

THE EUROPEAN UNION BRAND IN SERBIA¹

Aleksandra Plazinić²; Mitar Božić³

Abstract

This paper is based on the communication strategy of Serbia and the European Union, aimed to create positive EU perception among the citizens of Serbia, in order to accept general decision for entering the European Union and to perform preparations for entering of Serbia as the full member of the European Union. Starting from company's marketing communication strategy, company's brand and brand of its products, as important elements to acquire customers, in the same rationale, the European Union as the particular organization also communicates brand of its organization and its values, which are important to present its target group, stakeholders, or in this case, this paper aims to determine whether European Union can be regarded as the brand in Serbia. Therefore, it examines brand of the European Union, testing it in the outlook of marketing academic references and examines it in terms of: identity, characteristics and elements, which determine brand of a company (organization). Also, this paper aims to assess the perception of the features and peculiarities of the European Union brand, also in regard to marketing treatment, or used brand management by the European Union in Serbia. The final outcome of the research is the determination of the functions of the European Union brand and the used method of the EU brand conversion to EU image in the perception of the stakeholders, citizens of Serbia.

Key words: European Union, EU brand, EU brand management, Serbia, EU image

JEL klasifikacija: F5, H7

INTRODUCTION

The European Union is a specific organization with 28 member states and a constant growth tendency, as evidenced by the enlargement policy

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BREND EVROPSKE UNIJE U SRBIJI¹

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Sažetak

Ovaj rad polazi od strategije komunikacije Srbije i Evropske unije, koja ima za cilj stvaranje pozitivne percepcije Evropske unije u svesti građana Srbije, kako bi se prihvatilo opredeljenje za ulazak u Evropsku uniju i izvršila priprema građana za uključivanje Srbije kao punopravog člana u Evropskoj uniji. Polazeći od tržišnog komuniciranja kompanija, i brenda kompanije i njenih proizvoda, kao važnih elemenata za pridobijanje potrošača; analogno tome, Evropska unija kao organizacija posebne vrste takođe komunicira brend svoje organizacije i vrednosti koje je važno da predstavi svojoj ciljnoj grupi, stejkholderima, u ovom slučaju, građanima Srbije. Polazeći od postulata da se potencijalno sve može brendirati, ovaj rad ima za cilj da utvrdi da li se i Evropska unija može posmatrati kao brend u Srbiji. Tako se ispituje brend Evropske unije, kroz definiciju brenda u marketing literaturi i testira se kroz obeležja identiteta, karakteristike i elemente, koji određuju brend jedne kompanije (organizacije). Takođe, ovaj rad ispituje percepcijska obeležja i osobenosti brenda Evropske unije, u pogledu marketing tretmana, odnosno brend menadžmenta kojim se vodi Evropska unija u Srbiji. Krajnji cilj istraživanja je utvrđivanje funkcije brenda Evropske unije, kao i način konverzije brenda Evropske unije u imidž Evropske unije u svesti njenih stejkholdera, građana Srbije.

Ključne reči: *Evropska unija, brend EU, EU brend menadžment, Srbija, imidž EU*

JEL klasifikacija: F5, H7

UVOD

Evropska unija je specifična organizacija 28 zemlja članica sa konstantnom tendencijom rasta, što potvrđuje politikom proširenja usmerenoj na zemlje Zapadnog Balkana. Tako je i Srbija jedna od zemalja u fokusu, koja danas

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aimed at the countries of the Western Balkans. Thus Serbia is one of the countries in focus, which now has the candidate status for EU membership and which has already started negotiations for membership in the European Union. The strategic preference of Serbia is accession to the European Union. However, as in any process of change, it is necessary to properly prepare the general public. In this process, the European Union, as an organization of special kind, communicates the brand and values of the organization, for which it is important to be presented to its interest groups, in this case the citizens of Serbia. Consequently, this paper aims to examine the European Union brand through the identity features, characteristics, and elements, and in this way, to determine the perceptual characteristics and particularities of the European Union brand in terms of marketing treatments, i.e. brand management, by which the European Union is guided in Serbia.

THE EUROPEAN UNION BRAND – IDENTITY CHARACTERISTICS AND SPECIFICITY OF THE BRAND

The European Union is defined as an organization of a special kind, and represents a unique political entity, which is today comprised of 28 sovereign European countries that have joined the government in key areas. On the other hand, what is unique about the EU is a supranational character, which is reflected in the functioning of some of its most important institutions, where the member states have waived their individual powers and transferred them to the EU.⁴ The European Union is different from other international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, or NATO, and therefore it has the characteristics of both a country and an international organization. The format of the European Union is between a complete federal structure, which exists in the United States, and the structure of intergovernmental cooperation, which can be found in the United Nations.⁵

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines brand as a “name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.” Thus, using the AMA definition as a basis, the European Union brand starts from the name, where usually the full name of the European Union is used, or the abbreviated name EU. The goal of creating a name is to separate the brand from the others, in this case, international organizations. In order for a name to be the holder of a successful brand, it should be simple, short, memorable, and with good

4 EU Institutions: www.euinfo.rs

5 European Commission (2013), *Information on the European Union: How the European Union Works, Your Guide to the EU Institutions*, p. 3

ima status kandidata za članstvo u EU i koja je već otvorila pregovore o članstvu u Evropskoj uniji. Strateško opredeljenje same Srbije je pridruživanje Evropskoj uniji. Ipak, kao i u svakom procesu promena, potrebno je na pravi način pripremiti širu javnost. U tom procesu, Evropska unija, kao organizacija posebne vrste, komunicira brend svoje organizacije i vrednosti, koje je važno da predstavi svojim interesnim grupama, u ovom slučaju građanima Srbije. Zbog svega toga, ovaj rad ima za cilj da ispita brend Evropske unije kroz obeležja identiteta, karakteristike i elemente i tako utvrdi percepcijska obeležja i osobenosti brenda Evropske unije u pogledu marketing tretmana, odnosno brend menadžmenta kojim se vodi Evropska unija u Srbiji.

BREND EVROPSKE UNIJE- IDENTITETSKA OBELEŽJA I SPECIFIČNOST BREND

Evropska unija se definiše kao organizacija posebne vrste i predstavlja jedinstven politički entitet koga čini danas 28 suverenih evropskih država, koje su udružile vlast u ključnim oblastima. Sa druge strane, ono što je jedinstveno za EU je nadnacionalni karakter, koji se ogleda u funkcionisanju nekih od njenih najvažnijih institucija, gde su se države članice odrekle pojedinih ovlašćenja i prenele ih na EU⁴. Evropska unija se razlikuje od ostalih internacionalnih organizacija kao što su Ujedinjene nacije, Savet Evrope ili NATO, te zato ima obeležja i države i međunarodne organizacije. Sam format Evropske unije je između potpune federalne strukture, koja postoji u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama i strukture međuvladine saradnje, kakav se može pronaći u Ujedinjenim nacijama⁵.

