

# PREFACE

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For many Balkan analysts it is important to point out that the EU should practise an open door policy towards the countries in Southeast Europe with the goal to strengthen the stabilisation process in the region. Indeed the EU's Balkan declaration at the summit in Thessaloniki in June 2003, in which the countries of the Western Balkans were mentioned as possible candidates for the first time, raising hopes among them that in the near future the past wars and human tragedies could become history and that Southeast Europe would be transformed into a prosperous region.

One should not overestimate the Thessaloniki summit – as we know from history there have been many political declarations which did not become concrete policy. Croatia as a first test will show how serious the EU declaration really was. But regardless whether the Southeast European countries will be accepted in the EU in a medium or long term – before Turkey or after Turkey – Thessaloniki somehow symbolises the changes in the engagement of the so-called international community in the region: Not only in regard of the burden sharing between the relevant international organisations and their goals but also in regard of the relationship between the international community and the Southeast European countries.

During the Yugoslav secession wars in the 1990s the international community had been occupied by more or less successful peace making and peace keeping activities in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The international efforts in that time concentrated on the division of the conflict parties and to finding stable peace agreements, which should prevent the outbreak of new fighting. In that period, because of the troubles UN peacekeeping missions had faced in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, NATO was the undisputed lead organization. The OSCE very early found her niche in the field of democracy building and the monitoring of human rights abuses.

The EU's more substantial engagement in Southeast Europe and the definition of a common EU stabilization policy for the region, which led to the declaration of Thessaloniki, at the beginning of the 2000s created new conditions for the international presence in the region. For nearly every country in the Western Balkans the prospect of a future EU accession has become the most important motivating factor for economic, juridical and political reforms as well as for reconciliation. The EU herself looks at the stabilization of Southeast Europe as the biggest challenge for her Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The ambition of the economic-based EU to take over the responsibility for the NATO-led peacekeeping missions in Southeast Europe is an important indicator that today's issues of hard security in the Balkans have in general less importance – for the optimistic analysts – compared to the goal of European integration. The more pessimistic observers on the contrary argue that ethnic hatred, unfinished nation-building and unresolved status issues still can provoke new crises. For that reason they plead for a strong international military presence under NATO control. Especially the US, as the leading NATO member, is very sceptical towards the military engagement of the EU. The main reasons for this are both due to the specific strategic interests of the US as well as the fear that the EU will not be able to run demanding military missions in the Western Balkans.

Another competitive situation among the international organizations could evolve in a short term period in regard of the relationship between the EU and the UN. This could happen in the case that the EU, as a consequence of the problems the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is confronted with, in addition to her economic engagement, tries to play a more important political role in this part of the Western Balkans. The current situation in Southeast Europe generally gives the impression that the relations between the main international organizations involved in the stabilization process are at a crossroads and that a new burden-sharing will develop. At this time it is not clear whether this development will strengthen

the stabilization process or whether it will cause a kind of inter-blocking situation which could produce negative effects for the peace process.

Beside the necessity to optimize and in some fields to improve the relations among themselves the international organizations which participate in the stabilization process have to deal also with the ambiguous attitude of the regional actors towards international presence: on the one hand financial help and international peacekeepers are highly welcomed, on the other hand, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo especially, criticism concerning the political role of the international community is increasing.

Maybe it is not more than an accident, but it can be noticed that since the EU has started her political dialogue with the Western Balkan countries in the context of the Stabilization and Association Process, critical intellectuals for instance in Bosnia-Herzegovina have intensified their critique of the de facto protectorate in their country. They accuse the Western European Politicians of being hypocrites. From their point of view it is not compatible that the EU has negotiations with the local politicians about a close political and economic co-operation, while at the same time the EU-based High Representative would behave as a colonial governor. Of course also the opposite opinion can be heard: Without the far-reaching powers of the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina and of the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Kosovo new ethnic conflicts would occur. Regardless which of the two positions one prefer it seems logical that the intensification of partnership between EU/NATO and the Balkan countries has to go hand in hand with the extension of local and regional ownership.

This study deals with the various aspects of the international (post-)conflict management in Southeast Europe. It includes the results of a workshop held by the working group Regional Stability in Southeast Europe of the PfP Consortium in Reichenau, Austria held 7-10 May 2004.

From the NATO-led Mission IFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which deployed in 1996, to the first EU-led military mission “Allied Harmony” in Mace-

donia, deployed in 2003, international security presence in Southeast Europe passed through a lot of changes. The troops were reduced and their tasks became very similar to the tasks of the international police forces that are engaged in the Western Balkans. This led to the situation that some analysts used the term “constabularisation” in regard of the peacekeeping troops. They made the proposal that the military forces deployed in the Balkans in the near future should be replaced by police forces.

These voices became silent after the ethnic riots in Kosovo in March this year, but the issue of constabularisation and of a premature reduction of international military forces in the Western Balkans is still on the agenda. Frédéric Labarre (Royal Military College of Canada) and Tibor Bábos (Hungarian Defense Forces) are two analysts, who by their contributions give an important impetus to the discussion on the issue of the current and future role of the internal peacekeeping troops in the Balkans. They bring in their specific Canadian and Hungarian perspectives.

The indisputable importance international police missions do have for peace and stability in Southeast Europe is described in the study of Klaus Schmidt from the Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania (PAMECA). The UK Defense Academy’s Amadeo Watkins’ presentation focuses on the NATO co-operation programme PfP as support for co-operative security in Southeast Europe.

