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## **GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT AS A BASIS FOR ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF SMALL EUROPEAN STATES – the case of Austria and Slovenia regarding the Western Balkans\***

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### **Abstract:**

The author tests the theory of small (European) states' active foreign policy strategy of choosing to cooperate in a field where they could use their historical context and geographical proximity to an area as a basis for their active foreign policy strategy. She claims that it is the change of external determinants of foreign policy which make a small European state decide to use their historical context or geographical proximity and a relevant field of cooperation, but in some cases selectively. The theory is verified regarding two small European states, Austria and Slovenia and their historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans.

**Keywords:** small states, foreign policy, history, geography, Europe

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## **Introduction**

The goal of this paper is to analyse whether a small European state necessarily chooses to cooperate in a field where it could use its historical context and geographical proximity to an area as a basis for its active foreign policy strategy, and if not, what are the determinants which make a small European state decide not to pursue this or any other kind of foreign policy strategy.

Firstly a short overview of the small states' scope of foreign policy strategies in international relations (IR) will be made, and the most common of small states' foreign policy strategies will be identified with the distinction between the traditional passive (pre-) and more active post-Cold War. In the second chapter I will explore one of the latter, namely the strategy of using capabilities, based on geographical proximity and historical context regarding an important geographical area. I will argue that history and geography as internal determinants of foreign policy are more likely to be used in cases when changes appear in external foreign policy environment. In the following chapter I will apply this theory to the case of Austria and Slovenia, both small in times of Cold war non-pole European states, geographically and historically close to Western Balkans, test whether the exposed theory is true in their case and if not, try to identify the specific situations or possible reasons for which either of them applied a different foreign policy strategy. In Conclusion I will present the findings of the analysis.

The methodological approach applied in this research will be a review of literature on possibilities and construction of small state's foreign policy strategies and a comparison of two case studies, of which the latter will be done by content analysis of primary sources – foreign policy strategies of the two respective governments.

### **1. Small European states' scope for making an active foreign policy strategy**

Traditional political theory has offered a very limited understanding of small state's abilities and possibilities for foreign policy action in IR; authors mainly claimed that the first and the ultimate foreign policy goal (interest) of a small state was to achieve 'defensive power', which means "autonomy i.e. ability to resist offensive power of other units" (Mouritzen 1998: 44) or the ability to prevent others from affecting their own behaviour (Singer in

Goetschel 2000: 6).<sup>1</sup> This was mainly the perception of small European states' foreign policy range during the Cold War, when security was the main 'high politics' issue dealt with within the alliances of each pole. The possibilities of small European states, especially the ones which were outside the security alliances, were therefore mainly perceived as pursuing a passive foreign policy - retaining *status quo* (Benko 1992: 6) by a form of non-commitment or neutrality (Mouritzen 1998: 44), conflict avoiding behaviour (Väyrynen 1971: 96; Baillie 1998; Erling 1968: 167) and avoiding big risks or costs – low profile (East 1973: 558; Baillie 1998: 210). Mouritzen (1998: 43) claims that in the Cold War period the higher the level of tension between the two poles in a symmetric constellation was the lower was a non-pole<sup>2</sup> small state's defensive power.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, many small states<sup>4</sup> have on the other hand been able to exercise active foreign policy serving their national interests in some fields of international cooperation (Goetschel 2000: 6). An active foreign policy's main purpose is to pursue a foreign policy as defined by the small state itself, in some cases also offensive policy in a way of searching for alliances (Benko 1997: 251). Mouritzen (1998: 44) explains that in the previous example since a small state's defensive power would lower, its behaviour would become more active, applying the strategies of non-commitment, counterweight and possibly, mediation. Another reason to explain a possibility for more active foreign policy behaviour of small European states in the time of Cold War was the growing complexity of the international community 'dealt with' in the growing number of international governmental (regional) organisations, which has provided more fields of cooperation and therefore also 'situations in which quantitative power attributes were not essential' (Goetschel 2000: 6-7; Hey 2002).

After the end of the Cold War, when the states and also cooperation within international organisations have shaken off the bipolar system constraints,<sup>5</sup> strategies for small (European) states' foreign policy have pointed to opportunities for pursuing a more active foreign policy and even to possible sources of their influence gain (in international fora). These possible

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<sup>1</sup> Singer, Marshall R. (1972: 54) *Weak states in a world of powers. The dynamics of international relationships*. New York: The Free Press. In Goetschel (2000: 6).

<sup>2</sup> A non-pole state is a state not belonging to any of the two (military) alliances, the Western or the Eastern.

<sup>3</sup> The small European states belonging to one or another pole did not have much real political choice to apply their own foreign policy independently. Mostly their choice of foreign policy behaviour was bandwagoning (Mouritzen 1998: 50).

<sup>4</sup> The literature on small states mainly exposes the following: Austria, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland.

<sup>5</sup> The international organisations have in fact become crucial centres of interaction and decision-making (Goetschel 2000: 7).

strategies<sup>6</sup> are: use of information technology (Tonra 2002: 345), factors linked to the structure of the negotiation process (Sundelius in Goetschel 2000: 5;<sup>7</sup> Baillie 1998) like (diplomatic) bargaining, mediation (being an honest broker), *l'art de convaincre*; (Erling 1968: 165; Väyrynen 1971: 96; Baillie 1998; Jazbec 2001: 58; Hey 2002: 219), expertise and knowledge (Kronsell 2002, Hey 2002; Sundelius in Goetschel 2000: 5), qualification of diplomats and organisation of the administration (Zupančič 2003; Hey 2002; Knudsen 2002: 190) good leadership (Hey 2002; Knudsen 2002: 190), political legitimacy (Knudsen 2002: 190), national policies as examples of success (Petrič 1996: 879; Kronsell 2002), setting clear priorities (Zupančič 2003: 100), forming flexible alliances (Zupančič 2003: 100), being adaptable (Väyrynen 1971: 96; Knudsen 2002: 188; (Tonra 2002: 345), norm setting (Kronsell 2002) and exploiting (political) market niches (Antola *et al.* in Zupančič 2003).<sup>8</sup> In the international organisations a small state preference for support of strong and effective common institutions has also been identified (Baillie 1998; Tonra 2002: 347; Hey 2002).

