „Contributing to Modern Partnerships: Assessments of Sino-EU-Serbian Relations“, represents an scientific endeavor conducted from December 1, 2023 through November 30, 2025 under the support of the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia (Grant No. 7294). Implemented by the Institute of International Politics and Economics (IIPE) in cooperation with the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), COMPASS was designed to offer a rigorous, empirically grounded assessment of the principal risks that characterize Serbia’s relations with two of its most consequential strategic partners, the European Union and the People’s Republic of China, across the pivotal domains of politics, security, and economics.

At its core, COMPASS sought to map and evaluate the evolving landscape of Serbia’s external relations against

a backdrop of deepening geopolitical complexity. The project adopted a systematic approach rooted in extensive data collection and content analysis of developments in Serbian foreign policy since 2013, identifying contingencies and classifying them according to their implications for Serbia’s foreign policy position. These contingencies, defined as events, actions, or policy decisions that have the potential to influence risk dynamics, were further analyzed using a structured risk-assessment matrix that quantifies both their likelihood and potential consequences. In doing so, COMPASS not only offered a robust analytical framework but also enriched academic and policy debates with new empirical insights.

The rationale for focusing on the EU and China reflects Serbia’s unique strategic position. On the one hand, the European Union remains Serbia’s principal economic partner and its declared accession objective, exerting significant influence on political and regulatory orientation. On the other, China’s growing global footprint and deepening bilateral cooperation with Belgrade, ranging from infrastructure investment to security collaboration, have introduced a parallel set of strategic considerations that increasingly intersect with Serbia’s broader foreign policy calculus.

This dual focus aligns with the theoretical foundation of the project, strategic hedging, where a state seeks to balance multiple external partnerships in an environment marked by uncertainty and shifting power dynamics.

Over the course of its two-year implementation, the COMPASS project team led by Principal Investigator Dr. Ivona Ladevac and comprising specialists in international relations, security studies, and economics generated a substantial body of research outputs and analytical tools that demonstrate the scientific depth and practical relevance of the project. As presented at the concluding COMPASS multistakeholder conference in November 2025, these achievements collectively represent one of the most comprehensive assessments to date of Serbia's strategic engagements with the EU and China.

Among the most significant accomplishments were the development of a novel risk-assessment methodology, the construction of a comprehensive database of identified risks to Serbian foreign policy, and the deployment of Delphi sessions with domain experts to validate analytical findings. The project also conducted two public opinion surveys on Serbia's foreign policy preferences, thus offering a integration of expert and public perspectives on Serbia's international positioning. Scientifically, the project yielded over 20 scholarly articles, including publications across internationally recognized academic categories, several of which were indexed in global research

databases. Scholarly engagement was further enhanced through international conferences and workshops, such as the Dialogues on China events and participation in global academic forums. Complementing these were dedicated capacity-building activities, including

training for emerging researchers and a workshop targeting foreign policy decision-makers. The COMPASS online platform registered substantial engagement, with tens of thousands of visits to its repository of analytical content, underscoring its value not only to researchers but to practitioners and the broader public alike.

This final integral scientific report brings together the cumulative analytical work and empirical findings of the COMPASS project spread across several reports. Its structure reflects the project's overarching analytical architecture and offers a presentation of diverse types of results that span multiple interrelated domains:

- 1. Economy Cooperation Between Serbia and the EU/PR China:** The first component of this report synthesizes the economic dimensions of Serbia's partnerships with the EU and China. It examines trade flows, investment patterns, financial engagements, and the economic implications of strategic alignment or diversification in foreign economic policy. Emphasis is placed on risk factors that may influence Serbia's economic resilience and long-term developmental trajectories.

2. Political & Security Cooperation Between Serbia and the EU/PR China: Building on the economic analysis, the second component assesses political and security cooperation. It explores diplomatic engagements, institutional and normative alignment, security arrangements, military cooperation, and the broader implications of strategic policies on national and regional stability.

3. Integral Risk Matrixes Report: Central to the COMPASS analytical apparatus, this section presents refined risk matrices that integrate data from the three studied domains. These matrices offer a synthesized overview of identified contingencies, their assessed risk levels, and cross-domain intersections. This effort provides a decisive tool for both scholarly evaluation and policy prioritization.

4. Media and Dissemination Report: Recognizing the importance of knowledge transfer and public engagement, this component documents COMPASS's dissemination efforts, media outreach, and visibility in both national and international forums. It evaluates the project's impact on public debate and on the broader recognition of its analytical outputs. It particularly highlights the results of the public opinion surveys conducted under the project's methodological framework, which showed how public perceptions align with or diverge from expert assessments of strategic partnerships.

5. Report from the Final Conference: The concluding segment of the report chronicles the insights and discussions from the final multistakeholder conference held in November 2025. This synthesis captures peer reflections, expert commentary, and stakeholder contributions that consolidate the project's legacy and point toward future research and policy directions.

Together, these interconnected reports represent a comprehensive account of the COMPASS project's contribution to understanding Serbia's strategic partnerships with the European Union and the People's Republic of China. This integral scientific report serves as both a culmination of a sustained scientific effort and a foundational resource for ongoing policy and scholarly inquiry.



Economy Cooperation Between Serbia and the EU/PR China

The primary objective of this report is to present an overview of **high and extreme risk contingencies** within the economy area of Serbia's foreign policy landscape. Drawing from the comprehensive COMPASS risk assessment framework, this report stems from the COMPASS Dataset and identifies, categorizes, and examines those contingencies that possess either a significant probability of occurrence paired with substantial potential consequences or an imminent threat of critical impact on Serbia's economic relations, trade partnerships, and foreign direct investments. Furthermore, due to the connection of these topics with political and security areas, this report contains the contingencies deemed as belonging to not only economic, but also one or both of the other domains.

Within the COMPASS methodology, a **contingency** is defined as an event or action that has the potential to influence the escalation of risks across the political, security, or economic realms of Serbia's foreign policy environment. Each contingency is subject to a structured evaluation through a risk assessment matrix that appraises both **likelihood and impact**, enabling systematic classification into risk levels ranging from low to extreme. High and extreme risk classifications signify those contingencies with profound implications should they materialize, demanding deeper analytic scrutiny.

Additionally, every contingency presented contains a short description, date, area, subarea, list of actors involved and the relevance for EU, China or both bilateral relations.

Certain contingencies cut across both economic and political-security domains. For reasons of analytical coherence and to avoid duplication, such contingencies were addressed in the economic report, where their core dynamics and primary impacts are most clearly articulated.

High risk contingencies constitute a real and significant risk for Serbia's position in international system. They have the potential to cause considerable harm if left unaddressed. Risk that would have significantly impact and has a legitimate chance to occur, has a big probability or will occur with great certainty, as well as a contingency tied risk that would have severe and widespread negative impacts and has a legitimate chance to occur.

Extreme – Critical Risk contingencies represent The most critical risk for the values embedded in Serbia's foreign, security, or economic policies. Critical/extreme risks that would involve catastrophic consequences and are, based on current available information undoubtedly certain to occur in the near or mid-term future.

The economic domain revolves around the various dimensions of economic collaboration between Serbia and both the

EU and China. This includes grants, loans, bilateral trade agreements, foreign direct investments, collaborative infrastructural projects, and the exploration of the economic effects arising from the cooperation with these two actors on Serbia's economy.

This report situates its analysis within the broader temporal scope of COMPASS, placing focus on on the project's active implementation period of 2024–2025. More specifically, the report covers the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 July 2025. Due to their definition, the assessed period does not contain any Extreme – Critical Risk contingencies and thus only high risk contingencies are listed below.

By presenting high risk contingencies in economy area, the report aims to support evidence-based understanding, inform policy deliberations, and enhance strategic foresight regarding Serbia's evolving role in an increasingly complex international order.

High risk contingencies

Dispute over payment of salaries and pensions to Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija

After a meeting with EU Envoy Miroslav Lajčák, President Aleksandar Vučić addressed concerns about Prime Minister of Kosovo*, Albin Kurti, aiming to prevent the payment of salaries and pensions to the Serb population in Kosovo and Meto-

hija. Vučić stated that this could lead to further escalations in the already tense relations between Priština and Belgrade. He emphasized the potential for political, economic, and security repercussions if Kurti's government follows through with these actions.

Date: 17/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S; E

Subarea: EU Accession process; Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability; Economic policies

Actor/s: China; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; EU Commission; Miroslav Lajčák; Kosovo and Metohija

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbia requests emergency UNSC session over Kosovo and Metohija situation

In response to escalating tensions in Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia has submitted a formal request for an urgent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session. Rising acts of violence against Serbs, attempts to undermine Serbian dinar, and violations of UNSC Resolution 1244 are key reasons for the request.

