I.

The European Union opens the door to six Balkan countries but insists that to enter the EU block there are rules to be followed. Serbia and Montenegro lead the list of candidates.

In Germany there is a coalition agreement: Social Democrats join the German chancellor to form a government. In this program we also analyze the decision of the SPD leader to resign from the leadership of the German diplomacy after internal criticism of the party.

And in this Magazine Europe: Brussels can restrict UK access to the single market by 2019.

II.

Welcome to the Europe Magazine!

The European Union is preparing to open the doors to six Balkan countries. Serbia and Montenegro are first on the list. Brussels insists, however, that the entrance is not free, as the journalist Sofia Jesus tells us.

The talks on the accession of Serbia and Montenegro to the European Union are already under way. The European Commission has drawn up a program for the enlargement of the Community bloc to these two Balkan countries by 2025, with an investment of EUR 1070 million.
According to Brussels, other countries in the region may be followed: Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.
The door to the Balkans opens, but first there are house rules to follow.
In a document to which the POLITICO newspaper had access last week the enlargement strategy is outlined, but it can also be read that these countries show "clear evidence of state dominance, including links to organized crime and corruption at all levels of government and administration. "
The European Commission also writes that none of these countries "can be considered as a functional market economy".
The enlargement of the European Union to new geographies is expected to help the stability of the bloc, according to statements by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in the last State of the Union address in September last year.

And from Brussels we have with us as usual, Victor Ângelo, former Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and international consultant based in the Belgian capital.

Victor, the European Union wants to promote the entry of new countries in the name of stability. However, there are a number of impositions. Is this going to be a difficult and long way?

Of course, the Balkans are at the moment the political volcano of Europe. It is a volcano that sends huge shock waves and ethnic tremors across the six countries. It is a volcano that has huge problems of various kinds. In addition to ethnic violence, it has problems related to corruption, with organized crime. They are countries where democracy has not yet advanced as expected. They are also countries that have several border disputes and are mainly very poor countries with a long economic backwardness. In other words, tackling these countries' accession to the European Union is a huge undertaking.

And what challenges would the eventual integration of these countries bring?

We are talking about a region of Europe that is a completely different region from the rest of the continent, which politically has a lot of problems and is very divided between itself and in relation to the rest of the European countries.

We must not forget, for example, that there is a conflict between Macedonia and Greece. Greece does not want the country to be called Macedonia, but it actually translates into a deeper conflict, which is a conflict between the Greek ethnic group, so to speak, which still has some weight in Macedonia and the Macedonians themselves are of various ethnicities.

There are very serious internal conflicts that can quickly degenerate into violent war-type conflicts within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In fact, the only country that has any stability and which could quickly join the European Union is Montenegro. At the moment Montenegro is already a member of NATO and it would also be easy to become a member of the EU later. But even within Montenegro there are many difficulties in terms of respect for the law, and in particular in terms of organized crime.

We are talking about a series of conflicts. I asked him, with the UK's exit from the bloc and also the growth of anti-European parties, what advantages does this enlargement project bring?

There is a great deal of competition in this region and it is crucial at the moment for the European Union to say that the accession of this region and the individual countries to the EU is a concrete possibility and that it is therefore not worth these countries to think about and in particular a rapprochement with Russia, which is happening at the moment in Serbia, and also to consider a deepening of its relations with Turkey, although it is known that Turkey is extremely active in the region and of the Balkan countries that have a very strong Islamic community. Albania is a fundamentally Islamic country and Bosnia itself has a very large Muslim community and Turkey tries to take advantage of this religious approach to a political rapprochement and, to a certain extent, a subordination also of the region to the Turkish interests.

We are talking about the Eastern European wing, which comes several times in confrontation with Brussels. Viktor Orbán, Hungarian Prime Minister, also argues that the European Union must open the doors to these nations and promises to help Serbia to do this. Was this position of Orban natural?
Yes, because in fact Hungary has a very strong relationship with the Balkans and Hungary wants to be seen as one of the standard-bearers of integration, let us say, of this region in the rest of Europe. Hungary knows, for example, that Bulgaria and Austria are keenly interested in deepening their political and economic relations with the Balkans. Hungary also knows that Germany has immense political and economic influence in the Balkans, and that is why Viktor Orbán's statements are a kind of positioning of his country, Hungary, in relation to other countries of the European Union, I mentioned.

III.

In Germany, almost five months after the election, Angela Merkel reached an agreement with the Social Democrats to form a coalition government. The issue of migrants was one of the most difficult issues in this negotiating process. More with the journalist of Antena 1, Isabel Cunha.

[Merkel talks about Germany, Schulz puts the spotlight on Europe. The chancellor says the agreement is a solid foundation for a stable government, which will focus on investment to keep the German economy competitive in the future. And he makes a point of stressing that solid finances will be the signature of the government. Modernizing infrastructure and looking at the challenges of digitization are other priorities. Angela Merkel admits that migrant-related issues were the most difficult to achieve convergence of positions between conservatives and Social Democrats. But the chancellor said that also in this theme have achieved a good package of measures. Martin Schulz believes that the coalition agreement is a decisive moment for European policy because Germany will once again assume an active and leading role in the Union. Seehofer sees this pact as the leader of the Christian Social Union of Bavaria Seehofer of government as a positive way to overcome divisions in German society.]

