

THE BALKANS OVER THE CENTURIES

2003

The presidents of Croatia and Serbia make formal apologies for the atrocities their people committed against one another during the war. Serbs and Croats may now cross into one another's countries without visas.

2004

Slovenia joins the European Union.

2005

The European Union starts accession negotiations with Croatia. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia obtains the status of a candidate country, but accession negotiations have not started.

2006

International negotiations begin to determine the final status of Kosovo. Although a part of Serbia, Kosovo has been governed by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999.

Slobodan Milosevic dies of a heart attack in his cell in The Hague. His long-running trial was repeatedly delayed—partly because of his poor health. No verdict was reached.

Montenegro declares independence from its union with Serbia.

Serbian voters in a referendum approve a new constitution, which declares that Kosovo is an integral part of the country. Kosovo's Albanians are not permitted to vote.

2007

In a case brought by Bosnia-Herzegovina, the International Court of Justice in The Hague rules that the 1995 Srebrenica massacre constituted genocide but clears Serbia of direct responsibility.

International talks on the future status of Kosovo end in stalemate, with the province's ethnic Albanian leadership vowing to unilaterally declare independence.

2008

Kosovo unilaterally declares independence from Serbia. Serbia says the declaration is illegal.

2009

Serbia continues to reject Kosovo's independence, but over fifty countries recognize the new state.

Albania and Croatia join NATO.