Date: 5/2/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; S; E

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; Serbia and international fora; Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability; Other - economical

Actor/s: UN; Kosovo and Metohija; Serbia; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

President Vucic appeals for international action over Kosovo and Metohija as tensions mount

During an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic emphasized the sharp humanitarian and political crisis faced by Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. Vucic referred to the recent decision of the so-called Kosovo* Central Bank to ban the use of the Serbian dinar starting February 1, claiming such a move will affect the very survival of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija, who up until now have relied on Serbia's financial assistance to receive salaries, pensions, and social benefits. The President explained that the ban on the dinar resulted in so many Serbian-owned businesses being closed and community services compromised, from health care to education, which threatened to impede

these services from continuing. President Vucic condemned the broader attempts at ethnic cleansing by Pristina: seizures of the headquarters of local government in Serb-majority municipalities and continuous selective detentions. He underlined that ethnically motivated attacks have increased drastically (more than 300%) since Kosovo* Prime Minister Albin Kurti came into office. This is further fueled by the one-sided movement of Pristina to the euro as the main currency, which puts Serbs in greater economic isolation. Vucic also called on the UN Security Council to intervene without delay, in conjunction with other international structures, to stop further escalation, protect the Serbian community, and ensure the dialogue provided for by UN Resolution 1244 and other relevant agreements. He insisted that the measures taken by Pristina are crimes against humanity and asked the allies to decisively condemn those acts in a bid to stabilize the Western Balkans. He thanked all the international partners who have condemned Pristina's moves and said that instead of declarations, it was necessary to take concrete measures to stop the persecution of Serbs and preserve peace in this part of the world.

Date: 8/2/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; S; E

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; Serbia and international fora;

Date: 21/2/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability; Economic policies; Other - economical

Area: P; S; E

Actor/s: Aleksandar Vučić; UN; Kosovo and Metohija; Albin Kurti; Serbia; Kosovo*

Subarea: EU Accession process; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora; National Security & Regional Stability; International Security; Serbia in EU CFSP/CSDP; Economic policies

Consequences: 4

Actor/s: Russia; USA; EU; France; Germany; UK; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Serbian MFA; EU Parliament; EU Commission

Likelihood: 3

Consequences: 4

EU imposes new sanctions on Russia amid ongoing Ukraine conflict

Likelihood: 4

On February 21, 2024, the European Union announced a new round of sanctions against Russia in response to its continued actions in Ukraine. These sanctions target Russian financial institutions, technology exports, and key sectors critical to Russia's economy. The EU aims to weaken Russia's war capabilities and increase economic pressure. However, these measures could also have repercussions within the EU, such as potential energy supply disruptions, economic impacts on European businesses operating in Russia, and increased tension within member states facing differing levels of reliance on Russian resources. This contingency reflects the EU's commitment to supporting Ukraine while managing the economic and political consequences of sanctions within Europe.

Serbia's New Measures Regarding Kosovo and Metohija Institutions

The Serbian Government announced a series of measures concerning Kosovo and Metohija. These include the return to the status quo, ensuring the resilience of Serb institutions, establishing a special prosecutor's office, and declaring all Kosovo institutions established after independence illegal. Serbia's future moves fall into five areas, he said, noting that the country seeks a return to what has been achieved in the dialogue process. The President specified the moves, which are: - Return to the "status quo;" Kosovo and Metohija as an area of special social protection; Resilience of Serb institutions in Kosovo and Metohija; Establishing a special Prosecutor's Office;

Decision on the illegality of all bodies and institutions established on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija after the illegal unilateral declaration of independence and the non-existence of all their acts that have been passed or will be passed.

Date: 13/9/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S; E

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; National Security & Regional Stability; Economic policies

Actor/s: USA; EU; France; Germany; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Kosovo and Metohija

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Rio Tinto's acquisition of "Arcadium Lithium" positions company as global leader in critical minerals

Rio Tinto has announced a definitive agreement to acquire Arcadium Lithium in an all-cash transaction valued at approximately \$6.7 billion, or \$5.85 per share, representing a 90% premium to Arcadium's closing price. This strategic acquisition is expected to close by mid-2025, pending regulatory approvals. By integrating Arcadium's assets, Rio Tinto aims to significantly expand its lithium resource base, enhancing its position as a leading global producer of this critical

mineral essential for energy transition technologies. Arcadium Lithium is recognized for its vertically integrated operations, encompassing both hard rock lithium mining and brine extraction, with a current annual production capacity of 75,000 tonnes of lithium carbonate equivalent. Plans are underway to more than double this capacity by the end of 2028. This acquisition complements Rio Tinto's existing lithium projects, including the Rincon project in Argentina and the Jadar project in Serbia, reinforcing the company's commitment to supplying key materials for the global shift towards sustainable energy solutions.

Date: 1/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: S; E

Subarea: Human Security; Foreign direct investments

Actor/s: Rio Tinto

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Von der Leyen visited Serbia and discussed lithium expansion and EU integration

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen met with Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić in Belgrade on October 25. They held talks focusing on Serbia's potential lithium expansion and its implications for EU integration. Von

der Leyen highlighted the importance of Serbia aligning its resource development strategies with EU environmental and economic standards.

Date: 25/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; E

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia's domestic politics; Serbia and international fora; Other - economical

Actor/s: EU; Aleksandar Vučić; EU Commission; Serbian Ministry of Mining and Energy; Serbian Ministry of Environmental Protection; Serbian Ministry of Finance; Ursula von der Leyen

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Serbia's strategic role in the global race for critical raw materials

The European Union has launched a €22.5 billion initiative encompassing 47 strategic projects aimed at bolstering domestic production, processing, and recycling of critical raw materials. Notably, Serbia's Jadar lithium project, led by Rio Tinto, is under consideration for inclusion in this initiative. Serbia holds confirmed lithium reserves of approximately 158 million tons, capable of producing 58,000 tons of lithium carbonate annually. This capacity positions Serbia to potentially supply up to 20% of the

EU, UK, and Norwegian markets. The EU's Critical Raw Materials Act mandates member states to expedite permitting processes for mining projects, aiming to reduce reliance on external suppliers, particularly from China. However, the Jadar project has faced strong domestic opposition due to environmental concerns, lack of transparency, and fears over long-term impacts on water resources, agriculture, and public health.

Date: 1/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: S; E

Subarea: Human Security; Foreign direct investments

Actor/s: EU; Serbia; Rio Tinto

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Chinese Premier Li Qiang held a telephone call with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

In April 2025, Chinese Premier Li Qiang spoke with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, stressing the 50th anniversary of China-EU relations and calling for deeper cooperation to safeguard free trade and investment. Amid rising U.S. tariffs and global trade tensions, Beijing intensified outreach

to the EU to strengthen economic and political ties and reduce dependence on the United States under President Donald Trump.

Date: 9/4/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; E

Subarea: Diplomatic visits; Four pillars policy; Foreign trade; Belt and Road Initiative

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU; Xi Jinping; Ursula von der Leyen; Donald Trump; Li Qiang

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

New U.S. tariffs of 50% on steel and aluminum imposed

The U.S. has imposed new tariffs of 50% on steel and aluminium starting June 4, doubling the previous 25% rates introduced in March by President Donald Trump. The policy emphasizes countering unfair trade practices and global excess capacity, especially from countries like Canada and the United Kingdom, though the latter will retain a 25% tariff under a new trade agreement.

Date: 4/6/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: E

Subarea: Foreign trade

Actor/s: China; USA; EU; UK; Canada; Donald Trump

Consequences: 5

Likelihood: 4

European ports face significant congestion

Europe is experiencing its worst supply chain congestion since the coronavirus pandemic due to a combination of US tariff policies and low river levels, particularly affecting major ports like Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg. Shipping and logistics companies report long delays for barges and container ships, with barges waiting over 66 hours at Antwerp and 77 hours at Rotterdam to load goods. The situation is further impacted by the increased container volumes from Asia to Europe, driven by high US tariffs diverting goods from the US.

Date: 30/6/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: E

Subarea: Foreign trade

Actor/s: China; USA; EU

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Political & Security Cooperation Between Serbia and the EU/PR China

The primary objective of this report is to present an overview of **high and extreme risk contingencies** within the political and security areas of Serbia's foreign policy landscape. Drawing from the comprehensive COMPASS risk assessment framework, this report stems from the COMPASS Dataset and identifies, categorizes, and examines those contingencies that possess either a significant probability of occurrence paired with substantial potential consequences or an imminent threat of critical impact on Serbia's political stability, foreign policy goals, and national security posture. The contingencies affecting not only these areas but the economy one as well are presented in the other report.