As a part of a foreign policy strategy, a small state also has to choose its primary field(s) of cooperation in IR. Since it has less sources of its own (financial, natural, human), a small state is bound to choose less fields of cooperation so it can mainly focus its sources and efforts on the selected fields (Paterson 1969: 122). Therefore it has to choose wisely. A so called sectoral approach of small state perception (Šabič 2002: 5) offers an analysis of a small state action (and influence) in specific areas of cooperation, but most importantly also indicates *how* a small state chooses its issue specific field(s). Small states namely select a field of cooperation where they try to (and can) turn their existing resources and capabilities to their favour, meaning they “/.../ choose an issue regarding which they can best use their capabilities” (Šabič 2002: 6). In some cases the latter can even represent ‘comparative advantages’ (in the form of knowledge, experience, expertise, tradition, successful national policies) compared to other states which a small state can therefore make use of in order to achieve its foreign policy goals (Antola and Lehtimaki in Zupančič 2003: 103; Bojinović 2004). Zupančič (2003) points out that the latter can be a foreign policy strategy especially appealing to new small (European) states which are yet entering the international fora (e. g.

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<sup>6</sup> Here, I do not distinguish between strategies (long term, enabling prediction of foreign policy) and techniques (which are short term or temporary) of foreign policy. Further along, my attention is only given to strategies of foreign policy.

<sup>7</sup> Sundelius, Bengt (1980: 202) ‘Independence and Foreign Policy’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 15: 187-208. In Goetschel (2000: 5).

<sup>8</sup> Antola E. and M. Lehtimaki (2001) *Small States in the EU: Problems and Prospects of the Future*. In Zupančič (2003: 103).

European Union - EU) and want to shape their proper foreign policy profile in the international organisation(s) as soon as possible. Good examples of the latter are: Swedish norm setting role in case of EU environmental policy (Kronsell 2002), Finnish mediation interest in the EU-Russia relations (Zupančič 2003: 104) and Luxembourg's successful negotiation/mediation in economic/financial aspects of the European integration (Baillie 1998; Hey 2002).

Some authors (Erling 1968; Benko 1992; Petrič 1996; Mouritzen 1998; Baillie 1998; Hey 2002) extend the presented panel of proposed small states' foreign policy strategies to a possibility of acting in a field of cooperation where a small state can use its capabilities, deriving from its (strategic) geographical position and historical context.<sup>9</sup> The goal of this paper is to pursue this research agenda, meaning to research whether a small European state necessarily chooses to cooperate in a field where it could use its historical context and geographical proximity to an area as basis for its foreign policy strategy, and if not, what are the determinants which make a small European state decide not to pursue this kind of foreign policy strategy.

## **2. Geographical proximity and historical context regarding an area as a basis for small state's foreign policy strategy**

### **2.1. The meaning of history and geography as a basis for small state's active foreign policy strategy**

Benko (1992: 6) claims that a small state pursuing an active foreign policy strategy has to lean on the advantages as they arise out of security geography. (Petrič 1996: 896) even notes that a small state should do everything in order to assert itself as an active agent and partner in its own region, especially in cases if problems arise in the area, respectively. Baillie (1998) and Hey (2002) expose the value of historical context linked to a geographical position as a small state's source of knowledge and negotiation assets. According to these authors, it is to claim that capabilities of a small state, deriving from geographical proximity to an area and historical context connected with this area can be used regarding the same geographical area or can be used in a very different field of cooperation. The example of the first is Finnish

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<sup>9</sup> Some authors (Paterson 1969: 122; Väyrynen 1971: 96) also speak of small states' foreign policy focus on their regional area, but do not explain motivation for this action except a lack of resources.

mediation interest in the EU-Russia relations based on the special ‘adaptive acquiescence’ behaviour (experience) towards the Soviet union in the Cold War (Mouritzen 1998: 93) or Luxembourg’s cross border cooperation with France and Germany, based on knowledge (language, culture) of the German and the French nation (Baillie 1998). The example of the second case (a different field of cooperation) are Luxembourg’s negotiation assets deriving from linguistic and cultural knowledge of the German and the French, being used in many of EU cooperation fields (Baillie 1998).<sup>10</sup> Geographical proximity and historical context are inter-connected and should be of importance not only to the small state but also to the international ‘context’ in which a small state acts (e. g. to an international organisation). Erling (1968: 158-59) even notes that the importance of a small state’s geographical position increases if intensity of a big power’s interest grows, where the latter could in existing IR also be interpreted as the interest of an international organisation.

In the following chapter I will look into the mechanism of how history and geography can be used as a basis for (small states’) foreign policy strategy by researching their role as internal determinants of foreign policy.

## **2.2. The mechanism of using history and geography as basis for foreign policy strategy**

Benko (1997: 233) defines geography and history as determinants of internal environment of a state’s foreign policy. Geography is understood in connection with the state’s extent, location, strategic geopolitical position, configuration of borders, installation of the territory in international environment and international communications network and also natural resources (*ibid.*). History as another internal determinant is understood as the historical development of the society and the historical memory, meaning national historical self-understanding (self-perception) regarding the development and experiences of the society (*ibid.*).<sup>11</sup> The external environment of foreign policy is on the other hand the ‘outside world’, involving the coexistence of states with transnational relations (Hill 2003: 186) and is mainly determined by features of a certain international system, including role of international organisations (Benko 1997: 236). This environment also has geographical, economic, cultural, and other determinants (*ibid.*), but they are defined as constituting external

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<sup>10</sup> In this case the capabilities are more used as one of the sources of small state’s influence (Baillie 1998) and not ‘only’ as a determinant of choosing a field of cooperation.

<sup>11</sup> Some other foreign policy internal environment determinants are also economic, cultural and military (security) factors and formulation, conduct and implementation of foreign policy decisions (Benko 1997: 233-35). The paper will not primarily include these determinants as basis for foreign policy strategy; e. g. economic interests for a formulation of foreign policy strategy will not be exposed as such.

environment of foreign policy because they are “not easily susceptible to change and not part of the political *process*, which generates decisions” (Hill 2003: 186).<sup>12</sup> The internal (domestic) and external environment of foreign policy are not separated, but are in interaction, which is well presented by Mouritzen (1998: 82).<sup>13</sup> In this regard he resumes Goldmann’s<sup>14</sup> three models of internal-external foreign policy sources (determinants) interplay, one of which is a so called requisite (control-relax) model, by which external determinants influence the relation between internal factors and foreign policy (Mouritzen 1998: 82) (further on used as a model for Figure 1).

