



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“The European Union and South Eastern Europe”

Summer school
Šipan, 7th – 13th July 2003

*organized by the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies
in association with the Croatian Centre for International Studies*

Introduction

The Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS) has held annual summer courses at the Black Sea in Romania since the creation of the Black Sea University Foundation 10 years ago. Following the interest and importance of bringing together students and academics from different parts of the wider Europe for presentations and debates on the present and future of European integration, the LIEIS has extended its summer course programme in 2003 to Croatia and Hungary. The first summer course took place from 7th to 13th July in Šipan, a beautiful island off the coast of Dubrovnik. Some 20 students from across the Balkans and some EU member-states attended presentations from academics as well as political actors from Eastern, Central and Western Europe.

The main objective of the summer course was to engage in critical analysis and exchange on the nature of the growing cooperation between the EU and South Eastern Europe (SEE). Students from Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina (without the participation of any Bosnian Muslim) delivered presentations on the progress of their respective countries towards EU accession and the political, economic, social and cultural ramifications. These presentations were largely uncritical with regard to the actions of national governments. There were also a number of linguistic problems which made the debates even more difficult. The students from EU countries focused on the works of the European Convention and on a wider debate between European thinkers like Jürgen



Habermas, Jacques Derrida, Ralf Dahrendorf and Timothy Garton-Ash on the meaning of Europe, in particular

- (a) Europe's role in the world as an alternative to, or a critical partner of the US;
- (b) the emergence of a "core Europe" (*Kerneuropa*);
- (c) the emergence of a European identity coupled with a transcendence of nationalism and the advent of a post-national age.

Some of the general themes of the discussions were as follows:

- where are the EU's (or Europe's) borders, and which denomination to give to the "Balkans"?
- the future of European integration in the wake of the Convention (generally taken to be a failure)
- the EU's capacity to be a "security community" (Karl Deutsch), solving conflicts and securing peace beyond its borders
- public opinion in the EU regarding enlargement (thought to be largely hostile)
- the conditionality of EU accession as well as of association and stabilisation agreements
- difficulties caused by specific EU demands on SEE countries: return of displaced people, good relations with neighbouring countries and cooperation with the Hague Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia
- step-by-step accession (e.g. Croatia together with Bulgaria and Romania possibly in 2007) or accession en bloc? Is integration a regatta or a caravan?
- the future of the protectorate of Bosnia-Herzegovina: if it broke up, what about a Muslim state in the middle of Europe?
- the role of civil society in the transformation of societies, especially in the overcoming of ethnic divides
- the possibility of "Euro-regions" to solve problems related to regional cooperation as well as to ease ethnic conflicts
- alternatives to membership (partnerships, association, cooperation, etc.)
- the place of NATO in a post Cold-War world, especially in central and Southern European countries; is there a dilemma of turning either to the EU or the USA?

I. Enlarging and deepening the EU in an era of utter confusion

The discussions of the summer course were launched by Dr. Armand Clesse, Director of the LIEIS, who gave a presentation that consisted of a historical and theoretical synthesis of the European project. He raised a number of crucial issues that were debated in the course of the ensuing discussion. First, the need to clarify the meaning of different terms that describe the EU and Europe, in particular "union" and "community". Mario Hirsch, political scientist, remarked that in English the former carries more weight, while in German it is the other way around. A. Clesse insisted on the fact that the six founding members of the then EEC initiated the European integration process on the basis of a relatively strong degree of homogeneity and that in the course of their post-Second World War development have consolidated this homogeneity, which has given rise to the idea of a "core Europe" (*Kerneuropa*).

According to A. Clesse, if one conceives the EU as a purely economic union, then EFTA would have been sufficient, since it does not require any country to relinquish its sovereignty and entails cooperation rather than integration. But A. Clesse argued that the EU is about more than a mere free trade area, even if for the time being the economic dimension is clearly predominant, which is demonstrated by the leverage of the EU in international trade negotiations and the persistent image and reality that the EU is a political dwarf. He advocated the need for radical reform of the CAP prior to enlargement in order to avoid that the EU financial framework breaks down. Concerning the Euro, the theories of stable as opposed to dynamic convergence were much discussed. The former implies that there be “only” convergence of the economic basics (i.e. inflation, interest rates, exchange rate, debt and budget deficit). The latter, however, includes further much more stringent criteria, such as GDP per capita (i.e. standard of living), productivity, etc. While the present Euro countries had to converge according to the former criteria only, it was suggested that in the light of the current problems of the “Eurozone” (in particular Germany), new entrants ought to converge according to the latter criteria too.