Within the COMPASS methodology, a contingency is defined as an event or action that has the potential to influence the escalation of risks across the political, security, or economic realms of Serbia's foreign policy environment. Each contingency is subject to a structured evaluation through a risk assessment matrix that appraises both likelihood and impact, enabling systematic classification into risk levels ranging from low to extreme. High and extreme risk classifications signify those contingencies with profound implications should they materialize, demanding deeper analytic scrutiny.

Additionally, every contingency presented contains a short description, date, area, subarea, list of actors involved and the relevance for EU, China or both bilateral relations.

High risk contingencies constitute a real and significant risk for Serbia's position in international system. They have the potential to cause considerable harm if left unaddressed. Risk that would have significantly impact and has a legitimate chance to occur, has a big probability or will occur with great certainty, as well as a contingency tied risk that would have severe and widespread negative impacts and has a legitimate chance to occur.

Extreme – Critical Risk contingencies represent The most critical risk for the values embedded in Serbia's foreign, security, or economic policies. Critical/extreme risks that would involve catastrophic consequences and are, based on current available information undoubtedly certain to occur in the near or mid-term future.

In the **political domain**, risks encompass developments such as bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagements, legislative actions, public declarations, official state visits, and policy shifts that could significantly alter Serbia's international relations or jeopardize core foreign policy objectives. These contingencies are assessed not only for their direct implications but also for their secondary effects on Serbia's geopolitical alignments and strategic commitments.

In the **security domain**, risk contingencies include military cooperation agreements, changes in the posture and engagement of the Serbian Armed Forces, participation in international missions, arms trade dynamics, and evolving defense legislation. These factors are evaluated for their capacity to influence Serbia's defense readiness, alliance dynamics, and overall security environment.

This report situates its analysis within the broader temporal scope of COMPASS, placing focus on the project's active implementation period of **2024–2025**. More specifically, the report covers the period from **1 January 2024 to 31 July 2025**. Due to their definition, the assessed period does not contain any Extreme – Critical Risk contingencies and thus only high risk contingencies are listed below.

By presenting high risk contingencies in political and security areas, the report aims to support evidence-based understanding, inform policy deliberations, and enhance strategic foresight regarding Serbia's evolving role in an increasingly complex international order.

High risk contingencies

Croatia is renovating the barracks in Beli Manastir

The Ministry of Defense of Croatia has initiated the process of renovating the barracks in Beli Manastir in Baranja, near

the border with Serbia, where the Croatian Army's "Sokolovi" mechanized battalion will be located. Renovation will be completed in 2026, housing 650 to 850 soldiers. The move seeks to enhance border security amid a migrant influx and tackle demographic decline.

Date: 12/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: S

Subarea: National Security & Regional Stability

Actor/s: Serbian Government; Serbian Armed Forces; NATO; Croatia

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

The BIA arrested an associate of the Albanian intelligence service in Serbia

Serbian Security Information Agency (BIA) has uncovered and dismantled another espionage network operating in Serbia. A Serbian national, D.R., was arrested on suspicion of collaborating with the Albanian State Intelligence Service since 2022. He established contacts with Kosovo's intelligence agency and collected sensitive political, security, and economic information in Serbia, including data on Serbian security personnel and individuals from Kosovo.

Date: 12/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Likelihood: 3

Area: S

Subarea: National Security & Regional Stability

Actor/s: Serbia; Albania; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Alongside anti-tank missiles, Kosovo intends to acquire additional weapons.

In addition to acquiring 246 Javelin anti-tank missiles from the U.S., Kosovo's Ministry of Defense announced plans for further military procurement, though details remain confidential. Kosovo aims to bolster its security capabilities in light of tensions with Serbia, particularly following incidents like the Banjska attack. President Vjosa Osmani affirmed that these efforts are part of Kosovo's commitment to enhancing defense capacities in line with NATO standards.

Date: 12/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: S

Subarea: National Security & Regional Stability; Military cooperation

Actor/s: USA; NATO; Serbia; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Vučić's call for unity on western pressure

Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić emphasized the need for national unity in response to Western pressure concerning Kosovo* and Serbia's stance on Russia. In a politically charged speech, Vučić urged political forces to consolidate and resist Western demands, highlighting the importance of preserving Serbia's national interests in light of its relationship with Russia and the unresolved status of Kosovo. The call for unity comes amid ongoing tensions in Serbia's foreign policy and strained relations with Western powers.

Date: 15/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Four pillars policy

Actor/s: Russia; USA; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Serbian MFA; Office for

Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo and Metohija; Political West

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Priština's effort to improve EU relations while targeting Serbia

In January 2024, Albin Kurti, the Prime Minister of the temporary authorities in Priština, sought to restore relations with the EU while challenging Serbia's stance. Speaking to Politico, Kurti criticized the EU for imposing sanctions on Kosovo* over unrest in the north, while Serbia faces no penalties despite aligning with Russia. Kurti's strategy aims to position Priština as a responsible EU partner and undermine Serbia's narrative.

Date: 20/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Four pillars policy

Actor/s: Russia; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Office for Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo and Metohija; Albin Kurti

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Kosovo* signs Military Framework Agreement with Türkiye

A Military Framework Agreement has been signed between Yaşar Güler, the Turkish Minister of Defense, and Ejup

Maqedonci, the Minister of Defense of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina. The agreement was finalized in Türkiye during the official visit of a delegation from Kosovo* and so-called Kosovo Security Forces (KSF). According to the signatories, the agreement aims to strengthen military cooperation and includes provisions for joint training and education, medical treatment of KSF members in Türkiye, and military personnel exchanges.

Date: 29/1/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; National Security & Regional Stability; International Security; Military cooperation; Statements and institutional activities; Other – security

Actor/s: Kosovo and Metohija; Türkiye

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Kosovo* police carries out a raid on Serbian infirmary in Pristina, health workers detained

The Office for Kosovo and Metohija condemned a police raid on an infirmary serving the Serbian community in Pristina. The statement condemned the raid that led to the detention of health work-

ers for several hours. It points out that this incident highlights the violent and oppressive tactics of Albin Kurti's regime, reflecting his hostility towards the remaining Serbian population. The infirmary has been providing essential health services to a dwindling number of Serbs since 2005. The raid serves as a stark message to these residents, indicating that they are unwelcome and denied their right to healthcare. Despite nearly two decades of operation, the infirmary now faces renewed threats and intimidation, representing a broader pattern of persecution against Serbs.

Date: 1/2/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability

Actor/s: Office for Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo and Metohija; Albin Kurti; Serbia; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Kosovo* police raids municipalities of Pec, Istok, and Klina

The Office for Kosovo and Metohija condemned a recent raid by the so-called Kosovo* police in Serbian municipalities of Pec, Istok, and Klina, describing it as

continuation of ethnic cleansing and part of ongoing campaign to drive Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija. The raid of the so-called Kosovo* police included shutting down Serbian-administered municipal buildings, health centers, and pharmacies. Local leaders were detained for questioning, prompting accusations of ethnic cleansing against Kosovo's* leadership under Albin Kurti. This action follows previous incidents that have gone unchallenged by the international community, raising concerns over regional stability and the rights of Serbian returnees in the area.

Date: 2/2/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability

Actor/s: Office for Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Serbia calls for international action on human rights violations in Kosovo and Metohija

Addressing the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council in an online format, Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, emphasized the

ongoing hardships faced by Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, who for decades have endured discrimination, restricted freedom of movement, and limited rights to political participation and economic development. He urged international community to address these persistent and severe human right violations and abuses and work towards ensuring basic rights and security for the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija.

Date: 26/2/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; Serbia and international fora; Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability

Actor/s: Serbian MFA; UN; Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

China's diplomatic push to strengthen EU relations

In March 2024, China initiated a diplomatic outreach campaign aimed at improving its relationship with the European Union, deploying his special envoy for Eurasian affairs on a "shuttle diplomacy" tour of several European countries and urging Brussels to prioritize common interests over differences between the two sides, which has been strained over

issues such as human rights, trade imbalances, and China's stance on the Ukraine conflict. Through high-level meetings and economic incentives, China seeks to position itself as a cooperative partner on global challenges like climate change and economic recovery. However, the EU remains cautious about China's intentions, balancing its economic interests with concerns over security, supply chain dependencies, and alignment with U.S. policies.

Date: 1/3/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; S

Subarea: EU Accession process; Sino-Serbian political cooperation; Four pillars policy; National Security & Regional Stability; International Security

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Kosovo* gets closer to the Council of Europe membership

Kosovo's* membership application has received a positive recommendation from the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, despite strong Serbian objections. Serbian officials have hinted at possible responses, including considering withdrawal from the Council

of Europe. This event follows Kosovo's* concession of disputed land to the Serbian Orthodox Dečani Monastery. The final vote is expected in April.

