Study Group Information

Multiethnic State or Ethnic Homogeneity: The Case of South East Europe

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"Crisis Management in
South East Europe"

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CONTENTS

The Principle of Non-forced Change of Borders versus the Principle of Self-Determination of Peoples

The topic of this conference, "Multiethnic State or Ethnic Homogeneity - the case of South East Europe", is both theoretically interesting and practically important. It is directly connected to a highly problematic reality as well as to the awareness of a self-evident need to get out of it not only quickly, but also in a secure way, in order to avoid a turned back of similar events.

When democratic changes started in the former Communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe, probably nobody thought that many movements of a national character in the former Soviet Union, former Yugoslavia, and former Czechoslovakia would experience this kind of rekindling and revival. As a consequence of these movements many new states were created. With the exception of the peaceful division of former Czechoslovakia and a part of the former Soviet Republics, the birth of these new states came about through wars, which often took a tragic course, especially in former Yugoslavia where severe crimes and massive ethnic cleansing accompanied this process. All international efforts that aimed to resolve this crisis via dialogue and cooperation failed. Thus, NATO intervention became indispensable, and only after this intervention the Dayton Agreement, whose main purpose was in its core to make the peoples of different ethnic backgrounds in Bosnia-Herzegovina to once again co-exist peacefully with each-other within one state, was signed in December 1995.

Ten years later, in 1998, another cruel ethnic conflict exploded, this time in Kosova. Again, NATO intervention against the Serbian military was required to put an end to this conflict. Immediately after that and in order to eliminate the possibility of new wars in the Balkans the "Stability Pact" was initiated and signed by all the countries of Southeastern Europe. However and independently of all the efforts made by the International Community, today we feel the danger of another ethnic conflict in Macedonia. On the other hand, separatist tendencies are developing or redeveloping in Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The movements of a national character have not been highly evident in Southeastern Europe alone, where they were so conspicuous, but in other parts of the world as well. In Chechnya, e.g., we notice that the same aspirations for national identity are not likely to fade away.

Movements for national identity are also present in Northern Ireland, Tibet, East Timor, the Basque Region of Spain, regions with Kurdish population, etc. Based on these bloody or peaceful developments of the post communist period in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in other countries of the world one can arrive at some clear, prime and probably indisputable conclusions.

1. The long co-existence under the rule of Communist governments of nations or ethnic minorities was based upon fierce oppression and discrimination with obvious or hidden assimilation purposes.

2. Nations and ethnic minorities demonstrated that they were ready and able to fight even a war for their national rights. The different wars of a nationalist nature came out as a repetition of the previous similar wars that had taken place in the long history of these countries, especially in the Balkan region.

3. The international effort to revive co-existence, including the Dayton Agreement were probably not the most fruitful means for the creation of long-term peaceful ethnic co-existence. This agreement overestimates the multiethnicity within one state and under-estimates the inter-state multiethnicity. I think that the creation of new national identities

does not translate into isolation for these nations, on the contrary, it puts the latter in equal conditions for cooperation and good relationships.

4. Groups of people that have undertaken continuous efforts to preserve and express their rejected national identity cannot be easily forced to cohabit peacefully within the borders of the same state. The experience of Bosnia, Kosova and Montenegro makes this quite evident. This truth has more value for the people that had to experience bloodshed during these movements of national character. Those people do need a relatively long and quiet period of time, during which they can get the chance to experience self-governing as independent countries or UN protectorates so that they can express their long-denied national identity. Thus, they need to affirm their identity. In this way, these people will be more easily and more quickly included in state integration processes such as federative and confederative ones and in Euro-Atlantic integration processes.

5. In many cases, the qualitative and quantitative vagueness of the term "ethnic minority" has been abused in order not to fulfil all the requests of a national character that different groups of people might have. This is very clearly shown by the interethnic conflict situation in Macedonia. This fact shows that the causes of ethnic conflicts are not only related to the national consciousness of a nation or ethnic minority that fights for more rights, but also with the national consciousness of the nation that controls the power in a particular state. The governing elites of the states where small or large ethnic groups have been oppressed and have revolted have deeply-rooted prejudices concerning the dangers the fulfilment of the demands of a national character might bring for their ethnic social position.

6. The national movements have been revived at a time when it was thought that the pace of integration processes within countries and between countries was being accelerated, among other things, as a result of the intensification of modem communication due to big advancements in the information technologies. Nevertheless, we should accept that besides worldly tendencies towards integration there still exist counter tendencies that support the movements for the strengthening of the national or other identities.

In a few words, I think that trying to look beyond eventual developments of different national movements, one can observe a discrepancy between the tendency of such developments and the political and diplomatic efforts to resolve the problems derived from them.

In an effort to find the cause of this discrepancy, I think that the main reasons are related to two important principles of international charters, i.e. the principle of the non-forced change of borders and the principle of self-determination of peoples.

The International Community should in a natural way preserve both of the principles and I would notice here that while it keeps trying to do that it always faces huge problems. The international recognition of the numerous new states that came out of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are an indicator of these efforts, despite the fact that in some cases the borders become international via force. The "de facto" international protectorate in Kosova also brings evidence of the same efforts, although the right to self-determination by a referendum of a final political status for the Albanian people there has not been fully recognized.

If we would for a while also look at the situation in Macedonia and at the attitude of the International Community towards the latest developments there, things seem to be a little different. In this case we are not talking about either respecting or disrespecting any of the two principles. It seems as if the International Community this time in Macedonia did not want to allow the repetition of the passivity and delays that were noticed in the decision making processes regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova. The International Community has been accelerating its efforts to support without any conditions the Macedonian

government as if this was not the case of a clear two-ethnic state. In its position towards the ethnic problems in Macedonia, what was observed was a clear and open support for the majority's Macedonian State at the expense of an unbiased treatment of the Macedonian-Albanian ethnic problems. In this framework of reasoning, the revolting Albanians in Macedonia were described as terrorists and extremists, although they were never the first to attack and have declared many a time and since the beginning of the armed revolt that they only want to make the dialogue between Albanians and Macedonians start as soon as possible, after so many years of delay. They also stated many times that they are bound to defend the territorial integrity of Macedonia. On the contrary, Albanians in Macedonia are suffering the heavy consequences of government violence, such as shellings, killings, economic destruction, fleeing as refugees, anti-Albanian psychological pressure, etc.

That is why, the very open support that governments of some EU countries offered for Macedonia and the EU Association Agreement that Macedonia signed recently seems to have not served for a softening of the exacerbated interethnic Albanian-Macedonian relations. I am afraid that, again, the International Community is one step behind the conflicting interethnic developments in Macedonia and the situation may worsen even more. The recent creation of a coalition government with participation of all the political forces of both ethnic groups in Macedonia, while the governmental military forces are still attacking the National Liberation Army (UCK), does not seem to offer much of a solution to the problem, that is for the constitutional changes, that is, Albanians demand.

The issue can be considered in the following way: What can be done to offer a long-term solution to the acute ethnic problems of the countries in Southeastern Europe?

Let us go back to the two principles that were previously stated and are related to the self-determination of peoples and the non-forced change of borders.

In the Final Act of the Helsinki Agreement, Article l(a).l, entitled "Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty", it is stated among other things that" ...all the participating States have equal rights and duties. They will respect each other's right to define and conduct as it wishes its relations with other States in accordance with international law and in the spirit of the present Declaration. They consider that their frontiers can be changed, in accordance with international law, by peaceful means and by agreement".

In the same document, in Article l(a).8, entitled "Equal rights and self-determination of peoples", it is stated that" The participating States will respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting at all times in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States.

By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference, and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development".

In the UN Charter, Article 1.2 it is stated that one of the purposes of the UN is "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace".

It is understandable that one of the basic ideas that stands after these articles that describe border changes and the right to self-determination is that there are situations in which ethnic homogeneity becomes indispensable and more fruitful than support of multi-ethnicity. Thus, ethnic co-existence is not a principle that should always be enforced.

Wars with national character that took place in the last decade in Southeastern Europe showed that different people did not desire any coexistence within the borders of one single state. Instead, they fought with indescribable cruelty and committed horrendous crimes although they had been cohabiting for a long time with each other. Many borders were forcibly changed on behalf of ethnic homogeneity or ethnic "cleansing", thus violating the Helsinki Charter. Many nations ask for and cannot exercise their right of self-determination. Therefore, way they cannot exercise the relevant articles of the UN and Helsinki Charters.

In some cases the borders that were forcibly changed (or forcibly self-determined) were recognised by the International Community. On the other hand, in some other cases, nations that want to exercise their right to self-determination (or change borders without use of force) are not being helped to exercise the rights deriving from the above-mentioned charters. This contradiction concerning the violation of the principle of non-forced change of borders and the practical impossibility to exercise the right of self-determination demands a solution. The key to this is an increase of the imposing force that the international organisations have towards particular states based on the international charters and laws, which, as is known, is not easy, but neither impossible. Inability to timely prevent the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to prevent the war in Kosova, and avoid further exacerbation of interethnic conflict in Macedonia has its roots in the inability of the International Community to timely and via consensus exercise the enforcement of international charters and laws.

In order to solve the ethnic problems that still exist in Southeastern Europe and, more explicitly, in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosova, Montenegro, Macedonia, etc, some ideas should be taken into consideration.

Firstly, the principle of multiethnic cohabitation should not be looked upon in a dogmatic way. Whenever this cohabitation within a certain country faces difficult problems, other possibilities should be taken into consideration which have to do with ethnic homogeneity and a peaceful change of borders.

Of course, in this case also the principle of multi-ethnicity is not ignored, not only because it is in the long ran related to the essence of social life itself as a cohabitation and that there is nowhere pure ethnic homogeneity, but also because this principle is necessarily observed in international relations.

Secondly, in order to solve the ethnic problems, the historical and the present background of concrete interethnic relations must be considered, which are closely related to the depth of national feelings of various human groups as well as to the way and strength of their thinking of the ethnic group they belong to.

Thirdly, the terms "minority" and "majority" would be more precisely defined if they were regarded not only in the context of the country they concern but also linked with the history of the territories they live in and of their appertaining to these territories.

Fourthly, as long as there are no pure ethnic groups, the respect for the real ethnic minorities is always very important.

Fifthly, the efforts of the International Community aiming at preserving the principle of the non-forced change of borders should be complemented with the creation of the conditions for the people to exercise their right of self-determination. The situation in Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosova, etc., would probably more persistently need this exercise of the right of self-determination and in that case the International Community should not be late.

In the UN Charter, Chapter 12, Article 76.b, it is said that the international system of trusteeship (as it is the case of Kosova) has as a main goal "to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be

appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement"

In conclusion, I would like to reinforce the idea that in the territories of former Yugoslavia where there are still problems, a process of dialogue and discussion should start aiming at exploring the possibilities and the means of exercising on the right of self-determination of the peoples. South East Europe or the Balkans is in need of a pre-integration period during which national identities should be recognised and assessed, never forgetting that a war was recently fought for the sake of these identities and that there is still a danger of new wars. Macedonia, where winds of war are coming around, seems to be an easier case to be solved if timely actions are to be taken. There, the Albanians do not demand to proclaim their independent state, but just equal constituent rights.

The great fear concerning the Albanians is that wherever they make efforts to realise the idea of a "Greater Albania" it is part and result of a deceitful propaganda, which serves as a protective umbrella against the true chauvinists of the Balkans who just finished a bloody tragedy and continue to work out the idea of a "Greater Serbia".

At a conference organised by CEPS (Centre of European Policy Studies) in Brussels, on February 26, 2001, President Gjukanovic of Montenegro said: "The eyes of Serbian nationalists have always seen Montenegro as a part of Serbia. As long as Montenegro stays with Serbia, in whatever form of a united state, the project of the Greater Serbia will continue to live and will be a threat to the peace and stability of the region."

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Overcoming Conflict in the Balkans

1. The convening of this workshop of the PfP Consortium Working Group on "Crisis management in Southeast Europe" to consider important aspects of inter-ethnic relations in countries of this region is a most laudable and timely initiative. Since inter-ethnic relations are one of the main causes of the conflicts which have been ravaging this part of Europe for the past ten years, their analysis at this meeting of recognised specialists in the field provides us with the opportunity of looking also at the wider prospects of peace in this region. The initiative to organise this Workshop comes at the right moment because, with the latest democratic changes in Yugoslavia and Croatia, conditions have been created for the undertaking of a determined diplomatic effort to move beyond the mere management of the existing crises, towards reconciliation and the establishment of lasting peace in the Balkans. As the special Envoy of the UN Secretary General to the Balkans, former Prime Minister of Sweden, *Carl Bildt*, put it in a recent article in Foreign Affairs, a second chance - after the one missed in 1995, following the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Accords - is now given to the nations of the Balkans, of Europe and of the world at large to put an end to these endless cycles of violence and counter-violence. The UN special Envoy draws the attention to the grave risks with which this region and Europe as a whole will be confronted in the future if this new chance for peace were to be missed again.

2. Indeed, for ten years now, the largest part of the former Yugoslav space has been the theatre of unspeakable violence and war, which resulted in huge material destructions and great losses of human lives. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons are still wandering far away from their homes, placing an additional heavy burden on the fragile economies of the countries sheltering them. The extremely harmful effects of the conflicts have been felt not only by the parties directly involved, but also by other neighbouring nations of the region, seriously affecting their progress towards integration into the European Union. And despite the presence in the region of large international peace-keeping forces, the situation has not become less risky. In fact, the outstanding issues to be settled in order to establish durable peace in the region are more numerous and more complex today than they were two years ago or five years ago.

3. At this time, the countries of South-eastern Europe and the international community as a whole are confronted with the dilemma of either continuing, as in the past ten years, simply focusing on efforts to prevent new violent conflicts, to control the emerging crises and to undertake modest steps of post-conflict rehabilitation; or of moving decisively, in a coherent and coordinated manner, towards seeking acceptable solutions to the real causes of the existing conflicts. If the present no-war-no-peace situation is allowed to continue, we may end up with repeating the sad history of the Cyprus problem, which would be disastrous for the ideal of achieving the unity of Europe. Moreover, we may be confronted along the road with new military outbursts, with unpredictable consequences for the region, for Europe and the wider Euro-Atlantic space. Such a course would have no winner, but all would be losers. What is going on today in Southern Serbia and Northern Macedonia should serve as a serious warning in this regard. The continuation of the present state of instability in the Balkans would only widen and deepen the extremely harmful phenomena of drug and weapon trafficking, organised crime, terrorism and illegal migration in this region, which are posing growing risks for the stability and welfare of the whole of Europe.

4. Obviously, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, initiated by the European Union two years ago, plays a crucial role in the efforts of the international community to turn the course of events in the direction of establishing real peace in the Balkans. Nevertheless, the

experience of the past two years has clearly shown that, important as it is, the Stability Pact is not sufficient. More is required in order to take the Balkan situation out of the present stalemate, hi the absence of a reconciliation between the main parties to the conflict, especially between Serbs and Albanians and between Serbs and Croats, no genuine progress can be made in the implementation of meaningful national and regional projects of development, of democratic reforms or of consolidating the sense of security in the region. It is obvious that as long as nations of this area remain locked into conflicts, there will be insignificant resources that could be spared for sustaining substantive programmes of economic and democratic changes, which would allow them to move towards integration into wider European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

5. All this suggests the pressing need for defining a more comprehensive strategic vision about the kind of measures that are necessary at the national, regional and international levels in order to advance as fast as possible towards the establishment of genuine peace in the Balkans.

