

ARTICLE

Timeline Western Balkans 2000-2017

A divided region as illustrated by a timeline covering news and political developments between 2000-2017

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Date	News
2017	
October	European Council president Donald Tusk proposes a series of 13 top-level meetings to take forward European reform in the wake of Brexit. A handful of them will also take place at special events, such as a summit on the Western Balkans in Sofia in May 2019.
September	President of the European Commission Juncker promises the offer of a credible enlargement perspective to the Western Balkans.
September	New government of Kosovo with three ministers of the Serb minority installed after a delay of many months. Opposition parties continue to voice objections against Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. Serbia maintains the indictment for war crimes against new Kosovo Prime Minister Haradinaj.
August	Presidents of Serbia and Kosovo agree on the integration of the Serb dominated North of Kosovo in Kosovo's judicial system.
August	Serbia decides to withdraw diplomats from Macedonia citing unacceptable interference by local intelligence forces. Observers claim Serbia is angry about the rapprochement between Macedonia and Bulgaria and also wants to protest against support of Macedonia for Kosovo's membership of UNESCO.
July	Berlin process – six EU countries supporting the Western Balkans. More money made available for railway and transport.
June	Croatia will not accept the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on the dispute over territorial waters between Croatia and Slovenia .
June	Bosnian Serb leader Dodik announced there will be no referendum on the independence of Republika Srpska in 2018 but secession remains on the agenda.
June	Bosnia and Herzegovina sees proposals to make denial of genocide and crimes against humanity punishable by prison sentence. Bosnian Serbs are infuriated.
June	Montenegro formally joins NATO , alienating them further from Serbia.
May	Macedonia has a new government for the first time in more than a decade, after a political crisis involving a huge wiretapping scandal, and attempts of blocking a coalition with the Albanian minority.

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April	Serbia sees a decisive victory in the presidential election for Mr. Vučić, edging the country closer to autocracy , according to the opposition.
March	Leading MEP McAllister incites all EU countries to be more pro-active against the Russian destabilisation of the Balkans .
February	Bosnia formally asks the ICJ to review its ruling which cleared Serbia of direct responsibility in the Srebrenica genocide . On 9 th March the ICJ rejected this appeal.
January	US sanctions Dodik , President of Republika Srpska, after he defied rulings handed down by Bosnia's Constitutional Court.
January	Train covered with a decal stating ' Kosovo is Serbia ' in 21 languages heads for Kosovo, straining tensions between the two countries.
January	The Republika Srpska government cuts communications with Bosnia's High Representative Inzko after he compared the entity's banned celebrations to commemorations of a Croatian WWII-era Nazi puppet state .
2016	
November	Bosnian Serb officials file charges against Croatian Defence Minister and 15 other former high-ranking officers of committing war crimes during the 1992-95 conflict.
October	Montenegrin prime minister Djukanovic steps down after almost 25 years of leading the country. Mr. Djukanović's office says his decision "has nothing to do with the alleged coup, which was supposed to have taken place on election day involving Serbs and Russians."
October	Parliamentary elections in Montenegro . Pro-Western majority remains in place.
September	Republika Srpska's president, Milorad Dodik, no longer dares to travel to Sarajevo because he was compared to the slain leader Gaddafi by Bosniak's chairman Izetbegović.
September	Republika Srpska votes overwhelmingly by referendum to defy a ruling by the state-level Constitutional Court that banned the entity's 'statehood day' .
September	Croatian conservative party HDZ wins national elections , blocking return of social democrats to power.
August	Croatia's interior minister states 'false Serb residents' will be deregistered, enabling the Serbian language and Cyrillic script to be abolished as official language , sparking new tensions.
May	The top international official in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inzko, warns the UN Security Council that the Bosnian Serb leadership is threatening a referendum on secession and glorifying war criminals.
April	The European Commission issues an informal document calling on Zagreb to no longer obstruct Belgrade's EU accession .