Date: 27/3/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: EU; Serbian Government; Serbian MFA; Council of Europe; Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Scholz's diplomatic visit to China

In April 2024, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited China to engage in high-level discussions on trade, climate action, and geopolitical stability. Scholz's visit sought to maintain Germany's economic ties with China while addressing European concerns about overdependence on Chinese markets and the geopolitical challenges posed by China's foreign policies. The visit reflects Germany's attempt to navigate a nuanced relationship with China, balancing the need for economic cooperation with EU-wide calls for strategic autonomy and alignment with the United States on critical issues.

Date: 19/4/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P

Subarea: Diplomatic visits; Four pillars policy; Other - political

Actor/s: China; EU; Germany; Xi Jinping; Olaf Scholz

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Iran threatens to attack Israel

The US will deploy additional warships and fighter jets to the Middle East to help defend Israel from possible attacks by Iran and its proxies, the Pentagon said. Tensions remain high in the region over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and a key commander of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Missile defence forces were placed on a state of increased readiness to deploy, the Pentagon said, adding that its commitment to defend Israel was "ironclad".

Date: 7/8/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: S

Subarea: Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability; Other - security

Actor/s: Iran; USA; Israel

Consequences: 5

Likelihood: 3

Kosovo* police occupies numerous Serbian institutions in the north

Authorities in Kosovo have closed five parallel institutions working with the ethnic Serb minority, accusing them of being illegal. These institutions provided employment and services to Serbian and non-Albanian citizens of northern part of Kosovo and Metohija. The move is further contributing to rising tensions between Albanian and Serbian population.

Date: 31/8/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: EU Accession process; Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; National

Security & Regional Stability

Actor/s: USA; EU; Serbian Government; Kosovo and Metohija; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

EU warns Serbia on alignment with Russia amid accession talks

On September 5, 2024, the European Union, through High Representative Josep Borrell and European Commissioner for Enlargement Várhelyi Olivér, issued a warning to Serbia regarding its continued alignment with Russia, stating that this stance contradicts Serbia's declared goal of EU membership. The EU emphasized the need for candidate countries to align with its foreign and security policies, particularly concerning sanctions against Russia over its actions in Ukraine.

Date: 5/9/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Four pillars policy

Actor/s: Russia; EU; Serbian Government; Serbian MFA; Serbian Ministry of European Integrations; Ukraine; Várhelyi Olivér; Josep Borrell

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

EU Spokesman Stano called on Kosovo to refrain from unilateral actions and criticized Serbia's Russia ties

On September 5, 2024, EU Spokesman Peter Stano called on Priština authorities to refrain from unilateral actions that escalate tensions in the region and expressed concerns about Serbia's intensifying relations with Russia. Stano emphasized the importance of both sides engaging in constructive dialogue to normalize relations under the EU-facilitated process. According to Stano, while Priština's actions risk destabilizing regional peace, Belgrade's growing ties with Russia challenge its EU accession commitments, particularly in foreign policy alignment.

Date: 5/9/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: Russia; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; EU Parliament; EU Commission;

Peter Stano

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbia-China joint special units exercise

In September 2024, Serbia and China concluded a joint military exercise, attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Ivica Dačić, involving special units from both countries, focusing on counter-terrorism and crisis response. While the exercise demonstrated operational capabilities and mutual trust, it raised concerns among some EU member states and NATO allies about Serbia's balancing act between Eastern and Western partnerships.

Date: 11/9/2024

Geographic actor: China

Area: P; S

Subarea: Diplomatic visits; Sino-Serbian political cooperation; National Security & Regional Stability; Military cooperation

Actor/s: China; Serbian Government; Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia; Ivica Dačić; Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

China's call for Belgrade-Priština constructive dialogue

In September 2024, China urged Belgrade and Priština authorities to engage in constructive dialogue to reduce esca-

lating tensions between the two sides. Highlighting its position as a global mediator, China emphasized the importance of peaceful resolution and regional stability in the Balkans. This intervention comes amid strained relations between Belgrade and Pristina over unresolved political and territorial disputes. Beijing believes “that the security and lawful rights and interests of ethnic Serbs in the Kosovo region should be upheld.”

Date: 16/9/2024

Geographic actor: China

Area: P

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia’s domestic politics; Four pillars policy

Actor/s: China; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Office for Kosovo and Metohija;

Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Military agreement between Kosovo and Turkey

Vjosa Osmani authorized the Kosovo* Ministry of Defense to sign a military framework agreement with Turkey. The agreement covers personnel exchanges, materials, equipment, and

training between the armed forces of both nations. Additionally, it includes provisions for military education and intelligence cooperation.

Date: 10/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Human Security; National Security & Regional Stability; International Security; Military cooperation

Actor/s: Serbian MoD; NATO; Kosovo and Metohija; Turkey; Türkiye; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Tanja Mišćević, MEI: Serbia’s commitment to align systemic laws with EU regulations by 2027

In October 2024, Serbian Minister for European Integration Tanja Mišćević announced a comprehensive plan to align all systemic laws with EU regulations by 2027. This ambitious reform initiative demonstrates Serbia’s commitment to meeting EU accession requirements and advancing its integration process. However, the scale and scope of the required legal reforms pose significant challenges, including the need for political consensus, administrative capacity, and sustained public support.

Date: 10/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia's domestic politics

Actor/s: EU; EU Parliament; EU Commission; Serbian Ministry of European Integrations; Tanja

Miščević

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Serbian Ministry of Defense issues a statement on Kurti's allegations regarding SAF troops' movement

The Ministry of Defense issued a statement claiming that the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) are being once again targeted in a disinformation campaign carried out by the Albin Kurti, the Prime Minister of Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Priština. The Serbian Statement affirms the SAF troops' activities are in line with the Military Technical Agreement and other signed agreements. These activities in the Ground Safety Zone are regular tasks in supervising and guarding the administrative line. The SAF prevented timber smugglers from carrying out illegal transport of timber to the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. Furthermore, as

stated by the Ministry of Defense, the presence of the so-called Kosovo* Security Force and so-called Kosovo* Police has no legal grounds.

Date: 13/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Serbia's domestic politics; National Security & Regional Stability; Statements and institutional activities

Actor/s: Serbian MoD; Serbian Armed Forces; Kosovo and Metohija; Albin Kurti; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

MEPs warn against China's actions on Taiwan

On October 24, 2024, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) issued a warning about China's attempts to distort history and international law regarding Taiwan. The statement emphasizes the EU's commitment to preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait while reaffirming support for Taiwan's democratic institutions.

Date: 24/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; S

Subarea: Four pillars policy; Other - political; International Security

Actor/s: China; EU; EU Parliament; CPC; Taiwan

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbia's 2024 EU progress report

The 2024 Serbia Report from the European Commission, issued on October 30, 2024, assessed Serbia's progress toward EU membership, emphasizing advances in economic reform and regional cooperation while highlighting persistent challenges in the rule of law, media freedom, and judicial independence. The report calls for accelerated reforms to align with EU standards, particularly in combating corruption and organized crime. While the report recognizes Serbia's efforts, it raises concerns about the pace of reforms and political alignment with EU foreign policy.

Date: 30/10/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process

Actor/s: EU; Serbian Government; EU Parliament; EU Commission; Serbian Ministry of European Integrations

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

MoD statement on heavily armed members of the so-called Kosovo* Police crossing the administrative line

Serbian Ministry of Defense (MoD) issued a statement condemning the unauthorized crossing of administrative line between the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and Central Serbia by members of the so-called Kosovo* Police, who were heavily armed. MoD points out that this act is just one in a row of escalatory moves of Albin Kurti. Serbian side demands KFOR to take necessary actions in accordance with its mandate.

Date: 21/11/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; National Security & Regional Stability; Statements and institutional activities

Actor/s: Serbian MoD; Kosovo and Metohija; Albin Kurti; Serbia; Kosovo*; KFOR

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Minister Gašić denies allegations of Xhelal Svecla concerning the seized explosives

Bratislav Gašić, the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Serbia, has denied allegations made by Xhelal Svecla concerning the seized explosives. Minister Gašić said that Serbia has not been involved and that the explosives had not originate from Serbian Armed Forces' (SAF) depots. According to the Serbian Defense Minister, such allegations are part of the ongoing campaign of repression against the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija.