In fact, there are several factors of common position and common interest on which such a vision can be based.

First, as members of the OSCE, all the nations of this region are firmly committed to respecting the existing national borders which cannot be changed but by mutual consent of the states concerned.

Second, all these countries have accepted the standards of the OSCE and the Council of Europe regarding the full respect for the rights of national minorities. Certainly, such standards do not offer any support for tendencies towards fragmentation of countries on ethnic criteria. This is fully understandable since the central course of developments, which include various forms of local and regional autonomy in Europe and in the world, is heading into an opposite direction, that of integration of nations in wider entities as a component part of the process of globalisation.

Third, there is the major national interest of every country in South-eastern Europe to become members of the European Union one day. Obviously, in order to be able to meet the difficult economic and political criteria for admission into this great organisation, our nations must concentrate all their material and human resources, as well as any other international assistance they may receive, on significant programmes of economic development and of consolidation of their democratic institutions. This would require seeking urgent mutually acceptable solutions to the problems which constitute the causes of the existing conflicts in the area, since development and war are incompatible. When all countries of South-eastern Europe become parts of an integrated Europe, many of the issues which separate them at present will become irrelevant.

At an international conference in Bucharest last month on coping with crises and conflicts, organised by the Romanian Foreign Ministry and UNDP, *Yasushi Akashi*, former assistant Secretary General of the UN and a recognised expert on Balkan problems, stated that peacekeeping alone cannot bring solutions to the issues separating the parties to a conflict. Peacekeeping is essentially a measure aimed at a cooling — down of the political temperature. "In order to be effective", he said, "peace-keeping has to be accompanied by a determined effort for peacemaking or the resolution of conflict. When these diplomatic efforts are out of joint, (UN) peacekeeping is reduced to prolonging a unsteady and fragile status quo like in Cyprus".

It was also the widely shared view of the participants in that conference that the main initiatives for building a solid structure of peace in South-eastern Europe should come from within the region, since it is the very future of the nations of this part of the continent which is at stake. Countries from other parts of Europe and of the world, as well as international

organisations and especially the United Nations, OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Union and NATO, can bring a decisive contribution by landing their political and material support to such initiatives.

The most appropriate framework in which Southeast European can develop ideas and proposals for the establishment of peace in their region is probably the South-east European Cooperation Process, in which all countries of the area take part. Nations of this group which are not involved in the existing disputes and conflicts, such as Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey, can jointly play an important role in the efforts to achieve reconciliation among the other countries of the region. Before ending my brief remarks, it is proper to quote the conclusions of *Carl Bildt's* article referred to at the beginning of this presentation.

"On a day-to-day basis", says the UN official, "simply accepting a drift toward dis-integration and abstaining from more ambitions efforts might seem the most comfortable approach. But the risks of this option are grave. The world might end up with a revanchist Serbia, a broken Bosnia, and a fractured Macedonia, with NATO having to manage endless low-level confrontations along the region's different fault lines, and the rest of Europe consumed by a cancer of criminality fed by the uncertainties of the region.

The international community must not fool itself into believing that only more smart bombs can handle the problems of the Balkans. It is the smart policies that have been most lacking over the past decade. Now, history has given the region, Europe, and the world a new chance. We miss it at our own peril".

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PEACE BUILDING IN THE BALKANS: THE NEED TO STAY THE COURSE[1]

The ideas I want to share focus on Bosnia. They are based on the need to preserve the Dayton Peace Accords and on the ties between their provisions and today's conflict resolution doctrine and practices. They postulate that the DPA were designed to make multi-ethnic coexistence possible. And so, one cannot go without the other in the Balkans.

The need for this position arose from the recent troubles in the Balkans, and from the mounting criticism over the peace process from those whom I would call "abdicators" and "revisionists". This article represents the "romantic" point of view.

Thomas Friedman, writing for the New York Times, represents the abdicators insofar as he believes that democracy is impossible in a multiethnic Bosnia, whereas it is taking root in "homogeneous" (sic) Croatia and Serbia. Therefore, the DPA should be abandoned. Immediately we can point to the fact that Serbia, for one, is not homogeneous. It counts Montenegrins as a distinct minority and, in law as well as in fact, Kosovo, where ethnic Albanians are in the majority, is still integral to Serbia.

The revisionists, mostly semi-official commentators from international organisations and NGOs, complain about the intolerable delays of the peace process and the perceived shortcomings of the Dayton Accords. Therefore, the DPA should be redrafted.

There are in fact three positions where the revisionists separate the abdicators and those faithful to the DPA and the idea of a lively multiethnic Bosnia. The abdicators advocate a general pull-out. The revisionists advocate amendments. The "romantics" advocate pressuring the individuals resistant to change. Meanwhile, all three agree that there have been flare-ups of violence in Bosnia and in the region as a whole.

In response to these flare-ups, the international community has begun to be more assertive and more insistent in the implementation of the Dayton Accords. It has removed numerous obstructionist officials, it has unilaterally amended election rules to avoid extremists monopolising the political domain, it has also physically denied the means of chauvinistic propaganda to certain groups. This, it has started doing only in the last 18 months.

The evidence shows that some elements of the respective communities in Bosnia are responsible for the troubles. The Bosnian Croat HDZ's bid for separation of the Mostar enclave finds little resonance past the goons of the extremist leader Ante Jelacic. Lately, SFOR has tried to deny it the financial means to propagate his message of the hate, but met with fierce resistance from an organised crowd.

Similarly, a few hundred Serbs have turned up in Banja Luka to violently protest the erection of one of the mosques destroyed in the war.

This action was prophesised by the UN High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, who argued on the BBC's "Simpson's World" of May 4th that extremism had to be resisted with all the international community's might, lest it gives a model for action for other disgruntled groups. So far, the troubles have been confined to these two incidents, being the gravest. The recent troubles are as much responsible for the desire to withdraw as for that to press on and possibly have the international community "over reach".

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[1] This is a shorter version of an as yet unpublished paper entitled: "Peacebuilding in the Balkans: The Need to Stay the Course?" that was written in support of a presentation given at the Crisis Management in South East Europe working group of the PfP Consortium, in Reichenau, Austria, 18 May 2001.

The international community has taken the path of the romantics and seems determined to press on with the Dayton agenda, despite its faults. It is not surprising that the DPA are victim of criticism, or that they are indeed faulty. After all, these are terms that were predefined by the US mediators, on parties who had no desire to come to terms. The presence of idiosyncratic mechanisms, such as the right to vote in your former area of residence is extremely strange, as is the concept of a rotating troika presidency where there are in fact two legal entities, one being bi-national. Despite all this, the DPA have not failed. The fact that the international community is husbanding the process is not a sign of failure. As will be demonstrated later, it is part of the normal peace-building process.

The Dayton Accords should be kept as they are, and the peace process supported with renewed might. There are several positive, negative and neutral reasons for this, all indicative of the situation on the ground.

Positively speaking, while staying the DPA course, 2000 has seen record numbers of refugee returns. It would be interesting to see if there is a relation between the new returnees and the outbreak of violence in Bosnia, because this would hypothetically mean that the initiators of violence would have been the ones denied the 5 year return to normality afforded to the non-displaced persons. Unfortunately, such a tempting analysis cannot be made here in the space provided.

Another reason to give the DPA a second chance is the fact that Bosnia is now enjoying its first non-nationalist government. Granted, it necessitated significant OSCE election-rule tweaking, but the challenge now is to make this government function correctly and give a practical demonstration to the electorate that democracy brings results.

Despite slow progress, there is now a police force worthy of some trust. This is a significant development which goes in line with peace-building theory. As a conflict enters a period of mediated truce, the military element provided by the international community is reduced and replaced by a competent police force. This, the DPA made clear as a priority. Nowhere in the DPA was it said how to achieve these results. The planning had to be made by various international organisations acting in concert. The DPA is a set of general guidelines to provide a framework for a self-sustaining multi-ethnic democracy. That the number of SFOR troops has dwindled in response to the increase in IPTF-trained local officers is therefore part of the plan.

Arbitration over Brcko is holding. To some, this is one of the relevant successes of the international mission, but it is clear that if this area now enjoys peace, it is because the local population has accepted an international ruling over the area. That they have done so while a few individuals are aware of the potential riches imbedded in the soil is telling. It furthers the point that communities have little desire to fight each other, while corrupt and self-serving individuals, most often associates of criminal elements, have a definite stake in the region. This prospect was defused by international arbitration over Brcko.

To those who would say that Bosnia is ripe to have its fate dictated by the international community, I would say that this would smack of condescendence. It would negate the fact that many communities have to learn to live in a country in the creation of which they had no say, and which, as a result, would have little legitimacy in their eyes. It would be possible in such a scenario to see a resumption of the violent conflict 50 years from now. What the DPA do is to give the tools to the former belligerent to find a way to live and operate together. It so happens that for areas of the DPA like Brcko (and, had it not been otherwise, Kosovo as well) which have found no legal resolution at the negotiation table are settled so that the overall process does not suffer not suffers.

The implementation of the border police works as intended. This is an important area which was implemented with only 6 months of delay. It is important because implicit in the need to have

a competent border police is the understanding that it is criminal gangs with their propaganda and weapons smuggling that re-ignite passions in Bosnia.

War criminals are being brought to The Hague, because without justice there can be no trust, and trust is paramount to the reconciliation of all the parties. Also implicit in the need to bring criminals to justice is the need to provide an effective deterrent against atrocities in the future. But this argument also supports the fact that those very few elements are the guilty parties, and not the entire communities. The dynamics of coercion in the context of ethnic conflict would necessitate a separate paper altogether, but it suffice to say that the pursuit of war criminals gives life to a common ground where all parties can acknowledge that their fighters had a part in war crimes, but also that it does not ascribe a war criminal mentality to the whole of the other nationalities. More than a simple matter of immediate justice, it is a matter of long-lasting reconciliation.

It is true to say that with the historic changes in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, the environment is ripe to isolate resistant elements. Indeed, this is likely to marginalise and also radicalise the extremes of all political persuasions that do not believe in centrist democracy. Now is the time to vocally and tangibly support the forces that tend to learn towards reconciliation and multi-ethnic coexistence.

Most importantly, there is evidence that multi-ethnic coexistence is feasible because flare-ups are highly localised and find no resonance in the population. Mihailo Crnobrnja wrote in 1995 that it took a lot of time and a lot of concentrated effort to initiate a policy of ethnic cleansing. Those who believe incorrectly that the Yugoslav civil wars are the fruit of ancient hatreds and who could not reconcile the fact that ethnic cleansing took place more than ten years after Tito's death have the answer. Concentrated efforts at spreading hate messages, false rumours, and manipulating history. Yugoslavs have lived together under the yoke of communism, a dehumanising ideology. They can certainly live together in harmony in a context of their choice. The DPA is the only tool they have for them to make an informed choice. If they choose to live apart, it must be so after a reasoned, measured and informed political debate. At the same time, the decision to leave must be mutual and the new state created thereby must find acceptance (that is, recognition) by the international community. Doing anything less would inevitably send Shockwaves for the nation-state, as countless "disgruntled" communities would find a precedent for separation.

But, if the DPA are abandoned, this means an abandonment of the only plan to create self-sustaining peace for all communities. The efforts of civilian peace workers and the sacrifices of military peacekeepers will have been in vain and it will send the signal that the Balkans are simply not worth the time nor the money, as if you could put a price on freedom and peace. This will be the signal to NGO's, who have acquired a new status as legitimate international actors that they have failed, and all other peace endeavours which can only be supported by NGO's will suffer as a result. The dream of an international civic society, where even the smallest of individuals can make a difference in world affairs will crumble. The NGO's failure will confirm donor fatigue, and the outpour of generosity from private and public sources that we have seen in the post-Cold War era will come to an end.

The "neutral" reason would be that peace work thinkers and practitioners see these delays as normal, expected, foreseeable occurrences. When a truce occurs during a conflict, this is the ideal time, provided the truce is well-founded, to insert a peacekeeping/enforcing mission. The task of the military is, first of all, to separate belligerents, in essence keep the peace as a heavily armed police contingent would (in the case of peace enforcement) and help the international organisations and NGO's do their work. As this happens, the warring parties will react in a variety of different ways, but in the case of civil wars, populations unaccustomed to violence will revert back to peace quite quickly. The obstacles come from the perpetrators of violence who find no more audience for their anger. The result is a polarisation of communities because of the belligerent discourse of the war mongers, which can be erased only after time and after institutions have been put in place to equalise positions. Institutions such as an independent judiciary and

regular elections equalise the chances of all communities and prepare the way for a self-sustaining multi-ethnic democracy where the war mongers and extremists would have no place to exist since their renown is based on the hatred of the other as a "political" programme. As soon as communities gain trust in the institutions, they will learn to trust each other.

For all these reasons, the DPA must not be touched. It is bad policy to change strategy in mid-course. Abdicators believe that 5 years and $5 billion an too long and too expensive. As if you could put a price on freedom and peace. Thomas Friedman, echoing the correct notion that no two countries who have McDonald's restaurants have ever gone to war, said it was not surprising that McDonald's did not have any restaurants in the Balkans.

Peace and freedom do not come as quickly and as cheaply as a burger and fries. But with regards to multi-ethnic coexistence, well... What is a Big Mac without the secret sauce?

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THE BULGARIAN ETHNIC MODEL - A FACTOR OF STABILITY IN THE BALKANS[1]

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the development of the multiethnic policy in the context of the Bulgarian society transformation to democracy and to reveal its positive effects on creating favourable conditions for preserving stability in the Balkans. In addition, it aims at analysing public attitudes towards different ethnic and religious communities in Bulgaria and evaluating current interethnic relations in society. Finally, the paper should summarise the main problem areas and some potential internal and external risks in the context of the current situation in South Eastern Europe (SEE).

Research Methods and Empirical Data

The analysis in this paper is based on empirical data obtained in the framework of a research project entitled: "Attitudes towards Ethnic Tolerance and Co-operation in the Bulgarian Armed Forces". The Institute for Advanced Defence Research (IADR) has been carried it out

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[1] This view expressed in this paper are solely those of the auther and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Bulgarian MoD or the Institute for Advanced Defence Research at the "G.S. Rakovski" National Defence & Staff College.

(during the period of July 2000 to July 2001)[2] in co-operation with the Institute for Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

We have used both quantitative (questionnaire surveys) and qualitative methodology (focus groups and consultations with experts) in our study. The project comprises the following empirical surveys:

- A representative sociological survey conducted by the IADR among 1905 Commissioned Officers (COs), Non- Commissioned Officers (NCOs), cadets in the Defence Academies, professional soldiers and conscripts from July to November 2000 period;

- A survey of experts (high ranking officers and civilians from the Ministry of Defence - MoD - , General Staff –GS - and the Services of the Bulgarian Armed Forces — BAF -) on the same topic using in-dept interviews and focus groups, conducted by the IADR in the period of July 2000 to February 2001.