Američka asocijacija za marketing (AMA) definiše brend kao ime, termin, znak, simbol ili dizajn, kako bi se identifikovali proizvodi i usluge određenog proizvođača ili diferencirali od konkurencije. Tako, koristeći AMA definiciju kao osnovu, brend Evropske unije počinje od imena, gde se koristi uglavnom puno ime Evropska unija, ili skraćeno EU. Cilj kreiranja imena je da se brend izdvoji iz gomile⁶, u ovom slučaju međunarodnih organizacija. Da bi ime bilo nosilac uspešnog brenda, trebalo bi da bude jednostavno, kratko, pamtljivo i sa dobrim komunikativnim potencijalom.⁷ Stoga, ime Evropska unija, sa skraćenicom EU ili na nekim jezicima UE, je lako izgovorljivo i jasno ukazuje na geografsko područje- Evropu, što je sugestivno i lako pamtljivo čak i u međunarodnoj sferi.

4 Institucije EU: www.euinfo.rs

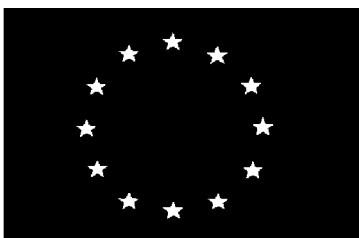
5 Evropska komisija (2013), *Informacije o Evropskoj uniji: Kako funkcioniše Evropska unija, Vaš vodič kroz institucije EU*, str. 3

6 Lifland, S. (2002): *Effective Branding- bMore than just a name*, American Managment Asociation

7 Rakita B. (2007) *Brend menadžment*, Savremena administracija, str. 29

communicative potential.⁶ Therefore, the name of the European Union, with the abbreviation EU or in some languages UE, is easy to pronounce and clearly indicates the geographic area – Europe, which is suggestive and memorable, even in the international sphere.⁷

Furthermore, the European Union has its own identity characteristics, in the form of a recognizable symbol, the flag with a blue background with 12 gold stars, which represents the unity, solidarity and harmony among the people of Europe.⁸ The flag as a symbol is almost always used when presenting the European Union, and in this way, it represents its standardized logo.



Picture 1: The European Union flag

The European Union communicates its values through a short associative sentence, i.e. its motto *United in diversity*. This motto, which is also the slogan in the marketing sense, clearly reflects the values on which the European Union is based: *united Europeans in the EU, a community of peace and well-being enriched by the diversity of their cultures, traditions and languages*.⁹ Also, part of the identity of the European Union is its anthem, the melody of Beethoven's ninth symphony. According to Keller, almost anything can be branded, and lately major events and manifestations have attracted much media attention, as recognized by the European Union, which celebrates Europe Day on May 9th, when for the first time, in 1950, Robert Schuman presented ideas on which the European Union is based today.¹⁰

Looking at the characteristics of the European Union, through the AMA definition, it can be concluded that the European Union has certain *services and products*, which it offers to its members, and even potential members. In the policy of enlargement, the European Union activities are related to preparations for EU membership, while the member states find benefits, *inter alia*, in economic and political stability. In the end, what really identifies the

6 Lifland, S. (2002): *Effective Branding-B, More than just a name*, American Management Association

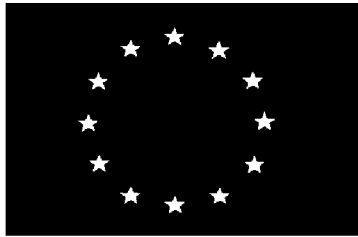
7 Rakita B. (2007) *Brend menadžment*, Savremena administracija, p. 29

8 The official webpage of the European Union, EU symbols, http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/index_hr.htm

9 The official webpage of the European Union, EU symbols, EU anthem, and The official webpage of the European Union, EU symbols, http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/index_hr.htm

10 Rakita B. (2007) *Brend menadžment*, Savremena administracija, p. 7

Dalje, Evropska unija ima svoje identitetsko obeležje, u formi prepoznatljivog simbola, zastave sa na plavoj pozadini sa 12 zlatnih zvezdica, koje predstavlja jedinstvo, solidarnost i sklad među evropskim narodima⁸. Zastava kao simbol se skoro uvek koristi prilikom predstavljanja Evropske unije i tako predstavlja njen standardizovan logo.



Slika 1: Zastava Evropske unije

Evropska unija komunicira svoje vrednosti kroz kratku asocijativnu rečenicu odnosno njen moto *Ujedinjeni u različitosti*. Ovaj moto, koji je ujedno i slogan u marketinškom smislu, vrlo jasno odražava vrednosti na kojima počiva Evropska unija: *ujedinjene Evropljane u EU, zajednicu za mir i blagostanje obogaćenu različitostu svojih kultura, tradicija i jezika*⁹. Takođe, deo identita Evropske unije predstavlja i njena himna, melodija devete Beethovenove simfonije. Prema Kelleru, gotovo sve može biti brendirano, te u poslednje vreme veliki događaji i manifestacije imaju veliku medijsku pažnju, što je prepoznato i od strane Evropske unije, koja slavi Dan Evrope- 9. maja, kada je prvi put 1950. godine Rober Šuman predstavio ideje na kojima danas počiva Evropska unija¹⁰.

Posmatrajući karakteristike Evropske unije, kroz definiciju AMA, može se zaključiti da Evropska unija ima određenje *usluge i proizvode* koje nudi svojim članicama ali čak i potencijalnim članicama. U politici proširenja aktivnosti Evropske unije su vezane za pripreme za članstvo u EU, dok zemlje članice nalaze benefit, između ostalog, u ekonomskoj i političkoj stabilnosti. Na kraju, ono što zaista identifikuje Evropsku uniju kao brend, jeste to da je ona je veoma drugačija od ostalih *konkurenata*- međunarodnih organizacija, pre svega zbog svog jedinstvenog političkog entiteta, pri čemu se uvek predstavlja kao međunarodna organizacija posebne vrste, što je čini prepoznatljivim, specifičnim brendom sa jedinstvenim identitetom.

8 Zvanična vebstranica Evropske unije, Simboli EU , [http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic information/symbols/index_hr.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/index_hr.htm)

9 Zvanična vebstranica Evropske unije , Simboli EU, himna EU Zvanična vebstranica Evropske unije, Simboli EU http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/index_hr.htm

10 Rakita B. (2007) *Brend menadžment*, Savremena administracija, str. 7

European Union as a brand is that it is very different from other *competitors* – international organizations, primarily because of its unique political entity, whereby it always presents itself as an international organization of a special kind, which makes it a distinctive, specific brand with a unique identity.