Date: 30/11/2024

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Belgrade-Priština dialogue; Serbia's domestic politics; National Security & Regional Stability; Statements and institutional activities

Actor/s: Serbian MoD; Kosovo and Metohija; Serbia; Kosovo*

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

President Trump's 2025 joint address to Congress

Donald Trump emphasized the signing of nearly 100 executive orders aimed at revitalizing the economy, reforming immigration policies, and reducing federal

regulations. The President praised the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, for its role in streamlining government operations. He also announced plans for new tariffs to address trade imbalances and discussed a proposed "gold card" path to citizenship for wealthy immigrants. The speech was marked by partisan reactions, with Republican members expressing strong support, while some Democrats protested, leading to the removal of Representative Al Green from the chamber.

Date: 4/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P

Subarea: Other - political

Actor/s: USA; Donald Trump

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Statement by the EU spokesperson on March 2025 protest developments in Serbia

According to the Statement by the EU spokesperson on March 2025 protest developments in Serbia, the EU is concerned about disruptions and violence in Serbia's Parliament, stressing that it should be a space for democratic debate. The EU has consistently called for

de-escalation and an inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders to address the reforms necessary for Serbia's EU integration.

Date: 5/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia's domestic politics

Actor/s: EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; EU Parliament; EU Commission

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Orbán's critique of EU's global isolation

On March 10, 2025, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán criticized the EU for isolating itself from major global powers, including China, Russia, and the United States, due to its current foreign and economic policies. He argued that the EU's approach—characterized by sanctions against Russia, trade disputes with China, and strained relations with the U.S.—has led to its geopolitical isolation.

Date: 10/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P

Subarea: Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora; Other - political

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU; Victor Orbán

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

U.S.-Ukraine talks in Saudi Arabia on ceasefire and aid resumption

On March 11, 2025, senior officials from the United States and Ukraine convened in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to discuss a proposed 30-day ceasefire with Russia and the potential resumption of U.S. military aid and intelligence sharing to Ukraine. During the talks, Ukraine agreed to a U.S.-proposed 30-day ceasefire, contingent upon Russia's acceptance. In response, the Trump administration announced the lifting of restrictions on military aid and intelligence sharing to Ukraine, aiming to encourage Russia to reciprocate the ceasefire.

Date: 11/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P; S

Subarea: Diplomatic visits; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora; Other - political; International Security

Actor/s: Russia; USA; Ukraine

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

EU condemns Thailand's deportation of Uyghur refugees

On March 13, 2025, the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning Thailand's deportation of at least 40 Uyghur refugees to China, citing violations of international law and human rights concerns.

Date: 13/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; S

Subarea: Sino-Serbian political cooperation; Serbia and international fora; National Security & Regional Stability; International Security

Actor/s: China; EU; EU Parliament; CPC; Thailand

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

EU Defense White Paper identifies Russia and China as strategic threats

In March 2025, the European Union released a White Paper on Defense, categorizing Russia as an "existential threat" and China as a "hybrid actor" challenging EU security.

Date: 14/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P; S

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia's domestic politics; Sino-Serbian political cooperation; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora; Other - political; National Security & Regional Stability; International Security; Serbia in EU CFSP/CSDP

Actor/s: China; Russia; EU; Serbian Government; Serbia

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbia's largest-ever anti-government protests in March 2025

On March 15, 2025, Serbia witnessed its largest anti-government protest in recent history, with over 300,000 people gathering in Belgrade to demand accountability and reforms from President Aleksandar Vučić's administration.

Date: 15/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: Serbia's domestic politics

Actor/s: Russia; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Serbia

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Alleged use of sonic weapon at March 2025 Belgrade protest

On March 15, 2025, during a large-scale anti-government protest in Belgrade, Serbia, participants reported experiencing a sudden, high-pitched sound that caused panic and health issues, leading to allegations that authorities deployed a sonic weapon against demonstrators.

Date: 15/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: Serbia's domestic politics

Actor/s: Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Serbia; Police of Serbia

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Xi Jinping declined EU invitation to 50th anniversary summit

In March 2025, Chinese President Xi Jinping declined an invitation to attend the European Union-China summit in Brussels, commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two entities. The European Union had extended an invitation to President Xi Jinping to attend a summit in Brussels,

marking 50 years of diplomatic ties between the EU and China. Instead, Premier Li Qiang was designated to represent China at the summit.

Date: 16/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Diplomatic visits; Sino-Serbian political cooperation; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: China; EU; Xi Jinping; Serbian Government; CPC

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

FSB involvement in Serbia's sonic weapon investigation

In March 2025, following allegations of sonic weapon use during a major protest in Belgrade, Serbia invited Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) to assist in the investigation, raising concerns about transparency and legal procedures.

Date: 29/3/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: Serbia's domestic politics; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: Russia; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB)

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

EP rapporteur Tonino Picula warns Serbia cannot join EU while balancing ties with EU, US, Russia, China

In April 2025, EP rapporteur Tonino Picula warned that Serbia cannot realistically join the European Union while it attempts to maintain balanced relations with the EU, the U.S., Russia and China—sitting “on four chairs”. He argued that Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić appears more focused on preserving domestic control and multi-vector partnerships than on meeting core EU membership criteria.

Date: 7/4/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia’s domestic politics; Sino–Serbian political cooperation; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU; Xi Jinping; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; EU Parliament; EU Commission; CPC; Serbian Ministry of European Integrations; Tonino Picula

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

EU Parliament warns Serbia on rule-of-law and media freedom

On April 7 2025, the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee adopted a report warning that Serbia’s progress toward EU accession is at risk unless it demonstrates real improvements in rule of law, media freedom, and aligns its foreign policy away from Russia.

Date: 7/4/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia’s domestic politics; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Serbian MFA; EU Parliament

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbia’s new government under Prime Minister Đuro Macut

Serbia’s parliament approved a new government on April 16 2025, appointing Prof. Dr. Đuro Macut as Prime Minis-

ter. The move comes amid widespread protests calling for accountability and reform under President Aleksandar Vučić's rule.

Date: 16/4/2025

Geographic actor: EU; China

Area: P

Subarea: Serbia's domestic politics

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia; Đuro Macut

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbia arrested Chinese and British nationals at the request of the United States

In April 2025, Serbia arrested Chinese national Cui Guanghai and British national John Miller at the request of the United States for allegedly directing a stalking and harassment scheme against a U.S.-based critic of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Beginning in October 2023, they allegedly recruited two U.S. individuals to stop the victim from protesting Xi's appearance at the APEC Summit, using tracking devices, vandalism, and threats.

Date: 24/4/2025

Geographic actor: China

Area: P; S

Subarea: Sino-Serbian political cooperation; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora; International Security

Actor/s: China; USA; UK; Xi Jinping; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Serbian MFA; Republic of Serbia Ministry of Interior

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 3

Marta Kos stated in Belgrade that Serbia's EU membership is at risk without deep reforms

During her visit to Belgrade and meetings with Prime Minister Đuro Macut and other officials, Kos emphasised that the demands of the public protests—judicial independence, transparency, press freedom—mirror the EU's requirements for membership. She stated that "without these changes Serbia cannot advance." The government acknowledges a long accession process ahead, but Brussels is signalling that reform momentum must be real or Serbia's candidacy will be delayed or blocked.

Date: 29/4/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: EU Accession process; Serbia's domestic politics; Diplomatic visits

Actor/s: EU; Serbian Government; EU Commission; Đuro Macut; Marta Kos

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić attended Russia's Victory Day parade in Moscow

On 9 May 2025, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić attended Russia's Victory Day parade in Moscow alongside Vladimir Putin. Vučić's participation at the Moscow event highlighted Serbia's continued balancing act between East and West.

Date: 9/5/2025

Geographic actor: EU

Area: P

Subarea: Diplomatic visits; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: China; Russia; USA; EU; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić; Vladimir Putin

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

Vučić to Xi: For us, there is only one principle, and that is the principle of One China

In early May 2025, President Aleksandar Vučić publicly thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping in Moscow for China's sustained economic investment and political support - emphasising China as Serbia's "key economic and political partner". He reiterated Serbia's support for the "One China" principle and China's territorial integrity, while Xi stressed a "shared destiny" between China and Serbia and encouraged Chinese investment in Serbian infrastructure.

Date: 9/5/2025

Geographic actor: China

Area: P

Subarea: Sino-Serbian political cooperation; Four pillars policy; Serbia and international fora

Actor/s: China; Russia; EU; Xi Jinping; Serbian Government; Aleksandar Vučić

Consequences: 4

Likelihood: 4

04

COMPASS Risk
Assessment –
Matrixes of COMPASS

Overall Risk Structure

Across both actors, the **economic domain** consistently accounts for the largest share of identified risks, indicating that economic interdependence and investment exposure remain the principal channels through which vulnerabilities arise. Political risks occupy a secondary but significant position, while security risks are comparatively fewer in number, though not negligible in impact. This distribution reflects the contemporary geopolitical environment in which economic interaction is the primary interface of engagement, with political and security dimensions acting as amplifiers rather than primary drivers of risk.