- A representative sociological survey on the topic "Attitudes towards Ethnic Tolerance and Co-operation", conducted by the IADR among 1145 high school students (16-19 years of age) in October 2000.

In addition, we have made secondary analysis of data from nation-wide representative sociological surveys on the topic of the project conducted in Bulgaria between 1997 and 2000.

Background: Ethnic and Religious Communities in the Bulgarian Society

According to the census of December 1992, 85.7% of the country's population are Bulgarians. Two major ethnic groups - Turks and the Roma, represent 9.4% and 3.7% of the whole population, correspondingly 800 052 and 313 396 people. The remaining of 1.2% are distributed in the following way: Tatars- 0.1%, Armenians - 0.2%, and others, which did not declare their ethnicity - 1.0%.[3]

The Turkish ethnic minority is basically concentrated in two regions - South Eastern and North Eastern Bulgaria. In the South-Eastern part of the country, or Rodopa mountain region, the biggest Turkish minority population is located in the Kardzali district (64.7% of the people living there). In North Eastern Bulgaria the Turkish minority population is concentrated around Razgrad (47.5% of the population in the district), Targovishte (33.6%), Silistra (32.8%) and Shoumen (29.4%). The Turks are rural for the most part: 68 out of 100 people live in villages, and 32 the towns. Concerning ethnic Bulgarians this correlation is 28:72, while for the Roma community the proportion is 52:48.[4]

As far as the religious communities in Bulgaria are concerned, 86.2% of the population identify themselves as Eastern Orthodox Christians,

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[3] Results of the Population Census, Vol. 1, Demographic Characteristics, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 1994, pp. 106.
[4] Ibid., p. 106-109.

0.6% as Catholics, 12.7% as Muslims, 0.2% as Protestants and 0.2% as others.[5]

If the distinction between Bulgarians, Turks and Roma is made on ethnic basis, on a religious basis we should distinguish two more groups: Pomaks[6] (Bulgarian speaking Muslims, descendants of Christian Bulgarians forcefully converted to Islam during the Turkish yoke) and Gagagouz (Turkish-speaking Christians). The Muslim Bulgarians are not listed in the census. Their number is estimated to be about 200 000 to 280 000. They are concentrated in the Rodopa mountain region in Southern Bulgaria as well as in the South-Western part, or the Pirin mountain region.[7]

Interethnic Relations in Bulgaria: a brief Retrospection

Regarding the main ethnic minority group in Bulgaria, the Turkish one, the Bulgarian State has not had a well-grounded and consistent policy during the last century. The periods of recognising the rights for lingual, religious and cultural self-identification and the development of the Turkish community have altered with periods of highly restrictive measures, breaching freedoms and rights. The first tendency found

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[5] Results of the Population Census, 2% sample, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 1993 (in Bulgarian).
[6] The term "Pomak" has a predominantly negative meaning. Therefore, we shall use the term "Muslim Bulgarians", which is in common use in the scientific literature in Bulgaria.
[7] Anna Krasteva, Ethnic Minorities, In: Bulgaria 1960-1995, Nikolai Genov & Anna Krasteva (Eds.), National and Global Development, Sofia 1999, p. 452.

expression in a powerful educational campaign and reserved quotas for the representatives of the minorities in the governing bodies of a number of state institutions.

A positive result of the integration was the liquidation of illiteracy in the Turkish community. Even after the nationalisation of education in 1946, the special status of Turkish schools was preserved and their number increased to 1199 in 1950.[8]

At the end of the fifties, a series of restrictive measures against the Turkish minority group were launched. In 1964, the Turkish language teaching was suspended in schools. In 1974, the Turkish Philology Department at the Sofia University was closed down.

The most extreme expression of the discrimination policy towards Turks was the forcible change of Turkish and Arabic names in the winter of 1984-1985. The official explanation was that the descendants of Bulgarians forcibly converted to Islam during the Turkish yoke must regain their Bulgarian identity. Therefore these measures were officially called "Revival process". In the summer of 1989, more than 300 000 ethnic Turks left Bulgaria, trying to attract international support for their minority rights. This was the most serious and deepest conflict in the interethnic relations in recent Bulgarian history.

Following the democratic changes in Bulgaria in November 1989, one of the first political acts was to condemn the "Revival process". On 15 January, 1990, the National Assembly adopted a declaration on national issues, assessing the forcible change of names as one of the

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[8] Ibid., p. 451.

greatest crimes of **Todor Zhivkov's** regime. The ethnic cleansing during the period of 1984-1989 is being perceived by society as a remnant from the old totalitarian regime. The new elite publicly denounced the policy of repression by restoring all human rights to the Turkish minority. Legal arrangements were made for each Bulgarian citizen to be able to restore **his/her** former names if desired.

Regarding the second ethnic minority group in Bulgaria in number, the Roma, one could say that predominantly negative tendencies exist. These tendencies have been accelerated during the last decade, and could be summarised in the following way:

- Poor living conditions;
- Grave economic situation, higher degree of unemployment in comparison with other ethnic groups, coupled with a lower degree of education, which makes the Roma people less competitive on the labour market;
- Strong prejudices and stereotypes against the Roma community, shared both by the Bulgarian majority and the other minorities.

An Attempt to Define the Bulgarian Ethic Model in the Context of the Bulgarian Society Transition to Democracy

The Bulgarian Ethnic Model (BEM) has been developed during the last decade as an alternative to the "Revival process" of 1984-1989. Most authors describe the BEM as a successful development of multiethnic policy in Bulgaria resulting in more than ten years of

tolerant, peaceful co-existence and co-operation of different ethnic and religious communities. This model is a "social and political construction, which is characterized by stability, equality and common responsibility [...], a small part of the global process of the dialog of the civilizations."[9] In addition, some authors describe the essence of the BEM, saying that "there are no separatist claims and the level of ethnic tolerance is rather satisfactory [...] in the everyday life, different ethnic groups respect habits and beliefs of other groups [...]. In the current Bulgarian political system, ethnically heterogeneous or homogeneous, multiethnic and monoethnic parties coexist and compete [...] distinctive from the more coercive and non democratic authoritarian models, to settle ethnic tensions."[10]

When describing the BEM, most of the authors put the main stress on the peaceful co-existence of Bulgarians and Turks.

In the following rows we are going to summarise the main factors contributing to the successful development of the Bulgarian ethnic model in the past ten years. These factors have a multi-faceted genesis. They could be summarised in two groups: internal and external.

One of the most important internal contributing factors is the constitutional one. The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, adopted by the Great National Assembly in 1991, postulates that "There shall be

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[9] Vladimir Chukov, Bulgarian ethnic model - National Version of the dialog of the civilizations.
[10] *Early warning report,* The Roma Ethnic Group In Bulgaria: Identification And Political Representation, March 2000.

no privileges or restriction of rights on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic self-identity, sex, origin, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status, or property status." In addition, Article 36 postulates that "The study and use of the Bulgarian language is a right and obligation of every Bulgarian citizen. Citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian shall have the right to study and use their own language alongside the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language."

According to Article 54, "Everyone shall have the right to avail himself of the national and universal human cultural values and to develop his own culture in accordance with his ethnic self-identification, which shall be recognized and guaranteed by the law."[11]

In accordance with the constitutional provisions and the Eurointegration policy of the country, Bulgaria strictly follows the main principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and fully recognises political, lingual, cultural and religious rights of the ethnic minorities in the country.

Along with the above-mentioned rights, an important achievement of democracy in Bulgaria is the opportunity for representatives of the minorities to join the BAF as COs and NCOs. This point is very important because during the totalitarian regime the representatives of the minorities used to carry out their military service in the construction troops and transportation troops which did not belong to the Armed

[11] Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria , Adopted: 12 July 1991, *International Constitutional Law, http://www.uni-wuerzburs.de/law/bu indx.html*

Forces. This was a kind of discrimination, which no longer exists. According to the Law of the Armed Forces adopted in 1995, young men belonging to minorities have equal rights as the Bulgarian majority to carry out their military service in the regular army. The law states that "All men, citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria, fit for military service, without difference of race, nationality, religion, social descent and family position, who have 18 years of age, shall be liable to military service."[12] Another important internal factor for the development of the BEM is the political one.

The democratic legislation adopted in Bulgaria after 1989 has established political representation for the minorities and a working model of representative democracy accepted and upheld by society. One example of this fact is the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) as a unique attempt to integrate the Turkish minority group in the political power structure of society. This movement is a political party of national relevance and has proved its a and a social liberal party, with a general left-wing trend stemming from the ability to control ethnic extremism during the last decade. It is a left-centre social characteristics of its electorate. The actual members of the MRF do not exceed 50 000. In elections, about 350 000 to 400 000 or about 5% to 6% of the electorate vote for the Movement.[13]

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[12] Law of Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria , *Promulgated - State Gazette (SG) No. 112 from 27 December 1995 with many amendments the last one from SG No.64/2000.*

[13] Vassil Penev, Political Parties, In: Bulgaria 1960-1995, Nikolai Genov & Anna Krasteva (Eds.), National and Global Development, Sofia 1999, p. 304.

There are positive tendencies also in the efforts to internally mobilise the Roma community for participation in the political power. These tendencies found expression in the establishment of numerous Roma organisations and organisations for human rights in **Bulgaria**.[14] In addition, there have been Roma Members of the Parliament in all National Assemblies since 1989 in both the parliamentary groups of the Union of Democratic Forces **(UDF)** and the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

There is a positive trend of change of radical nationalistic attitudes on part of the Bulgarian majority towards the Turkish minority during the last decade. The best example in this regard is the constantly diminishing role and influence of some nationalistic formations in the Bulgarian political life like the Bulgarian National Radical Party, the National Patriotic Union, and the Christian Radical party. The bases of their politics were the values of the nation state. Their demands included the following: Unification of all Bulgarians into one state (including those living outside the borders of Bulgaria); eviction of ethnic minorities; adoption of an obligatory, unified name system for all Bulgarian citizens; "national unification". The same process could be observed among the sympathisers of the **MRF**.[15] As a result, one could observe a process of gradual reduction on the of level of ethnic tensions, which

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[14] Anna **Krasteva,** Ethnic Minorities, In: Bulgaria 1960-1995, Nikolai Genov & Anna **Krasteva (Eds.),** National and Global Development, Sofia 1999, p. 450.
[15] **Krassimisr Kanev,** Ideologies and Beliefs, In: Bulgaria 1960-1995, Nikolai Genov & Anna Krasteva **(Eds.),** National and Global Development, Sofia 1999, p. 336.

used to be relatively high when the democratisation process in Bulgaria began.

Another important factor for the successful development of the Bulgarian ethnic model is the cultural one. It finds expression in the inherent Bulgarian tolerance to "the others", which is a good basis for the elaboration of the non-violent approach towards resolving ethnic conflicts.

Last but not least, when describing the BEM, we should underline the growing role and influence of the civil society in guaranteeing democratic rights and freedom of the minorities in Bulgaria.

From the viewpoint of the Bulgarian foreign policy, an important factor for the successful development of the Bulgarian ethnic model has to do with the new good relations with Turkey and the influx of Turkish business interests in Bulgaria.

Public perceptions of interethnic relations in Bulgaria

General perceptions of interethnic relations

The results of recent sociological surveys show that Bulgarians are more predisposed to perceive interethnic relations as problematic than the minority groups are. Three fourths of the Christian Bulgarian students assess the relations between Bulgarian and Roma communities in negative terms as "poor" and "very poor". In addition, about one third evaluate the relations between Bulgarians and Turks in these categories. The assessments of the elder people are close to those of the students.

At the same time, the representatives of the ethnic minorities perceive the interethnic relations with more tranquillity. Just 6.5% of the ethnic Turks consider the relations between Turks and Bulgarians "poor" and "very poor", while about half of the Roma students evaluate their relations with Bulgarians in negative terms.

When asked about the relations between Turks and Roma in Bulgaria, about half of the students from the Turkish ethnic group evaluate those as "poor" and "very poor", whereas just one fifth of the Roma students perceive their relations with Turks as "problematic".

These results clearly indicate that the assessment of the interethnic relations in Bulgaria correlates with the ethnic self-identification of the respondents. The Bulgarian majority perceives the relations with the Roma ethnic group as worsened because of the fact that the image of the Roma people is mainly associated with rising level of criminality during

the last decade, and, in this sense, with a threat to the personal security of the citizens.

Regarding the perception of the relations between Bulgarians and Turks, an important factor which influences the evaluations in a negative direction is the worry about possible religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims. These fears find expression in emotionally based expectations of a military invasion of Bulgaria by Turkish troops to protect the Turkish minority in case of interethnic conflicts in Bulgaria.

Assessment of Interethnic distances

The Bogardous scale was applied to measure interethnic distances in Bulgaria.[16] It contains six items, which compose the social-psychological term "social distance" and measure the level of acceptance of a person from other ethnic groups as a member of the family, close friend, neighbour, colleague at the workplace, fellow-townsman/fellow-townswoman and fellow-countryman/ fellow-countrywoman. The results of the measurement of interethnic distances between Christian Bulgarians, Muslim Bulgarians, Turks and Roma are presented in tables 1 to 6. These figures give an opportunity to compare the attitudes among five categories of Bulgarian citizens - the population aged between 18 and 85 years, the COs and NCOs from the BAF, the young people from

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[16] Yanakiev Y., Georgieva, Molhov, The Bogardus scale, In: Measurement Scales and Scaling Procedures in Sociological Surveys, "Saint G. Pobedonosets" Publishing House, Sofia 1996, pp. 19-24 (In Bulgarian).

18 to 30 years of age, conscript soldiers and students from 16 to 19 years of age.

Table 1

Social Distance between the Christian Bulgarians and the ethnic Turks
(Percentage of answers "Yes")

Would you accept a representative of the Turkish minority group for:	Population aged (18-85 years), 1997	BAF (COs & NCOs), 2000	Young people (18-30 years), 1999	Conscript soldiers (18-20 years), 2000	Students (16-19 years), 2000
Your wife/husband	15	27	13	26	19
Close friend	65	80	63	73	70
Neighbour	73	71	57	56	56
Colleague at the workplace	78	74	64	67	67
Fellow-townsman/ Fellow-townswoman	81	77	64	61	60
Fellow-countryman/ Fellow-woman	84	85	72	65	66

Table 2
Social Distance between the Christian Bulgarians and the Muslim
Bulgarians
(Percentage of answers "Yes")

Would you accept a representative of Bulgarian Muslims for:	Population aged (18-85 years), 1997	BAF (COs & NCOs), 2000	Young people (18-30 years), 1999	Conscript soldiers (18-20 years), 2000	Students (16-19 years), 2000
Your wife/husband	23	31.5	16	21	14.5
Close friend	67	76	60	59.5	58
Neighbour	76	70.5	68	49	52
Colleague at the workplace	81	75	71	59	60
Fellow-townsman/ fellow-townswoman	83	76	73	56	56
Fellow-countryman/ Fellow-woman	85	83	78	59	71

The analysis of the data presented in table 1 and 2 shows that the Christian Bulgarians demonstrate a comparatively high level of tolerance towards the Turkish minority and the Muslim Bulgarians. The only exception is when the hypothetical possibility to accept a person from these communities as a family member is concerned. The Christian Bulgarians perceive both the Turks and the Muslim Bulgarians in almost the same way. Obviously, the leading factor in the formation of these perceptions is religious rather than ethnic identification. It is important to underline that the Christian Bulgarians have more tolerant attitudes towards the Turks in comparison with the Muslim Bulgarians.