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April	The Bosnian state court wants to try former Croatian Defence Council major-general Jelić for wartime crimes against civilian prisoners who were forced to work on the front-line in Mostar.
March	Croatian Prime Minister Oresković denounces the acquittal of Serbian nationalist leader Seselj.
March	Balkan countries firmly shut borders for refugees .
March	Albanian-language textbooks from Pristina intended for ethnic Albanian pupils in Serbia are returned to Kosovo, being “ politically biased ”.
February	A Bosnian NGO files criminal complaints against Republika Srpska President Dodik, accusing him of inciting hatred for describing Bosniaks as ‘Turks’ .
January	As Serbia and Croatia trade accusations over new weapons purchases , experts denounce the provocative media coverage for reviving aggressiveness.
2015	
December	Dodik, the president of Republika Srpska , threatens the possible break-up of the country if the Constitutional Court is not reformed according to his demands.
October	Over 100 prominent figures sign a letter supporting the director of the Serbian Academy for Sciences and Art after politicians condemned his call for Serbia to accept it has lost Kosovo.
October	Relatives of Serbian victims of the Kosovo war call on UNESCO to not accept Kosovo .
September	The higher court in Belgrade finds nine men guilty of setting fire to the US embassy during mass unrest in the centre of the capital on February 21, 2008.
September	Former Yugoslav deputy PM Sainović is elected to the main board of the Socialist Party , part of Serbia’s ruling coalition, after his prison sentence for war crimes in Kosovo ended.
July	Serbian PM Vučić is chased by stone-throwing protesters and gets hit in the face by a stone while attending the Srebrenica massacre commemoration.
June	In comments that infuriate Zagreb, Serbian labour minister Vulin claims fascism is on the rise in Croatia after his trip to a WWII concentration camp sparked anger.
June	The ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party in Montenegro plans a vigorous campaign against EU- and NATO-membership, promoting close ties to Russia and Serbia .
June	Belgrade’s recent rehabilitation of WWII Chetnik leader Mihailović is seen in Kosovo as the return of support for hard-line nationalist ideas in Serbia .
April	Kosovo’s main parties back a proposed parliamentary resolution to launch a genocide law suit against Serbia , but insist it will not damage on-going talks between Pristina and Belgrade.

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April	After publicly burning the Croatian flag , Serbian war crimes defendant Seselj provokes Zagreb further by saying he wanted to return to Croatia “armed, on a tank”.
February	The International Court of Justice rejects the mutual genocide suits brought both by Serbia and Croatia.
January	The opposition <i>Vetevendosje</i> (‘Self Determination’) movement announces another protest in Pristina against cooperation with Serbia after clashes the same week between demonstrators and riot police that left 170 people injured.
2014	
November	Some 3,000 people march through central Belgrade at the first rally held in 11 years by nationalist leader and recently-released war crimes trial defendant Seselj.
May	The arrest of an ethnic Albanian on suspicion of killing a young Macedonian raises ethnic tensions and provokes a new outbreak of protests in the capital Skopje .
March	The Croatian president Tudjman’s goal was to expel the Serb population, Belgrade argues in its genocide suit against Zagreb at the ICJ.
January	Ivanović, a prominent Kosovo Serb leader, is in custody on suspicion of involvement in war crimes against ethnic Albanians .
2013	
December	Serbia’s foreign ministry warns foreign governments that Croatia’s Serb minority is under threat amid a row over a proposed referendum aimed at limiting minority rights .
April	Serbia and Kosovo start official dialogue under EU auspices.
April	Thousands turn out to festively welcome policeman Tarculovski, the only Macedonian convicted of war crimes by the Hague.
January	Ceremonies to mark Orthodox Christmas at churches and monasteries in Kosovo are overshadowed by detentions and protests .
2012	
November	Inter-ethnic clashes erupt in Northern Kosovo . Eight Kosovo Serb policemen refused to intervene.
October	The ethnic Albanian Democratic Integration Party in Macedonia overwhelms parliament with over 15,000 amendments to the proposed controversial bill that would provide social benefits to veterans, but excluding Albanians.
October	The Bosniak member of the Bosnian Presidency, Izetbegović, writes a letter to Serbia’s President Nikolić accusing him of irrevocably harming the relations between Bosnia and Serbia .
October	The government of Montenegro responds to the opposition's accusations that Montenegro had in effect surrendered its border territory to Croatia , by describing such allegations as pre-electoral manipulation.