The dataset further shows that most risks cluster in the **low-to-medium probability and consequence categories**, suggesting that the dominant risk profile is characterized by persistent, manageable exposure rather than acute crisis scenarios. High-probability or high-consequence risks are relatively rare but tend to concentrate in specific domains, pointing to areas where targeted mitigation is warranted.

Political Domain

Political risks linked to the EU display a relatively **even distribution across probability and consequence levels**, implying a structured and institutionalized pattern of exposure. This suggests that political risks are embedded within stable governance and regulatory frameworks, producing continuous but

predictable forms of uncertainty. Such a pattern is indicative of mature political interaction, where risks arise from policy alignment, regulatory divergence, and governance complexity rather than sudden destabilization.

In contrast, China-related political risks show a tendency to **cluster around medium probability and medium consequence categories**. This concentration points to a strategic pattern of engagement in which political exposure is present but calibrated. The results imply that political risks associated with China are not random or extreme, but rather managed through controlled escalation and selective issue areas. This reflects China's more centralized and strategic approach to political interaction, where risks emerge primarily from policy signaling, state-led initiatives, and diplomatic positioning.

Security Domain

Security risks are the least numerous across both actors, yet their qualitative profile differs significantly. EU-related security risks, while limited in frequency, exhibit **relatively higher consequence values**, suggesting that when security-related issues arise, they tend to carry substantial systemic or strategic implications. This pattern is consistent with the EU's role as a regulatory and political union rather than a traditional security actor, meaning that security incidents often intersect with broader institutional or alliance structures.

China-related security risks remain **low both in volume and intensity**, indicating a restrained and cautious security footprint within the observed dataset. These findings align with an approach that prioritizes economic and political engagement over overt security involvement.

The limited dispersion across probability and consequence levels suggests that security risks linked to China are narrowly scoped and less likely to escalate rapidly, at least within the parameters captured by the data.

Economic Domain

The economic domain dominates the risk landscape for both actors, but with notable differences in structure. China exhibits a **higher concentration of risks at medium probability levels with moderate consequences**, which corresponds to an investment-driven exposure model. This suggests that economic risks associated with China stem largely from market access, infrastructure projects, and trade dependencies, where engagement is frequent but typically bounded by contractual or institutional constraints.

The EU's economic risks, by contrast, show a **broader dispersion across consequence levels**, even where probability remains moderate. This indicates that while EU-related economic risks may occur slightly less frequently, their potential impact is more varied and can extend into higher consequence categories. Such a pattern reflects the

EU's deep integration into regulatory systems, financial markets, and value chains, where disruptions can propagate across sectors and jurisdictions.

1. Risk Probability x Area (P/S/E) - EU vs China (Absolute values)

Actor	Risk Probability	E	P	S
China	0	53	6	10
China	1	34	39	44
China	2	28	20	24
China	3	37	23	8
China	4	7	17	6
China	5	1	0	0
EU	0	24	4	20
EU	1	33	12	22
EU	2	32	22	15
EU	3	37	21	10
EU	4	2	18	3
EU	5	0	1	0

2. Risk Probability × Area (P/S/E) – EU vs China (Percentages)

Actor	Risk Probability	E	P	S
China	0	76.8%	8.7%	14.5%
China	1	29.1%	33.3%	37.6%
China	2	38.9%	27.8%	33.3%
China	3	54.4%	33.8%	11.8%
China	4	23.3%	56.7%	20%
China	5	100%	0	0
EU	0	50%	8.3%	41.7%
EU	1	49.3%	17.9%	32.8%
EU	2	46.4%	31.9%	21.7%
EU	3	54.4%	30.9%	14.7% ³
EU	4	8.7%	78.3%	13%
EU	5	0	100%	0

3. Risk Consequence × Area (P/S/E) – EU vs China (Absolute values)

Actor	Risk Probability	E	P	S
China	0	52	6	10
China	1	35	33	41
China	2	32	28	24
China	3	37	20	10
China	4	4	18	7
EU	0	23	4	20
EU	1	30	16	23
EU	2	34	17	16
EU	3	37	24	5
EU	4	4	17	6

4. Risk Consequence × Area (P/S/E) – EU vs China (Percentages)

Actor	Risk Probability	E	P	S
China	0	76.5%	8.8%	14.7%
China	1	32.1%	30.3%	37.6%
China	2	38.9%	33.3%	28.6%
China	3	55.2%	29.9%	14.9%
China	4	13.8%	62.1%	24.1%
EU	0	48.9%	8.5%	42.6%
EU	1	43.5%	23.2%	33.3%
EU	2	50.7%	25.4%	23.9%
EU	3	56.1%	36.4%	7.6%
EU	4	14.8%	63%	22.2%

5. COMPASS

Interpretative Summary (P/S/E)

Political (P): EU-related risks are more evenly distributed across probability levels, indicating structured but persistent political exposure. China-related political risks tend to cluster at medium probability and consequence levels, reflecting strategic engagement with controlled escalation.

Security (S): EU-linked security risks show lower frequency but higher relative consequence, suggesting fewer but more impactful events. China-related security risks remain limited in volume and intensity, consistent with a cautious security footprint.

Economic (E): Both actors exhibit the highest concentration of risks in the economic domain.

China demonstrates higher probability but moderate consequences, aligning with investment-driven exposure, while EU economic risks show slightly lower probability but broader consequence dispersion.



Media and
Dissemination Report
of the Compass
Project

The dissemination of the results of the COMPASS project was carried out through numerous contributions to the media.

The following stand out in particular:

1. Two “Topic of the Week” features in the daily newspaper Politika dedicated to the survey results of the project, including an interview-response to the findings by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marko Đurić;
2. Appearances in leading programs of the public broadcaster RTS 1 (“Morning Programme,” “News at 8 PM,” “Takovska 10,” “Thursday at 9”);
3. Media coverage of the project’s press conferences;
4. The use of project results in numerous media publications (guest appearances, articles).

„Politika“ – „Topic of the Week“

„Topic of the Week“ dedicated to the first survey:



„Topic of the Week“ dedicated to the second survey:



Appearances on RTS

Appearance on the RTS 1 Morning Programme (2024 survey)

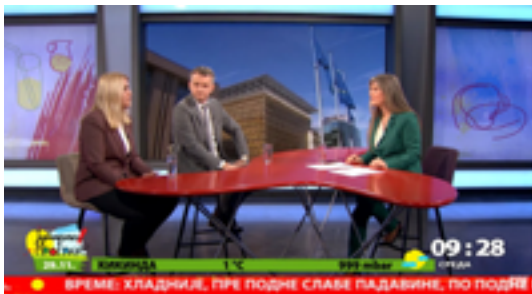
<https://www.rts.rs/vesti/drustvo/5669103/koje-su-drzave-za-gradjane-srbije-prijateljske-kako-je-orban-postao-omiljeniji-od-putina.html>



Morning Programme (project announcement, 29 November 2023)
Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of International Politics and Economics and head of the COMPASS team, Dr Ivona Ladevac, together with team member and Research Fellow Dr Aleksandar Mitić, presented the project on 29 November 2023 on Radio Television of Serbia, within the “Morning Programme,” in a segment titled “Science and Politics.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPXKXGJD3-A>

between minutes 12.20 and 12.45



Appearance on the RTS 1 Morning Programme (2025 survey)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUDQYCVSpS8>



RTS News at 8 PM (Dnevnik 2)



Appearance on the RTS programme “Thursday at 9” with the Minister for European Integration, Nemanja Starović (22 May)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HX-k2bCuE1E>



Appearance on the RTS programme “Takovska 10” with the Minister for European Integration, Nemanja Starović (7 October 2025)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oz1VB8B2-oM>



Media Coverage Related to the Press Conferences and Presentation of the Survey

Basic Information

As part of the planned activities of the “COMPASS” project, two public opinion surveys were conducted on the foreign policy attitudes of citizens of the Republic of Serbia. The aim was to contribute, through research and data analysis, to improving the understanding of Serbia’s foreign policy.

Both surveys were conducted online using structured questionnaires. The first survey was conducted in July and August 2024 (with 1,103 responses). The second survey was conducted from April to July 2025 (with 1.104 responses).



The surveys were published in PDF format on the project's portal.