The other conclusion is that young people demonstrate more restrictive attitudes towards both communities than their parents.

Finally, one should emphasise a different, more tolerant attitude of people in uniform in comparison with their civilian counterparts. On the one hand, the higher educational level of the COs and NCOs could explain this result. On the other hand, the results form our surveys proved the hypothesis that the specifics of the military life influence the attitudes towards "the other" ethnic community in favourable manner.

The attitudes of the Christian Bulgarians towards the Roma community are presented in table **3**.

Table 3

Social Distance between the Christian Bulgarians and the Roma ethnic group
(Percentage of answers "Yes")

Would you accept a representative of the Roma ethnic group for:	Population aged (18-85 years), 1997	BAF (COs & NCOs), 2000	Young people (18-30 years), 1999	Conscript soldiers (18-20 years), 2000	Students (16-19 years), 2000
Your **wife/husband**	6	11	5	8.7	5
Close friend	27	38	22	33	29
Neighbour	32	27	26	21	22
Colleague at the workplace	40	35	29	29	28
Fellow-townsman/ fellow- **townswoman**	50	41	43	30.5	32
Fellow- **countryman/** fellow-woman	60	53.5	50	40	41

It is obvious that the social distance between the Bulgarian majority and the Roma is very high and the attitudes of discrimination dominate among all surveyed groups of respondents. When analysing these figures

we have to keep in mind the fact that part of the Christian Roma population present themselves as Bulgarians and another part of Muslim Roma population present themselves as Turks. Probably for that reason the real degree of discrimination against of the Roma community in the Bulgarian society is even stronger.

The attitudes of the Turkish minority towards the Roma community are less restrictive compared to the attitudes of the Bulgarian majority. However, they remain discriminative. (Table 4)

Table 4
Social Distance between the ethnic Turks and the Roma ethnic group
(Conscript soldiers, Percentage of answers "Yes")

Would you accept a representative of the Turkish/Roma ethnic group for:	Turks - Roma	Roma - Turks
Your wife/husband	17	65
Close friend	42	84.5
Neighbour	26	79
Colleague at the workplace	39	83
Fellow-townsman/ fellow-townswoman	34	77
Fellow-countryman/ fellow-woman	50	77

The Roma community represents itself as the most open for integration both with the Bulgarian majority (table 5) and the Turkish minority (table 4).

Table 5
Social Distance between, the ethnic Turks, the Roma
and the Christian Bulgarians
(Conscript soldiers, Percentage of answers "Yes")

Would you accept a representative of Bulgarian Christians for:	Turks	Roma
Your **wife/husband**	63	79
Close friend	94.5	90
Neighbour	94.5	86
Colleague at the workplace	97	90
Fellow-townsman/ fellow-townswoman	93	91
Fellow-countryman/ fellow-woman	92	91.5

Young people from both the Turkish and the Roma communities demonstrate high level of openness towards the Christian Bulgarians. A comparison with the attitudes towards the Muslim Bulgarians (table 6) shows of comparatively low level of acceptance of the later community, both by the ethnic Turks and the Roma group.

Table 6
Social Distance between the Muslim Bulgarians,
the ethnic Turks and the Roma ethnic group
(Conscript soldiers, percentage of answers "Yes")

Would you accept a representative of Bulgarian Muslims for:	Turks	Roma
Your **wife/husband**	40	55
Close friend	69	74
Neighbour	69	74
Colleague at the workplace	74	74
Fellow-townsman/ fellow-townswoman	70	73
Fellow-countryman/ fellow-woman	70	73

These results proved the hypothesis that the Muslim Bulgarians tend to become an isolated and underestimated community in society. They feel neither Bulgarian nor Turkish, and are disregarded by both communities. Probably for that reason their self-esteem is very low. The Muslim Bulgarians have problems with their ethnic and religious self-identification because they feel different from the Christian Bulgarians for their religious affiliation as well as from the Turkish minority because of their ethnic affiliation: Therefore, they look for their own ethnic identity. This situation generates a conflict potential because of the attempts to establish the so called "Pomak ethnic community" in Bulgaria.

Assessment of Interethnic prejudices and stereotypes

A variant of the Katz & Braly test has been applied to measure interethnic prejudices and stereotypes. It contains a series of negative statements concerning the different ethnic groups in Bulgaria. These statements are formulated on the basis of a previous qualitative study among small groups of representatives of these communities.[17]

We think of prejudice as "an attitude of aversion and hostility toward the members of a group simply because they belong to it and are therefore presumed to have objectionable qualities ascribed to the

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[17] Ilona Tomova, Measurement of stereotypes and prejudices in Bulgarians, In: Aspects of Ethnocultural Situation in Bulgaria, Friedrich Namann Stiftung, ACCESS Association, Sofia 1994, pp. 293-310, (in Bulgarian).

group"[18]. Stereotyping is an aspect of the cognitive component of the attitude. Stereotypes are "unscientific and hence unreliable generalisations that one makes about individuals by virtue of their membership in a group"[19].

The analysis of the data from the surveys proved the hypothesis that there are comparatively stable and invariable prejudices and negative stereotypes among different generations of Christian Bulgarians.

The prejudices and stereotypes against ethnic Turks are associated with their participation in the political power, which generates fears and mistrust regarding their loyalty to the Bulgarian State and the possible influence of Islamic fundamentalism in the country (Table 7).

Table 7
Prejudices and stereotypes of Christian Bulgarians
against ethnic Turks
(Percentage of answers "Completely agree" & "Rather agree")

Statements	Population aged (18-85 years), 1997	BAF (COs & NCOs), 2000	Young people (18-30 years), 1999	Conscript soldiers (18-20 years), 2000	Students (16-19 years), 2000
The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria are privileged compared with the other ethnic groups	28	30	38	29	28.5

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[18] James W. Vander Zanden, Social Psychology, Ohio State University, McGRAW-HILL, Inc., 1987, p. 465.
[19] Ibid., p. 43.

The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria have occupied too many posts in the governing bodies of the country	50	50	57	57	53
The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria are religious fanatics	63	59	53	45.5	37
One could not believe and rely on the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria	46	36	40	36	33
The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria have hostile attitudes towards the Christian Bulgarians	37	31	38	35	36
The ethnic Turks in Bulgaria have hostile attitudes towards the Roma community	31	27	22	18.5	17
It is necessary to undertake everything possible to make more Ethnic Turks migrate to Turkey	29	31	41	43	53.5
All Turks resemble each other	52	52	57	53	53

More than half of the respondents from all generations support the statement that "Ethnic Turks have occupied too many posts in the governing bodies of the country". In addition, their image is associated with Islamic fundamentalism. Finally, more than half of the Christian Bulgarians thinks that "all ethnic Turks resemble each other", which indicates that the level of identification of the individual with the group

is comparatively high. Again we should underline that, on the whole, young people are more likely to have prejudices against and negative stereotypes concerning the Turkish and the Roma minorities than elder generations.

It is not surprising that the prejudices and negative stereotypes of Christian Bulgarians towards the Roma community are very strong (Table 8).

Table 8

Prejudices and stereotypes of Bulgarian Christians against
the Roma community
(Percentage of answers "Completely agree" & "Rather agree")

Statements	Population Aged (18-85 years), 1997	BAF (COs & NCOs), 2000	Young people (18-30 years), 1999	Conscript soldiers (18-20 years), 2000	Students (16-19 years), 2000
The Roma in Bulgaria are privileged compared with other ethnic groups	27	30	31	25	24
The Roma are irresponsible and lazy	84	73	82	65	63
The Roma are inclined to criminal activities	89	81	88	74	77
The Roma do not value education	-	74	–	67	67
One could not believe and rely on the Roma	84	72	85	64	66
The Roma community has to live separated from us	67	62	68	58	63
All Roma resemble each other	80	73	80	67.5	66.5

The sociological surveys during the last 5 to 6 years reveal a tendency
of growing negative attitudes towards the Roma. Their image is
predominantly one of "irresponsible and lazy people", people who are
"inclined to criminal activities", "people that could not be believed and

relied on", "people who do not value education". All these prejudices against the Roma community have added up to the attitude that "they have to live separated from us", which is upheld by about two-thirds of Christian Bulgarians.

It is important to stress the fact that according to the data from our surveys, Christian Bulgarians are afraid of possible common activities of the Roma community and the Turkish ethnic group in case of social conflict in Bulgaria. They think that in such a situation the ethnic Turks will support the Roma and that this could lead to a deepening of the interethnic counterpoising and a threat to social peace in Bulgaria.

When comparing this to reverse views, i.e. the prejudices and the negative stereotypes of the Turkish and the Roma minorities against the Bulgarian majority, one can find differences between the two groups (Table 9). On the whole, the negative image of the Christian Bulgarians predominates among the Roma community. The prejudices and stereotypes against Bulgarians are comparatively widespread.

Table 9
Prejudices and stereotypes of ethnic Turks and the Roma
towards Christian Bulgarians
(Soldiers, percentage of answers "Completely agree" & "Rather agree")

Statements	Ethnic Turks, 2000	Roma, 2000
Bulgarians are privileged compared with other ethnic groups	43	61
Bulgarians do not like hard work and want to be the superiors	46	67
Bulgarians are religious fanatics	29	34
One could not believe and rely on Bulgarians	24	50
Bulgarians have hostile attitudes towards Turks	28	42
Bulgarians have hostile attitudes towards the Roma community	37	56
All Bulgarians resemble each other	36	67

Speaking about the ethnic Turks, obviously the positive image predominates, despite the fact that about half of the young ethnic Turks view Bulgarians as people who "are privileged in comparison with other ethnic groups" and as people who "do not like hard work and want to be the superiors".

Public attitudes towards some basic minority rights

The analysis of data on the attitudes of the Christian Bulgarians towards some basic minority rights, presented in table 10, leads to the following conclusions:

First, most of the Bulgarian majority is apt to accept some lingual and cultural rights of the minorities connected with preserving their culture

and traditions that are officially recognised and that are realised in Bulgaria at the present moment. The scope of these rights includes the establishing of organisations for preserving minority cultures and traditions as well as the publication of books and literature in their mother tongue.

Second, regarding the participation of the representatives of the minorities in the political power structures, the Bulgarian majority is almost equally split into acceptance and rejection. The representation of minorities is an officially recognised right of the minorities in Bulgaria and its rejection by half of the Christian Bulgarians should be analysed very carefully because it could generate conflict potential.

Third, non-acceptance prevails regarding a group of minority rights that are officially recognised by the Constitution such as the following: Each minority group is allowed to learn their mother tongue in public schools; to have their programmes on National television; to establish their television; to have their newspapers. In addition, the Christian Bulgarians tend to reject some rights that are officially recognised but only partially realised in Bulgaria. These are the right of each Bulgarian citizen to be able to join the BAF, the Secret Services or the Police as CO or NCO. Finally, the right of the minorities to put road signs, advertisements, etc. in their mother tongue in public places in the regions where compact minority groups live, which is not prohibited by the Constitution and the laws in the country. This also rejected by most of the Christian Bulgarians.

Fourth, the Christian Bulgarians do not definitely accept rights of the minorities that are prohibited by the constitution such as: territorial autonomy; to establish their political parties; to carry out education in public schools in their mother tongue.

Table 10
Public Attitudes Towards Some Basic Minority Rights
(Christian Bulgarians, Percentage of answers "Yes")

Some Basic Minority Rights	Population aged (18-85 years), 1997	BAF (COs & NCOs), 2000	Young people (18-30 years), 1999	Conscript soldiers (18-20 years), 2000	Students (16-19 years), 2000
To establish organisations for preserving their culture and traditions	67	73	67	58.5	60
To publish books and other literature in their mother tongue	52	54	43	46.5	47
To learn their mother tongue in public schools	29	31	24	31.5	27
To carry out education in public schools in their mother tongue	9	10	9	19	19
To have their representatives in the National Assembly	50	63	44	45	40
To have their representatives in the local parliaments	47	60	40	39	40
To put road signs, advertisements, etc. in their mother tongue in public places in the regions where compact minority groups live	12	13	14	21	24.5

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To establish their political parties.	25	36.5	32	30	28
To have the right of territorial autonomy	3	4	3	13	12
To have their television	18	31	23	40	35
To join the Bulgarian Armed Forces as Cos or NCOs	21	33	-	26	35
To join the Secret Services or Police as COs or NCOs	27	27	-	22	29
To have their broadcast on the National Television	20	26	14	21	22
To have their newspapers	45	51.5	37	38	32

The analysis of the attitudes of different generations of Christian Bulgarians shows that young people are much more restrictive in comparison with their parents when asked about the acceptance of some basic minority rights. At the same time, the analysis of the data presented in Table 11 shows that young people from different minority communities demonstrate radical attitudes in their pursuit of these rights and freedom.

The gap between the unwillingness of the majority to accept some basic minority rights and the pretensions of the minorities regarding their rights is an important precondition for ethnic tensions, which could generate ethnic conflicts. Therefore, constant monitoring of interethnic perceptions, distance and prejudices, especially among young people, is of great social importance.

Table 11
Public attitudes of students towards the minority rights
(Comparison among the answers from the three main ethnic groups in
Bulgaria, Percentage of answers "Yes")

Some Basic Minority Rights	Bulgarians	Turks	Roma
To establish organisations for preserving their culture and traditions	60	79	82
To publish books and other literature in their mother tongue	47	76	76
To learn their mother tongue in public schools	27	68	65
To carry out education in public schools in their mother tongue	19	30	55
To have their representatives in the National Assembly	40	66	81
To have their representatives in the local parliaments	40	64	73
To put road signs, advertisements, etc. in their mother tongue in public places in the regions where compact minority groups live	24.5	44	55
To establish their political parties	28	53	61
To have the right of territorial autonomy	12	29	35
To have their television	35	69	63
To join the Bulgarian Armed Forces as COs or NCOs	35	61.5	75
To join the Secret Services or Police as COs or NCOs	29	63	76
To have their broadcast on the National Television	22	66	69
To have their newspapers	32	68	68

Conclusions: Some potential internal and external risks for the interethnic relations in Bulgaria

The analysis of the current interethnic relations in Bulgaria we made so far leads to the conclusion that despite development of tolerant interethnic relations in Bulgaria during the last decade, one could hardly speak of an absence of ethnic tensions and counterpoising among the main ethnic communities. The present stage of interethnic relations could be defined as a latent conflict which could escalate under specific circumstances. From the viewpoint of the internal situation in Bulgaria, these could be summarized in three main dimensions: The social-economic, the political and the social-psychological dimension.

The social-economic dimension

One of the most important factors that has generated ethnic tensions in Bulgaria during the last decade is the unequal burden sharing between the majority and the minority groups during the time of painful economic reforms. This is obviously one of the main problems in interethnic relations in the context of the social-economic transition in Bulgaria.

These problems are most profound in the regions with mixed ethnic population, which may be defined as risky. In some cases social counterpoising may be generated in them, due to unclarified ownership of farm lands, ethnic differences in employment, living standards,

housing, education, health care, etc. In most of these regions there is a very high unemployment rate, which restricts the job opportunities.