The EU’s structural funds were seen as a hope for the Balkan countries, as they had helped to bring the economic performance of several less developed European countries such as Ireland and Spain in line with other countries (and, in the case of Ireland, arguably outperforming them). One delegate from Serbia remarked that as far as aid is concerned there was a sort of system of natural solidarity, which has made Ireland, once it had become a “rich” country, one of the most generous donors of foreign aid. He also countered criticisms that the EU had switched too much of its aid to Eastern Europe since the fall of the “Iron Curtain”, and thus neglected the much more urgent problems of Africa, by saying that Europe has an obligation and a direct interest in the stabilisation and prosperity of its neighbours. However, the problems of aid, notably dependency and corruption were also highlighted.

A. Clesse then addressed the political dimension of European integration. Concerning European defence, it was recalled that the project had initially emerged as a response to the horrors of WWII and to contain Germany. Was Europe ready, as suggested one Bosnian Serb, to retract to a mere position of home defence according to the Swiss model? It was thought that in an age of interconnectedness and interdependence, Europe could not afford to do so. This raised the question of what the aim of Europe was. *A tour de table* about the values considered to be quintessentially European yielded one overwhelming answer: peace. It was also agreed that the question of Europe’s goal and *raison d’être* has repeatedly been eluded, most recently by the Convention on the Future of Europe. This is problematic since Europe was born out of the breakdown of the European empires, the continuous conflict of European nation states and eventually the realisation that taken individually the European states have ceased to be world powers. So initially European integration was about securing a dignified place for Europe on the international stage. On this account, according to A. Clesse, enlarging the EU has been and is weakening its political resolve, because it brings in countries that are less prepared to integrate and less convinced of the necessity to pool sovereignty.

For Dr. Martin Brusis of the University of Munich this reticence is the outcome of two factors. First, the absence of the shared war experience of *Kerneuropa*. Secondly, the recent recovery of full sovereignty and the reluctance to relinquish it again. There was unanimity among the students that Poland is a threat to further political integration. Thus, the centrifugal tendencies might well rise within the EU in the wake of enlargement. Increasingly, the

impetus for a political union might weaken. Instead of a stronger political force, the EU could witness the proliferation of transregional and issue-based coalitions and it might therefore evolve into a loose structure of cooperation that is perhaps best described as an “*à la carte*” configuration. As a result, according to Dr. Brusis, the Iraq crisis was such a disastrous moment for the EU, since it destroyed the trust into the “Other” which ought to be its essence. If the Union is really heading to become a community in the Tönniesian sense, then the question is whether veto power is still justifiable? Does it not go fundamentally against the spirit of a shared community, in which countries are supposed to accept some common will that transcends exclusively national interests?

The same problem prevails in the petty fight over the right to retain a national commissioner, as this is contrary to the very principle of the commission, which is supposed to be an a-national structure that operates on the basis of expertise and is an effective “guardian of the treaties”. Thus the convention would have been an attempt to create a backbone for Europe, which would enable it to survive the stormy waters of enlargement. But in this enterprise it failed. Is Europe a political project, heading towards a federal state, or is it merely a free trade area? In the face of such threats to the further integration, is there any possibility to move at different speeds? A. Clesse even suggested to reverse the trajectory of the European integration process, in the sense of truly integrating those countries that are willing, while either leaving the others out or creating looser circles of cooperation (different sorts of association and cooperation agreements). M. Hirsch suggested the possibility of having different categories of membership.

A. Clesse concluded his presentation by questioning the reality of societal change in the Balkan countries: is there really a free-thinking intelligentsia, is there really a critical opposition? Given the absence of a tradition of free thinking, he doubted that a real transformation had been achieved (e.g. problems of minorities), and wondered if it was taboo in a democracy to tell the truth.

II. The role and the implications of the Convention on the future of Europe

Dr. Brusis argued in his presentation that the Convention was initially conceived as a different arena than the habitual intergovernmental conferences. In virtue of the presence of members from national parliaments and owing to the fact that sessions were public, it was supposed to be the launching path to a first European wide public debate, meant to create a momentum similar to the one that allegedly accompanied the drafting of the US constitution. However, in this aim, as well as in simplifying the treaties so that they could be understood by the peoples of Europe, the Convention failed.