It is to confirm that geographical position of a (small) state or the perception of it is an important internal factor upon which a state will formulate its foreign policy. As previously mentioned, geography can be understood as a determinant of both internal and external foreign policy environment, the first as a self-perception of geographical position and the second because it is a part of the external, independent and slow-changing physical world (Hill 2003: 166). From this I infer that it is more likely that geography is also understood as an internal determinant of foreign policy when the geographical external environment is in the process of change. An evident example of that would be a change of international system or foundation of new states. A less obvious but not less important is the generally accepted and empirically supported social science theory of external environment danger – internal cohesion-centralisation (Mouritzen (1998: 84-85) which is especially true for small states.<sup>15</sup> More directly connected to geographical proximity of a state to an area author also adds that when the environment becomes more stable domestic political actors get used to it and natural stereotypes may be applied to units in the neighbourhood (e.g. ‘hereditary enemy’, ‘big brother complex’). This usually can lead to domestic institutionalisation of the salient

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<sup>12</sup> The external environment of foreign policy is not simply equivalent to the external environment of a state. State’s external environment is everything physical outside a state’s borders, but some physical external environment factors of foreign policy like climate, topography or mineral resources (which are also some aspects of state’s geography) are placed inside territorial limits, nevertheless, they are slow changing and relatively immune to political intervention, and therefore are perceived as external (Hill 2003: 174). But as Benko (1997: 233) notes, ultimately a state’s own perception of a determinant makes the latter an internal foreign policy determinant.

<sup>13</sup> Mouritzen (1998: 81-82) claims that an explanation of foreign policy can best be done by supplementing levels of analysis, meaning explanation belonging to one specific level can somehow be supplemented with factors belonging to other levels if the first cannot in itself account satisfactorily for what it is set out to explain.

<sup>14</sup> Goldmann, Kjell (1976) *The Foreign Sources of Foreign Policy: Causes, Conditions or Inputs?* In Mouritzen (1998: 82-83).

<sup>15</sup> The author nevertheless draws attention to cases exposed by many authors (Cosser 1951; Otterbin in Stein 1976: 148; Mintz 1951; Williams 1947) when this theory does not apply, namely when the initial solidarity between (internal) sub-units does not exceed a critical threshold (i. e. minimal consensus) or if the external pressure does not apply evenly (roughly speaking) to the subunits (Mouritzen 1998: 88).

environment (sedimentation), including its challenges and preferred ways of dealing with them by developing a certain pattern of rhetoric and bureaucratic code language (Mouritzen 1998: 92). “In this way the domestic actors can be used by the foreign policy leadership to push in the ‘right’ direction” (*ibid.*).

History can similarly be used to support foreign policy direction by launching ‘great narrations’ and by practice with cumulative effect (Grosser 2002: 363). The author defines history in four terms, namely as the ‘weigh’ of history, its ‘laws’, ‘choices’ and ‘the belief in it’, where the weigh of history represents an accumulative heritage, either in the form of individual or collective experience or in the form of references, transmitted within an organisation, institutions or a social or national group (Grosser 2002: 262). The author also points out to the *use* of both, geography and history, claiming that they “can both be understood as *contrainte* (restriction) or *patrimoine* (heritage), depending on how they are (selectively or statically) represented by the ones who are in charge of the representation” (Grosser 2002: 362). He exposes a possibility of choosing ‘out of history’ in order to support and legitimise a certain direction of foreign policy (Grosser 2002: 371, 375),<sup>16</sup> where history also “can be read and put values on certain geographical positions or experience” (*ibid.*). On the other hand a historical narration with reference can be turned around by an event like a fall of a state system (*régime*) or a negative experience regarding an event linked to the narration (e. g. a loss of war) (Grosser 2002: 381). The selective role of history can very well be seen in cases of new states being formed (state-building), when it is hard to construct a policy without referring itself to traditions and therefore “to find a ‘usable past’ is a task of every new state” (Grosser 2002: 375). History in this regard is used instrumentally and state-building is an external determinant of foreign policy, understood as a formulation of a state regarding its external environment. On the other hand Baillie (1998) and Hey (2002) expose historical context as a tool which offers a small state (cultural) knowledge of other states (in proximity) to which a history of cooperation is linked. Here I would add that history of cooperative relations among states in geographical proximity brings about more than ‘just’ cultural (linguistic) knowledge; cooperation with states in geographical proximity also creates heritage of economic and security related historical context (historical memory).<sup>17</sup>

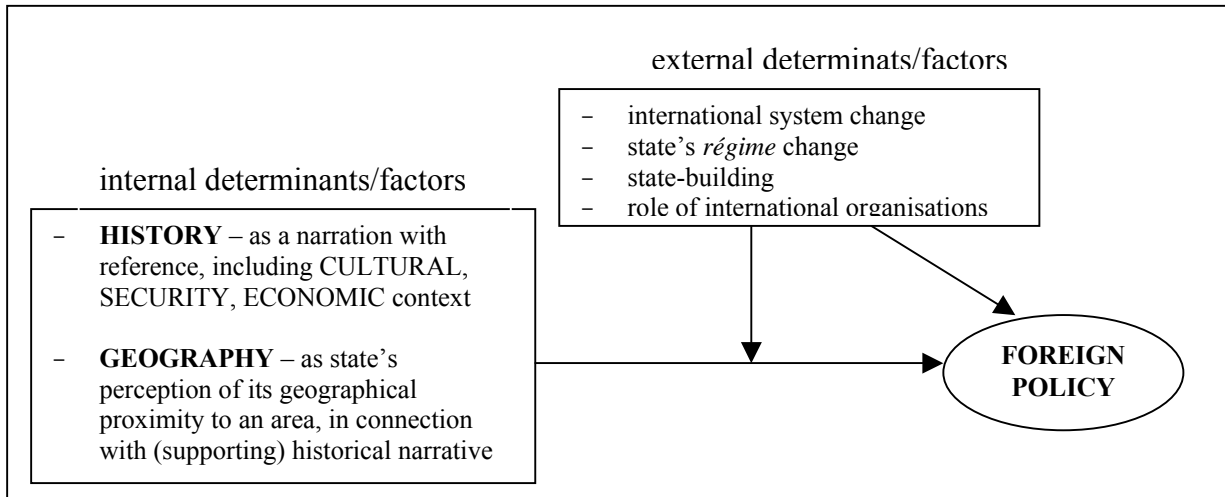
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<sup>16</sup> Two examples ‘from history’ are the construction of Austrian neutrality after 1955 and the legitimacy of French-German relations in European integration process (Grosser 2002: 346).