The poor economic standard and economic hardships, especially of the people living in mixed ethnic regions of Bulgaria could be reasons for some radical political claims on part of the minorities as well as nationalistic attitudes among the Bulgarian majority.

The political dimension

An important risk factor for the interethnic relations in Bulgaria that generates ethnic tensions and division in the Bulgarian society is the so-called "ethnic voting". This phenomenon has its definition in the Bulgarian political life as "ethnomobilisation" and finds expression especially during the pre-election campaigns. Both the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority have used the ethnomobilization tactics in parliamentary as well as in local elections after the democratic changes in 1989. Despite the efforts of the MRF to break its ethnic stereotypes and the image of the Party of the Turkish minority, the Bulgarian majority continues to perceive it as an "ethnic party".

Another risk factor that could lead to serious tensions in the interethnic relations in the future is the new intensification of the activities of some Bulgarian citizens and organisations for the formation of the so-called "Pomak ethnic community". The community of the Muslim Bulgarians has been subjected to unsuccessful efforts for integration both by the Bulgarian and the Turkish ethnic group. At the

same time, both the Christian Bulgarians and the Turkish minority underestimate this community. Most of them look at the Bulgarian Muslims as second class people due to their different ethnic and religious self-identification. As a result, along with the Roma, the Bulgarian Muslims are the second marginal and disintegrated community in the Bulgarian society. Under these circumstances the formation of the so-called "Pomak ethnic community" has taken place.

Social-psychological dimension

Along with the economic and the political factors, there are many social-psychological factors which could generate problems in the interethnic relations in Bulgaria. They are both cognitively and emotionally based. First of all, one should point out the maintenance of certain stereotypes and prejudices among the Bulgarian majority towards the minorities (Turkish, and especially Roma) as well as among the minorities towards the ethnic Bulgarians. In addition, there are conflicting perceptions and attitudes with an emotional dimension which find expression in a feeling of fear, mistrust, scorn, in some cases in hatred, etc.

Finally, the gap between the restrictive attitudes of the Bulgarian majority towards the rights of the ethnic minorities and especially among young people, and the radical pretensions of the minorities regarding their rights is an important precondition for ethnic tensions, which could generate ethnic conflict. The main external factor which could pose

potential risk to the interethnic relations in Bulgaria and hence to the security and stability in SEE, is the crisis-like development of the situation in some parts of the Western Balkans. A possible further deepening of ethno-religious contradictions in the region and a spreading of Islamic fundamentalism in SEE could provoke radical nationalistic attitudes in Bulgaria. The crisis situation in SEE could have an additional negative effect on the development of interethnic relations and ethnic peace in Bulgaria, namely possible mass refugee streams. Such a situation could lead to changes in the ethnic composition of the Bulgarian society, infiltration of some radical, nationalistic groups, illegal traffic of armament, etc., which is a predisposition for ethnic tensions.

A restraining factor for the development of the Bulgarian-Macedonian relations continued to be the ideologies inherited from former Yugoslavia, and the attempts by circles connected with the former regime of Milosevic to use them for attaining their political and economic interests. In this regard, some tensions could produce the artificial problem of the so-called "Macedonian minority" in Bulgaria and problems with the illegal United Macedonian Organization (OMO - Ilinden "Pirin") with its separatist claims.

Ethnic conflicts in the Balkans in the post-Cold War period have proved the particular significance of the problems of ethnic minorities and the impact of ethnic and religious contradictions on the internal stability and foreign policy of the countries.

The Bulgarian ethnic model, which is a synonym of stability, respect of habits and beliefs of other ethnic groups, common responsibility, absence of separatist claims, mutual co-existence of **monoethnic** and multiethnic political parties, has proved to be a. successful multiethnic policy. Thus, it has created favourable conditions for preserving stability and security in the SEE. At the same time, there are many internal as well as external risks which could generate ethnic tensions and conflicts. The best way to prevent these risks is further development of the democratisation process in Bulgaria and the building of a civil society. This will secure equal and full right of political representation of all ethnic minorities on the national as well as the local level, and an opportunity to accommodate the interests of the different ethnic group's under a common denominator, to discuss and to achieve political goals by peaceful means. It is very important for all political parties to recognize the **interethnic** relations as vital for the development of the democracy, economic stabilisation and prosperity of Bulgaria. The overcoming of ethnic voting is of prime importance in this regard.

Further economic stabilisation and prosperity of Bulgaria is necessary in order to solve one of the most serious problems, namely the problem of social justice in the social-economic transition of Bulgaria.

Further development of the culture of conflict behaviour, both among the majority and the minorities, culture for non-violent elimination of conflicts and control of affects and emotions is more than necessary. Overcoming prejudices and negative stereotypes should be the first step in this direction.

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ETHNO-POLITICAL CONFLICT IN MOLDOVA

As an orphan of the Cold War, impoverished, left in a security vacuum and transformed into an ideological battlefield, Moldova is the first country in Europe after 1989 to elect to power an old-fashioned Communist party, that promises nothing else but restoring the Russian sovereignty in the area. Created by Stalin in 1940, one of many weak states in South-eastern Europe, Moldova lacks ethnic, political or cultural legitimacy as an independent state and is continuously torn between competing political projects: a would-be new civic European nation, a new colony of Russia or integration into the Romanian nation-state.

These broad geopolitical tensions are reflected inside the country as ethno-political conflicts that pertain to the rights to representation, territory, self-identification etc. The Gagauzians in the South and Transnistrians in the East demand a federative arrangement. The Russians in Chisinau and Balti ask to make their language the second official one in the country. Speaking about culture, the majority group is divided into pro-eastern Moldovans and pro-western Romanians. Since its independence in 1991, the country witnessed an armed conflict and is immersed in a continuous political and media war that needs to be addressed urgently in a modern European way.

Responding to this urging need, this paper will attempt to shed more light on the following questions: Who are the main relevant actors of identity politics in Moldova and what are their aspirations? How is the historical trend of post-Soviet decolonisation transforming **Moldovan** society and its various identity groups? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the nation- building programme enacted by the state? Where is the focus of current ethnic competition? And, finally, what recommendations could be made to contribute to fostering ethnic peace and harmony in Moldova?

Ethnic, cultural and political identities

So, who are the main relevant actors of identity politics in Moldova and what are their aspirations?

The Republic of Moldova is a new state in South-eastern Europe that did not have ethnic homogeneity as a base of its foundation. Currently, the country is inhabited by approximately 65% Moldovan Romanians, 13% Ukrainians, 12% Russians, 3% **Gagauzians,** 2% Bulgarians and other smaller communities of Gypsies, Jews etc. While as a whole the country's population is multi-ethnic, the rural population is predominantly Moldovan, with pockets of Gagauzians and Bulgarians in the South and disperse Ukrainian population in the North. If the villages preserved their primordial **ethno-cultural** unitary identification, then the towns, the melting pot of Soviet society, produced a number of hyphenated cultural identities. Nowadays these towns, representing an

ethnic mix, are polarised into two cultural communities based on two major languages: Romanian and Russian.

The above-described cultural division, rather then ethnic competition, is the hotbed of what is called ethnic tension today. The Soviet authorities contributed to a growing division between Russian speaking cities and the Moldovan countryside. The authoritarian rule banned for over 50 years the Romanian language and culture from Moldova, a vacuum that was supposed to be replaced by a newly created "Moldovan culture". Constructed artificially, the latter has never reached the level of a fully-fledged culture, remaining in an inferior position to the "Great Russian" or Romanian cultures. I am ready to discuss if *Moldovan culture* exist as such… or if it is rather a sub-culture. This phenomenon produced on one side a cultural inferiority complex of Moldovans, a stultification of their identity, and, on the other side, a "superiority complex" of the Russian-speaking elite. On the eve of independence a new cultural elite that identified with the Romanian language and culture rather then with the stultified Moldovan or an "oppressing" Russian emerged.

Political action in modern Moldova follows cultural rather then ethnic identification, which is not necessarily the same. Thus, about 20% of the population has Russian as a mother tongue and tends to manifest politically as Russians.[1] At the other end, some 20% of the population identify with the Romanian ethnicity and culture without denying a

Moldovan identity.[2] Though in essence the **Moldovan** culture cannot be separated from the Romanian are nor a clear line can be drown between ethnic **Moldovans** and ethnic Romanians, this division is often considered for certain political gains.

Later I will show how the Moldovan nation-state appears as a compromise between these two elites, competing for the control of mass culture, none of them being able yet to gain critical support and impose its own political project. At large **ethno-cultural** politics in Moldova have been fluctuating, influenced by the predominant political parties that have not been able to find an acceptable consensus yet.

The pro-Romanian parties have claimed that all people previously defined as belonging to the Moldovan ethnic group should be considered as belonging to the Romanian ethno-cultural group; they form a majority cultural group in Moldova and therefore, the Romanian culture has to become the civic culture of an independent and democratic Moldova. In essence, this is a policy of cultural emancipation of an oppressed group through inclusion into a broader cultural community and cultural import.

The pro-Russian parties argue that Moldova already has a civic culture (based on the Russian language as the "language of **interethnic** communication") - a cultural pattern that has to be preserved. At large they saw the emancipation of Moldovans through association to the Russian-dominated elite. They often spoke against the threat of

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[1] The 1989 census shows some 20% native Russian speakers, a cultural orientation confirmed by **1994** parliamentary elections, where the radical pro-Russian movement **Unitatea-Edinstvo** gained 22% of votes.

Romanisation, perceived as a would-be hegemony of an ethnic group. At various times they succeeded in aggregating support from several ethnic minorities as well as ethnic Moldovans against this "threat".

The third political group — **pro-Moldovan** — is made of the new administrative elites. They have not proposed a cultural project of their own but tended to balance the two extremes and work for the consolidation of a **Moldovan** state, also reaching the masses that maintain their Moldovan identity.

The adoption of the official language is a classical example of the political bargaining of the three groups. Romanians convinced Moldovans of the need to give their common language an official status, while Russians convinced Moldovans to call the language Moldovan rather then Romanian.

The pro-Russian groups have succeeded in securing for the Russian language the status of "language of **interethnic** communication" - a quasi official status making it obligatory in schools, services as well as public administration. Pro-Romanians in turn succeeded in introducing specifically *Romanian language* and the *history of Romanians* as obligatory subjects in public schools.

This competition contributes to an on-going tension between the two cultural elites. Russians as a political group have actively interfered into the politics of the **Moldo-Romanian** community. Using their parliamentary mandates they imposed the name of *Moldovan* for the

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[2] Though no census ever distinguished between Moldovans and Romanians, the combined vote for pro-Romanian parties in 1994 and 1998 averages 20%.

official language, though the polls show that the majority of the native speakers prefer to call it *Romanian.* The Russians also opposed the Latinisation of the **Moldovan** alphabet. In **Transnistria,** where the Russian cultural group is the majority, it is continuously imposing the Russian alphabet on **Moldovans** in spite of their numerous claims, and prohibits any manifestation of **"Romanianness".** It appears that Russians, not necessarily Moldovans are the main promoters of the would-be Moldovan culture.

In this regard the Communists' quest to make the Russian language official represent an attempt to make a deal between the more affluent Russian community and the poorest Moldovans, giving the first cultural rights in exchange for social guarantees for the latter.

In the case of the church, another important cultural institution, the state has refused to register in Moldova the Romanian Orthodox Church **(Mitropolia Basarabiei),** thus favouring the Russian Orthodox Church (Mitropolia Moldovei), which monopolised the Moldovan parish under the Soviet regime.

In general, the Moldovan state exhibited a natural tendency for a unified ideology: one church, one titular nation, one state language. However, being a compromise body, the resulting ideology is a grotesque mosaic of the Russian church using the Romanian language, a multi-ethnic society governed by a Moldovan bureaucracy.

This short analysis reveals several important factors for future research:

The existing concept of ethnicity and the description of ethnic groups in Moldova pertains to a primordial ancestral identification and is not the main source of cultural identification or political action. However, it is often used for political mobilisation.

Cultural identification is marked by an ongoing competition between two elites, - the Romanian and the Russian. It is the main contentious point in society and is used as one of the important sources of political mobilisation.

Political mobilisation targets cultural politics and coagulates around three main vectors: pro **Moldovan,** pro-Romanian, and pro Russian, promoting respectively Romanian, Russian or a Moldovan political culture - all three residing in a state of continuous bargaining.
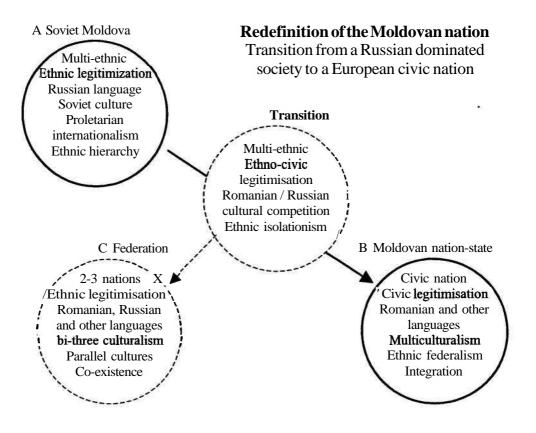
Decolonisation

How is the historical trend of post-Soviet decolonisation transforming the Moldovan society and its various identity groups?

There are several parallel processes under way:

- First is the process of *de-colonisation,* known also as *nationalisation, **Moldovenisation** or Romanisation.* It has many faces, but the essence is tied to replacing one system of cultural values with another, emancipation of the majority cultural group — the Romanian - from Soviet time **marginalisation** and oppression.

- Second, in relation to the first, is the identity crisis and search for identity redefinition of the previously dominating cultural group, the Russians.
- Third, is a state-building effort, that is, targeting the formation of a new civic and political community - the **Moldovan** - composed of various ethnic groups.
- And fourth, is the emancipation of some **ethno-cultural** communities claiming territorial rights, most noticeable Gagauzians.

Further, I would like to reflect on the first process - decolonisation. Generally speaking, the **ethno-political** conflict in Moldova is not about the emancipation of an ethnic minority; it is not about equal participation or rights to representation. The core of the ethno-political conflict in Moldova is about a paradigm shift, it is about emancipation of the cultural majority in front of the previously dominating minority. The majority are the Romanian-speaking **Moldovans,** and the minority is the Russian-speaking colonial bureaucracy.

A Soviet Moldova

Multi-ethnic
Ethnic legitimization
Russian language
Soviet culture
Proletarian
internationalism
Ethnic hierarchy

Redefinition of the Moldovan nation
Transition from a Russian dominated
society to a European civic nation

Transition

Multi-ethnic
Ethno-civic
legitimisation
Romanian / Russian
cultural competition
Ethnic isolationism

C Federation

2-3 nations   X
Ethnic legitimisation
Romanian, Russian
and other languages
bi-three culturalism
Parallel cultures
Co-existence

B Moldovan nation-state

Civic nation
Civic legitimisation
Romanian and other
languages
Multiculturalism
Ethnic federalism
Integration

Historically, this should be regarded as a process of transforming one
type of community (A) into a different type of community (B). Soviet
Moldova was a multi-ethnic state pretending "ethnic" legitimisation and
was governed by a community of people, using the Russian language,
Soviet culture and a "proletarian internationalism" as main cultural
values. This multi-ethnic community however had a rigidly established
ethnic hierarchy, with Russians at the top, Moldovans at the middle and
Gagauzians and others at the bottom.