THE EUROPEAN UNION IN SERBIA – BRAND IDENTITY AND IMAGE

The brand also represents a market term that has its value and recognition, by which one may identify specific companies or institutions. This means that the brand is more than a name or basic characteristics, because the brand has to motivate, promote action, cause emotions and certain associations, and create confidence.¹¹ Also, the brand represents a seal or guarantor of partnerships on the market between a company and consumers. In the case of the European Union in Serbia, it represents the relation between the citizens of Serbia and the European Union, just like consumers decide to purchase a particular product, in the same way the citizens decide on Serbia's accession to the European Union.

As defined by the American Marketing Association, *a brand is a customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas, while brand recognition and other reactions are created by the accumulation of experiences with the specific product or service, both directly relating to its use, and through the influence of advertising, design, and media commentary.* It also implies the brand values, ideas, and even personality.¹² The aim of the EU in Serbia is to brand its product, i.e. accession of Serbia to the European Union and the necessity of reforms, in a way where the experience of the citizens of Serbia will be accompanied by positive ideas and associations, not only because ultimately the citizens will vote on a referendum regarding Serbia's membership in the EU, but also because of simpler and painless implementation of reforms. For all these reasons, the European Union, as any organization or company, aims to convert the identity of the European Union brand into the image in the minds of consumers, or to make a communication bridge that connects this unique organization with the citizens of Serbia.

BRAND IDENTITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN SERBIA

Starting from the European Union identity, this organization in Serbia primarily communicates its policy of enlargement and accession, together with the specifics that are characteristic for Serbia. On the official website

¹¹ Ibid, p.29

¹² American Marketing Association, dictionary: brand, branding

EVROPSKA UNIJA U SRBIJI- BREND IDENTITET I IMIDŽ

Brend predstavlja i tržišni izraz koji ima svoju vrednost i prepoznatljivost, po kome se može prepoznati određena kompanija ili institucija. To znači da je brend više od imena ili osnovnih obeležja, jer brend mora da motiviše, pokreće na akciju, izazove emocije, određene asocijacije i kreira poverenje¹¹. Takođe, brend predstavlja pečat, odnosno garant partnerskih odnosa na tržištu između kompanije i potrošača. U slučaju Evropske unije u Srbiji, to predstavlja odnos građana Srbije i Evropske unije, jer kao što se potrošači odlučuju za kupovinu određenog proizvoda, tako i građani odlučuju o pristupanju Srbije Evropskoj uniji.

Prema definiciji Američke asocijacije za marketing, brend je iskustvo potrošača predstavljen slikama i idejama, dok se brend prepoznaje reakcijama koje su kreirane akumulacijom iskustva sa specifičnim proizvodom ili uslugom, direktno ili kroz uticaj oglašavanja, dizajna ili medija. Takođe, brend implicira vrednosti, ideje, čak i personaliti.¹² Cilj Evropske unije u Srbiji je da brendira svoj proizvod, odnosno pristupanje Srbije Evropskoj uniji i neophodnost reformi, na način gde će iskustvo građana Srbije biti praćeno pozitivnim idejama i asocijacijama, ne samo zato što se ultimativno građani izjašnjavaju na referendumu o članstvu Srbije u EU, već i zbog jednostavnijeg i bezbolnijeg sprovođenja reformi. Zbog svega toga, Evropska unija, kao i svaka organizacija ili kompanija, ima za cilj da konverzuje identitet brenda Evropske unije u imidž u svesti potrošača, odnosno da napravi komunikacioni most koji povezuje ovu jedinstvenu organizaciju sa građanima Srbije.

BREND IDENTITET EVROPSKE UNIJE U SRBIJI

Polazeći od identiteta Evropske unije, ova organizacija u Srbiji pre svega komunicira svoju politiku proširenja i pridruživanja, zajedno sa specifičnostima koje su karakteristične za Srbiju. Na zvaničnom sajtu Evropske komisije mogu se naći opšti uslovi za članstvo u Evropskoj uniji, kao i posebni uslovi predviđeni za zemlje Zapadnog Balkana. Prema Osnivačkom ugovoru Evropske unije, bilo koja evropska zemlja može aplicirati za članstvo ako poštuje demokratske vrednosti Evropske unije i posvećena je promociji istih. Opšti uslovi koje jedna zemlja mora da zadovolji da bi pristupila Evropskoj uniji su: ispunjenje EU standarda i pravila, ima pristanak EU institucija i EU zemalja članica i ima saglasnost svojih građana- koja je ispoljena u nacionalnom parlamentu ili referendumom. Prvi korak u pristupanju jedne zemlje Evropskoj uniji je ispunjavanje ključnih kriterijuma, koji su definisani u Kopenhagenu 1993. godine i nazivaju se popularno *kriterijumi iz Kopenha-*

11 Ibid, str.29

12 Američka asocijacija za marketing, dictionary: brand, branding

of the European Commission, there can be found general conditions for membership in the European Union, as well as the special conditions laid down for the countries of the Western Balkans. According to the Founding Treaty of the European Union, any European country may apply for membership if it respects the democratic values of the European Union and is committed to promoting them. General conditions that a country must meet in order to join the European Union are: meeting the EU standards and rules, having the consent of the EU institutions and EU member countries, and having the consent of its citizens, which is displayed through the national parliament or on a referendum. The first step in the accession of a country to the European Union is to meet the key criteria, which were defined in Copenhagen in 1993 and have been popularly known as *the Copenhagen criteria*. Countries that wish to join the European Union must have stable democratic institutions, the rule of law, have to respect and protect minorities and human rights; a market economy with the capacity to cope with competitive and market pressure in the EU; and the ability to take and effectively implement the membership obligations, including adherence to political and economic goals, and the objectives of the monetary union. Also, the European Union has to integrate new members, which means that in the case of the Western Balkan countries (where Serbia belongs), it is necessary to establish additional requirements for membership, which have been defined in the so-called Stabilization and Association Process, relating to regional cooperation and good neighborly relations.¹³

Serbia was granted candidate status on March 1st 2012 and officially started negotiations with the European Union at the first intergovernmental conference on January 21st 2014.¹⁴ The terms and time for Serbia to access the European Union as a full member have been determined by the adoption and implementation of all existing EU regulations (i.e. the EU *acquis*). These regulations have been divided into 35 negotiation chapters and refer to various areas to be regulated, such as the rule of law, transportation, environmental protection, etc. and they have to be specifically negotiated. Examining further the process of negotiations, the European Commission, in presenting their identity, clearly states that the regulations cannot be negotiated about (*They are not negotiable*), but the candidate countries essentially agree on how and when they will adopt and implement regulations, and the European Union receives assurances from the country regarding the date and effectiveness of measures of each candidate to do so.¹⁵ Further, in the

13 Conditions for membership, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/index_en.htm

14 Serbia, membership status, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia/index_en.htm

15 Conditions for membership, <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/>

gena. Zemlje, koje žele da pristupe Evropskoj uniji, moraju imati: stabilne demokratske institucije, vladavinu prava, da poštuju i štite manjine i ljudska prava; tržišnu ekonomiju sa kapacitetom da se nosi sa konkurencijom i tržišnim pritiscima u EU; i sposobnost da preuzmu i efektivno sprovedu obaveze članstva, uključujući i pridržavanje političkih i ekonomskih ciljeva, kao i ciljeva monetarne unije. Takođe, Evropska unija mora da integriše nove članove, što znači da u slučaju zemalja Zapadnog Balkana (gde pripada i Srbija) potrebno je da se uspostave dodatni uslovi za članstvo, koji su definisani u tzv. Procesu stabilizacije i pridruživanja, koja se odnose na regionalnu saradnju i dobre susedske odnose¹³.