<sup>17</sup> The reasons why states cooperate in the first place are mostly linked to economy and security (although cultural incentives should not be neglected).

In Figure 1 the mechanism of using history and geography as a basis for foreign policy strategy is presented within the framework of interplay between internal and external factors (determinates) of foreign policy.

**Figure 1: Mechanism of using history and geography as a basis for foreign policy strategy**



From the above stated it is possible to affirm that both geography and even more history (as claimed by Grosser 2002: 375) are used as political resources in the framework of internal environment of a state's foreign policy. It is also to assert that history and geography as sources (basis) for formulation of foreign policy strategy may be used in cases of international system change, state's *régime* change and foundation of new states (state-building) and that the role of international organisations in this regard is also important:

- geography (reference of a proximity to a certain geographical area) as internal source of foreign policy is more likely to be used by a state in cases where external environment is in the process of change in order to support a foreign policy strategy,
- history (reference to a certain historical context) as internal source of foreign policy is likely to be: a) used as basis of accumulated knowledge and experience as a foreign policy asset and b) more selectively (instrumentally) used in cases of new states being founded (state-building) in order to support 'the right way' of foreign policy strategy (domestic institutionalisation and application of stereotypes to units in neighbourhood) and c) great narrations can be turned around by an event like a change of state *régime* or a negative experience linked to the previous narration.

Based on the revealed theoretical possibilities of small state's foreign policy strategies and the mechanism of using history and geography as a basis for foreign policy strategy, attention will now be turned to the two case studies. It will be examined whether Slovenia and Austria – which I arbitrarily take as small European states – with historical and geographical ties

(context and proximity, respectively) to the Western Balkans have chosen to use the latter as a basis for their active foreign policy strategies (have chosen to cooperate on issues where they would make use of this historical and geographical circumstance) or if they have not, what are the reasons.

### **3. Slovenian and Austrian historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans as a basis for their active foreign policy strategy**

I will investigate the foreign policy strategy (and actions) of the two respective governments towards the Western Balkans<sup>18</sup> on the basis of their official documents of foreign policy strategies (and action). I will briefly present the historical and geographical context of relations between the two states and the mentioned area and further on concentrate on the time period from the end of the Cold War until the present time.<sup>19</sup>

#### **3.1. Austrian foreign policy strategy regarding the Western Balkans**

Austria today does not directly border any of the states of the Western Balkans, but is placed in the latter's very close North-western vicinity. Its historical roots with the area go back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century when the Habsburgs have expanded their territory to South-east (as far as Croatia) in order to create a defence zone against the Turkish invasions. The monarchy's involvement in the Balkans was oriented even more to the South in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when its ambitions to gain passage to the nearby straits in the Mediterranean lead it to take Bosnia and Herzegovina under its administration in 1878. This action not only intensified a long lasting rivalry between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and

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<sup>18</sup> Western Balkans is an area in the South Eastern Europe, comprising Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia (all used-to-be constituent Republics of Former Yugoslavia with the exception of Slovenia) and Albania. It is a political term (in contrast to Balkans as geographical notion of a mountain range on the Balkan peninsula), founded by EU in 1998 at the European Council in Vienna. Strategy paper presented to the special meeting of »The Club of three and the Balkans« (Club-of-three 2000: 13-14) claims the term is inappropriate and suggests to keep in use South Eastern Europe. The latter nevertheless is a broader term, mainly understood in political sense to describe the majority (but not all) of the states in this geographical area; the ones which are in the process of transition and therefore yet entering the European integration process. The term has been launched in everyday use by initiating the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in 1999.

<sup>19</sup> I have chosen the end of Cold War as a point in time when states were able to pursue more active foreign policy strategies. The restriction here is noted that Slovenia had officially become a recognised independent state after 1989, therefore its policy until 1992 will be assumed on its foreign policy strategy as a Yugoslav Republic.

Russia in the area, but – after Bosnian annexation in 1908 – also increased its tensions with Serbia (Vaïsse 2000: 32). The Empire at that time with help of its ally Germany strengthened its position in the Balkans, but its territorial claims provoked the other big players in the area, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, to intensify their own pressure, and caused revolts from the local nations which lead to two Balkan wars in 1912-13, in which Austria was taking part either in direct military or financial-supportive aspect (*ibid.*). After the Serbs had reinforced their claims to unify the Southern Slaves still under Austrian domination, the situation got more explosive and in June 1914 resulted in the assassination of Grand Duke Ferdinand in Bosnia, and consequently in an unfeasible Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, which was practically a declaration of war.<sup>20</sup>

After the First World War the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated and it should be well noted that this meant a major change also for Austrian foreign policy, since its standing suddenly turned from being a big empire to having possibilities ‘only’ to act as a small state. Between the two World Wars Austria was more occupied by internal political affairs and especially with the great economic crisis in the late twenties and in the beginning of the thirties. In foreign policy it was mainly dealing with the (territorial) pressures from neighbouring states, Germany and Italy respectively, therefore its foreign policy activities were not much involved with the Balkan states; one example of the latter is fixing the southern border (at present day with Slovenia) in 1920. Already before the *Anschluss* in 1938, it was already demanded from Austria to align its foreign policy with that of the *Reich* (Vaïsse 2000: 21) and in the Second World War Austria under German annexation occupied most parts of Yugoslavia. In its constitutional treaty of 1955 Austria had to assume a neutral status in international affairs, and was therefore during the Cold War a non-pole state. But as Goetschel (2000: 12) claims, “the country never saw neutrality as an obstacle for active multilateral engagement; on the contrary /.../.” It has profiled itself in fields of development policy, peace-keeping and conflict resolution (*ibid.*).<sup>21</sup> As the state was a ‘grey area’ between East and West (Goetschel 2000: 13) it undertook a role of bridge building and offering good offices.<sup>22</sup> In this regard Austria also conducted its political cooperation with Western Balkans states, as they were mainly constituting Yugoslavia (Socialist Federative Republic of

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<sup>20</sup> The latter is also perceived as the cause for the beginning of the World War I.

<sup>21</sup> Austria was very active within Council of Europe, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Process and United Nations, but did not join the EU.

<sup>22</sup> “Prior to 1989 Austria was trying to establish at a government level a dialogue between states from ideologically antagonistic camps, between communist dictatorships on the one hand and pluralist democracies in the other and thereby to promote a policy of *détente*” (Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1993, p. VIII).