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The democratisation of the '90es overthrew the imposed hierarchy and values and set Moldovan society on a path of transformation from an authoritarian colonial regime to a European democratic state. The target society of this transformation process is a civic nation grounded in civic legitimisation. In time, it is the Romanian language, the language of the majority population, which is said to become the main tool of communication, with other languages enlarging their vital space as well. European **multiculturalism** will replace the Soviet-time hierarchy of ethnic relations marked by a process of civic integration.

This paradigm shift is going to change the language of the civil society from Russian to Romanian, but also to emancipate silenced cultural communities and establish a principle of equality among various ethnic groups. The transformation is going to change Moldova from a multi-ethnic society, where ethnicity used to be a major identifier, into a civic nation where the citizenship will be the main identifier. The state is going to evolve from a **pseudo-ethnic**[3] legitimisation to a civic one. The most important feature of the target society will be its **integrative** character based on the new nationality.

This scenario depicts an end of a long transition path towards a new Moldovan civic nation, from a society based on the minority speaking the Russian language to a society based mainly on Romanian.

This is certainly not the only possible scenario. Leaving aside the possibilities of joining other nations and acquiring their national

[3] A call Soviet Moldova e pseudo-ethnic rather then ethnic state, because Moldovan "ethnicity" is contested.

identities, the other scenario is a multiplication of nations, or federalisation, promoted by many in Tiraspol and **Comrat**. If Moldova enters a federation with, e.g. **Transnistria** and Gagausia, will it be a federation of lands, as Germany and USA, or a federation of nations such as Belgium and Switzerland ? The federalists see Moldova evolving towards a type C-society of two to three nations, two to three main languages and cultures.

Can the principle of territoriality function in the long run in Moldova? Can Gagausia or Transnistria be a territorial base for another nation?

Gagausia (3% of population) is obviously too small to significantly influence cultural politics on the whole of Moldova. There are small pockets of cultural diversity across Europe that enjoy local cultural autonomy, being loyal also to the nation-state. Nor can multi-ethnic Transnistria become a territorial base for a new **ethno-cultural** group, except if the current authoritarian rule continues infinitely. The three main ethnic groups both in Moldova and Transnistria are the same: **Moldo-Romanian,** Russian and Ukrainian. Any political liberalisation in Transnistria would entrench trans-river kinship solidarity of these ethnic groups.

What is, in fact, the **Transnistrian** nation? Nor the word **"Pridnestrovye"**[4] neither the nation itself existed before the 1990 rebellion. This political project from the very beginning was an attempt to save territorially, what could not be imposed on the changing Moldova, specifically a type A society characteristic of Soviet Moldova

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[4] *Transnistria* in Russian

- a multi-ethnic society dominated by the Russian culture. In principle, the more Transnistria stays apart from Moldova, the more the distance between the two societies grows, the more they have chances to become separate nations. However, the sooner they become one political nation, the sooner they produce one, rather then several, civic nations. When they unite at any point in time, the resulting society will be most probably moving towards the model **B**.

What can be claimed instead by the Russian cultural community seeking the preservation of its particular culture, is a special status of some urban communities, e.g. Tiraspol or Rabnita, as free cities etc. If Gagausia could claim an ethnic territory, than Transnistria cannot, at least not on the whole of its territory.

The search of Gagausia and Transnistria for territorial autonomy cannot be regarded as a simple quest for self-governance, but rather as an attempt of gaming influence on all-Moldova politics through federalisation. In both Gagausia and Transnistria the only working language remains Russian, and they have actively lobbied to make it official in the rest of Moldova.

It seems that today Moldova stays at half way of the announced transformation. A multi-ethnic society struggling between ethnic and civic legitimisation, marked by a harsh cultural competition and ethnic isolationism. The impressive vote for communists in the 2001 parliamentary elections shows a desperate attempt of nostalgics to return to a type A society, but the hesitance of the victors in fulfilling their electoral promises denotes their uncertainty about the reversibility of this

process. From the prospective of the described paradigm shift, giving today to Russian the status of an official language will not greatly increase its use, but will certainly slow down the transformation of pace. There are signs that many groups studying Romanian have lost their audience after the Communist victory.

The Russian cultural group that lost its Soviet civic identity is now looking for a new political identity in an independent Moldova. I just want to remind you of the fact that the Russian cultural group consists not only of ethnic Russians but also of representatives of other ethnic groups that adopted the Russian culture under the Soviet regime and it amounts approximately to 20% of population. Initially, its elite launched the denomination *of Russian speakers* that targeted political mobilisation of all ethnic minorities (one third of the population) as a quest of the Russian cultural community to gain more political weight. Lately, the idea of a *Slavonic nation* is taking shape through the establishment of a Slavonic University in **Chisinau.** Hypothetic *Transnistrians* can be regarded as another face of the pro Russian political community. This identity search should be regarded as an open-ended long-term process. Its political accommodation, however, is strained because of lack of a clear identity.

With or without **Transnistria,** Moldova remains a multi-ethnic society. It has to learn to contain and transform potential conflicts between various ethnic groups. It has to accommodate the various interests and claims creating a culture of tolerance and cooperation.

The Nation-building process

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the nation-building programme enacted by the Moldovan state since acquiring independence a decade ago?

At large, the state nation-building activity was devoted to establishing functioning institutions able to contain and transform the ethnic conflict through the inclusion of various ethnic groups into a participatory democratic society.

The first important act of this process granted universal citizenship for all residents of Moldova as of 1991. This generous inclusive act, however, was rejected by many residents of Transnistria, whose "secession" was mainly motivated by an anti-independence drive.

Second was the institution of the state language and its gradual implementation. Challenged from the very beginning, this act is contested until today. Although it has its merits in starting and forwarding the decolonisation process, cultural education in conditions of lack of civic education has proven much less efficient than expected.

Third was granting territorial rights to ethnic and cultural groups. The Moldovan constitution adopted in 1994 granted territorial autonomy to Gagauzians and specified a special status for Transnistria.

In the first case, that of Gagausia, the new Constitution helped downplaying the separatist tendencies and institute a new format of relations with the political centre. These relations, however, are far from harmonious. Comrat administration on various occasions showed

solidarity with Tiraspol separatists, claiming federative powers etc. In the second case, Transnistria "seceded" from Moldova in 1990, opposing the independence of Moldova, claiming the "danger" of "Romanisation" and joining Romania, claims it maintains until today.

The 1999 territorial administrative reform was an attempt to balance the two special territorial units, Transnistria and Gagausia, by nine newly created *judet* comparable in size and population. This reform disadvantaged Bulgarians that lost their ethnically homogeneous rayon. Upon multiple requests it was restored and up-graded to a *judet* in 2000. This reform aiming at a decentralisation of power is again contested by the ruling Communist party that sees the restoration of a Soviet-time administrative division.

The Moldovan constitution was less successful in providing guarantees for the representation of ethnic groups in elected bodies. The Moldovan constitution does not provide ethnic quotas for parliament nor uninominal electoral circumscriptions. The election laws specify a unitary electoral circumscription as for parliament so for the regional and local councils based on party lists. It seems that this provisions have favoured the majority groups: the Moldo-Romanian at a national level and the Gagauzian and other at regional levels.

E.g. The Parliament elected in 1998 consisted of:

Moldovans	Romanians	Ukrainians	Russians	Gagauzians	Bulgarians
47	37	8	3	4	2

This mixture shows a severe under-representation of ethnic Russians, while all the minorities (Moldo-Romanians excluded) have a twice less representation than their percentage in population.

The only organ of "ethnic" representation in the **Moldovan** political system is the Department of **Interethnic** Relations and the affiliated "House of Nationalities". Besides their necessary representative function, these institutions perform a **duplicitary** function, that of **"solidarisation"** of minorities against the majority. Why not the "House of all Nationalities" but the "house of all nationalities except **Moldovans** and Romanians"?

The chart above also shows Romanians as the second biggest ethnic group or an ethnic minority. Regarded by the state as a political rather then ethnic group it has also been denied institutional recognition. There is no legislation in Moldova mentioning Romanian culture, language or ethnicity. This ignorance has a high caloric potential as well.

The Moldovan ethnicity as a modern political project was proposed to legitimise a Moldovan state, however, it contradicts the civic essence of present-day **Moldova,** and is not as relevant as before. At the same time, a Romanian ethnicity, in the sense of belonging to a certain cultural group, has became a reality in Moldova. As there are Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, there are also ethnic *Romanians* in Moldova and their existence sooner or later will have to be acknowledged by the state.

In conclusion, I would like to cite a politician who is well-known in Moldova, Vladimir Solonari, who has recently written an article where

he claims that in Moldova, the civic model of a nation has prevailed in comparison with the Baltic states where an ethnic model was implemented.

I disagree in two points with this affirmation. I disagree that the Latvian society, with almost a half of ethnic Russians, is an ethnic state. Indeed, they took the Latvian culture as a base of the new civic identity but enacted efficient programmes of integration of other ethnic groups into the Latvian nation: language tests, citizenship examinations etc. The Latvian nation-state became a functioning multi-ethnic state.

Second, I disagree that Moldova has become a civic nation. What we have achieved in Moldova through rejecting a cultural ground for a new nation so far is that of an institutionalisation of the conflict. Instead of education of a new citizenry we opted for cultural isolationism and territorial separatism, feeding together a geo-political competition.

Cultural competition today

Where is the focus of current ethnic competition?

The main claims of the ethno-cultural groups, Russians and Romanian, as reflected by the media, could be reduced to several objectives.

Pro Russian political groups have demanded on various occasions:

- To make Russian the second official language;

- To promote Russians in order to include them into state administration;

- To introduce the principle of a "national school", meaning the elimination of the teaching of "Romanian language and history" and replacing it by **"Moldovan"**.

They have raised complaints such as:

- The law on audiovisual media specifies 65% of programming in Romanian except in areas with a compact distinct population, allowing arbitrary interventions by the Audiovisual Committee;
- The requirement of advertisements in Romanian when, some Russian businesses claim, among potential customers Russian speakers predominate
- The forceful implementation of Romanian in order to quickly establish its dominant role in public life;
- A test of Romanian for joining public service, especially justice.

The pro Romanian political groups have lobbied for a promotion of the *Romanian* language and *Romanian* ethnic identity in Moldova specifically through:

- An acceptance of the name *Romanian* for the official language;

- A recognition of the **Basarabian Mitropolitan** church;

- An efficient legislation to protect the media market from a monopolisation by Russian language businesses (see the CAIRO case).

Several of these claims pertain to **"bilingualism"**. Further, I would like to reflect on the question itself: "Is bilingualism possible?"

As an example, I would like to cite a recent declaration of a Gagaus official requesting that official documents sent to **Gagausian** local authorities be accompanied by a Russian translation. There are several objections to this request. First, **Moldovan** along with Gagausian and Russian are official languages of the autonomy, thus any document in Moldovan has to be accepted by the authorities.

Second, two official languages should mean the right of the citizen and customer to choose the language in its relation with the public officials or services. To which extent would public servants have the right to choose the language of communication among them? Are not the specified public servants looking for securing the right not to know the official language? And why should the central authorities pay for the ignorance of local authorities by hiring translators?

Under current legislation, the Moldovan bureaucracy should by definition be bilingual, but the secretariat will be predominantly monolingual. Inside the autonomy, it can be in Gagausian, but in its relation with the centre it has to be in an official language.

In principle, are there any bilingual nations? No, except when territorially defined like Flanders and **Vallonia** in Belgium or inside the Swiss confederation. Every community evolves towards one language of communication. There are no bilingual capitals in Europe, are they? They can have many confessions, many ethnic communities but, in the end, one language becomes the community language. The Russian language performed this function throughout the Soviet period. The 1991 language law, granting Moldovan the status of Official language,

also granted Russian the status of language of **interethnic** communication, reflecting a historic duality. What is going to occur in the future is that the Russian language, after loosing its predominance in public administration, will lose its monopoly in inter-ethnic communication, remaining a language of a cultural community that still can be defined wider as the one of ethnic Russians.

Another group of claims cited above pertains to the political dispute between the partisans of the **Moldovan** ethnicity and separate language and those who speak in favour of a Romanian ethnic and linguistic unity. In the long run this dispute is futile. Why? First, currently this is effectively the same language and the main source of development of the Moldovan language is cultural import from Romania. With a global growing of communication technologies it is hard to imagine the emergence of a different language here in **Moldova,** except under an authoritarian rule that would make a new attempt to create an artificial language. Thus, the core concern is if this language, called Moldovan or Romanian, will be allowed to freely thrive here in its natural habitat, a habitat endangered by aggressive media marketing.

Last year I was asked to comment on the report on human rights abuses in Moldova prepared by **Álvaro GIL-ROBLES,** Human Rights Commissioner for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:

The report suggests a «forced» implementation of an official language through education, media and public use. I suggest: Moldova to be seen as a FAILING STATE unable to insure the implementation of a liberal

*minority legislation, rather then as an AUTHORITARIAN STATE imposing an abusive legislation. **Moldovan** legislators, in fact granted all minorities the right to use their languages, and granted the Russian language the status of "language of inter-ethnic communication", provisions that are by far more "generous" than in the Baltic states or even the Ukraine. The policy of Moldovan authorities is that of promoting the use of an Official language rather then imposing it. These efforts have not been entirely successful, partially because of a strong psychological resistance on the part of the population that does not speak the official language. In 1994, they blocked the adoption of a law that would test public officials on their knowledge of the Official language, thus passively resisting the rehabilitation of the Romanian language after 50 years of discrimination. After TEN YEARS of new linguistic legislation enacted in 1989, many public officials still do not speak the official language. The Moldovan State has not succeeded in convincing its citizens of the need to know the Official language. Today, Official language became a SKILL required for public service, not a meter of privilege, **a** fact ignored by many.*

*In fact, Moldova is a **battlefield** between Russian and Romanian cultural and political influences. Romanian is more prominent in the public service (with regional exceptions) and education while Russian is dominant in the economy. The media market is heavily dominated by the Russian language. 60% of all newspapers sold in Moldova are in Russian, half of them imported from the Russian Federation. 100% of advertising newspapers are in Russian. 70-80% of short wave Radio*

broadcast is in Russian, since the respective radio stations have been bought by media groups of Russian federation. The only cable provider in Chisinau shows half of the channels in Russian and only one quarter in Romanian. The only two cinemas in Chisinau show movies exclusively in Russian. Thus, in many segments of the media market, like advertising a cable TV, there are monopolies that simply resist any use of Romanian under the protection of the right of private initiative. Since the bunch of private capital in Moldova is controlled by one linguistic community, the Russian, it is often trying to impose this language on all other linguistic communities, including the majority one. During the controversy about Russian radio stations last fall, Russian president Vladimir Putin stated: "If you want Russian gas you have to learn the Russian language! ". This proves that the language controversy in Moldova specifically is, to a large extent, artificially inspired from Russia as a tool of maintaining its grip in the "near abroad". In fact, no other minority except the Russian (13% of the population) has expressed serious complaints on their cultural rights, and precisely the Russian minority has disproportionately much more rights than any other minority. In spite of learning the Romanian language in schools for 10 years 90% of the minority's graduates still ignore it, some because of poor teaching but the majority because of a psychological resistance inherited from the Soviet Union era, an official Romanophobia.