Srbija je dobila status kandidata još 1. marta 2012. godine i zvanično otpočela pregovore sa Evropskom unijom prvom međuvladinom konferencijom 21. januara 2014. godine¹⁴. Uslovi i vreme pristupa Srbije kao punopravnog člana Evropske unije određeni su usvajanjem i sprovođenjem svih postojećih EU propisa (tzv. EU *acquis-a*). Ovi propisi su podeljeni u 35 pregovaračkih poglavlja i odnose se na različite oblasti koje treba regulisati, kao što su vladavina prava, saobraćaj, zaštita životne sredine itd, i koji se posebno pregovaraju. Ispitujući dalje proces pregovora, Evropska komisija u prezentovanju svog identiteta jasno navodi da se o propisima ne pregovara (*They are not negotiable*), već se zemlje kandidati suštinski slažu kako i kada će ih usvojiti i sprovesti, i da Evropska unija dobija garancije od zemlje o datumu i efektivnosti mera svakog kandidata da to uradi¹⁵. Dalje, u procesu pregovora, uloga Evropske komisije je da prati napredak zemlje kandidata u sprovođenju zakonodavstva Evropske unije i ispunjenju drugih uslova, uključujući i obavezna merila. Komisija o napretku informiše Savet i Evropski parlament o tom procesu kroz redovne izveštaje i strateška dokumenta. Kada je konkretno reč o procesu pregovora sa Srbijom, kao predstavništvo Evropske unije i glavni komunikator identiteta je Delegacija Evropske komisije u Beogradu. Njena uloga je da promoviše i širi vrednosti i interese Evropske unije, i prati odnose Srbije i EU. Takođe, otvaranjem pregovora o pridruživanju Delegacija je angažovana u procesu skrininga pregovaračkih poglavlja i podrške pregovaračkom procesu praćenja politike EU. Prioritet je dat pružanju pomoći i uspešnoj primeni Sporazuma o stabilizaciji i pridruživanju. Važna uloga Delegacije Evropske unije jeste i upravljanje programima finansijske pomoći (tzv. IPA fondovima). Na kraju, jedan od važnih

13 Conditions for membership, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/index_en.htm

14 Serbia, membership status, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia/index_en.htm

15 Conditions for membership, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/index_en.htm

negotiation process, the role of the European Commission is to monitor the progress of the candidate countries in the implementation of EU legislation and the fulfillment of other conditions, including the mandatory criteria. The Commission informs the Council and the European Parliament on the progress regarding this process through regular reports and strategic documents. When specifically talking about the process of negotiations with Serbia, a representative of the European Union and the main communicator of identity is the Delegation of the European Commission in Belgrade. Its role is to promote and spread the values and interests of the European Union, and follow the relationship between Serbia and the EU. Also, when opening accession negotiations, the Delegation was engaged in the process of screening negotiating chapters and supporting the negotiation process of monitoring the EU policies. Priority was given to providing assistance and successful implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. An important role of the European Union is the management of financial assistance programs (i.e. the IPA funds). Finally, one of the important tasks is also informing the citizens, government, institutions and the media on the integration process, as well as the institutions and policies of the European Union.¹⁶

From the aspect of analysis of European Union identity in the accession process and negotiations, the brand is defined by the general conditions for membership, stemming from the Treaty, *the Copenhagen criteria*, and for the Western Balkans countries, additional criteria have been established in the Stabilization and Association Process. Furthermore, the accession of any country to the European Union will be precisely determined after the closing of the 35 so-called negotiating chapters. The Delegation of the European Union supports the communication of the entire brand identity from the values and institutions of the European Union to the process of negotiations for Serbia's membership in the European Union and the management of financial assistance. In short, the main elements of the brand identity that the European Union wants to communicate are: the conditions for Serbia's EU membership, the progress and the current status of the negotiation process and the provision of financial assistance to Serbia in order to regain public support for Serbia's membership in the European Union. This means communicating the necessary reforms and harmonization with the European Union regulations that Serbia should implement as soon as possible in order to become a full member of the European Union.

zadataka je takođe i informisanje građana, vlasti, institucija i medija o procesu integracija kao i institucijama i politikama Evropske unije¹⁶.

Sa aspekta analize identiteta Evropske unije u procesu pristupanja i pregovaranja, brend je definisan opštim uslovima za članstvo, koji proizilaze iz Osnivačkog ugovora, *kriterijumima iz Kopenhagena*, a za zemlje Zapadnog Balkana dodatni kriterijumi su utvrđeni i u procesu stabilizacije i pridruživanja. Dalje, pristupanje bilo koje zemlje Evropskoj uniji će biti tačno utvrđeno po zatvaranju svih 35 tzv. pregovaračkih poglavlja. Delegacija Evropske unije podržava komuniciranje celokupnog brend identiteta od vrednosti, institucija Evropske unije do procesa pregovora Srbije za članstvo u Evropskoj uniji i upravljanju finansijske pomoći. Ukratko, glavni elementi brend identiteta koji Evropska unija želi da komunicira su: uslovi za članstvo Srbije u EU, napredak i trenutno stanje procesa pregovora i pružanje finansijske pomoći Srbiji, u cilju pridobijanja podrške građana za članstvo Srbije u Evropskoj uniji. To praktično znači komuniciranje neophodnih reformi i usklađivanja sa propisima Evropske unije, koje Srbija treba da sprovede kako bi što pre postala punopravna članica Evropske unije.

IMIDŽ BREND A EVROPSKE UNIJE

Dok identitet brenda predstavlja način na koji organizacija vidi sebe, imidž (brenda) predstavlja način na koji je entitet (organizacija i institucija) percipirana od strane drugih¹⁷. Tako imidž Evropske unije se može posmatrati kroz istraživanje stavova i percepcija građana Srbije o procesu reformi, faze pregovora, procesa komunikacije Evropske unije i brend menadžmenta, odnosno konverzije identiteta u imidž. Ovdje će dalje biti analizirana konverzija brenda Evropske unije u odnosu na podršku reformama, članstvu u EU, informisanost o procesu pregovora i informisanost o pružanju finansijske pomoći Srbiji, na osnovu publikacije *Istraživanje javnog mnjenja: Evropska orijentacija građana Srbije*, objavljenog od strane Vlade Republike Srbije, Kancelarija za evropske integracije u junu 2014.godine.