M. Brusis noted that one could question the use of the word constitution, given that it has to be ratified by an IGC, which makes it more akin to an intergovernmental treaty than a constitution. He established a list of factors that influenced the drafting of the constitution as well as the European integration process at large, of which there are obvious – colour of government, national political systems – and more subtle ones – the direct experience of WWII but also national identity (Britain as a former world power, versus a micro state like Luxembourg). However, national positions did not depend on size or wealth. Belgium and

Denmark for example are both of comparable size but of radically different approaches to Europe.

The fact that the president of the European Commission is elected by the European Parliament seems to be a first step towards a European public sphere, with several ideas and candidates competing on a Europe-wide scene (maybe Berlusconi's recent blunder was the first such incident). A Europe-wide competition for a "president of Europe" would be a forum to highlight differences in a constructive way as well as draw Europe together. It might eventually lead to the creation of European parties. Concerning Europe's infamous democratic deficit (low turnout at European elections and generally apathy by the public for European issues), Dr. Brusis took a functionalist line. Given that it is inevitable (it has in fact already happened not only since the creation of the EEC) that countries give up sovereignty, it is better to relinquish it to the EU than to any other even less accountable institution.

III. Europe's "Ins" and "Outs"

M. Hirsch's analysis followed the thread of a recently published article by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dominique de Villepin, in the Financial Times, with the title: "The Balkans must wait." M. Hirsch's argument was very critical of the EU's propaganda towards its "hopefuls". There can be hardly any doubt that public opinion in the EU is suspicious of enlargement. However, this is not meant to be shown to the applicants and "hopefuls" – which explains why there are no referenda on enlargement in the current EU member-states, the outcome of which would be a foregone conclusion. So the public is constantly being told about the heavy demands on the candidate countries – the list of tough conditions that are to be fulfilled prior to accession, since "One has to deserve membership". Thus, the onus to fulfil all the *acquis communautaire* (which a lot of "ins" have not) is on the Balkans, while the EU sits back. M. Hirsch shares the view of Ralf Dahrendorf, who believes that if one were to "apply the tests to current members the result would be dismal". For the West Balkans (as the most recent "Brussels-jargon" goes), this means that there are ins and outs, special clients ("pet countries" like Croatia), forgotten countries (Albania). Overall there is a high degree of paternalism towards all applicants. In other words, Europe operates according to the classical imperialistic tool of *divide et impera*.

Regarding Europe's future, he took a radically different view from A. Clesse, arguing that diversity, which for most of the students had a negative connotation, is not *per se* a bad thing. Diversity has many positive implications, and the only issue is how to cope with it. He dismissed the thought, implied by A. Clesse, that enlargement might lead to a break-up or a paralysis of the EU. While this fear is obviously latent in the EU (which explains xenophobic opposition to enlargement), it is nonetheless unfounded. Diversity would certainly increase, but one can hardly argue that the current EU is one homogeneous bloc (as demonstrated most graphically by the "opt outs" enshrined in the Maastricht treaty), and as a consequence different EU countries have already taken different paths. M. Hirsch's picture of Europe is one of competition fuelled by its very diversity. Competition of different social, economical and fiscal models for instance is economically efficient. Europe is much more marked by the possibility to advance at different speeds, by its flexibility than by a utopian homogenous model.

It is thus erroneous to demand of the newcomers that they conform to fixed rules of a club that are de facto largely inexistent. Applicants are treated as semi-barbarians, and the EU is on a missionary crusade to teach them the “superior” western way. It is also potentially catastrophic to require total compliance on the part of countries that are clearly not ready to address all the problems at once. This leads to an overburdening of their political system and strains people’s patience, to which the return of the communists in a host of countries testifies. Furthermore, he alerted the “hopefuls” to the bitter hypocrisy, according to which they would be refused entry ostensibly because they have not complied with rules – which apart from the *acquis communautaire* are very vague: market economy, functioning democracy... – but de facto because they are not wanted by a hostile public opinion fearful and resisting the unknown “Other”. This is a typical show of conditionality, in which the final decision is entirely subjective and random. He argued that there are a number of options alongside full membership, in particular association, free trade agreements and cooperation. He therefore urged the countries not to be obsessed by the perspective of membership, certainly not at any price. The delegate from Serbia supported this argument by saying that in the Balkan countries at present the priority ought to be on stabilisation rather than membership proper.

