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## WELCOME WORDS

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Journal Balkania, founded more than fifteen years ago, appears with a new issue thanks to the sponsorship of Casa Mediterráneo, a public consortium led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, which is based in Alicante. Among its objectives, there is one very prominent and it is to promote knowledge of the Mediterranean countries and encourage their study. Hence our strong support to this journal, one of the few in Spanish language dedicated to the Balkan studies.

Today, almost 27 years since the start of the Yugoslav conflict, the Balkans remain an area of Europe that has been partly left out of history and even, for the moment, outside the process of European integration. And while several countries in the region such as Croatia or Slovenia, or Romania and Bulgaria have managed to get on the European train and settle in modernity, most of the countries in the area, including Turkey as well, have remained in a kind of a limbo, their candidacies for the European Union frozen for the moment.

This is a very serious fact and it supposes throwing cold water on the illusions and efforts that have made many leaders and citizens of these countries committed to modernizing and democratizing an ideal that supposes the process of integration in the European Union. Their temporary paralysis poses a serious risk to involution in this process of modernization of the societies and economies of some countries, which in some cases, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina or Serbia, have not yet fully recovered from the wars of the 1990s.

Therefore, it is more important than ever to cultivate ties with these countries and encourage knowledge about their societies, which are so similar to ours. The Balkans has long ceased to be news, but, nevertheless, the end of conflicts has not led to their normalization as prosperous and fully democratic societies. It is more than ever necessary to build bridges and maintain interest in this area of Europe, now so forgotten and Balkania is an excellent instrument for this.