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An analysis of Serbia's alignment with the European Union's foreign policy declarations and measures in 2018

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From January 1 until December 31, 2018, the European Union issued a total of 54 declarations urging candidate and potential candidate countries, as well as states belonging to the European Economic Area and Eastern Partnership, to align themselves with these documents. During that period, Serbia complied with only 28 declarations, i.e. 52 percent. Having in mind that the percentage for the whole of 2017 was 46 percent, and for the first half of 2018 it was 44 percent, it is fair to say that the tendency of continual dropping with Serbia's alignment has somewhat stabilized. In comparison, in 2016 Serbia's alignment was 67 percent, while in 2015 it was as high as 74 percent. The continual 3 year drop in alignment represents a significant challenge for Serbia's foreign and security approach as an EU candidate state that aspires to join the EU tentatively by 2025.

Even if Serbia starts to significantly improve its alignment track record in 2019, it will still lag behind its neighbours, including that of Montenegro which has 100 percent alignment in 2018, and Macedonia which was at 85 percent in 2018. It is difficult to see Serbia reaching anywhere near those levels in the foreseeable future due to the specific issues in which Serbia diverges from the EU when it comes to Russia and states which have not recognized the independence of Kosovo.

Of the declarations that Serbia did align itself with, eleven pertain to the situation in Ukraine, in the context of Russia's involvement in various aspects of the crisis there, four pertain to the war in Syria, another four to the crisis in Venezuela, two are about the Democratic Republic of Congo and one each regarding Iran, Myanmar (Burma), Georgia, Burundi and Zimbabwe.

In regard to foreign policy declarations concerning the situation in Ukraine that Serbia failed to align itself with, seven involved the extension of the already imposed restrictive measures against certain entities and individuals from Russia and Ukraine. Others refer to the findings of the Joint Investigation Team on the collapse of the Malaysian MH17 aircraft; then the anniversary of the Crimean annexation in which the Russian actions are condemned, including the militarization of this peninsula and the violation of human rights of the Crimean Tatars; one condemns the elections in the Donbas region which are contrary to the Minsk Agreement; and finally, one is dedicated to the infamous incident in the Sea of Azov in December, when Russia captured several Ukrainian ships.

Apart from Ukraine related topics, one declaration covers the 10th anniversary of the conflict in Georgia, which Serbia also did not align with. In this declaration, the EU calls for the resolution of the frozen conflict and supports the measures of the Georgian government.

Regarding the EU's declarations on Syria with which Serbia did not align, one concerns an attack on Eastern Ghouta, an area near Damascus, which has been under siege by regular Syrian forces since 2013; this declaration calls for the implementation of a 30 day humanitarian truce. Although Russia was not explicitly mentioned in this declaration, the media reporting from the Syrian conflict explicitly made reference about the Russian support for the Syrian forces. The other two declarations on Syria deal with the use of chemical weapons by the regular Syrian forces, and the Council explicitly invites countries that have influence over Syria, including Russia and Iran, to exert pressure on Syria to fulfill its obligations as a member of the Chemical

1) The analysis covers all EU foreign policy declarations seeking the alignment of third countries, made publicly available on EU Council's webpage consilium.europa.eu.

Weapons Convention. It should also be noted that in addition to these three, Serbia did comply with the EU's further two declarations on Syria, which were not connected with Russia, all insisting on the extension of restrictive measures against individuals and entities in that country

In general, thus, Serbia continues to consistently non-align itself with declarations involving Russia, in total with 16 of them. Still, Serbia's two major political goals – European integration, and preservation of its sovereignty over Kosovo – are rather incongruent, since for the latter Serbia needs support from Russia, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. In other words, although it is incompatible with the framework of Chapter 31 – the Common, Foreign Security and Defense policy – Serbia continues to maintain and, in some segments even expand, its relations with Moscow.

Regarding non-compliance with DR Congo declarations, the most likely explanation for it is the fact that two years earlier this country voted against Kosovo's admission to UNESCO, and this was an expression of solidarity and gratitude. During 2016 and 2017, Serbia also did not comply with the declarations devoted to this country. It should be noted that Serbia aligned with the third declaration on the DR Congo; this, however, was a political declaration on the conduct of the electoral process in this country, and did not contain restrictive measures as the last two. Supporting Serbia's position over Kosovo is also likely to be associated with non-compliance with foreign policy declarations on Venezuela as well, a country that is currently undergoing one of the most dramatic economic and political crises in its existence. Nevertheless, Serbia also agreed with the other two political declarations related to Venezuela, but which, as in the case of the DR Congo, did not contain restrictive measures.

After a long period of time, Serbia did not comply with any declaration related on Iran, regarding the extension of restrictive measures. The situation was similar in 2014 when Serbia did not comply with the declaration on Zimbabwe, although there was a regime change in this country. In addition, it also did not agree with the extension of restrictive measures against Burundi. It can also be assumed that the reason for such moves is the support of Iran, Zimbabwe and Burundi to the foreign policy position of Serbia over Kosovo, and their voting/support in UNESCO.