Yugoslavia - SFRY).<sup>23</sup> Although it was pursuing an active foreign policy in this view, “Austria stuck to autonomy (passive foreign policy) as far as its core neutrality obligation was concerned” (Goetschel 2000: 13).

In 1989 Austria saw the revolutionary changes in the European Eastern block as promising development in favour of *rapprochement* of West and East and the latter’s path to democratisation and market economy. Austria understood this situation has changed the state’s position and placed it ‘back to the heart of Europe’ which consequently offered new opportunities for its activities in the framework of neutrality. In 1989 Austria also presented its candidacy for membership in the European Communities. Its geographical priorities have not changed, remaining assistance to now former Eastern block states to pursue democratisation process.<sup>24</sup> “As a neighbour, Austria was also called upon to assist the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe to overcome the disastrous legacy of communism.”<sup>25</sup> In 1989 Austria launched its Central European Initiative (CEI) to cooperate with the countries in its neighbouring region, namely with Yugoslavia, Italy and Hungary.<sup>26</sup> Austria has turned its attention more to South Eastern Europe as conflicts there began in 1991.<sup>27</sup> It stated that “for geographical and historical reasons Austria has always had a close relationship with her neighbours in South Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia. /.../ Austria repeatedly advocated action by the international community and advanced a series of concrete proposals to this end.”<sup>28</sup> Regarding the hostile relations developments in the Balkans Austria expressed its deep security concern for its own being.<sup>29</sup> This concern increased in 1992 when Austria has clearly changed its security strategy from neutrality to active cooperation in EU integration process. The state was advocating that EU membership would give Austria greater security assurances, which were obviously not satisfying within the possibilities of the passive neutrality foreign policy strategy. The reason for this reorientation was therefore perception of unstable geopolitical environment, colourfully represented in expression that Austria’s international position in 1992 was largely determined by

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<sup>23</sup> Although SFRY was not a part of either of the blocs, being a leading state of Non-aligned movement.

<sup>24</sup> Außenpolitischer Bericht 1989, Jahrbuch der österreichischen Außenpolitik. Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten, p. IX.

<sup>25</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1991, p. VI.

<sup>26</sup> Außenpolitischer Bericht 1989, p. 10. Later on in 1990 Czech Republic, Slovak Republic (at the time still as Czechoslovakia) and in 1991 Poland have joined (Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1991, p. 53).

<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that Austrian activities in the region began already in 1989, when it mediated in the human rights breaches in Kosovo bilaterally and within the framework of OSCE (more on that see Jandl, Gerhard (1999)).

<sup>28</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1991, p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

‘Maastricht-Sarajevo’ field of tension.<sup>30</sup> The new security strategy can also be explained by the external environment danger – internal cohesion theory. In 1994 Austria presented its foreign policy strategy of cooperation within the EU (whose member it became the following year), where it stressed that its policy toward the Balkans will be continued also in the EU and already pointed to another foreign policy priority, namely the “support for enlargement of EU Central and Eastern Europe for many historical and geographical reasons.”<sup>31</sup> The two priorities have been accentuated ever since; a) enlargement to (and strengthening relations with) Central and Eastern Europe which would be a priority objective of Austria’s foreign policy in Europe, also for political and economic reasons, but “mostly because a region - with which Austria has the most intimate historical, cultural and economic links - will start to grow together once more”,<sup>32</sup> and b) special attention to the Balkans region will further on be given within the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).<sup>33</sup> In 2003 Austria has set as its priority a still closer approach of the EU to the Western Balkans.<sup>34</sup>

The analysis of Austrian foreign policy strategy regarding the Western Balkans shows, that after the Cold War Austria did use its historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans as a basis for its foreign policy strategy. This was the most recent context, namely Austrian cooperation with Yugoslavia during the Cold War; Austria did not use its previous negative experiences and historical memory regarding the Western Balkans as a reference for foreign policy strategy. Austria therefore did choose a field of cooperation on the basis of its (positive) historical and geographical context regarding the Western Balkans. Austria did not have to build a new foreign policy regarding its political relations towards the Western Balkans, since it had only continued its mediation, conflict resolution and bridge building role from the times of the Cold War; its foreign policy strategy in this regard did not have to change because of the change of external environment, namely the nature of the international system. Nevertheless, as soon as conflicts erupted in the Balkans, Austria was

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<sup>30</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1991, p. VII. Austria was at the time waiting for the negotiations for membership in the EU to start, which was gradually gaining importance due to the other – a very different – source of tension, i. e. the beginning of Balkan conflicts as a danger to stability in its immediate neighbourhood. Although not yet a member of the EU, Austria actively expressed its foreign policy stand toward the Western Balkans also in the EU (Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1992, p. 46).

<sup>31</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1994, p. VIII.

<sup>32</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1999, p. VI.

<sup>33</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1995, p. VIII and Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1999, p. VII.

<sup>34</sup> In this regard, Austria exposed its priority was a successful complementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SP SEE), under the leadership of its special coordinator former Austrian Vice Chancellor Erhard Busek (Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 2003, p. 49-50). Dr. Busek, appointed to this place in 2001, was not the first high diplomat Austria achieved to place in the framework of solving the Balkan crisis; in 1998 Austrian ambassador to Belgrade Wolfgang Petrisch was appointed EU special envoy to Kosovo (Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1998, p. 28-29).

placed in immediate area of violence and felt endangered. Its neutrality (passive security strategy) was not adequately providing security any more. Therefore Austria due to changes in perception of its geographical proximity had consequently also changed its foreign policy security strategy into a more active one (leaving the policy of ‘sitting still’ or standing aside),<sup>35</sup> aiming for higher security guarantees within EU CFSP.<sup>36</sup> The geographical proximity and historical context to the Western Balkans did not make Austria ‘preoccupied’ or ‘labelled’ with the latter (see further on), as its identity was (even more) firmly based in the Central Europe. On the other hand, Austria did not (have to) choose a field of cooperation in the EU by claiming *advantages* on the basis of its historical context-geographical proximity regarding the Western Balkans, because cooperating with this area was already its role and since it had experience which were very much desired by the EU, this foreign policy strategy/activity of Austria was already recognised by the EU (member states).