There are numerous facts of discrimination of non-Russian speakers by the business community concerning employment. There is a wide-spread discrimination of non-Russian speakers as consumers, where businesses

fail to hire staff competent also in Romanian, in breach of the legislation. There are wide-spread discrimination of non-Russian speakers as consumers of media products and advertising by not providing products and services also in Romanian, the Russian using their monopoly position on the market.

Believe it or not, it is the Russian language that is continuously imposed on all another ethnic groups, since it is still an obligatory subject in all schools. A public debate on making Russian an optional foreign language in non-Russian schools was counter argued by the need to somehow employ abundant Russian teachers and by the force of tradition.

A rare positive example is higher education where, because of better persuasion and teaching, the minorities' students have been able to acquire proficiency in the Official language.

Suggestions:

"Moldovan specifics" have to be taken into consideration by the author of the report,

1. Precisely that the Russian Federation is doing an aggressive cultural and political marketing in Moldova, the country facing the danger of literally being bought by Russian businesses. The Russian Federation also supports a pro-Russian separatist government in Transnistria.

2. The efforts of promoting the Official language should not be mistakenly taken as an abusive imposition of it. Facts of discrimination

or abuse have to be examined on a case-by-case basis rather than as consequence of a state policy.

Solutions

Finally, what recommendations could be made to contribute to an improvement of inter-ethnic relations in Moldova, leading towards a more peaceful and harmonic society?

As a result of the **ethno-political** relations in Moldova, I would emphasise two focal conflict bearing points:

- **Romanophobia,** as ethnic hatred, the building of an image of an enemy.
- Alienation of the Russian cultural community.

In Soviet **Moldova,** the Russians often had a superiority complex that in time developed into a feeling of **frustration** from independent Moldova and hate towards "nationalists". This psychological handicap has to be transformed into respect and cooperation through targeted education programmes.

It is necessary to target the political inclusion of cultural Russians. As I said, this is the most affluent part of the **Moldovan** society. They simply do not pay taxes if the state does not provide the cultural services they expect.

There is a need for a better representation of ethnic minorities in public administration as well as in elected bodies. The introduction of a

quota system in the Academy of Public Administration could help educating bilingual public servants from ethnic minorities. The electoral law could be revised to provide for a better representation of ethnic groups.

Cultural education has to be supplemented by civic education. Minorities have to learn both *rights* and *duties* of an ethnic group in a democratic society. Rather than isolation (the case of Transnistria and Gagausia) they have to be persuaded to opt for participation.

The state has to promote the intercultural dialogue. Nation building has to be rather a shared long-term policy than a momentary compromise. It is difficult to impose certain cultural patterns very quickly, however, a fair play framework has to be created.

The state needs to implement laws for the protection of consumers from aggressive takeovers and monopolies especially in the media market and the service sector. On the other hand, the state needs a *liberalisation* in religious politics.

A certain modern history of Moldova has to be developed where the political project of the Republic of Moldova is given shape together with an appropriate definition and a role for ethnic and cultural groups. This is the path towards a modern civic nation; this is the way towards European integration.

Octavian Sofransky
Chairman
European Centre in Moldova

THE MULTI-ETHNIC STATE AND ETHNIC HOMOGENEITY - AN ARTIFICIAL DILEMMA IN THE CASE OF NEW YUGOSLAVIA

At the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, the system of international relations, and especially the order symbolised by the United Nations, were fundamentally shaken and altered. The Cold War - at first glance, a purely ideological confrontation of two leading centres of power in the international system of the time - ended with an unexpectedly swift and convincing victory of one view of the world, an absolute triumph of the forces dedicated to parliamentary pluralistic democracy, market economy, and, most important for the subject of this essay, an open society based on respect for human and minority rights.

The victors were awarded with well-deserved gains and the emerging world society seemed to threaten the human race only with the boredom of democratic certainty. However, already at the outset of the last decade of the 20th century, the winners and the defeated in the Cold War contest found themselves facing many challenges. Whereas the physical centre of the Cold War confrontation was located primarily in Central Europe, in the 1990s the focus shifted to secessionist and nationalist conflicts in the former Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. These conflicts became one of the most outstanding features of the political, the one relating to security, cultural, and civilisational environment in which the reshaping of relations and institutions on the Continent and the entire

Euro-Atlantic region was being carried out. Unprepared to deal with the challenges presented by the Yugoslav civil war, which in the demands of the opposing sides confronted the two basic principles of the then political and security order represented by the OSCE - the principle of the inviolability of borders versus the right of self-determination - Europe was facing with the most serious crisis on its soil after the Second World War.

The question of the position and rights of different minorities (ethnic, religious, lingual, and other) in the Balkans arose at the beginning of the 19th century with the process of the creation of independent national states in the Balkans. Ever since that time it has been continually active, undermining the stability of the region like an underground torrent.

The minority problem first appeared as a problem of the position of religious minorities in some Balkans countries. Over time it "survived" alongside the tremendous changes of the social environment as the peoples of this part of Europe belatedly formed their states and gained international recognition.

The "malign nationalisms", re-nationalisation and **balkanisation,** consciously suppressed during the Cold War, appeared on the historical stage in their full destructive force, advertising themselves as the way to the solution of the national issues of Croats, Serbs, Albanians... In the last decade the peoples of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe have been the witnesses and immediate participants of a new outburst of ethnic and religious conflicts, whose atavistic ferocity has dispersed many illusions regarding human nature and human communities

expressed, for example, in Hegel's famous vision of the "final rational form of society". That is why we from this part of Europe have a greater responsibility than others to study the roots, essence, and expressions of nationalism and, more importantly, the ways to overcome it in the changed conditions of today. Unfortunately, the gloomy prediction of Michael Clark that "the principle of self-determination which has marked the 20th century will become the curse of the 21st century"[1] came true too soon. The epidemic of madness or "ultra-nationalist insanity"[2] in the shape of secessionist nationalism in the period of greatly increased institutional velocity of "thick globalism" (Keohame and Nyu Jr.) potentially threatens the whole world in which, according to data from the mid-1990s, there are more than 3600 ethnic groups, but only some 180 internationally recognized countries.

On the other hand, as far as the Balkans are concerned it should be said that, in addition to secessionist nationalism, an equally important feature of the inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations on this ethnoreligious "leopard skin" is the fact that minorities, with some honourable exceptions, have never been recognized nor truly respected by the majorities and their national governments. Most Balkan countries conducted a policy of voluntary or forced integration of ethnic and religious groups into the majority group of every individual country. As Prof. Helmut Rititig rightfully noticed, the ethnic national state which

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[1] Langley, Winston E., *Liberation Theology and the Politics of transformation: A Review Essay, transnational Perspectives,* Volume 15, 1. 1989, p. 23.
[2] Kogelfranz, Siegfried, *Epidemija ludila,* Tanjug pres, Beograd, 3. ll 1993, p. 21

was the leading political idea in the 19th century and which "almost destroyed Europe in the 20th", did in some cases tolerate ethnic minorities, but its policy was mainly that of forced assimilation or later expulsion".[3]

The state of inter-ethnic relations in the Balkans is complicated by the existence of several cultural regions and civilisational types: Byzantine-Orthodox in the East, Latin-Catholic in the West and Asiatic-Islamic in the central and southern areas.[4] Thus, it happened that the Balkans, at the same time a coherent geographical area and a zone of contact between three world-important religions with complex mutual relations which often led to migrations of members of individual religions and the shaping of ethnical self-consciousness, became and remained a lasting source of confrontation and tensions.

However, the ascent of nationalism after the Cold War also had many other causes of various origin: historical, psychological, economic, geopolitical, geoeconomic, military strategic...

The international response to these confrontations has varied during the last decade, ranging, as Prof. Oschlies noticed, from unwilling mediation to large-scale military intervention, and in most cases the results were limited to the freezing of the most pronounced enmities and the satisfaction of the most urgent humanitarian needs.

The geopolitical re-designing of the Balkans, which came as a result of the 1989 changes, the break-up of Socialist Yugoslavia, a strategic

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[3] Helmut Rititig, *Prava manjina Hi ljudskaprava,* "Medjunarodna politika", Beograd, 1997, p. 335

and ideological buffer of the Cold War period, and the series of secessionist wars, has thoroughly altered the geopolitical appearance of this part of Europe. First, instead of the earlier six, there are now ten states in this region (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia). Second, the earlier regional balance between members of NATO, members of the Warsaw Pact, and non-aligned states has been replaced by a situation in which eight Balkan states are members of NATO or its Partnership for Peace programme, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia being, unfortunately, the only two still remaining outside this system of collective security. According to available data, at the beginning of the 1990s, the ten countries mentioned above had a total population of 126,4 million people - 23,3 million or 18,6 percent of that number were members of minorities, expressing their self-consciousness through 88 various ethnic groups.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious country, in which the Serbs constitute 62,2, and the Montenegrins 5 percent of the total population. According to the 1991 census (partially based on estimates since Albanians in Kosovo and Metohia did not participate in the census), the Albanians formed 16,5 percent of the country's population, the Hungarian national entity 4 percent, while 13 percent were members of several dozen other ethnic, linguistic and religious communities.

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[4] Cvijic, Jovan, *La penisule Balkanique*, Collin, Paris, 1918, p.67

After the recent democratic changes in Serbia, the necessary conditions for a real integration of all ethnic communities into the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, open civil society were established. Only as such a society can the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia be integrated into the regional and continental security and political architecture. The first steps in that direction have already been made, but the new cooperation, for example, between the Army of Yugoslavia and NATO or between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and KFOR, should be further accelerated and expanded. Speedy accession to the Partnership for Peace programme would represent a very important step for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and would also greatly contribute to peace and stability in the entire region, because, as experience shows, every strategy directed at ending the Balkan crisis is doomed to fail if it does not include one of the region's centres - Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At this moment, the greatest problem for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and also for the whole region, is the prevention of the spreading and spill-over of Albanian extremist terrorism to the other countries. Although NATO is the backbone of KFOR, and should remain that way, interested Balkan countries need to assume their share of responsibility for peace and stability in the region.

To this end, it would be necessary to include in the international forces stationed in Kosovo and Metohia soldiers from Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, and, first of all, Yugoslavia. Only with the concerted efforts of KFOR, UNMIK, Euro corps, and Balkan countries' peacekeeping forces can there be a hope of overcoming the current "grey

zone terrorism" in Kosovo-Metohia, which is characterised by the near-ruin of the Province's infrastructure, the expansion of political corruption, an inefficiency of civil authorities, the disappearance of legitimacy, and a lack of control over certain "wild" areas, accompanied by every criminal activity conceivable (kidnapping, murder, abduction, drugs, arms, and slave trafficking).

Unless the unrealistic plans of Albanian extremists aimed at creating a so-called Greater Albania or Greater Kosovo are not nipped in the bud, the threat of disintegration which now looms over the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will spread to other countries of the region. This is being confirmed these days by the example of Macedonia.

Any change of existing borders on the basis of ethnicity anywhere in the Balkans - whether the one desired by Albanian extremists in Kosovo-Metohia, Macedonia, Southeastern Serbia and Montenegro, or the one recently demanded by Croat separatists in Bosnia-Herzegovina - would open a **Pandora's** box.

The only solution that truly guarantees peace and stability in the region and its democratic development consists of respect for human rights and rights of ethnic communities combined with their integration into multi-ethnic and multicultural societies within the borders of existing Balkan states.

Along with the greatest power, NATO and the EU also have the greatest responsibility in enabling the incorporation of this area of "unfinished peace" into the regional system of collective security, as

well as in facilitating its access to the economic integrations and cultural and civilisational trends of our common European home.

Most encouraging in this respect is the fact that for the first time in their political history all Balkan countries have democratically elected governments of pro-European orientation. Only by joint efforts of these countries and the interested factors of European and world politics (NATO, EU and OEBS) can we prevent the current process of radical transformation of the ethno-religious structure of the Balkan nations from exploding into conflicts with unforeseeable, but certainly disastrous consequences.

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Independent State of Kosovo
The Contribution for Stability in the Region

The great changes in Europe in the past decade, following the end of the cold war, the collapse of communism and the fall down of the Berlin wall, have opened the perspective of expanding democracy - the new world order - over the rest of Europe. Until then, Europe was living under a dual system of completely disparate values: Western Europe with liberal democratic values and Eastern Europe with totalitarian-communist values resting on the motives of territorial expansionism.

The defeat of communism was followed by disintegration and integration tendencies causing a change of the European political map in compliance with the will of the people. As a result, Germany was unified, many new states were born, others are on their way, whereas forceful state structures such as in the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia collapsed.

This new era of the regeneration of the European family, which may be named also the era of the victory of the principle of self-determination, was not easily absorbed in the Balkans as its history had been built on the domination and supremacy of some nations over others.

In the process of the Balkan changes, the disintegration of former Yugoslavia appeared to be a most complex project. This is mainly because of the fact that former Yugoslavia was perceived by the international community as a rather strong multiethnic state but in reality, it was extremely fragile.

The initial refusal of the international community to acknowledge the legitimacy of the disintegration of former Yugoslavia and the hegemonic aspiration of Serbia, demonstrated in four aggression wars against other federation-forming nations, have placed the disintegration process in the track of wars and tragedy. Macedonia was born peacefully, but other states such as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosova (although not yet formally recognised), were born through wars of self-determination.

In managing the former Yugoslavian crisis to this stage, the involvement of the international community was evolving progressively as the crisis was deepening, but it remained mainly reactive. Thus, while the Bosnian war ended after three years, the Kosova war was brought to an end after a year and a half. In this process, the USA and NATO became determinant factors, following the evident failure of all other international mechanisms in giving adequate answers to the problems.

Since the disintegration process has attracted most of the energy of international mechanisms, only a little energy was left for an appropriate monitoring of the development of the new states. As a consequence, we are today entering the new phase with both the remaining unresolved problems from the past as well as the newly emerging problems.

Having in mind the current situation and noticing that some of the major security issues have been put behind, it does not seem speculative to say that there are real achievements but that the political and security agenda of the Balkans still remains burdened.

Therefore, it is essential that there be forward looking and comprehensive action by the peoples of the Balkans and the international community to address the continuing sources of underlying tensions.

On the global level, the current problems may be seen as belonging to two major groups: The first group includes the unresolved final status issues for Kosova and Montenegro, and the second group includes the problems related to the fragility of democratic institutions throughout the region, unresolved constitutional issues, minority rights issues, unpunished war criminals, the issue of unreturned refugees, corruption and crime and the economic blockade.

The right answer to the first group of problems rests on the finalisation of the disintegration process of former Yugoslavia. This means to acknowledge the independent state of Kosova and to respect the will of the people of Montenegro.

