

Institution: De Montfort University		
Unit of Assessment: 28		
Title of case study: Research Informing Policy – The UK and the Western Balkans		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010–2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Kenneth Morrison	Professor of Modern Southeast European History	2009–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Professor Kenneth Morrison's research on modern South-East European history and politics has had a tangible and measurable impact on UK government policy formation through his engagement with the House of Lords, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), as well as a number of international organisations. In 2017, he was appointed Specialist Adviser to the House of Lords International Relations Committee. In this capacity, Morrison advised the Committee and contributed significantly to the writing of its 2018 report, 'The UK and the Future of the Western Balkans' [C1]. The report's recommendations have directly influenced UK government policy in the region, including discussions on areas of policy priorities, the commitment of financial resources and the recalibration of bilateral relations with the countries of the Western Balkans post-Brexit.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Professor Morrison is a leading academic in the field of modern South-East European history and politics with an extensive knowledge of the countries of the Western Balkans. He has been teaching and researching at De Montfort University (DMU) since 2009 and held a Visiting Professorship at the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2018/2019. He has published a substantial corpus of original research material, including monographs, chapters in edited books, academic journal articles and numerous reports for think tanks, government bodies and international organisations. His research on the countries of the former Yugoslavia, with a particular focus on Bosnia & Herzegovina [R5], Serbia and Montenegro [R1, R2, R3, R4], including the Sandžak region [R6] has made an invaluable contribution in deepening the knowledge of modern Southeast European history. His research outputs are essential to understanding the complexities and nuances of the contemporary social, political, religious and economic dynamics in the Western Balkans. Professor Morrison's expertise proved vital to the work House of Lords International Relations Committee's inquiry on the region, for which he was the Specialist Adviser.</p> <p>Professor Morrison has written extensively on the Western Balkans. He has published two monographs on modern Montenegrin history, the latest of which, <i>Nationalism, Identity and Statehood in Post-Yugoslav Montenegro</i> (2018; R2), provides an in-depth analysis of the two decades spanning Montenegro's independence, with a focus on themes such as the rise of nationalism, Montenegro's complex relationship with Serbia and its neighbours (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Albania), and the processes that underpinned the consolidation of Montenegrin identity and statehood. Closely related to this research is his book <i>The Sandžak: A History</i> (2013; R6), which was co-authored with Elizabeth Roberts and is the first detailed history of the multi-ethnic and historically contested Sandžak region – which straddles the border between Serbia and Montenegro – in the English language.</p> <p>He has researched conflict, post-war legacies and the development of democracy in the region in a number of academic articles, dealing with themes such as 'Ethnic Minority Parties and Representation in Montenegro and the Sandžak' (2016; R4), 'The Trajectory and Parameters of Democratic Transition in Montenegro' (2017; R3) and 'Change, Continuity and crisis:</p>		

Montenegro's political trajectory, 1988-2016' (2018; R1) and the siege of Sarajevo during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia & Herzegovina [R5].

3. References to the research

NB All of the research outputs went through rigorous peer-review processes before publication.

- [R1] Morrison, K. (2018) 'Change, continuity and crisis: Montenegro's political trajectory, 1988–2016', *Südost Europa*, 66(2): 153–181;
<https://www.degruyter.com/view/journals/soeu/66/2/soeu.66.issue-2.xml>
- [R2] Morrison, K. (2018) *Nationalism, Identity and Statehood in Post-Yugoslav Montenegro*, London: Bloomsbury; ISBN 9781474235181
- [R3] Morrison, K. (2017) 'The trajectory and parameters of democratic transition in Montenegro', in S.P. Ramet, C.M. Hassenstab and O. Listhaug (eds) *Building Democracy in the Yugoslav Successor States: Accomplishments, Setbacks, Challenges Since 1990*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 345–368; ISBN 9781107180741
- [R4] Morrison, K. (2016) 'Ethnic minority parties in Montenegro: from marginalization to integration', in S.P. Ramet and M. Valenta (eds) *Ethnic Minorities and Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 138–153; ISBN 9781107159129
- [R5] Morrison, K. (2016) *Sarajevo's Holiday Inn on the Frontline of Politics and War*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; ISBN 9781137577177
- [R6] Morrison, K. and Roberts, E. (2013) *The Sandžak: A History*, London: C. Hurst; ISBN 9781849042451

4. Details of the impact

Professor Morrison's original research has had a significant political and cultural impact on UK government policy and diplomacy in the Western Balkans since 2005, benefiting UK government agencies such as the House of Lords, the FCO, the MoD and international organisations such as Freedom House, UNICEF and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This impact has been achieved via extensive experience in conducting advisory, consultancy and public diplomacy work for such agencies and organisations. He has, for over a decade, briefed a number of Ambassador-designates, both British and Irish, and has contributed to numerous discussions and roundtables at the FCO, including 'challenge sessions' which focus on the development of new policy, the adaptation of existing policy and the commitment of budgets for specific strategic areas. He has also been involved in a number of public diplomacy projects and was commissioned by the FCO to create an exhibition to commemorate 140 years of UK–Montenegrin relations at a hugely successful event held in the FCO in November 2018 [C3]. In addition, Professor Morrison has also acted as a consultant to the UK MoD (specifically, the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit) and has provided military and non-military personnel with training on cultural, social and political environments in the Western Balkans.