### **3.2. Slovenian foreign policy strategy regarding the Western Balkans**

Before their first full independence in history,<sup>37</sup> Slovenians were taking part in three states with mainly South Slavic peoples (an internationally unrecognised one, a kingdom and a socialist federative republic), the second two popularly named the first and the second Yugoslavia, each formed after the First and the Second World War respectively. Before 1918 Slovenes were (also with some South Slave peoples) for centuries a part of Habsburg and later on Austro-Hungarian empire. In sum, Slovenians have participated in different forms of states, where nations – and Slovenes in particular – had different positions regarding their equality and the dissatisfaction with the latter was also one of the reasons for Slovenes to want to pursue with their own state formation in 1990.<sup>38</sup>

Even before Slovenia was internationally recognised, it had formulated a kind of its foreign policy strategy.<sup>39</sup> The position of Slovenia in this strategy regarding the countries of the Western Balkans as they existed at the time was concentrated only to the Yugoslav republics

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<sup>35</sup> Austrian Foreign Policy Yearbook 1994, p. VIII.

<sup>36</sup> Stil, Austria achieved an exception regarding its neutrality, which would be observed also within the (W)EU.

<sup>37</sup> The (hi)story of Slovenian independence from referendum in December 1990, to declaration of independence in June 1991 and to international recognition on 15 January 1992 is well described in literature (see for example Bučar and Brinar (1994) or Bučar (1995)).

<sup>38</sup> For a more detailed description of Slovene political history with the Slavs and reasons for the independence move, see Bučar and Brinar (1994: 425-27).

<sup>39</sup> Temelji strategije zunanje politike Republike Slovenije [Foreign Policy Strategy], Poročevalec Skupščine RS in Skupščine SFRJ [Information from the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia] No. 11, 26 March 1991, p. 11-15.

(Albania not mentioned) with two main concerns: a) to develop the best possible relations with the states which were to be formed on the ground of Yugoslavia because of “economic and many other reasons”, and b) the priority was put to the issue of succession (international treaties, economic agreements). The main geographical priority in Slovenian foreign policy was given to Europe (European political and economic integration aiming at European Community membership). A ‘special intention’ was also put to cooperation with Central European states due to ‘common political, cultural and economic roots.’ In the framework of regional cooperation attention was put to the Pentagonale,<sup>40</sup> Alps-Adria Working Community and Assembly of European regions;<sup>41</sup> the only regional incentive where Slovenia could cooperate with Yugoslav states was the mentioning of its observer place in Working Community South Adriatic. It is therefore obvious that before and after the independence Slovenia did not use its historical context and geographical proximity to the Balkans as a basis for its foreign policy strategy (and also did not chose the area as a field of cooperation); rather it used its (positive) links to (Western and Central) Europe<sup>42</sup> (as if it had not been or did not perceive itself a part of Europe before) to formulate its pro-European integrations foreign policy strategy.

The foreign policy strategy from 1991 was based on the assumption that the disintegration of Yugoslavia would be peaceful and gradual,<sup>43</sup> therefore when the ethnic conflicts and war subsequently erupted in the area, Slovenia has engaged into a strategy to “get away from the Balkans, no matter what it costs” (Bučar 1994: 1065) in order not to be liked to the area in the eyes of the international community. Goldsworthy (2002: 33-34) explains that the so called ‘flight from the Balkans’ was a common strategy of many East European states<sup>44</sup> at that time, not only due to their own perception but also because of the long term symbolisation of geography and historical misrepresentations regarding the region, which resulted in seeing the Balkans only as a metaphor for conflict, incivility and violence.<sup>45</sup> This also was a reason for Balkan countries to seek to demonstrate that their true allegiance lay

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<sup>40</sup> Another name for Central European Initiative (CEI) before Poland joined it; after that it was similarly renamed into Hexagonale.

<sup>41</sup> The last three were also Slovenia's main regional cooperation frameworks with Central and Western European states in times of the Cold War. The second and the third are subregional cooperation associations, where Slovenia (the entire state) is regarded as one region.

<sup>42</sup> Slovenia was trying very hard to point to its ‘natural connection to Europe’ and therefore choice of its foreign policy priority by further underlining its traditional links, geographic location, intensive economic cooperation and also cultural heritage (Bučar and Brinar 1994).

<sup>43</sup> See Bučar (1995: 286).

<sup>44</sup> Considering quantitative criteria, the Balkan (bordering) states are mainly small states – only Romania could be perceived not a small state.

<sup>45</sup> For the historical and political development of the use of the term 'balkanisation', see Evans and Newnham (1998: 45) and Bjelić and Savić (2002).

elsewhere – in Central and even Western Europe (*ibid.*). An example of the rhetorical use of geographical and historical perception of the Balkans in a way Goldsworthy (2002) explains is a passage in a document produced by the Slovenian Ministry for Foreign Affairs:<sup>46</sup>

A special achievement, in a great deal thanks to Slovenian foreign policy, is that Slovenia as a state with the act of independence has started its departure from the area, which it was a part of from the end of the World War I; from the area lucidly named by Krleža<sup>47</sup> as ‘the Balkan’s pub’, and in which Slovenia was all this time despite of her attested adaptability, nevertheless a foreign body (Rupel et al. 2000).

Bučar (1995: 293) states that all previous (before independence) Slovene foreign policy orientations including Balkan cooperation were increasingly neglected.<sup>48</sup> “Slovenia did not seek to participate in any system centred on the Balkans region /.../; instead Slovenia sought to remove itself entirely from Balkans maelstrom /.../” (Bukowski 2002: 76). Slovenia was rather more actively regionally cooperating with members of Vishegrad group,<sup>49</sup> within Central European Initiative (CEI), and other more West-oriented regional cooperations. Therefore Slovenia initially did not want to participate in South Eastern Cooperation Initiative (SECI), launched in 1996 nor in Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SP SEE), launched in 1999 (Bučar 2001: 144). The government feared that if it joined SECI, the opposition would interpret that as an act of re-establishing the former Yugoslavia (Bučar and Šterbenc 2002: 105).<sup>50</sup> This indecisive posture of Slovenian foreign policy could be explained by the fact that after 1991 Slovenia had practically no foreign policy strategy on which all domestic political actors would agree upon,<sup>51</sup> “since political parties, at least most of them, seem to have been confusing their party interests with foreign policy national interest” (Bučar 1995: 288). This, accompanied by more structural unsatisfactory organisation and performance due to the fact that the state was young and had little (or non-positive) tradition of foreign policy was at the time clearly one of the Slovenian foreign policy internal

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<sup>46</sup> The text was written by four (it may be claimed at the time leading) Slovene diplomats for a ten-year anniversary of independent Slovenian foreign policy.