By accepting the negotiation framework in the EU accession talks, and thus Chapter 35's content, Serbia has pledged to normalize its relations with Pristina, the final result of which should eventually be the conclusion of a legally binding agreement on such an outcome. This agreement should resolve the challenges Serbia is facing and open the path towards the EU. However, Serbia believes that this does not prevent concentrated foreign policy actions aimed at preventing further recognition of independence, annulment of recognitions by some countries, and the prevention of Pristina's entry into international organizations such as UNESCO or Interpol.

Once again Serbia did not align with the declaration on Myanmar (Burma). The declaration refers to the extension of restrictive measures, including the restriction of arms exports and the prohibition of military co-operation, and in relation to the situation in the State of Rakhin, involving the violence against members of the Rohingya Muslim minority which began during the government's military intervention in August 2017. As in the previous year the reason why Serbia decided to avoid complying with this declaration may lie in Russia's, China's, and some other countries' show of support for the Myanmar regime, culminating at the end of 2017 in open opposition to a U.N. General Assembly's Resolution on the Rohingya, initiated by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Alignment of other states with the European Union's foreign policy declarations and measures in the first half of 2018

In relation to Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, and even Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia has a dramatically lower degree of alignment with foreign policy declarations and EU measures. The same goes in comparison to the countries of the European Economic Area - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Of the Eastern Partnership countries, Moldova and Georgia have a higher degree of compliance, while Ukraine has also reduced the percentage of compliance in relation to the previous year.

Some alignment tendencies should also be noted when it comes to declarations related to the Ukraine crisis. Most of the countries (except Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Azerbaijan and Armenia) are joining the political declarations concerning Ukraine, which do not contain restrictive measures (the MH17 attack, the Azov Sea incident, the Donbass election). Even Turkey, which in the previous period was extremely cautious about Russia, started joining them. However, when it comes to extending or extending restrictive measures towards the Russian Federation, only Albania, Montenegro, Norway and Ukraine are consistently joining.

State	Alignment Percentage
Serbia	51,85
Macedonia	85,19
Montenegro	100
Iceland	83,33
Albania	100
Bosnia and Hercegovina	66,67
Turkey	12,96
Lichtenstein	81,48
Norway	90,74
Moldova	75,93
Armenia	38,89
Georgia	53,70
Ukraine	48,15
Azerbaijan	0%

ANEX

**LIST OF THE EU'S FOREIGN POLICY
DECLARATIONS IN 2018**

Alignment with the EU's foreign policy declarations and measures – Third countries

No	Name of declaration	Date	Ser.	Mac.	Mont.	Icel.	Alb.	BiH	Lich.	Nor.	Mold.	Arm.	Geor.	Ukra.	Azer.	Turk
1	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo	January 9, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
2	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	January 12, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
3	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the latest developments in Venezuela	January 26, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no
4	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine	January 31, 2018	no	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no
5	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	February 7, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
6	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Venezuela	February 14, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no
7	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Syria: The massacre in Eastern Ghouta must stop now	February 23, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	no

8	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in South Sudan	February 23, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	
9	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries with the Council Decision of 26 February 2018 concerning restrictive measures against ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda	March 14, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
10	Syria: Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU	March 15, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
11	Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol	March 16, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
12	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe	March 16, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
13	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	March 21, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
14	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against Belarus	March 22, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
15	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries with Council Implementing Decision concerning restrictive measures against Syria	March 26, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no

24	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo	May 18, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no
25	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	May 18, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
26	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities in view of the situation in Iran	May 18, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no
27	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the presidential and regional elections in Venezuela	May 22, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
28	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures against Myanmar/Burma	May 24, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
29	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the findings of the Joint Investigation Team on the downing of flight MH17	May 25, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no
30	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries with Council Decision concerning restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	June 12, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
31	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures against Syria	June 12, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no

49	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Burundi	November 20, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
50	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain third countries concerning restrictive measures against the Republic of Guinea	November 20, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
51	Declaration by High Representative Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the EU, on the Democratic Republic of the Congo	November 22, 2018	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
52	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the escalating tensions in the Azov Sea	November 28, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
53	Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2018	December 9, 2018	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
54	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the alignment of certain countries with Council Decision concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Venezuela	December 21, 2018	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
No	Name of declaration	Date	Ser.	Mac.	Mont.	Icel.	Alb.	BiH	Lich.	Nor.	Mold.	Arm.	Geor.	Ukra.	Azer.	Turk			
	Aligned with		28	46	54	45	54	36	44	49	41	21	29	26	0	7			
	Did not align with		26	8	0	9	0	18	10	5	13	33	25	28	54	47			
	Alignment Percentage		51,85	85,19	100	83,33	100	66,67	81,48	90,74	75,93	38,89	53,70	48,15	0,00	12,96			

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