



**SÜDOSTEUROPA-
GESELLSCHAFT**

in cooperation with



Auswärtiges Amt

International Conference

The EU and the Western Balkans: The Objectives of the Slovenian EU Presidency – Implementation and Continuation

Berlin, September 12-13, 2008

Program

Conference Venue: Europasaal, German Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)
Entrance: Unterwasserstr. 10, Berlin
(Please show your passport)

Conference Languages: German and English (with simultaneous translation)

Conference Organization:

Hansjörg Brey, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association, München

Wim van Meurs, Radboud University Nijmegen,
Member of the Board, Southeast Europe Association

under the direction of

Gernot Erler, Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office,
President of Southeast Europe Association

Both among the twenty-seven member states of the European Union and among the (potential) candidate countries of Southeastern Europe the success of the Slovenian Presidency is widely acknowledged. Despite major competing European preoccupations, ranging from the process leading to Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008 to the ratification of the Lisbon Reform Treaty and the Irish referendum in June 2008, the Presidency has succeeded in restating the priority of Southeast Europe's processes of stabilisation, regional cooperation and EU integration for Europe as a whole.

Three sets of interlinked issues related to Southeastern Europe are currently on the European agenda: stabilisation, reforms and EU integration. Firstly, bilateral issues that tend to hamper the on-going enhancement of regional cooperation. The disagreement between Athens and Skopje on the country's name and NATO membership has soured relations between an EU candidate country and (together with Slovenia) one of the main investors in the regions. The unresolved issue of the recognition of Kosovo's independence has blocked next to all cooperation between these two in regional, European and international frameworks. Nevertheless, at the end of the Slovenian Presidency, Kosovo has been recognised by a majority of EU member states and the EULEX mission is in place. Serbia's integration process, moreover, continued with the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, a new government committed to EU membership and finally the arrest of Radovan Karadžić. Tensions between the requirements of a stabilisation strategy and the conditionality of the EU integration process, however, will continue to complicate relations between the EU-27 and the (potential) candidates in Southeastern Europe.

Secondly, the increasing divergence of the bilateral status of the countries vis-à-vis the EU, ranging from Croatia as a negotiating candidate to Serbia's non-status, was often identified as a serious impediment for regional cooperation. The first half of 2008 witnessed the signing of SAAs with Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, despite the EU's own reform quandaries and symptoms of enlargement fatigue among constituencies and political representatives in many member states, the promise of a dynamic integration process made in Zagreb and Thessaloniki has been upheld. In the medium term, Southeastern enlargement is bound to collide time and again with a more inward-oriented European Union, determined to enact a substantial reforming the institutions prior to confronting national constituencies on a final round of enlargement.

Thirdly, the Slovenian Presidency has demonstrated that pragmatic measures upgrading actual relations between the region and/or individual countries and the EU can be a powerful boost to the reform process and encouragement for pro-European constituencies. Suffice to mention the dialogue on visa liberalisation, the negotiations on a transport agreement and the establishment of an Investment Framework as well as enhanced cooperation in civil protection and the fight against terrorism and organised crime. Evidently, with EU integration a solid promise, but not an short-term perspective for parts of the region, flexible support for tangible reform efforts may require thinking out-of-the-box in terms of the EU instruments and assistance. As far as practical measures to upgrade relations for the sake of reforms are concerned, regional expectations and need, on the one hand, and the constraints of national constituencies and enlargement conditionality, on the other hand, are bound to diverge.

Friday 12 Sept. 2008

14:00 hrs **Opening**

Gernot Erler, Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office, President of the Southeast Europe Association, Berlin

Matjaž Šinkovec, State Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana

15:00 hrs **Panel I: Achievements of the Slovenian EU Presidency**

What are the achievements of the Slovenian Presidency in the continuation of the integration process, in the upgrading of present relations and instruments as well as in resolving stability issues?

Chair: Minister of State **Gernot Erler**

Speakers:

Jan Trzuszczński, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General Enlargement, European Commission, Brussels

Ivan Vejvoda, Executive Director, GMF Balkan Trust for Democracy, Belgrade

Anton Bebler, Professor of Political Science and of Defense Sciences at the University of Ljubljana

András Inotai, Director, Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

16:30 hrs Coffee break

17:00 hrs **Panel II: Reform Strategies and Regional Cooperation**

What special role can EU member states like Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and Greece play in the reform process? How do stability issues and other bilateral concerns hamper regional cooperation, esp. the functioning of the Regional Cooperation Council?

Chair: **Emily Haber**, Ambassador, Special Envoy for South Eastern Europe and Turkey, German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

Speakers:

Alphan Solen, Political Advisor, Regional Cooperation Council, Sarajevo

Leon Marc, Head of Southeast Europe Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana

Vladimir Gligorov, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, Vienna

Christophe Solioz, Secretary-General, Center of European Integration Studies (CEIS), Geneva

Südeuropa-Gesellschaft, Widenmayerstr. 49, D-80538 München

phone: +49/89-2121540, fax: +49/89-2289469

e-mail: info@suedosteuropa-gesellschaft.com, http://www.suedosteuropa-gesellschaft.com

Saturday 13 Sept. 2008

09:00 hrs Panel III: EU Integration and Assistance

What is the record of the SAp/SAAAs in promoting economic and governance reforms in the region? Do the particularities of Southeastern Europe require further modifications of the EU's enlargement strategy? How could visa liberalisation and other pragmatic upgrades of relations benefit the reform process without jeopardising enlargement conditionality?

Chair: **Wim van Meurs**, Radboud University Nijmegen

Speakers:

Telmo Baltazar, Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security, European Commission, Brussels

Matthias Oel, Director EU-Affairs, German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Berlin

Višnja Samardžija, Head of Department for European Integration, Institute for International Relations IMO, University of Zagreb

Denisa Sarajlić-Maglić, Member of the Board of Directors, Foreign Policy Initiative, Sarajevo

10:30 hrs Coffee break

11:00 hrs Panel IV: Challenges for the French and Czech Presidencies

What challenges remain for the French and Czech Presidencies in the continuation of the integration process, in the upgrading of present relations and instruments as well as in resolving stability issues?

Chair: **Rolf Mafael**, Ambassador, Deputy Director General, EU External Issues and Relations with EU Member States, German Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

Speakers:

Hannes Swoboda, MEP, European Parliament

Gregor Krajc, Deputy Director, Office for European Affairs, Ljubljana

Graham Paul, Envoy, Embassy of the French Republic, Berlin

Katarina Rychtáriková, Head, EU Presidency Task Force, South Europe and South East Europe Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic, Prague

12:30 hrs Lunch on invitation of Minister of State Gernot Erler

13:30 hrs End of the Conference

Conference Office: Dr. Sonja Schöler, Deputy Director, Southeast Europe Association
Gudrun Kuhlmann, Secretary, Southeast Europe Association
Sebastian Rösner, Project Assistant, Southeast Europe Association

*Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, Widenmayerstr. 49, D-80538 München
phone: +49/89-2121540, fax: +49/89-2289469
e-mail: info@suedosteuropa-gesellschaft.com, <http://www.suedosteuropa-gesellschaft.com>*