<sup>47</sup> Miroslav Krleža (1893-1981); a Croatian (essay) writer, poet and erudite.

<sup>48</sup> (Bučar 2001: 144) even observes that immediately after independence Slovenia had a sublime and distant attitude toward Eastern European countries (Bučar 2001: 144).

<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, Slovenia never became a member of the Vishegrad group. The state did consider (in 1993) to join the group, but did not pursue this policy, because it was told by the members that the group would formally cease to meet, since it did not have any formal structure, nor common action or coordination (Drnovšek 1997).

<sup>50</sup> Slovenia joined United States-sponsored SECI in March 1997 only after United States has expressed that ‘the international community expected a more determined involvement of Slovenia in regional affairs’ and also indirectly linked Slovenian SECI participation with its better outlooks for NATO membership (Bučar and Šterbenc 2002: 105). This was a personal correspondence of the American President to Slovenian Prime Minister (*ibid.*). The event is not mentioned in the Report of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Even the one from 1991 was not an official document since it was not endorsed by the parliament due to various political parties’ inability to agree on common security and military position of the state (Bučar 1995: 287).

environments' permanent features.<sup>52</sup> The latter was one of the reasons for Slovenia's initial unwillingness to participate in SP SEE, as in 1999 there were 'grand debates' within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs itself, how Slovenia should define its role and cooperation within SP SEE (Kliner 2005).<sup>53</sup>

After Slovenia joined SECI and SP SEE and by this its previous foreign policy action it has also turned around its use of historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans (i. e. 'away from the Balkans' perception). The government produced a Declaration on foreign policy in the end of 1999.<sup>54</sup> In the document Slovenia expressed its recognition that due to its political, security, economic and other interests it has to be present and active in the area of South Eastern Europe. The document states that Slovenia has to become an important and credible partner of the international community in this part of Europe and also exposes Slovenian participation in SP SEE. The Declaration concludes, that "on the basis of its geographical, political, economic and historical predispositions Slovenia can offer good offices in solving complicated situations as in its neighbourhood as elsewhere." It is seen, that the document did not simply represent a change in use of historical context and geographical proximity regarding the Western Balkans, but that their perception was turned into a different - active foreign policy strategy toward the area. Slovenia was to become a mediator in solving the Balkan issues. This strategy was resumed in an even more intensive way in the following official document on foreign policy, called 'The appropriate foreign policy', from October 2002.<sup>55</sup> The continuation and gradation of the recently established positive perception and active strategy regarding the Western Balkans was expressed in the following passage under the title Central Europe:

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<sup>52</sup> Bučar (2001) exposes conceptually-strategic (planning), organisationally-technical (implementation) and politically-personal Slovenian foreign policy problems.

<sup>53</sup> Some claimed that if Slovenia participated in SP SEE, the international community would see that as an act of re-establishing former Yugoslavia. At the same time Slovenia was also trying very hard to establish itself as a Central European state. Therefore the initial proposition of the international community that Slovenia should be a recipient state was for Slovenia unacceptable (Kliner 2005). Slovenia did not participate on the founding meeting of SP SEE in Köln on 10 June 1999 (Austrian foreign policy report 1999, p. 27). After it was agreed that Slovenia would be a *donor* Central European state to SP SEE, Slovenia started to participate actively on a high diplomatic level (Poročilo Ministrstva za zunanje zadeve 1999 [Report of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 1999], p. 88). The change in foreign policy stand happened also due to very big expectations regarding Slovenian role in SP SEE expressed on the side of the international community, especially the EU (Kliner 2005).

<sup>54</sup> Deklaracija o zunanji politiki Republike Slovenije [Declaration on foreign policy of the Republic of Slovenia], endorsed by the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia on 17 December 1999. In this document the state's activities regarding the Western Balkans as a whole (SECI, SP SEE) and also cooperation with each of the countries from the area is presented (Albania included for the first time).

<sup>55</sup> Primerna zunanja politika – Temeljne prvine zunanje politike Republike Slovenije ob vključevanju v evroatlantske povezave [The appropriate foreign policy – the basic elements of the Slovenian foreign policy along its integration in Euro-Atlantic alliances], adopted by the government of the Republic of Slovenia on 10 October 2002.

*Nevertheless*, Slovenia is not only a central European state, its identity is also built on its Mediterranean tradition and connection to South Eastern Europe; therefore it could be a bridge between different European regions. This is also the perception of other (Central European) countries, therefore Slovenia has to profit from this position and within Central Europe (even as the future member of the EU)<sup>56</sup> assume the role of the leading connoisseur and adviser on political, economic and other problems of South Eastern Europe.

The presented new orientation of foreign policy strategy is based on the Slovenian multiple sourced *identity*, although (ironically) the (European) identity building just after the independence was the reason to use ‘away from the Balkans’ narrative in the first place. This is not so uncommon and could be explained by the fact that Slovenia was at the time a new state, yet entering the international community, and as such it was its task to base (ground) its proper, autonomous political identity (Benko 1992: 8). At the same time, Slovenia set itself a primary foreign policy goal, to enter European integrations and ultimately join the EU. Knudsen (2002: 184) notes that “paradoxically, state-building and integration beyond the state are thus closely linked while also being mutually conflicting.” The author explains this identity/integration *problematique*; identity in the outset is usually determined by a matter of finding out who one thinks one is not (Knudsen 2002: 189). In this regard it is possible to understand the use of ‘away from the Balkans’ narrative based on the general and Slovenian negative perception of historical context and geographical proximity to the Balkans, and therefore the Balkans during the Slovenian state-building were ‘the usable past’ defining what Slovenia’s identity is not, just like it was the case in other (small) Eastern European states.<sup>57</sup> As Mouritzen (1998: 92) says, political actors got used to this and natural stereotypes were applied to a unit in the neighbourhood, which led to domestic institutionalisation of this environment – claiming that links to the Balkans impede Slovenia from being perceived as a Central European state, credible for European integration. Therefore only external pressures, big expectations of Slovenia’s role in the region and promises of treating it as a Central European state made Slovenia change the perception of and foreign policy action toward the Western Balkans and re-include the area in its identity concept. Afterwards Slovenia used the historical context and geographical proximity to formulate its new foreign

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<sup>56</sup> Under the title of Slovenian contribution in the EU, it is stated that within the framework of Common Foreign and Security Policy Slovenia will have to concentrate on the area of Mediterranean and South Eastern Europe since it has the advantage of knowing the conditions in the area.