Survey for 2024:

https://serbiacompass.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/CompassAnketa_250205.pdf



Survey for 2025:

https://serbiacompass.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/CompassAnketa02_250805.pdf



Results

Key Conclusions of the Survey Results:

1. Pessimism regarding EU membership and a negative attitude toward the positions and leaders of the EU;
2. Caution regarding relations with the People's Republic of China, although respondents believe that Serbia has had the best cooperation with China over the past 10 years and see it as a future global leader;
3. Russia is seen as the country that most protects Serbia's national interests, with two-thirds of respondents opposing sanctions on the Russian Federation;
4. Strong concern about the environmental consequences of development projects;
5. Expectation that Serbia's foreign policy position will not change in the next 10 years.

The surveys were presented at press conferences organized at the Media Center in Belgrade. The first was held on 20 February 2025 (presentation of the 2024 survey), while the second took place on 8 September 2025 (presentation of the 2025 survey).

From the first press conference

<https://youtu.be/ZKEQ5Vnf3ng>



From the second press conference

<https://youtu.be/ZKEQ5Vnf3ng>



Media Coverage of the Survey (selection)

1. „Sputnik“

The (Un)Surprising Results of the Latest Survey: Russia and China Remain Serbia's Closest Friends, While the EU Grows More Distant

<https://sputnikportal.rs/20250220/neiznenadjujuci-rezultati-najnovije-ankete-rusija-i-kina-najveci-prijatelji-srbije-eu-sve-dalja-1182847678.html>

2. „RT Balkans“

Who Defends Serbian Interests on the International Stage: Most Serbs Say It Is Russia

<https://rt.rs/srbija-i-balkan/130841-istrazivanje-anketa-srbija-spoljna-politika/>

3. News and Video Report by the “Beta” Agency

<https://www.vesti.rs/Evropska-Unija/Predstavljeni-rezultata-naucnog-projekta-COMPASS-Doprinos-modernim-partnerstvima.html>

4. Portal “Novi Magazin“

“Citizens of Serbia Have a More Positive Opinion of China than of the European Union”

<https://novimagazin.rs/vesti/346468-gradjani-srbije-imaju-pozitivnije-misljenje-o-kini-nego-o-evropskoj-uniji>

5. „Politika“



6. „Danas“



7. „Biznis“ Magazine

„Serbs would most like to live in one of the EU countries, believe that we will never become EU members, see Hungarians as their closest friends, and view China as the dominant global power in 2030 – according to a survey by the COMPASS scientific project“

<https://magazinbiznis.rs/anketa-iz-najnovijeg-istrazivanja-serbia-compass/>

8. Statements Published in the Programmes “Euronews Evening” on Euronews Serbia, the News Broadcast on Nova S, the “Morning Programme” on RT Balkans, and the News Broadcast on TV Una



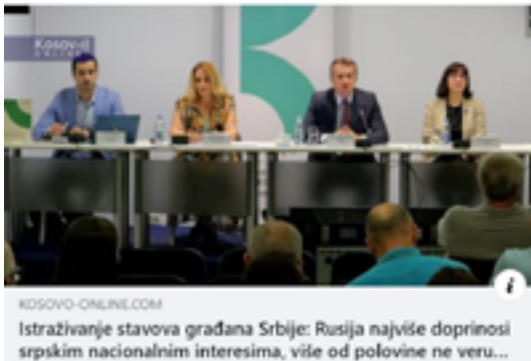
9. „Danas“

<https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/istrazivanje-strani-politicar-popularnost/>



10. Portal “Kosovo online”

<https://www.kosovo-online.com/vesti/politika/istrazivanje-stavova-gradjana-srbije-rusija-najviše-doprinosi-srpskim-nacionalnim>



12. Appearance on the Programme “In the Spotlight” on Radio Belgrade 1:

<https://www.rts.rs/radio/radio-beograd-1/5786139/kako-gradjani-vide-spoljnopoliticku-poziciju-srbije.html>



13. RT Balkans:

<https://rt.rs/srbija-i-balkan/156517-compass-istrazivanje-srbija>



14. Sputnik

<https://sputnikportal.rs/20250908/rezultati-novog-istrazivanja-rusija-najvise-stiti-nacionalne-interese-srbije-1189892595.html>

Use of Results in Media Contributions

1. Documentary Film “A Shared Future” (“People’s Daily,” Beijing)



4. News Broadcast of Radio Television of Republika Srpska:



2. Sputnik, under the title “What Ursula von der Leyen Asked from Xi Jinping” Future” (“People’s Daily,” Beijing)

https://odysee.com/@Sputnjik.Srbija:7/Novi-Sputnjik-Poredak--13-12-2023---Odysee:2?fbclid=IwZXhObgNhZWOCMTEAAR2-Z6tZrWmKzc2POqVVmvNFhRiR4qoKz0jvlyXxeHx6aRprMdUICbv_5v0_aem_AT7OwaFhF-8he_k8iLc-i7J_ojsxJdLG-yr3rc07kq_-Kcb7dcX1mEkYgNmJSqwK2wGl6kKY791CRs4NcC-0CcCp

between minutes 40 and 42

3. Programme “Ino-strane” titled “China and Global Challenges,” Radio Television of Vojvodina 1, 25 June 2024 (between minutes 2.30 and 3)

<https://sputnikportal.rs/20250908/rezultati-novog-istrazivanja-rusija-najvise-stiti-nacionalne-interese-srbije-1189892595.html>

5. Author's Article "Cooperation with China Raised to the Highest Level in Europe", published in the June issue of CorD magazine

https://cordmagazine.com/cord/cord-magazine-no-236-june-2024/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZWQCMATAAR0PaqIHJCxBvDCogCy aV_NHdOZ5eSmsHjD5HOXcVVO-QsUCB9ahYPiM3fH4_aem_ZmFrZWR1bW15MTZieXRlcw

strana 23



Project statement:

na, and I hope that we won't see it in the future. Still, within the scope of the COMPASS project, which is being funded by the Science Fund, researchers from the Institute of International Politics and Economy and the Institute of Social Sciences are currently working to analyse perspectives and threats to cooperation in the triangle of EU-Serbia-China relations.

7. Euronews Serbia, 8 May 2024. Appearance of Dr Katarina Zakić on the programme "Serbia is the First European Country to Elevate Cooperation with China to This Level: Euronews Centre on Xi Jinping's Visit"

<https://www.euronews.rs/srbija/politika/123042/srbija-je-prva-evropska-zemlja-koja-je-saradnju-s-kinom-digla-na-ovaj-nivo-uronews-centar-o-poseti-si-dinpinga-vest>



8. Biznis.rs, monthly magazine, May 2024, issue 32. Statement by Dr Katarina Zakić, page 33.

<https://www.euronews.rs/srbija/politika/123042/srbija-je-prva-evropska-zemlja-koja-je-saradnju-s-kinom-digla-na-ovaj-nivo-euronews-centar-o-poseti-si-dinpinga/vest>



thinski tankova. U ovom trenutku je svakako najvažnija realizacija projekta pod nazivom COMPASS koji je finansiran od strane Fonda za nauku Republike Srbije u odnosu na Evropsku uniju i Kinu, posmatrajuci istovremeno tri aspekta saradnje – politički, bezbednosni i ekonomski.

- Cilj nam je da sa potrebe, pre svega, državnih institucija, a nakon toga i ostalih relevantnih ekonomskih i političkih aktera, te domaće javnosti, napravimo bazu podataka koja identifikuje ključne događaje u saradnji Srbije sa EU i Kinom. Uz pomoć te baze, naših naučnih analiza, mišljenja eksperata u datim oblastima, ali i anketa javnog mnjenja, nadamo se da blagovremeno uočimo rizike sa kojima se Srbija suočava u ovim relacijama i damo predloge kako da su sa istim borimo i kako da ih neutralizujemo. U pitanju je projekat koji traje dve godine i deo naših analiza će uskoro biti dostupan javnosti. Nakon završetka finansiranja, naš Institut će nastaviti i dalje sa ovim istraživanjem, jer će ove vrste analize biti neophodne i u budućnosti. Saradnja sa Fondom za nauku je odlična, i pružila nam je mogućnost da uradimo analize koje do sada nismo imali mogućnosti da realizujemo, osavremenimo svoju informaciono-tehnološku opremanu i svedno damo doprinos internacionalizaciji i prepomativnosti društvenih nauka - smatra Katarina Zakić.

9. Author's Article "Public Opinion and Serbia's Foreign Policy: Neither West nor East, Neither North nor South," published in the monthly bulletin of the Belgrade Open School Talks on Negotiations, no. 127 (December 2025).

https://issuu.com/beogradska_otvorena.skola/docs/progovori_o_pregovorima_127_-_energetska_bezbednos?fr=sOWRjYtG5NjA2NDY



Use of Results in Media Contributions

Project team members included project information in their email signatures throughout the entire duration of the project.