The reality created after the falling apart of former Yugoslavia - the third failed experiment of this century - has not left any ground for the fourth one called FRY. All Slav nations have left Serbia despite of the same origin. Montenegro is on its path to independence, too. Therefore, it is nonsense for Kosova and Albanians as non-Slav nations to be asked to remain with Serbia, especially after experiencing the genocidal war. An independent state of Kosova is a normal and realistic outcome. As soon as this reality is understood by the international community, the Balkans will be moving more quickly towards sustainable peace and stability, which would be beneficial for both Serbs and Albanians.

The independent state of Kosova should act under a KFOR and UNMIK protectorate for some time. The final status of independence gives Kosova a clear agenda, which is a precondition for overcoming post war challenges and for being able to join the mainstream movement of integration and globalisation. The independence of Kosova shall create appropriate conditions for Kosova to develop the enhanced democracy to which its people are committed, as they have shown through the successful first free municipal elections last October.

The interim protectorate would also help Kosovars prove their commitment to the rule of law, the respect for human rights and the right of minorities. Good inter-ethnic relations are perceived as an element of democracy. Therefore, the efforts for its advancement are in the process, hi this regard, Albanian-Serb relations in Kosova present the most sensitive issue, having in mind the Serb genocide against Albanians in the past decade of war and occupation. In spite of it, the policy lines of Albanian political factors are future-oriented. Delivering the right policy for minorities, including the Serb minority, is seen directly linked to a better future of Kosova. In terms of confidence building measures, there is already an established dialogue with Serbs within the framework of the Airlie Conference and US-support, which has given some results such as the integration of Serbs in some municipal structures throughout Kosova although they did not take part in the elections. Further integration efforts go in the direction of having Serbs and other minorities participate in the forthcoming national elections in Kosova, guaranteeing constitutionally and consistently their legal position according to international standards. The logic of enclavisation and divided life which is in its worse manner manifested in the town of Mitrovica, have no future.

The improvement of the relations with Serbs in Kosova depends also on some factors such as the release of Albanian prisoners and missing people in Serbia, the punishment of war criminals in the The Hague Tribunal, the acceptance of a new reality of Kosova by Serbs and the avoidance to live in ambiguity. On the other hand, the global improvement of interethnic relations is certainly interlinked to a strengthened international support for the economic revival of Kosova - the creation of job opportunities, as well as the improvement of mechanisms of better security for all citizens of Kosova.

Investing into the independent state of Kosova is of manifold benefits for Kosova itself as well as for the region. The independent state of Kosova is a factor of peace and stability in the region, because it is a guarantee for the respect of international charters and for the promotion of dialogue and cooperation, as it was proved through a decade-long non-violent movement of its people and an acceptance of war only when imposed. The independence of Kosova means a respect of the will of its people grounded on the legitimate right to self-determination. Under the conditions of the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. The legal status of Kosova in former Yugoslavia as one of eight federal units with a veto power on all decision making levels was an expression of the right to self-determination and succession. Due to this fact, the international recognition of Kosova borders is in compliance with international principles,

because the territorial integrity of Kosova and its borders were constitutionally defined and guaranteed, in the same manner as those of other federal units which got international recognition. The other important fact is the former Yugoslavia - the country which Kosova was a federal part of - has ceased to exist.

An independent state of Kosova would contribute constructively to the resolution of the crisis in Macedonia. This will create confidence among Albanians in Macedonia that their issue will be justly settled. It will also make the Macedonian government discontinue the prolongation logic and act more responsively in terms of accomplishing constitutional changes in favour of the state forming status of Albanians to which they are legitimately entitled. The Macedonian government needs to change its ethnic state reasoning and commit itself to building a multiethnic state. The changes should occur through a dialogue for which three elements are critical: That the dialogue be brokered and guaranteed by the international community; to be inclusive in terms of Albanian representation by both the political and military factor, and to start immediately. To find a just solution it is important to comprehend that the problem of the Albanians in Macedonia has originated ten years ago and beyond. To this problem the Macedonian leadership has failed to give an adequate answer so far.

An independent state of Kosova presents also a contribution to the peace process in the Presheva valley for a just solution of the rights of the Albanians there.

An independent Kosova will be a reliable partner in building peace and stability in Southeastern Europe as well as an active factor in synergetic efforts of advancing the political and security agenda of the region. In this context, it is important to outline that the Kosova vision on the settlement of the question of divided nations - among which is also the Albanian question - rests on the formula of the integration of Southeastern Europe into the European Union and Euro-Atlantic structures. By having Kosova, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and other states in the European Union, the borders will loose their traditional sense, and perspectives for modern economic cooperation will be open.

The integration of the region of Southeastern Europe into the Euro-Atlantic community is a key project for sustainable peace and stability in the region. The essential element of this project is that the post-conflict countries should integrate as whole. Any attempts of applying the policy of selective integration of individual countries will be a source of tensions. To build stable states in Southeastern Europe, the key principle is a balanced support by the international community. These peoples have for a long time suffered from a policy of exclusion and domination. Therefore, they need equal consideration.

In this regard, the recent exclusion of Kosova from international regional activities including the Summit of Zagreb and the Summit of Skopje have been discouraging. While the exclusion of Kosova and Albanians from the signing of the Agreement between Skopje and Belgrade concerning the borders of Kosova were not only illegal, provided that Kosova is actually under UNMIK sovereignty, but also provocative to the Albanians in Macedonia and critical in triggering their armed reaction for the dissatisfaction accumulated in the last ten years.

In contrast to the past decade, there is a need for new ways of addressing the remaining political and security problems of the Balkans. This, first of all, means a proactive, quick and decisive approach. The resolution of existing problems cannot be prolonged for another decade. For it will be dangerous, having in mind the potential threats of new conflicts.

Peace building and prosperity in the region directly depend on the support of the international community. The role of the USA, the European Union and NATO is critical. The pact of stability, SECI and other initiatives present a concrete supporting programmes for the region, but so far they have not made the expected progress. Obviously, there is a need to

review the actual approach, particularly in the economic sense, thinking along the lines of " a new marshal plan ".

The nations of Southeastern Europe need accelerated economic advancement, in order to be able to enact self-management and compatible integration in the EU and the transatlantic community.

Edita Tahiri
Pristina

THE ROLE OF JOURNALISM IN THE PREVENTION OF CONFLICTS AND IN THE SUSTENTION OF MULTIETHNIC, MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIRELIGIOUS SOCIETY - (ELEMENTS OF A STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY AND HEALTHY PUBLIC LIFE)[1]

I believe it is not necessary to emphasise the importance of the role of the media in the prevention of conflicts, or, to what extent the media incited conflicts and served as an instrument of nationalistic politics against minorities on the territory of former Yugoslavia. What journalists can do in order to enable the promotion of peace among nations as well as the prevention of conflicts, could be most competently discussed by those who have personally experienced the fatal consequences of the transformation of an honourable profession into a servile lackey of the war master and an exponent of the most ruthless propaganda imbued with unabashed chauvinism, xenophobia and intolerance.

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[1] Drago Pilsel, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1962, is a journalist and a political and religious columnist in "Novi list", a Croatian daily. He is also the Vice-president of Croatian Journalists' Association; a Balkan correspondent of COPE, a Spanish radio net; a correspondent of "Vida nueva", a Catholic weekly from Madrid and a correspondent of "NTV Studio 99", an independent Radio and TV based in Sarajevo. He is a member of The Croatian P.E.N. center, The Council for religious freedom in Croatia, The European Movement in Zagreb and The Center for peace studies in Zagreb. He was also one of the founders and the Vice-president of The Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human rights.

The media landscape has been poisoned by the language of hatred to such an extent that its decontamination has not yet been completed, nor, in a way, has it truly begun.

We face the need to restore the dignity of, to some extent, a compromised profession. We should go back to the key principles of free journalism, which enable it to be an indispensable factor in the development of democracy in society, to be a corrective to government and to **incorruptibly** disclose social evils. Furthermore, free journalism should be the important means of the fight against racism and xenophobia, prejudices and preconceptions, that is, it should be able to recognise the rights and to defend the dignity of the members of minorities.

The warmongering journalism in Croatia is one of the main motives as a consequence of which Croatian journalists have an appointment with truth. Unfortunately, the process of **detudmanisation** of Croatia has not been going on at a speed which could overcome the longing of many, who wish that all squalor in reporting and commentating in the past decade be swept under the **virtual** carpet created by **Tudman's** death, the process of disintegration of the Croatian Democratic Union and the expected victory of the opposition in last year's parliamentary elections.

Admittedly, there is almost no more talk about **Tudman,** yet he was the chief originator of the climate of dissemination of hatred and intolerance in Croatia, and was considered the leading factor in articulating the lack of freedom in the media. Sometimes it seems to us as if he had not been there at all. But that is a delusion. The

consequences of the politics and spiritual climate created by that Croatian master of war are so grave and deep-rooted in the psyche of an average citizen of the republic of Croatia that it is impossible to evaluate them in the right way.

Although uncritically supporting, nationalistic and even chauvinistic journalism is for many a problem of the past, its existence in our consciousness is being renewed, in the context of the discussion about revanchism, primarily by those who have spread the language of hatred and intolerance, and who have destroyed the dignity of the journalistic profession. Now they scream that there are attempts to remove them from the media scene.

There are three things I would like to emphasise when it comes to the role of Croatian journalists in inciting the war machinery and initiating the politics of the destruction of other nations and states.

1. There was a culture of lies

Times of great truths, such as the ones emerged from the process of the disintegration of Socialist Yugoslavia, are usually deeply imbued with an omnipresent culture of lies. This culture of lies, it seems, has long since been accepted, generated and consolidated by small nations on the Balkans.

As an example, twenty years ago, nations in former Yugoslavia genuinely cried at Tito's funeral. Today, these same nations claim in

unison that they had lived under "the repressive heel of the communist dictator".

A lie, just as death, had become a natural state, a norm of behaviour, and liars are normal citizens. Thus, **Dobrica** Cosic, a Serbian writer and unsuccessful president of Yugoslavia, deserves some acknowledgement, if any, for his authorial **rebuttal:** " A lie is an aspect of our patriotism and confirmation of our inherent intelligence."

The culture of lies is most easily established if there is an adversary that lies even more, or speaks a more horrible and diabolical language. Only the dead do not lie, however, within the context of the culture of lies, they have no credibility. The lie gradually developed from a norm of political and media behaviour, which legalised the lie, into a strategy of war, and as a war strategy it, rapidly established itself as morally acceptable.

2. The culture of life should be extolled against the culture of lies

The culture of lies should be contrasted with the culture of truth and life. Truth here does not imply mere exactness or consent. It is not something that could be fabricated or that could be used for manipulation. Where illogical schemes of action do not include lived reality, the need for argumentation and foundation appears.

A journalist must never leave truth an open question. He stands under pressure to face it. In this way, journalism is not a mere gathering of

information, but a critical enquiry about reality. A test of every truth, also a journalistic truth, lies, as Heidegger claimed, "only in faithfulness towards oneself. A journalist serves truth by being free and by respecting life and truth of each and every being.

We must have realised that journalism represents crime if it can no longer distinguish an organised lie. Strangely, nevertheless, it has been generally considered that this crime needs not be punished. On the other hand, I believe that a certain international court for criminals in journalism should exist, and that those, who, by using lies, enabled and incited war crimes and criminals should be branded as such.

I think it is a real pity that the intention of Richard Goldston, the prosecutor of the International Tribunal in The Hague, who hoped for the prosecution of those, who (I quote) "misused the media in a criminal **way",** did not come into existence. It is easy to identify the protagonists of media crimes, since their traces are more difficult to destroy.

The man of today inhabits a civilisation of death. It appears that in the past century approximately 175 million people died a violent death. We are surrounded by so much evil and so many lies that we simply have to say and believe this is an evil time for goodness. Today, namely, it becomes clearer and more evident that moral action is not solely needed, but that it is, altogether, the basis of human life.

"Living a life humanely - and this is a central notion of every moral — demands from us to reach a meaningful optimum of development of our own emotional, social, spiritual and cultural life, which has, and must have, social consequences."

3. There are no songs of praise of hatred

Had there been no genetic shame concerning the feeling of hate, and I claim there is, except in psychopathic personalities, I suppose its power would have been celebrated in verse at least as much as love. If no one normal person praises and extols hate, how is it possible to theoretically criticise such an unexplained passion? For anything defined as "the language of hatred", its author will produce a refutation in the form of patriotic and nation-building principles, proving that those who dare identify something like that in his work, are actually the ones who hate those same principles.

We could hardly go forward without self-control and tolerance. But tolerance does not imply putting up with something, withdrawing from actions one finds acceptable, nor refusal to intervene because one is not familiar with a problem or due to sheer indifference.

Strictly morally speaking, tolerance leads us to two key issues: the necessity of self-control and the relation between another person and autonomy.

Tolerance cannot cure hatred or replace love and solidarity, nor can it make society happy, free or affluent. It simply makes society what it is. Everything else follows. There is no point in tolerance unless its subject has power and knowledge.

In Croatia today we are partly taking a rest from those who spread the language of hatred, incited war and told us that everyone, who is not prepared to lie for their homeland, is an enemy and a traitor. Had there

not been some fifty, maybe less, independent journalists who were not intimidated and who never abandoned a professional relation towards their work, the following journalistic generation would have been an irretrievable failure.

Therefore, the following question is posed: How could the media, especially electronic media, be modified, in order to become a more significant protagonist that would help create more tolerant, peaceful and healthier societies?

Journalists are faced with a responsibility for settling scores with inner weaknesses which compromise journalistic standards as well as for the application of the principles of diversity and pluralism on all levels. Notably:

The Journalists and their professional associations would have to require such a politics of recruitment in media, which would encourage journalists from minority communities to engage in journalism;

Professional training of journalists has to focus on the questions of discrimination and intolerance in society. The production staff and journalists who gather information often lack a sufficient awareness of or knowledge about the society in which they serve;

Journalists and media organisations have to broaden the way in which they cover a certain community, and they have to employ authorised and representative sources of information from minority communities or other ethnic communities when it comes to relevant topics in the news;

Journalistic associations should work harder to organise conferences, seminars, and workshops in order to enable journalists to exchange

information and improve the level of consciousness within their profession;

International federations of journalists and journalistic associations from Central Europe, the South East, the Balkans and Mediterranean areas should work more systematically to ensure and develop journalists' awareness of national and international ethical codes;

Apart from that, they should finally establish a programme for monitoring and reporting on the actions of the media in areas of intolerance; and also they would have to get involved in a dialogue with governments and other professional organisations, with the aim of defending journalistic independence (in Croatia there is no adequate legal framework for the journalistic profession);

And now a few more sentences about the important elements of a strong civil society and a healthy public life…

Publics and public relationships are created through the common work of public action. Public action is not the same as the action of special interest groups; it is comprehensive and inclusive rather than categorical. And it is not the same as governmental or institutional action, which is uniform, linear, and usually coordinated by some administrative agency.

Being successful in the long run requires an active public, one involved in an ongoing process of making judgments about whether the results a community is getting from its efforts are consistent with what is truly valuable to its citizens. That is how a community develops the capacity for continuous adaptation and ongoing improvement. We in

former Yugoslavia need a more public kind of accountability, with citizens directly involved in assembling and weighing the evidence of accomplishment, evidence that include their own experiences. In this case the public would evaluate itself rather than merely receive reports of what institutions and agencies had done.

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