The role of PfP has certainly changed during the last 10 years. Before the NATO enlargement its core function was a kind of waiting-room for the East European countries on their way to NATO accession. Nowadays the support of co-operative relations between the armed forces of the Western Balkan countries could become a new core function, supposing that Bosnia-Herzegovina just as Serbia and Montenegro will enter PfP in a short term period.

As it was mentioned before the growing demand of the local forces to give way to “regional ownership” to achieve the goal of self-sustaining peace,

above all in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, is still very controversial, although the term “regional ownership” is very often used also by international representatives. The critics of this demand argue that the time for handing over the peace process to the regional forces has not come yet. As support for this thesis they refer especially to the successful election campaigns of nationalist parties and to ethnically-motivated riots that occurred in Kosovo in March this year.

The issue of how to deal with the external driven nation-building in this study will especially be reflected by focusing on the Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina situation. Christian Ebner from the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo will discuss the topic of the far-reaching powers of the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina as he tries to give an answer to the question of why these powers are still necessary for the stabilization process. The second author who refers especially to Bosnia and Herzegovina is Christian Haupt from the OSCE in Sarajevo. Mr. Haupt is involved in the defence reform process in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was asked not only to describe the main results of the defence reform, which is an important prerequisite for Bosnia-Herzegovina’s integration into the PfP programme, but also to give his impressions whether this reform means progress towards a more co-operative relationship between Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In Kosovo the relations between UNMIK and the Kosovars have become worse. One important factor in regard of this negative development is certainly the further unresolved status issue. Jolyon Naegele who works for UNMIK gives a first hand information what the influence of the March riots really is on the guidelines for resolving Kosovo’s future status. Enver Hasani from the University of Pristina gives an insight in the complicated relations between the “internationals” and the local population from a Kosovar perspective. Srdjan Gligorijević from the Belgrade-based think tank G17 presents his general ideas on the interaction between the local forces and the relevant international organizations in the peace process, especially

the harmonization of policies between NATO and EU, and its relevance for reaching the goal of self-sustaining peace in the region.

Another part of this study deals with the role the international presence in Southeast Europe plays in regard to human security issues as the reconciliation process, the strengthening of human rights and democracy building, gain more relevance towards the goal of self-sustaining peace. Drago Pilsel and Igor Bandović give an insight into the very difficult reconciliation process in Croatia and Serbia and discuss the international role in this context. Christine von Kohl, who has a long experience in dealing with human rights matters in the Balkans very critically deals with the international engagement and the problem of human rights. Iulian Fruntasu, who has experience in OSCE field missions, examines what role the OSCE mission in Croatia can still play in the transition of Croatia to a peaceful democracy.

The topic of the European Union's growing role in Southeast Europe – between myth and reality is addressed in the contributions of Dennis Sandole, Franz Lothar Altmann and Urban Rusnak. Fulbright professor Dennis Sandole proposes a strategy and plan of action for the EU to build peace in Post-NATO Bosnia-Herzegovina. But on the other hand there is also some scepticism, whether the EU, who will have to master the big enlargement of the first of May, will be able to fulfil all the expectations concerning the stabilization process in Southeast Europe. Franz Lothar Altmann from the Berlin think tank Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in his study comments on this issue.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the first of May 2004 is created also by the new EU member states from Central, Eastern and South Europe. For that reason it is very interesting to read Urban Rusnak's analysis about the anticipated impact of the new EU members on the EU policy in Southeast Europe.

The issue of the EU's role in Southeast Europe is closely linked to the discussion about the US's future role in the region. In regard of this topic the general impression is that since the end of the Kosovo war, the Balkans are not anymore an important strategic area for the US. One indicator for that is the continuous reduction of US peacekeeping troops. But on the other side the US government seems to be interested that NATO keeps involved in the regional stabilization process and shows scepticism regarding EU's new military role in Southeast Europe. What is today the real US interest in the Balkans? Mayor Linda Royer, USAF, who is a career officer in the US army tries to give some answers.

Austria is grateful for the contributor's acquiescence of its invitation to present to this study group in Reichenau. In closing, there is a need to stress that the opinions in these proceedings are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of their respective organizations. I also hope that the debates, of which this publication is testimony, will help the spirit of understanding so necessary for sustained peace in the Balkans.

Finally, we should acknowledge that the publication of the workshop proceedings for the 6th Reichenau study group on Regional Stability in South East Europe (RSSEE), let alone the organization of the conference itself, could not have been possible with the help of some important actors, to which we remain indebted.

First and foremost, Maj. Andreas F. Wannemacher and Capt. Ernst M. Felberbauer for the operational guidance and steering they provide to the Study Group throughout the year. Next, to their staff, 1Lt. Benedikt Hensellek and Ms. Karin Schlagnitweit, for the excellent organization of the workshop. Of course, the gratitude of everyone is expressed to the Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defence and the Austrian National Defence Academy for its hospitality, as always. Finally, to the Royal Military College who was gracious enough to lend the services of Mr. Labarre as co-editor to myself, and to Dr. Christian Stangl, National Defence Academy, as facilitating editor.

Their dedication to this important project remains key to a successful study group within the PfP Consortium for Defence Academies and Security Institutes, and to enhance the visibility of the Austrian Bureau for Security Policy, the National Defence Academy, and the Royal Military College of Canada.

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