The promotional banner was displayed throughout the two-year duration of the project in the Institute's Hall used for receptions and events with partners.



At all conferences, events, and reports to the relevant ministries, the implementation of the COMPASS project, funded by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, was consistently highlighted.



Project Website and Social Media

The official project website is available at: <https://serbiacompass.com>

In addition to information about the project team, methodology, and the database of project results, the site features a blog with more than 45 posts, regularly informing the public about project activities.

Social media links:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

The COMPASS project was active on three social media platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram), with a total of over 50 posts.



Report from the final
conference

**Nobel Zira Hotel, Belgrade,
26 November 2025.**

Opening Remarks

Director of the Institute of International Politics and Economics (IIPE), Dr. Branislav Đorđević, opened the event by reflecting on the development of science funding in Serbia. He noted that until 2019 scientific work had been financed primarily through long-term projects, without mechanisms for researchers to earn additional income. Drawing on examples from abroad, the government established Serbia's Science Fund, though challenges remain—most notably the absence of an appeals procedure for project evaluations.

He highlighted that one of the project's major achievements was the publication of two volumes containing policy proposals for Serbia's relations with the EU and China.

Deputy Director, Dr. Ivona Lađevac, who also served as project leader, in her opening remarks emphasized the close cooperation between IMPP and the Institute of Social Sciences (IDN). She also stressed the skills and knowledge team members acquired through work on the project and expressed hope and plans for future applications to the Science Fund projects and calls.

Panel 1 – Results of the COMPASS Project

Moderator: Nenad Stekić

Participants: Ivona Lađevac, Pavle Nedić, Aleksandar Mitić, Sanja Filipović, Katarina Zakić

Project Overview

Dr. Ivona Lađevac presented the project's core objective: assessing risks in Serbia's relations with the European Union and China across the sectors of security, foreign policy, and the economy. The team promoted the project both through media engagement and by presenting it abroad. Implementation challenges included organizational issues, the rapid pace of political and economic changes, and methodological complexities, as well as inconsistencies between the procedures of the Science Fund, IMPP, and IDN.

She highlighted that the project developed a methodological framework applicable not only to academic researchers but also to state institutions and other stakeholders. An extensive open database on Serbia's relations with the EU and China was created, and all planned publications were successfully completed. The project also organized two major events in the "Dialogues on China" series.

Research on China and Expert Consultations

Dr. Katarina Zakić emphasized the importance of state funding for science, noting that Serbia remains among the lowest investors in research in Europe. As a China specialist, she drew a parallel between China's Cultural Revolution, which devastated its scientific community, and China's subsequent rise after recommitting to science.

Within the COMPASS framework, she lead the Delphi studies segment. This studies were conducted to gather expert recommendations for improving Serbia's economic and political relations with China. The goal was to establish consensus among experts. In addition, she stressed the importance of extensive edited volumes that were published, and the comprehensive project website.

Public Opinion and Strategic Perceptions

Aleksandar Mitić focused on public opinion research regarding Serbia's foreign policy orientation, particularly views on the EU and China. Beyond the originally planned outputs, the project also produced an annual review of global challenges affecting Serbia.

He spoke on public opinio surveys. Key findings include:

- A majority of citizens do not believe Serbia will join the EU, nor do they see EU membership as a strategic priority.

- Over 50% believe Serbia will not join BRICS.

- Although China is perceived as Serbia's best partner among major powers over the past decade, citizens express concern about excessive borrowing from China and insufficient environmental safeguards. Criticisms also directed at the EU in connection with lithium extraction.

Policy Proposals and the COMPASS Platform

Pavle Nedić presented the project's policy recommendations for Serbia's relations with China and the EU, prepared for government institutions, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders. While the research was conducted comparatively, separate publications were produced for clarity.

The recommendations span areas such as participation in military missions, alignment with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, media monitoring of accession negotiations, Serbia- China free-trade agreement, UN system reform, and more. Serbia, he suggested, could serve as a transitional partner in China–EU relations.

The COMPASS digital platform hosts a database of over 1,000 contingencies with multiple search modes, including a "compass risk" tool to guide users through thematic risks.

Economic and Trade Findings

Sanja Filipović spoke on economic dimensions of the project. She emphasized that 59% of Serbia's foreign trade is conducted with the EU and 7% with China, making them Serbia's two largest partners. Exports to China have increased by 270%, while exports to the EU have quadrupled. However, Serbia still primarily exports raw materials.

Serbia records a 36% trade deficit with China, with a worrying upward trend. Public support for EU membership has reached a historical low. Foreign direct investment inflows from the EU and China are now nearly equal.

Filipović also noted that Serbia's multi-vector foreign policy provides flexibility but complicates decision-making for a small state. There is still no clearly defined economic development strategy, and Serbia remains caught between major powers. Cooperation between research institutions and state bodies is limited, with ministries often reluctant to share data or accept recommendations.

Nenad Stekić added that an early project-stage consultation with government officials demonstrated potential for deeper institutional cooperation. He also proposed establishing a Serbian Agency for National Development.

Panel 2 – COMPASS in Practice: Questions on Serbia's Foreign Policy

Moderator: Pavle Nedić

Participants: Marko Dašić,
Nevena Šekarić-Stojanović, Filip
Bugarčić, Mladen Lišanin

Geopolitical Context and National Interests

Marko Dašić discussed the broad challenges to Serbia's seven national interests. Employing Rosenau's concept of "fragnetration," he highlighted the division of the world into competing economic blocs disrupting supply chains. He noted an ongoing geo-economic struggle between China and the United States, though not yet a geopolitical one.

Multilateralism is weakening, with the WTO in long-term paralysis, and the second Trump administration further retreating from multilateral mechanisms. Key challenges include technological sovereignty amid AI development, energy security, regional relations, economic pressure, and the position of small states among major powers.

Dašić underlined the strain on Serbia's foreign-policy "four pillars," particularly regarding its neutrality and sovereignty concerning Kosovo and Metohija. Friend-shoring practices are increasingly common globally. Serbia remains active in EU-related projects, while cooperation with China is strongest in infrastructure and industry. Relations with Russia are expected to undergo significant redefinition soon.

Energy Security

Nevena Šekarić-Stojanović focused on energy-sector vulnerabilities. She argued for a strategic shift toward the EU and away from Russian energy dependence. Both Serbia and the EU remain asymmetrically dependent on Russian gas.

A step toward diversification is the new interconnector with Bulgaria, enabling imports of Azerbaijani gas, though volumes remain limited. Nine months after the announcement of U.S. sanctions related to majority Russian ownership in the sector, official information remains scarce and no clear strategy has been articulated.

She highlighted the need for greater self-sufficiency, diversification, and investment in joint projects with North Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria, as well as domestic renewable energy initiatives. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are participating in the construction of the “Southern Gas Corridor” in partnership with the United States.

Economic Competitiveness and Trade Logistics

Filip Bugarčić presented Serbia’s economic challenges from both a strategic and operational perspective. He noted that a single day of delay in exporting goods is equivalent to an additional 70 km of distance and increases tariff-equivalent costs by 1.6–2.1%.

While the EU average for export processing is six days, it takes 17 days in Serbia, largely due to border inefficiencies. Cooperation with India and the Global South remains low despite their large markets. Entrepreneurs often must identify foreign market opportunities on their own, highlighting the need for stronger institutional support from the state.

Security Outlook

Mladen Lišanin analyzed evolving security challenges in Europe and their implications for Serbia. European security remains ill-defined and extends beyond the EU framework. Events whose consequences still shape today’s environment include the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the 2008 financial crisis, and the 2015 migration crisis.

In EU assessments, Serbia represents a significant migration-risk hub for third-country nationals. The era of hedging strategies, where Serbia balanced among major actors, appears to be ending. Serbia still lacks strategic planning capacity, and the academic community remains insufficiently involved in policymaking. Ultimately, Serbia cannot independently determine which geopolitical sphere it will belong to.

Marko Dašić added that hedging strategies, borrowed from the banking sector, require predefined contingency

plans, which Serbia does not currently possess. He warned against sacrificing core national interests for secondary foreign-policy objectives.

The two panels were followed by lively and substantive Q&A sessions, which enabled in-depth discussion both among the panelists themselves and with the audience. The audience comprised representatives of the academic community, decision-makers, students, and NCO policy experts, whose interventions further enriched the exchange of perspectives and contributed to a nuanced debate on the issues addressed.