The Western Balkans remains an area of political instability and geopolitical competition which has a direct impact on UK foreign policy. As a result of his research expertise and extensive consultancy/advisory work, Professor Morrison was appointed, in August 2017, to the role of Specialist Adviser to the House of Lords International Relations Committee for their 'Beyond Brexit: The UK and the Western Balkans' inquiry. Working closely with both the Clerk and the Chairman of the Committee, as well as individual members, he brought a high level of research expertise to the inquiry [C2]. His primary role was to draw on this expertise to guide the Committee through the historical and political complexities of the Western Balkans, write questions for those being interviewed by the Committee and to provide an assessment of the oral sessions conducted in the House of Lords at the conclusion of each meeting.

The inquiry dealt with a number of key themes: Security, Migration and Human Trafficking; Regional Stability; External State Actors; Euro–Atlantic Integration; Corruption and Organised Crime; 'State Capture'; Trade; the Rule of Law; and Anti-Democratic Extremism. Weekly

'evidence-gathering sessions' took place in the House of Lords. Professor Morrison's role was to attend Committee meetings and evidence-gathering sessions with a plethora of expert practitioners and politicians from the region, sometimes in closed session. Prior to the evidence-gathering sessions, Professor Morrison briefed the Committee on each interviewee, providing the necessary historical context. At the end of each of these interviews, the Committee went into closed session whereupon Professor Morrison provided a critical assessment of the evidence and clarification, where required.

In addition to the evidence-gathering sessions in the House of Lords, the Committee travelled to Kosovo, Macedonia (now North Macedonia), Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina and were accompanied by Professor Morrison, who briefed the Committee members on the political dynamics, the key political parties and players, and current political issues in each country. They met with a wide range of senior politicians (government and opposition), including prime ministers, presidents, senior cabinet ministers and the military, as well as representatives of the media and non-governmental organisations from the Western Balkans. They also embarked on fact-finding visits to each of the parliaments in the respective countries, observing debates, procedures and processes, to gain a greater understanding of each country's political and institutional framework.

Professor Morrison's research expertise was used to convey to the Committee the political complexities of the region, as well as the geopolitical factors at play, and to contribute to the writing of a comprehensive report conveying the findings of the inquiry and related recommendations [C2]. He was responsible for all of the detailed country analyses in the report, contributing significantly to the writing and editing of it. The report, 'The UK and the Future of the Western Balkans', was published and presented in the House of Lords in January 2018. Professor Morrison presented the report, alongside members of the Committee and the former NATO Secretary General, Lord George Robertson, at the House of Lords on 17 January 2018 to a public audience and to the media [C1].

The report, which received a government response in March 2018 [C4], was debated in the House of Lords in May 2018 [C6]. The evidence sessions were disseminated publicly, broadcast live on BBC Parliament, placed on BBC iPlayer and were made available through the BBC Parliament website [C6] and the findings of the report were published in *The Guardian* [G7]. All written evidence submitted to the inquiry was also made available to the public.

Professor Morrison's role as Specialist Adviser had a significant impact on the inquiry and was vital to their work. The Chair of the Committee stated that:

'As Specialist Adviser, Professor Morrison's expertise was vital to the International Relations Committee's inquiry into the Western Balkans. The region, its history and contemporary politics are very complex. Professor Morrison's knowledge and analysis helped to ensure our report was accurate and credible. The value of his advice was particularly notable during our visits to the region and as we drafted the report' [C2].

During the House of Lords debate on the report (on 24 May 2018), Lord Purvis of Tweed publicly commended Professor Morrison's expertise as Specialist Adviser and his contribution to the inquiry by noting that 'his knowledge and understanding helped us greatly throughout' [C5].

Key recommendations within the report were adopted by the UK government and incorporated into government policy, which had a direct social and economic impact within the Western Balkans. The UK government announced in July 2018 that they were to increase (almost double) their aid budget to the Western Balkans to GBP80,000,000 to assist the countries of the region in the consolidation of regional security, cyber security, organised crime and legacy issues such as war crimes and justice (four key aspects of the House of Lords inquiry and recommendations) [C8]. Thereafter, Morrison was invited to be part of a specialist group assembled as part of an FCO 'challenge session' to discuss the spending commitments of the government and how they could best be utilised, and to discuss the likely major issues facing the region in the next five years [C3]. He continues to engage in discussions with the FCO on matters related to UK policy in the countries of the Western Balkans and is a valued interlocutor in these discussions [C3].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [C1] House of Lords International Relations Committee Report, 'The UK and the Future of the Western Balkans', HL Paper 53, January 2018; <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldintrel/53/53.pdf>
- [C2] Letter of Commendation from the Chair of the House of Lords, International Relations Committee.
- [C3] Letter of Commendation from the Principal Research Analyst (Europe Directorate / Western Balkans), UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- [C4] 'UK Government Response to the Committee's Report, "The UK and the Future of the Western Balkans" '; <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/International-Relations-Committee/uk-and-the-balkans/The-UK-and-the-Future-of-the-Western-Balkans-Government-Response.pdf>
- [C5] Debate in the House of Lords on the above report (24 May 2018, volume 791) – transcription of the full debate; [https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-05-24/debates/77C6178C-2946-4E34-B74B-84DC5D232099/UKAndTheWesternBalkans\(IRCReport\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-05-24/debates/77C6178C-2946-4E34-B74B-84DC5D232099/UKAndTheWesternBalkans(IRCReport))
- [C6] 'House of Lords Debate on the Balkans', BBC Parliament, 24 and 25 May 2018; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b65pyf>
- [C7] Wintour, Patrick. 'Western Balkans backsliding on democracy, says Lords committee', *The Guardian*, 10 January 2018; <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/10/western-balkans-backsliding-on-democracy-says-lords-committee>
- [C8] 'UK and EU Pledge More Aid to the Western Balkans', *Balkan Insight*, 10 July 2018; <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/uk-eu-to-increase-financial-aid-to-western-balkans-07-10-2018>