Važno pitanje koje se postavlja građanima Srbije u vezi podrške članstvu, koje se može posmatrati kao merilo i imidža Evropske unije je *Ukoliko bi sutra bio raspisan referendum sa pitanjem „Da li podržavate učlanjenje naše zemlje u Evropsku uniju?“, kako biste glasali*. Posmatrajući rezultate odgovora na ovo pitanje javnog mnjenja u periodu oktobra 2009. do juna 2014. godine, procenat građana koji bi glasao *za* je varirao od 64% do 46% (jun 2014), dok je najveći procenat od 73% zabeležen u novembru 2009. godine, a najniži procenta podrške u decembru 2012. godine od svega 41%. U osta-

16 Misija Delegacije Evropske unije, www.europa.rs

17 Rakita B. (2007) *Brend menadžment*, Savremena administracija, str. 58

BRAND IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

While brand identity is the way in which the organization sees itself, the (brand) image is the way in which the entity (an organization and institution) is perceived by others.¹⁷ Thus, the image of the European Union can be seen through the exploration of attitudes and perceptions of the citizens of Serbia on the reform process, the negotiation phase, the communication process of the European Union and brand management, i.e. the conversion of identity into the image. Here the conversion of the European Union brand in relation to reform support, EU membership, information on the negotiation process and information on the provision of financial assistance to Serbia on the basis of the publication *Public Opinion Survey: European orientation of Serbian citizens*, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, European Integration Office, June 2014, will be further analyzed.

The important question to ask the citizens of Serbia in respect of membership support, which can be seen as a measure of the European Union image is: *If there were a referendum tomorrow with the question "Do you support the membership of our country in the European Union?", what would you reply?* Looking at the results of answers to this public opinion question in the period from October 2009 to June 2014, the percentage of citizens who would reply *yes* varied from 64% to 46% (June 2014), while the largest percentage of 73% was in November 2009, and the lowest percentage of support was in December 2012, only 41%. In the other months in the period of three years, the percentage of citizens who would reply *yes* was mostly above 50%. On the other hand, looking at respondents who would reply *no*, a third of them said the reason for it was because *the EU would not bring us anything good, it would be even worse for Serbia*. Also, almost every third inhabitant of Serbia thought that he himself would benefit from Serbia's accession to the European Union, while two in five respondents claimed that Serbia would feel the benefits of membership.¹⁸ Although it can be concluded that the support to Serbia's membership in the European Union is positive with respect to an average of 50% of citizens who would vote for Serbia's entry into the European Union in a referendum, the results of research of the reactions that the European Union caused in the citizens of Serbia in June 2014, showed that 43% of citizens said that the current image of the European Union was neither positive nor negative, while in 33% of citizens, it caused a negative reaction. A similar response can be found to the question *"Is Serbia's entry into the European Union a good or bad thing?"* where 35% of respondents think that it is a good thing, while 43% of them are in-

17 Rakita B. (2007) *Brend menadžment*, Savremena administracija, p. 58

18 Istraživanje javnog mnjenja, jun 2014: *Evropska orijentacija građana Srbije*, Republika Srbija, Vlada, Kancelarija za evropske integracije

lim mesecima u periodu od tri godine, procenat građana koji bi glasao za je uglavnom bio iznad 50%. Sa druge strane, posmatrajući ispitanike koji bi glasali *protiv*, trećina njih navodi razlog da *EU nam ne donosi ništa dobro, Srbiji bi bilo još gore*. Takođe, skoro svaki treći stanovnik Srbije misli da bi on sam imao koristi od ulaska Srbije u Evropsku uniju, dok dva od pet ispitanika tvrdi da bi Srbija osetila koristi članstva.¹⁸ Iako se može zaključiti da je podrška članstvu Srbije u Evropskoj uniji pozitivna s obzirom da bi u proseku 50% građana glasalo za ulazak Srbije u Evropsku uniju na referendumu, rezultati istraživanja reakcija koju Evropska unija izaziva kod građana Srbije u junu 2014. godine, pokazuju da 43% građana smatra da je postojeća slika Evropske unije za njih *ni pozitivna, ni negativna*, dok kod 33% građana izaziva negativnu reakciju. Sličan odgovor se može naći na pitanje „*Da li je ulazak Srbije u Evropsku uniju dobra ili loša stvar?*“, gde 35% ispitanih smatra da je dobra stvar, dok 43% njih je indiferentno. Kao rezultat građani imaju indiferentnu asocijaciju, odnosno niti pozitivne niti negativne stavove prema članstvu Srbije u Evropskoj uniji. S obzirom, da brend treba da izazove pozitivne reakcije, i asocira na poverenje, brend Evropske unije u Srbiji za sada ne uspeva u tome u potpunosti. Što se tiče informisanosti građana Srbije o Evropskoj uniji, zainteresovanosti za proces evropskih integracija i tako proces pregovaranja (o identitetu Evropske unije), rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da više od trećine građana zna koji je trenutni status Srbije u pregovorima sa Evropskom unijom. Sa druge strane 48% njih ne zna da navede najznačajniji događaj u procesu pristupanja Srbije EU u poslednjih godinu dana, što je skoro polovina građana, dok svega 13% njih navodi da su to bili pregovori o Kosovu, odnosno Briselski sporazum. U načelu, opšta informisanost građana je pozitivna, odnosno oni su upoznati da se Srbija nalazi u procesu pregovora sa Evropskom unijom, što znači da je brend Evropske unije u Srbije prepoznatljiv, ali detaljnijom analizom zainteresovanost i time iskustva i interakcija građana sa Evropskom unijom veoma niska, s obzirom da građani ne mogu da navedu konkretne karakteristike, u ovom slučaju događaje, identiteta Evropske unije u Srbiji (proces pregovora). Prilog u tome govore i rezultati istraživanja javnog mnjenja oko informisanosti o procesu pristupanja Srbije Evropskoj uniji iz 2011. godine, koji pokazuju da građanima Srbije nisu još dovoljno poznati ključni aspekti procesa pristupanja Srbije Evropskoj uniji. S obzirom na nedovoljno poznate činjenice građani imaju podvojene stavove, i stoga opada procenat građana koji bi sigurno podržali članstvo Srbije u Evropskoj uniji¹⁹. Međutim, s

18 Istraživanje javnog mnjenja, jun 2014: *Evropska orijentacija građana Srbije*, Republika Srbija, Vlada, Kancelarija za evropske integracije

