



The Republic of Serbia

INTRODUCTION

Serbia, a landlocked country in Southeast Europe at the crossroads of the Pannonian Plain and the Balkans. It shares land borders with Hungary to the north, Romania to the northeast, Bulgaria to the southeast, North Macedonia to the south, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the west, and Montenegro to the southwest, and claiming a border with Albania through the disputed territory of Kosovo. Serbia with Kosovo has about 8.6 million inhabitants. Its capital Belgrade is also the largest city.

Given Serbia's description above, it also has its own issues such as: Lacking of human rights adherence, disregarding the freedom of media, uninitiated war crimes accountability, sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, care of disability rights, lack of attention to the care of minorities, and women & children.

Issues above were pressing the country which destabilizes their relationship, country's identity and economy. In relation to this being stated, during **Ukraine-Russia War**, Serbia being in a bilateral foreign relationship with Russia these two countries have been close allies for centuries; and the friendship between them has been strongly maintained, Russia's war in Ukraine leaves Serbia stuck between a rock and a hard place as Serbs insist that their expressions of sympathy are heart-felt exactly because people in Serbia know from their experience how Ukrainians feel right now in the bomb shelters.

"Our neighbours have a very big heart. They organised themselves and offered everything to us. The people are ringing the bell all the time, offering food, clothes for the children, they cook for us, they even offer accommodation in case we are overcrowded," said Kateryna in one of the interviews created. Resources: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/03/russia-s-war-in-ukraine-leaves-serbia-stuck-between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place>

That being said and described, The Republic of Serbia has been divided into two in terms of their stand in the Russia-Ukraine war. Due to this dilemma, Serbia's commoners and their republic has separated their views and opinions about the issue, a lot of them wanted to become allies with Ukraine while the Republic itself wants to go with Russia's side. With this, Serbia's media has been put in a dilemma on which issue should go on public and

which side should they follow. Another thing is that, economy-wise Russia is among the four biggest trade partners for Serbia and has a free trade agreement with Belgrade. Serbia never joined EU sanctions against Russia and has benefitted from this decision as the export to Russia grew to around a billion dollars thus, Serbia's decision on taking side with Russia during the war.

KEY ISSUE AREAS

If The Republic of Serbia would go against Russia and take the side of Ukraine, it would greatly affect in their economy since Russia, being said above, is one of the largest investors of the Republic. Although, it was evident that "Serbs" the commoners heartily support Ukraine as they based it in their experience before with NATO 1999, still, the Republics decision on saving the country from possible invasion of Russia by collapsing their support to Serbia's economy prevails.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The Republic of Serbia responded the crisis by doing the following:

1. Republic taking side to Russia even if commoners "Serbs" are taking the side of Ukraine.
2. While Russia-Ukraine war is the hot issue nowadays, Serbia is taking its step towards thickening ties with China. As they may think that incase Russia would withdraw its support to Serbia, China could replace it.
3. Circumnavigating political unrest in Ukraine via the Balkans with a key route through Serbia which does not only strengthens Belgrade's geo-strategic position, it deepens the necessity for both to cooperate; EU membership may be the larger tradeoff on the horizon, but it doesn't have to be.

Resources

-<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/serbia/kosovo>
-<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/03/russia-s-war-in-ukraine-leaves-serbia-stuck-between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place>
-<https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/with-all-eyes-on-russia-serbia-nourishes-ties-with-china/>
-<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/06/serbia-russia-and-effects-of-ukraine-crisis/>