IV. The present and future of the EU’s Stability Pact for SEE

Prof. Silvo Devetak of Slovenia addressed the question of the “Stabilisation and Association Agreements” (SAA), which constitute the EU’s approach to the region. He recalled the fact that in terms of the “dilemma” of choosing between the EU and the US, at least as far as economic matters are concerned, the facts speak for themselves: the EU is the main trading partner (e.g. 85% of Albania’s trade volume). He also noted that following the Thessalonica summit and the “European Integrated Partnership”, the countries that have signed a SAA will be present as observers on decisions concerning common foreign and security policy. This was a first step to integrate them institutionally. He also touched on the sensitive issue of reconciliation, saying that it is urgently needed to deepen and enlarge the reconciliation process rather than fall into amnesia. One had to transcend the borders, build transport links, build forms of genuine democracy in which people are involved in the decisions relative to their lives. He urged the young people around the table that it was their generation and their chance to rebuild the region and make the mistakes of the past come undone.

While there was broad agreement that corruption was using up valuable energies and that the West was not doing its homework by making sure that aid gets into the right hands, participants disagreed on the role of young people in politics in general and about the success or failure of the SAA. Prof. Nicolae Chirtoaca of Moldova argued that the record is mixed and that the EU needs to step up its efforts if the Balkans are to join the EU in any foreseeable future. He acknowledged that through the Pact the EU, for the first time in history, has undertaken to draw South Eastern Europe “closer to the perspective of full integration...into its structures”. Subsequently, all Southeast European countries have been recognised as potential candidates for EU membership in accordance with the Feira and Zagreb conclusions. As the EU’s main contribution to the Stability Pact, the European Commission designed the Stabilisation and Association Process for the Western Balkans. The European perspective has proved to be the most powerful incentive for reconciliation, co-operation and internal reforms in the region. Four years after its creation, Western Balkan countries view the Pact as a

reliable instrument of political and institutional support for the EU integration of SEE countries.

According to Prof. Chirtoaca, the Stability Pact, involving the EU, the G8 and other countries, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN, NATO, the OECD, has succeeded in facilitating necessary reform processes in a number of key areas. It established expert networks and agreements on sectoral policies that are vital to structural change, such as investment, anti-corruption and security sector reform. For instance, with the Investment Compact commitments for policy reform in the areas of *inter alia* privatisation, banking, trade, and SME support will be implemented in order to create a robust and sustainable market economy and to encourage local and foreign direct investment. Similarly, countries in the region have undertaken to fight corruption, in the framework of the Anticorruption Initiative. Through these initiatives the Pact has helped to develop administrative structures and capabilities in the countries of the region to carry this process forward.

But he was adamant that not every problem in the region, and not every problem which South East European states have in common, can be approached as a regional problem. Many of the democratisation and human rights issues raised under Table I, while important, are best addressed by existing institutions with established field structures throughout South Eastern Europe, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE or the European Commission. Many of the “hard security” issues under Table III would benefit from an expanded and enhanced Partnership for Peace programme. Moreover, despite some positive results the first phase of the Stability Pact has come to a close. The challenge now for this sub-regional cooperative arrangements is to make use of its high profile and distinctive role to drive a concrete agenda to advance in key issue areas the broader vision of democratisation, regional integration and Europeanisation that is at the heart of the Pact. The experience of integration in Western Europe has demonstrated that such a vision can only be achieved through practical programmes, setting concrete incentives and achievable deadlines. In order to live up to its promise, the Stability Pact must present a concrete vision that will capture the imagination of the publics both in the region and in the European Union.

Regional co-operation will only lead to meaningful results if it is fully supported by regional governments, which means it must help them deliver concrete benefits to their citizens. Drawing lessons from the experience of post-war European integration, an approach based on functional integration in politically important sectors of the economy could be another main aspect of the second Stability Pact phase. Significantly more support for institution building is needed in order to strengthen the capacity of states in the region to fight trans-border crime, while holding out the concrete promise of easier access to the European Union for their citizens. Such a focus can help to create a common sense of purpose among the actors working in this field.

So for N. Chirtoaca, at the heart of a refocused Stability Pact must lie a strong Office of the Special Co-ordinator with the resources and political backing necessary to meet the objectives defined by the Regional Table. At the same time, the commitment which a successful Stability Pact would require from governments both in South Eastern Europe and outside will only be generated if there is a genuine public debate on how additional resources can actually create sustainable democracies and lasting security. Such a debate took place in the late 1940s across Europe and North America. It then led to the institutions of collective security and economic

and political integration which continue to underpin European peace and prosperity. There is a need to launch a similar *Great Debate* now on the future and form of outside support to South Eastern Europe.