19 Strategija komunikacije Vlade Republike Srbije o procesu pristupanja Srbije Evropskoj uniji, 2011, str.10

different. As a result, the citizens have an indifferent association, i.e. neither positive nor negative attitudes towards Serbia's membership in the European Union. Given that the brand should elicit positive reactions, and be associated with trust, the brand of the European Union in Serbia has not been successful at it entirely for now. Regarding informing the citizens of Serbia on the European Union, interest in the European integration process and thus the negotiation process (on the identity of the European Union), the survey results show that more than a third of citizens knows what the current status of Serbia in negotiations with the European Union is. On the other hand, 48% of them do not know about the most important event in the process of Serbia's accession to the EU in the past year, which is almost half of the population, while only 13% of them stated that those were Kosovo negotiations or the Brussels Agreement. In principle, the citizens are generally informed, and they are aware that Serbia is in the process of negotiations with the European Union, which means that the brand of the European Union in Serbia is recognizable, but a more detailed analysis shows that the citizens' interest in, experience and interaction with the European Union are very low, given that the citizens cannot specify the features, in this case events, of the identity of the European Union in Serbia (the negotiation process). The findings of a public opinion survey in 2011 on whether the citizens were informed on the process of Serbia's accession to the European Union showed that the citizens of Serbia were not yet completely familiar with the key aspects of the process of Serbia's accession to the European Union. Regarding less known facts, the citizens had ambivalent attitudes, and therefore the percentage of citizens who would support Serbia's membership in the European Union declined.¹⁹ However, given that the European Union's enlargement policy communicates reforms, the positive aspect of the survey shows that the citizens understand the necessity of reforms. Thus, most of the respondents claimed that the reforms necessary for Serbia's EU accession should be carried out even if they were not a condition for Serbia joining the EU.²⁰

The examination of the citizens' general attitudes towards the European Union showed that the majority primarily stated the path to a better future for young people, then more employment opportunities, a possibility to travel wherever they wanted within the European Union as the third attitude, a possibility to improve the situation in Serbia as the fourth attitude; further, the risk of losing their own cultural identity, vast bureaucracy, waste of time and money, only a dream, a utopian idea, as the eighth attitude – the guarantee of lasting peace in the European Union was stated, and at the end,

¹⁹ Strategija komunikacije Vlade Republike Srbije o procesu pristupanja Srbije Evropskoj uniji, 2011, p.10
²⁰ Ibid, p.11

obzirom da Evropska unija svojom politikom proširenja komunicira reforme, pozitivan aspekt istraživanja javnog mnjenja pokazuje da građani razumeju neophodnost reformskih procesa. Tako većina ispitanika tvrdi da bi reforme neophodne za pristupanje Srbije EU trebalo sprovesti čak i ako nisu uslov Srbije za ulazak u EU²⁰.

Uvidom u opšte stavove građana o Evropskoj uniji, većina na prvom mestu navodi put ka boljoj budućnosti mladih ljudi, zatim više mogućnosti zapošljavanja, na trećem mestu mogućnost putovanja gde god želi unutar Evropske unije, na četvrtom mogućnost da se uredi stanje u našoj državi, dok dalje rizik gubljenja sopstvenog kulturnog identiteta; glomazni birokratski aparat, gubitak vremena i novca, samo san, utopijska ideja; na osmom mestu se navodi garancija dugotrajnog mira u Evropskoj uniji, i na kraju način da se zaštita prava građana i sredstvo poboljšanja ekonomske situacije²¹. Analizom ovih stavova može se zaključiti da je većina navodi pozitivne stavove i asocijacije u vezi sa Evropskom unijom, dok tek na petom mestu se navodi gubljenje sopstvenog kulturnog identiteta. Ipak, tek na osmom mestu se navode i vrednosti na kojima počiva Evropska unija kao što su mir i zaštita prava građana. Sa druge strane, zabrinjavajući su rezultati da većina populacije Srbije ne zna koliko Srbija dobija iz EU fondova na godišnjem nivou, a dvoje od petoro građana bi volelo da se informiše o projektima. Takođe, manje od polovine građana smatra Rusiju kao najvećeg donatora u poslednjih petnaest godina, iako bespovratna pomoć Evropske unije od 2000. godine do danas iznosi preko 2 milijarde evra, u proseku 200 miliona godišnje²².

Na osnovu gore pomenutog, može se zaključiti da Evropska unija predstavlja jedinstven brend u Srbiji, na osnovu uspostavljenog identiteta, koji se ogleda u promovisanju procesa pregovora i sprovođenju neophodnih reformi. Međutim, imajući u vidu istraživanja javnog mnjenja, koji ne pokazuju dovoljno dobru informisanost, kao ni potpuno pozitivne stavove i percepcije prema brendu Evropske unije, Evropska unija u Srbiji i dalje pokušava da na pravi način upravlja svojim brendom, odnosno da ga profilise i prevede u željeni imidž, kako bi se ostvarilo puno poverenje građana Srbije. Tako, Evropska unija u Srbiji predstavlja brend, ali nema još uvek potpuno uspešan brend menažment. Jedan od mogućih razloga gde se može pronaći i rešenje za percepcije građana koja je različita od identiteta Evropske unije, može da bude i nedovoljno jasno određivanju nosioca brenda, što predstavlja neizostavni element brenda. Nije uvek jasno precizirano ko

20 Ibid, str. 11

21 Istraživanje javnog mnjenja, jun 2014: *Evropska orijentacija građana Srbije*, Republika Srbija, Vlada, Kancelarija za evropske integracije

22 Delegacija Evropske unije u Srbiji, www.europa.rs

a way to protect the rights of citizens and the means of improving the economic situation.²¹ By analyzing these attitudes, it can be concluded that most of them are positive attitudes and associations related to the European Union, while losing Serbian cultural identity has been stated only as the fifth attitude. However, the values on which the European Union is based, such as peace and the protection of citizens' rights have been stated as only the eighth. On the other hand, it is worrisome that the majority of the population does not know how much money Serbia receives from the EU funds annually, and two in five citizens would like to be informed about the projects. Also, less than a half of the citizens consider Russia as the largest donor in the last fifteen years, although grants from the European Union since 2000 till today amount to over 2 billion Euros, an average of 200 million per year.²²