<sup>57</sup> Here two remarks have to be made. Firstly, it could not be argued that state-building including creating nationally identity was the decisive internal foreign policy determinant for the use of historical context and geographical proximity to the Balkans in all post-communist Eastern European states. Some of the latter were not new states (e. g. Romania, Bulgaria), but they still used the negative historical context regarding the Balkans as a base of their pro-European foreign policy. The explaining variable in this case could therefore be the aim to join the European integration. (More on national identity of post-communist small states joining the EU (case of Slovenia) see in Šabič and Brglez (2002). Secondly, as pointed out, not all Eastern European states were small states, having Romania in mind. Therefore the use of negative Balkans-related historical context as a basis for pro-European foreign policy strategy was not limited only to small states.

policy strategy (and choose a field of cooperation) where their previously negative perception was turned into a claimed advantage and even an opportunity; Slovenia could become a bridge builder between the EU and Western Balkans (South Eastern Europe).<sup>58</sup> This narration has now consolidated and is being used in formulation of foreign policy strategy toward the Western Balkans also in the latest government strategic document on the development of Slovenia.<sup>59</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

The findings of both case studies are presented in Table 1. The table shows how the external environment change has influenced the use of history and geography as a basis for foreign policy strategies of Slovenia and Austria regarding the Western Balkans.

**Table 1: Geographical proximity and historical context regarding the Western Balkans in Austrian and Slovenian foreign policy strategies**

|                                      | External environment change  | Historical/geographical base of an active foreign policy strategy   | WB*- field of cooperation? |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|
| S<br>L<br>O<br>V<br>E<br>N<br>I<br>A | 1991 – state-building (+ political identity)   | links with Europe from before and in times of SFRY  | NO                         |
|                                      | 1992 – eruption of Balkan conflicts + unstable internal foreign policy environment   | ‘away from the Balkans’ – even more accent on European links  | NO                         |
|                                      | 1999 – external pressure and expectancies regarding its membership in Euro-Atlantic integrations + built Central European identity | geographical, political, economic and historical predispositions for offering good offices regarding South Eastern Europe | YES                        |
|                                      | 2002 – joining Euro-Atlantic integrations and end of Balkan conflicts  | Balkans as a part of Slovenian identity + EU perspective of Western Balkans states  | YES/priority in the EU     |
| A<br>U<br>S<br>T<br>R<br>I<br>A      | 1989 – change of international system  | continuation of the East-West bridge building role from the Cold War  | YES                        |
|                                      | 1992 – eruption of Balkan conflicts  | danger to its own security in immediate vicinity  | YES                        |

<sup>58</sup> Pierre (1999) observes: “Slovenians prefer to think of themselves as not part of the Balkans at all. Rather, they like to consider their nation as part of Central Europe, like their neighbours Austria and Hungary, with some past Balkan experience. Another self-characterization is Slovenia as a valuable bridge to the Balkans, without being a part of the region.”

<sup>59</sup> The document states: “Historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans are perceived as ‘the biggest opportunity for Slovenia to use its comparative advantages (namely common history, knowledge of language, culture and habits) to establish itself (in the EU) as an honest broker and a reference point for the Western Balkans and by this also attain a positive profile in this field of cooperation within the EU.’ Strategija razvoja Slovenije, osnutek za javno razpravo [Slovenian development strategy, a draft for public debate], Vlada Republike Slovenije, Urad za makroekonomske analize in razvoj, 2004 [prepared by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Bureau for macroeconomic analysis and development in 2004], p. 26-27, 140-42.

|                      |   |   |                        |
|----------------------|---|---|------------------------|
| <b>R<br/>I<br/>A</b> | 1994 – joining the EU<br>2001 – end of Balkan conflicts | EU enlargement due to historical, geographical, political, economy links to Central and Eastern Europe + EU perspective of Western Balkans states | YES/priority in the EU |
|----------------------|---|---|------------------------|

\*WB – Western Balkans

On the basis of the presented analysis of the two small European states it could be concluded, that Slovenia and Austria after the end of the Cold War did use their historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans as a basis for their active foreign policy strategies regarding the area and also to choose their field of cooperation in the international community, but in case of Slovenia this did not turn out to be true at all occasions. Both internal determinants of foreign policy were used when external environment of foreign policy was changed, but the intensity of the first and the importance of the second depended on the perception of the recent (Cold War) historical contexts regarding the area in proximity (Slovenia had a negative, Austria a positive one). States were also in a different situation regarding statehood; Austria was a well established Central European state, on the other hand Slovenia was a new state in the process of state-building and transition.

Based on this perception and situation the two states saw their historical and geographical link to the Western Balkans differently; for Austria it was mostly an *opportunity* to continue its active foreign policy of mediation and bridge building. Even when the state perceived the geographical proximity as a security threat, it continued this policy and ‘only’ changed its security strategy – from neutrality to EU membership – therefore it could be argued that its policy was only put into another framework due to international system change. On the other hand, after its independence, Slovenia did not use its historical context and geographical proximity related to the Western Balkans and also did not choose this area to be its field of cooperation, because it perceived both, the geographical and historical link to the area as a *constraint* for its identity construction (Slovenia as a Central European state) and also for its European integration process (however, the latter does not seem to be a case exclusively applied to small (Eastern) European states, but more to European states in transition). The decisive external determinant of foreign policy in case of Slovenia in its early years of statehood was therefore not international system change, but state-building. When Slovenia asserted its Central European identity and changed the perception of its historical and geographical link to the Western Balkans into a positive one, it started to formulate it as a

foreign policy *opportunity* and, similarly as Austria did previously, chose the area as its primary field of cooperation also within the EU.

In this regard, it could be claimed that European integration process and the role of the EU as an organisation also proved to be an important external foreign policy factor determining the use of historical context and geographical proximity to the Western Balkans as the basis for foreign policy strategies and choice of field of cooperation for both selected small states in two ways: 1) because the Western Balkans was an area/issue which was high on the organisation's agenda and 2) as membership in the organisation was the two states' foreign policy goal, the EU could exercise a direct impact on them (Austria was invited, Slovenia more pushed/persuaded into cooperation). Since the area/issue has kept or even increased the importance within the framework of Europeanization process, an interesting subject of further research would be to see how (effectively) the two states are using their identified *opportunity* to implement their active foreign policy strategy in practice.

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