V. Croatia and the EU

The representative of the Croatian Ministry for European integration began her presentation by invoking the example of Turkey as a reminder of how long people might have to wait before accession negotiations take place. She also drew attention to the differentials in turnout in referenda in different candidate countries. While in Malta there was only a slim majority in favour of enlargement, over 90% of eligible voters turned out, whereas in Hungary there was a big majority but very little people actually bothered to vote. One could therefore relativise euro-enthusiasm in certain countries. She underlined that regardless of the EU's decision, Croatia intended to fulfil all the obligations it has by 2006 so as to be ready for possible membership in 2007.

Before 1990 there were not any codified accession criteria, countries joined according to particular agreements. Since Copenhagen there are fixed criteria to be fulfilled even by the new members in 1995. However she stressed the fundamental differences between them and, say, Croatia. But by having signed the SAA, Croatia is now an associated member and one step closer to the EU, as witnessed by the first ever European summit held outside the EU, in Zagreb in November 2000. Even if Croatia were never to join the EU, the reforms it is currently undertaking are for its own good. She also reminded the countries that they needed a clear strategy in order to prepare successfully for entry. Her ministry is carrying out active campaigns to inform people about the EU, through seminars for civil servants, tours through the country, events, and publications.

Prof. Radovan Vukadinovic of the Croatian Centre for International Studies maintained controversially that the refugee problem in Croatia was solved, most people simply having no desire to return home, all they wanted is to reclaim their property. This has led to ethnically clean areas, which permit a territorial division of Bosnia-Herzegovina for instance. One problem that remains to be solved is the institutional setting which is far from satisfactory. While there are material improvements, he thought it would need at least a generation of shared and not separated infrastructure for the war wounds to be healed. Concerning Europe's military might, Prof. Vukadinovic spoke of the fact that in Bosnia-Herzegovina one called the international presence "occupation". Furthermore, without at least a token American presence, nobody would take the force serious, despite the fact that at the present time about 85% of the soldiers on the ground are Europeans as Prof Devetak noted. In this optic, the planned handing over of the force to the EU seems in jeopardy. However, according to his analysis the international presence in the "protectorate" as everybody calls the entity, is a condition *sine qua non*, and this at least for a generation to come.

VI. Serbia and the question of Kosovo

For Prof. Zivojin Jazic, former Ambassador of Yugoslavia to India, Kosovo is Europe's most explosive powder keg. Kosovo's problems are accentuated by an explosive demographic

growth of Albanians who are soon to overtake Macedonians as the main ethnic group within Macedonia. The economic situation is dire, which explains that most refugees that have made it to Western countries prefer not to return. Options in Kosovo are virtually limited to the flourishing illegal sector (drugs, arms, humans). Following the 1974 constitution, Kosovo had reached autonomy status within former Yugoslavia having its own government, representatives in parliament etc. The explosiveness of the issue is accentuated by the fact that it is the cradle of Serbian nationhood. At the battle of “Amsfeld” in 1389, the Serbs were crushed by the Turks whereas, according to Serbian mythology they won a great triumph. Since then problems have been forthcoming: for instance from 1913 to 1999 the cohabitation of Albanians and Serbs has created 4 armed conflicts (Balkan war; 1944 in the wake of the German retreat, military government of Tito; 1981 state of emergency after student uprisings; and 1990 in Milosevic cancels Kosovo’s autonomy which is taken over by Serbs). Milosevic’s crackdown was highly popular, as it was seen to recover the essential part of Serbia.

The current UN mission is seen as a complete disaster by the Serbs as it has failed to provide the possibilities for a return of refugees. Kosovo is now 90% Albanian. The talks scheduled to start in Brussels this September will in all likelihood fail to yield any serious results. As a possible solution to the settlement problem, he referred to the Lausanne Treaty, which peacefully settled the issue of the resettlement of Turkish and Greek minorities in the respective newly sovereign nation states in the wake of the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Prof. Jazic put forward a set of interesting proposals for the solution of the smouldering conflict.