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the European Union is a unique brand in Serbia, on the basis of the established identity, which is reflected in promoting the negotiations and implementation of necessary reforms. However, taking into account public opinion surveys, which show that the citizens are not enough informed, and do not have completely positive attitudes and perceptions towards the brand of the European Union, the European Union in Serbia is still trying to properly manage their brand, i.e. to profile it and transform into a desired image, to gain full trust of the citizens of Serbia. Thus, the European Union in Serbia is a brand, but it still does not have fully successful brand management. One of the possible reasons, where a solution can be found for the perception of citizens that is different from the identity of the European Union, can be insufficiently clear determination of the brand holder, which is an essential element of the brand. It is not always clear who exactly communicates the EU brand, identity and, thus, values that the European Union wants to communicate in Serbia, as well as the conditions for Serbia's membership in the European Union. Basically, in the negotiation process, it is the European Commission in Brussels, i.e. its representative – Commissioner Štefan Füle, who is in charge of EU enlargement. Also, in Serbia, the European Commission is represented by the Delegation of the European Union, headed by Head of the Delegation, Michael Davenport. Further, in the negotiation process, the brand holder is often Catherine Ashton – the High Representative of the European Union, especially in the process of normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Lately, a representative of the European Union has often been Jelko Kacin, as rapporteur of the European Parliament for

21 Istraživanje javnog mnjenja, jun 2014: *Evropska orijentacija građana Srbije*, Republika Srbija, Vlada, Kancelarija za evropske integracije

22 The Delegation of the European Union in Belgrade, www.europa.rs

tačno komunicira brend EU, identitet i time vrednosti koje Evropska unija želi da komunicira u Srbiji, kao ni uslove za članstvo Srbije u Evropskoj uniji. Načelno u procesu pregovora to je Evropska komisija u Briselu odnosno njen predstavnik- komesar Štefan File koji je zadužen za proširenje EU. Takođe, u Srbiji Evropska komisija je predstavljena Delegacijom Evropske unije na čelu sa šefom Delegacije Majkl Devenportom. Dalje, u procesu pregovora kao nosilac brenda se često javlja i Ketrin Ešton- Visoki predstavnik Evropske unije, posebnu u procesu *normalizacije odnosa Srbije i Kosova*. U prethodnom periodu predstavnik Evropske unije je često bio i Jelko Kacin, kao izvestilac Evropskog parlamenta za Zapadni Balkan. S obzirom da Evropsku uniju čini 28 zemalja članica, svaki od predsednika država članica Evropske unije komunicira identitet Evropske unije, uslove za članstvo i podršku Srbiji prilikom evropskih integracija. Usled nejasne ili spore komunikacije, brend imidž značajno opada.²³ Nekonzistentnost i različito interpretiranje brend identiteta od različitih učesnika, negativno utiču na brend imidž među potrošačima, u ovom slučaju građana Srbije²⁴. Stoga, unutar organizacije treba posebno obratiti pažnju na brend kulturu, i kako se aktivnosti same organizacije slažu sa vrednostima brenda, odnosno kako navodi Schroeder, da li organizacija *živi brend*²⁵. *U tom svetlu, nosioci i komunikatori brenda Evropske unije bi trebalo da postupaju, imajući u vidu vrednosti Evropske unije koji se promovišu.*

OD BRENDA DO JAKOG BRENDA EVROPSKE UNIJE U SRBIJI

Evropska unija u Srbiji ima za cilj da postane jak brend. Da bi brend Evropske unije zaista bio jak, treba uvek imati u vidu da je brend više od proizvođača. Proizvod je nešto što se može ponuditi na tržištu da izazove pažnju, da zadovolji određenu potrebu, dok brend prevodi kupoprodajni odnos u partnerski²⁶. Time brend u stvaru komunicira misiju jednog entita ili organizacije. Stoga, analizirajući brend menadžment Evropske unije u Srbiji, komuniciranjem uslova za članstvo, procesa pregovora Evropska unija u Srbiji se više fokusira na *proizvod*, izostavljajući da predstavi svoj brend. Evropska unija je više od samog procesa pregovora i usvajanje pravnih tekovina EU, i uslova za članstvo. Ona predstavlja organizaciju koja pre svega

23 Hagen P, Burcă C.,2011,European Union: Which brand image, str.11

24 Kay M.,(2005) *Strong brands and corporate brands*, Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey, USA, str. 747

25 Schroeder,J.E.(2014),Brands And Branding, in *Wiley-Blackwell Concise Encyclopedia Of Consumption and Consumer Studies*, Edited by Dan Cook and Michael J.Ryan, New York:Wiley And Sons, str.4

26 Kotler, P. (1991), *Marketing Management-Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control*, 7th Edition, Prentice Hall, New York, str. 429

the Western Balkans. Given that the European Union is comprised of 28 member states, every President of a member state communicates the identity of the European Union, the conditions of membership and support to Serbia in European integration. Due to unclear or slow communication, the brand image significantly decreases.²³ Inconsistency and different interpretations of the brand identity by different participants have a negative effect on the brand image among consumers, in this case the citizens of Serbia.²⁴ Therefore, within the organization, particular attention should be paid to brand culture, and whether the activities of the organization suit the brand values, or as Schroeder states, *whether the organization lives brand*.²⁵ In this light, the holders and communicators of the European Union brand should act, taking into account the values of the European Union that are promoted.

FROM A BRAND TO A STRONG BRAND OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN SERBIA

The European Union aims to become a strong brand in Serbia. In order for the European Union brand to become really strong, it should always bear in mind that the brand is more than the product. The product is something that can be offered in the market to attract attention, to meet a specific need, while the brand transforms the purchase relation into a partnership.²⁶ In this way, the brand communicates the mission of an entity or organization. Therefore, by analyzing brand management of the European Union in Serbia, communicating the requirements for membership, the process of negotiations, the European Union in Serbia is more focused on the *product*, without representing its brand. The European Union is more than just a process of negotiation and adoption of EU acquis, and the conditions for membership. It is an organization that primarily promotes united European states, Partnership for Peace, democratic values that protect human rights, and economic and political stability. In Serbia, the European Union is too narrowly oriented to the conditions that are required to be met in order for Serbia to become a full member, leaving insufficient space for presentation of its brand identity with the elements and symbols, and thus come closer to the concept of the European Union in Serbia.

23 Hagen P., Burcă C., 2011, European Union: Which brand image, p.11

24 Kay M., (2005) *Strong brands and corporate brands*, Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey, USA, p. 747

25 Schroeder, J. E. (2014), Brands And Branding, in *Wiley Blackwell Concise Encyclopedia Of Consumption and Consumer Studies*, Edited by Dan Cook and Michael J. Ryan, New York: Wiley And Sons, p.4

26 Kotler, P. (1991), *Marketing Management-Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control*, 7th Edition, Prentice Hall, New York, p. 429

promoviše ujedinjene evropskih država, partnerstvo za mir, demokratke vrednosti, koje štite ljudska prava, kao i ekonomsku i političku stabilnost. U Srbiji Evropska unija se previše usko orijentiše na uslove koji su potrebni da se ispune kako bi Srbija postala punopravna članica, ne ostavljajući dovoljno prostora da predstavi svoj brend identitet sa elementima i simbolima, i tako približi koncept Evropske unije Srbiji.