Victor, this deal was expected?
Yes, either side or the other tried and sought at all costs to come to an agreement. I think both sides need a deal. Angela Merkel needs an agreement because she wants to continue to govern and the only possibility for her to continue to govern was to reach a government platform with the Social Democrats and, on the other hand, the Social Democrats themselves do not want in any way a New election round. The Social Democrats at the moment are losing support from the German electorate and all will do to ensure that there is a government coalition and a stable government for four years, a government that can allow them to recover some of the lost electorate in Recent times.

Either way this agreement between conservatives and Liberals still needs the green light of the SPD militants. And the Social Democrat youth has already come to say that he's going to fail the deal. What argument can be used to raise the party's internal support?
On the one hand, the SPD in this agreement has won very important ministries, namely the Ministry of Finance, which is a key ministry in terms of the German economy, in terms of the promotion of employment in Germany and also in terms of the relationship of Germany with the Rest of the EU. In addition to having won the key ministry, the SPD managed to convince the other party, that is, Angela Merkel, to invest more in the reform of the European Union. This for the young Germans has some weight, has some value and also the fact that he will insist on the young Germans, saying that this is not a personal matter, because he has given up being in the government, this is a matter of national interest and interests and therefore the young Germans must vote in favour of the coalition.

He mentioned the fact that Martin Schulz had finally retreated to a place in the government, notably as foreign minister, after internal criticism of the party. Has Schulz made a mistake strive this position?
We must not forget that Schulz had been President of the European Parliament, he was an extremely influential man in Brussels and within the European spheres. Last year in the beginnings of 2017, he returned to Germany with the hope of becoming the next chancellor. He failed to win the elections and will not be the next chancellor, but despite this he continued to have very strong governance ambitions and the ambition that was more suited to his personality and his political experience was that of foreign minister. And that's why he announced he was going to be the next Minister of Foreign Affairs. And this was immediately taken advantage of by the internal opposition within his party to say that this agreement was only an agreement to give places to Schulz and Schulz's friends. And this was further aggravated by the fact that Schulz had not consulted the current German foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel. Sigmar Gabriel had been leader of the Social-Democrat Party, has been an excellent foreign minister of the Outrunning government and was not consulted, was simply put aside and this was very poorly seen by the militants and public opinion German.

The issue of migrants was one of the most difficult negotiations. What separates the CDU/CSU and the SPD in this issue?
The main thing was to know what to do with the families of the immigrants who arrived in Germany in the meantime. And there were very different positions. On the Social Democrat side, the position of Martin Schulz and the leaders of the party was that the arrival of families should be facilitated, the members of the families of those who are already in Germany and who have already been recognized as having the right to stay in Germany , while on the side of Angela

Merkel's party there were far more reticences in that direction. This issue is such an important issue that the decision on who would be the Interior minister in the next government was one of the most difficult decisions to negotiate.

iv.

The European Union wants to restrict UK access to the single market from 2019. The restriction may be imposed if there are disputes between the country and the union after the Brexit.
That is what the transitional Action programme says in the exit agreement, a recently revealed document that lists the terms of the transition period. And it says that the Union reserves for itself the power to "suspend certain benefits" of the British during this period.
The document does not specify details of what type of disputes may lead to the mechanism or which benefits may be cancelled.

Victor, what remark can you make of this position in Brussels?
Brussels wants to reach an agreement with the United Kingdom, but Brussels has to follow a certain type of rules and it has, above all, to send a very strong message both to the United Kingdom and to the current EU members that the European Union's departure costs C Omerciais and economic very high and it is fundamentally the message that is being sent. It is a reminder to the United Kingdom that there are countries outside the European Union, but that they follow in a very close manner without discussion what is decided in the European Union. These countries have a privileged relationship with the rest of Europe, with the European Union and are, as it were, part of the single market, but for that they must accept, for example, the free movement of persons, the free movement of goods. I'm talking about Norway, I'm talking about Switzerland. This is one of the models that the European Union proposes to the United Kingdom. This model is apparently not going to be accepted by the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom would prefer a situation where a part of what Norway has as benefits would also be given as benefits to the United Kingdom, but Norway's obligations towards the European Union would not be the same obligations that the United Kingdom would have In relation to the European Union that is, the United Kingdom could choose what kind of obligations would be in it and which would be the ones he would not accept.

To conclude, I asked him what business and political relationship could there be between the two parties after this difficult divorce?
I think there's a risk here that we can't agree on. I now see that this divorce is at risk of being a conflicting divorce and probably what will happen is that the economic and trade relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union is only based on the principles and Rules of the World Organization of Trade, that is, the United Kingdom will be just like any other country that has

economic and commercial relations with the EU and the issues will be discussed on a case-by-case basis, product to product will be discussed.

V.

It was Victor Angelo, a resident commentator for the Magazine Europa. Time still for a cultural suggestion. Between 10 and 25 March is the seventh edition of the Macao Literary Festival – Route of the letters.
Jung Chang, author of Wild Swans, of the biography of Mao Zedong and Empress Dowager Cixi is one of the prominent names.
The literature will also bring to Macau American journalists Peter Hessler and Leslie T. Chang and the Spanish Rosa Montero.
Of Portugal was invited the writer and historian Rui Tavares, also former MEP.
From Brazil comes the last winner of the Saramago Prize, Julián Fuks.
This year, the event brings to the territory more than 60 authors.
In the next few days the full program will be available on the Festival page on Facebook. It's called The Script Road-Macau literary Festival.
See you next week
[Technical Sheet]
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