- The first scenario, categorically opposed by Serbia, would be independence of Kosovo. This issue has become a national taboo, all the parties oppose it and only a few intellectuals dare to espouse it. On the Albanian side the situation is the reverse, while political fractions disagree on everything else, they are unanimous in support of this scenario. Internationally, the support for independence is rising, this can be attributed to a highly effective Albanian lobby in key Western states.
- Secondly, the Austrian veteran politician Karl Busek suggested that Kosovo fall under the control of the EU (it is for now de facto under its control, in a “joint” mission with NATO while the UN provides the umbrella for legitimacy) and would become a sort of associated territory. Russia is not opposed to this solution, it is noteworthy that since the fall of Milosevic, it is operating a silent disengagement from the region, which is ironically the situation of the US too, announced more noisily though by George Bush. These two options are most likely according to his reading.
- Thirdly, a return to Serbia.
- Fourthly, Kosovo would become an autonomous part of the state union between Serbia and Montenegro; in the event of them ending the union at any time, it would stay (autonomously) within Serbia.
- Fifthly a continuation of the status quo, although highly undesirable, but as it happens provisional solutions often become permanent in international relations.
- Sixthly, a proposal by George Soros, who would like Serbia to accept independence and in return receive preferential EU entry conditions. This quid pro quo is however unlikely to cause excitement either in Brussels or in Belgrade.
- Seventhly, a direct partition of Kosovo, in which the northern part still predominately populated by Serbs would fall to Serbia. This scenario is supported by the nationalist parties in Serbia.

- Lastly, an internal partition following the model of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Challenged by a student, who confronted him with the nationalist slogan that Serbia without Kosovo was not Serbia, Z. Jazic replied quoting the orthodox bishop of Kosovo, that if there are no Serbs in Kosovo Serbia hardly needed Kosovo anymore. At any rate the possibility of reconciliation seemed remote, in Pristina it appears that even in Yugoslav times there was a *de facto* segregation, with Serbs using one sidewalk and Albanians using the opposite one, the same pattern with shops, cafés... Mixed marriages unlike in Bosnia are a rarity.

General points and conclusion

(1) In an interesting contribution from Macedonia, attention was drawn to the fact that in parliament there were representatives of civil society (i.e. NGOs). This spurred a hefty debate about the possibility of civil society to get directly involved in power, or whether this infringed on the democratic tradition of separation of powers. One delegate from Republika Srpska fiercely arguing that NGOs were a bad thing for society *per se*, since they “keep talking and do nothing”.

(2) An issue that was repeatedly raised was the dilemma all of the candidate countries were facing is the position in the Iraqi crisis. Support of the US meant antagonising key European states, supporting the “alliance of peace” meant losing US protection and valuable military aid. The example of Bulgaria was given by a participant: it was in favour of the US intervention but refused to sign the infamous section 90 concerning the exemption of US citizens from extradition to the International Criminal Court, which means that that it has lost valuable US military aid. As a solution the EU has to get a head start on a military strategy and a serious military force, so that these countries possess an alternative to an US umbrella. In the meantime, and the EU will have to accept this (even France...) they are forced to play a double game.

(3) It was discussed at length whether the EU would be ready to accept by 2007, a mere three years after its biggest ever enlargement, given its notorious problems to sort out institutional shortcomings, a batch of two, possibly three new candidates. The general feeling was that while this was hoped for, it seemed hardly likely, as the current enlargement would cause sufficient confusion to digest. M. Hirsch raised the option of there being in future two types of membership, one looser and one more serious one.

(4) If the fragile conglomerate of Serbia and Montenegro was not to survive the possible referendum in 2006 or so, the chances of the two countries joining the EU would be considerably reduced at least in medium term. The widespread problem of organised crime was judged by the students to be a necessary ill, as government and other powerful people had to do business with a corrupt old elite, it is thus seen as a part of societal change.

(5) Concerning Bosnia-Herzegovina, it crystallised that it is by far the most problem-riddled entity. It was “light years” away from membership of the EU, and remained *de facto* an international protectorate.

One of the more “terre à terre” but possibly most important achievements of the course was the fact that students from all over the Balkans got to know each other and got along very well. As they stated themselves, this was for them the most important feature of this course, a sad proof of how little of the supposed regional cooperation there is in this area. However on the question, put to them by A. Clesse, whether they had changed some of their opinions in the course of this week, most said that they had not.

He then implored them to use the possibilities that were put to them by history, in a dynamic changing and unfolding environment it was their chance to shape and model history. That chance was no longer given in the static and settled western societies. He urged them so seek creative ways for the future and not just like sheep trot towards EU membership without knowing why, and above all not to blindly copy the western model with all its faults. Lastly he urged them to never take anything for granted, to continuously question and inquire, to seek autonomy rather than heteronomy.

Nicolas Hirsch
August 2003