Iako postoje različite perspektive o karakteristikama jakog brenda, ono sa čim se autori slažu jeste da jak brend je onaj koji je kulturološki značajan i koji postaje neodvojivi deo identiteta kupaca. Takođe, značenje brenda se može predstaviti iz različitih izvora poput sociologije, popularne kulture, studija kulture i slično. Tako i Holt dolazi do zaključka da su jaki brendovi slični mitovima da oni snažno utiču na formiranje identiteta²⁷. Takođe, Schroeder navodi kao značajnu i kulturološku perspektivu brenda, jer kao kulturna forma, brend evolviru u skladu sa istorijskim, geografskim i društvenim promenama²⁸. Evropska unija mora postati kulturno značajan brend, sa kojim se građani Srbije identifikuju, koji smatraju kao svojim. Pri tome Evropska unija ima dobre perspektive, jer je njen cilj da okupi demokratske evropske države, a Srbija to jeste. Isto tako, Evropska unija može iskoristiti evropsko i kulturno nasleđe koje deli sa Srbijom i tako bolje komunicira svoj brend, kao što je zajednička istorija, geografski prostor Evrope... Tako bi brend Evropske unije mogao da izazove pozitivne reakcije, koje bi izazvale osećaj pripadnosti građana Srbije Evropskoj uniji.

Pored toga, jaki brendovi moraju biti veoma diferencirani i jedinstveni, pa tako i Evropska unija mora da diferencira svoj brend od Rusije, koju građani Srbije percipiraju kao najvećeg donatora, iako podaci pokazuju drugačije. Jedno od rešenja je da se težište komunikacione poruke premesti na finansijki doprinos koji daje Evropska unija Srbiji, prilikom pristupanja Srbiji Evropskoj uniji što može biti predstavljeno u formi da je Srbija već dobila značajne koristi od početka procesa pristupanja i interakcije sa Evropskom unijom. Evropska unija može postati jak brend u Srbiji ukoliko, kroz proces pregovara, približi građanima Srbije vrednosti na kojima počiva, poveže ih sa sličnim kulturološkim i istorijskim nasledem Srbije, i predstavi svoj finansijki doprinos podrške reformi.

ZAKLJUČAK

Evropska unija predstavlja jedinstvenu organizaciju na svetu, koja ima karakteristike federalne države, ali takođe daje pravo svim članicama da

27 Kay M.,(2005) Strong brands and corporate brands, Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey, USA, str. 746

28 Schroeder, J.E.(2014), Brands And Branding, in *Wiley--Blackwell Concise Encyclopedia Of Consumption and Consumer Studies*, Edited by Dan Cook and Michael J.Ryan, New York:Wiley And Sons, str. 6

Although there are different perspectives on the characteristics of a strong brand, the authors agree that a strong brand is one that is culturally significant, that becomes an integral part of the identity of customers. Also, the meaning of the brand can be presented from different sources, such as sociology, popular culture, cultural studies, and the like. Holt comes to the conclusion that strong brands are similar to myths in the sense that they strongly influence the formation of identity.²⁷ Also, Schroeder states the cultural perspective of the brand as important, since as a cultural form, the brand evolves in accordance with the historical, geographical and social changes.²⁸ The European Union has to become a culturally important brand, with which the citizens of Serbia identify, which they consider as their own. In addition, the European Union has a good perspective, since it aims to bring together the democratic European countries, and Serbia is one of them. In the same manner, the European Union can use the European cultural heritage, which it shares with Serbia, such as common history, the geographical area of Europe... and thus communicate its brand better. In this way, the brand of the European Union can elicit a positive response, causing the citizens of Serbia to feel that they belong to the European Union.

In addition, strong brands have to be very differentiated and unique, and therefore the European Union needs to differentiate its brand from Russia, that is perceived by the citizens of Serbia as the biggest donor, although the data suggest otherwise. One solution is to move the communication message focus to the financial contribution made by the European Union to Serbia at Serbia's accession to the European Union, which can be presented in the form that Serbia has already received significant benefits from the beginning of the process of accession and interaction with the European Union. The European Union can become a strong brand in Serbia if, through the negotiation process, it brings closer the values on which it is based to the citizens of Serbia, connecting them with similar cultural and historical heritage of Serbia, and present its financial contribution to reform support.

CONCLUSION

The European Union is a unique organization in the world, which has the characteristics of a federal state, but also entitles all member states to retain their sovereignty. The European Union has its own brand identity, with its elements that promotes the values on which it is based. In Serbia, the brand of the European Union is represented through the process of acces-

²⁷ Kay M.,(2005) *Strong brands and corporate brands*, Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey, USA, p. 746

²⁸ Schroeder, J. E. (2014), *Brands And Branding*, in *Wiley--Blackwell Concise Encyclopedia Of Consumption and Consumer Studies*, Edited by Dan Cook and Michael J. Ryan, New York: Wiley And Sons, str. 6

zadrže svoj suverenitet. Evropska unija ima svoj brend identitet, sa svojim elementima, kojim promoviše vrednosti na kojima počiva. U Srbiji, brend Evropske unije je predstavljen kroz prosek pridruživanja i proširanja. Danas se posebno brend Evropske unije u Srbiji može posmatrati kroz pristupne pregovore, odnosno reforme. Ultimativni cilj konverzije brend identiteta u imidž brend Evropske unije u Srbiji među građanima Srbije, jeste prihvatanje reformi i ultimativno pozitivno izjašnjenje na referendumu prilikom ulaska Srbije u Evropsku uniju. Analizom brend menadžmenta Evropske unije u Srbiji, može se zaključiti da Evropska unija jeste brend, s ozbirom da je jedinstven i prepoznatljiv među građanima Srbije, ali da Evropska unija ne izaziva pozitivno očekivane reakcije među građanima, koji nisu dovoljno informisani o celokupnom brendu Evropske unije. Takođe, kako bi Evropska unija postala jak brend u Srbiji, potrebno je na bolji način da profiliše svoj brend i poveže ga sa vrednostima koje promoviše i zajedničkim činionicima sa građanima Srbije.

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sion and EU enlargement. Today especially the brand of European Union in Serbia can be viewed through the accession negotiations or reforms. The ultimate aim of converting the brand identity into the brand image of the European Union in Serbia, among the citizens of Serbia, is the acceptance of reforms and an ultimately positive statement on the referendum during Serbia's accession to the European Union. By the analysis of brand management of the European Union in Serbia, it can be concluded that the European Union is a brand, considering that it is unique and recognizable among the citizens of Serbia, but that the European Union does not produce the expected positive reactions among the citizens, who are not sufficiently informed about the overall brand of the European Union. Also, in order for the European Union to become a strong brand in Serbia, it is necessary for it to profile its brand in a better way and connect it with the values that it promotes and with the factors it has in common with the citizens of Serbia.

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