Date	News
June	Several regional leaders refuse to attend the inauguration of Serbian President Nikolić due to his controversial past and recent inflammatory comments.
May	Croatian officials react with a mix of shock and irony to the new Serbian president Nikolić stating that Vukovar is “a Serbian town” and that a “ greater Serbia ” is his “unrealised dream”.
May	Kosovo says it is ready to address the past and reconcile with Serbia, but wants Serbia to apologise for the crimes it committed in Kosovo first.
2011	
October	Croatia risks reviving old disputes with Serbia after parliament in Zagreb adopts a controversial law rejecting all war crimes investigations in Croatia by bodies representing the former Yugoslav Army, the old Yugoslav state and the judiciary of Serbia.
May	Mladić, the last of the three main Serb players in the Bosnian war, gets apprehended and can be handed over to ICTY in The Hague . Bosnian Serb leader Karadžić and former Serb leader Milosević preceded him.
January	A Belgrade court sentences nine former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army to 101 years in prison for war crimes , while ethnic Albanian leaders condemn the verdict as “political”.
2010	
October	Three high-ranking members of the junior government party, the Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, including one government minister, face accusations that they served as spies for the former Yugoslav secret services .
October	The Appellate Court in Belgrade overturns the first-instance verdict against former Bosnian security officer Ilija Jurisić and orders a retrial in a controversial case that strains relations between Sarajevo and Belgrade.
July	International organizations in Bosnia strongly condemn top Bosnian Serb officials for denying genocide in Srebrenica and glorifying convicted war criminals.
April	The international community’s top representative in Bosnia, Inzko, sharply criticises Bosnian Serb leadership for questioning the massacre of some 8,000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) men and boys.
March	Top Bosnian Serb leaders react angrily to efforts by Bosniak and Bosnian Croat officials to discredit Serbia’s request for the arrest and extradition of Ganić , a member of Bosnia’s wartime presidency.
January	Relations between Serbia and Croatia reach another critical juncture as Croatian President Mesić decreases a jail sentence of a convicted war criminal who took part in the executions of ethnic Serb civilians, by one year.
2009-2000	

Date	News
2009, March	Bosnia's Minister of Security Sadović warns the Serbian Interior Minister Dačić, that “ good neighbourly relations ” between the two countries could “be jeopardised” if Serbia insists on prosecuting 19 Bosnian officials charged for war crimes against the Yugoslav Army.
2008, February	The Assembly of Kosovo adopts declaration of independence . Government starts diplomatic offensive for international recognition. Most countries in the world recognise in the end, but not Russia, Serbia and four EU countries do not.
2007, October	Serbia's Council for National Security offers a €1 million reward for information that could lead to the capture of former Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladić.
2006, October	Serbia holds its referendum to approve a new constitution asserting that Kosovo is an integral part of the country . Kosovo's Albanian majority boycott the vote.
2006, May	55% of voters opt for the independence of Montenegro in national referendum .
2004, March	The divided town of Mitrovica in Kosovo experiences the worst ethnic violence in the region since the 1999 war . At least 22 people are killed and hundreds injured in the fighting that breaks out between Serbs and ethnic Albanians. NATO has to send in reinforcements to calm the situation.
2003, March	Serbian Prime Minister Djindjić is assassinated in Belgrade . (Twelve men were later convicted of his assassination, which is believed to have been ordered by members of organised crime gangs concerned at his attempts to clean up corruption in Serbia and offering witness protection programmes.)
2001, March	Milosević is arrested in Belgrade and charged with misuse of state funds and abuse of office. Later the Prime Minister Djindjić overrules the country's Constitutional Court and authorises his extradition to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.
2000, October	In Serbia's presidential elections, opposition leader Kostunica claims victory over Milosević and is sworn in after a popular uprising and a general strike.

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