

Croatia and Western Balkans States (WB6) –  
Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Croatian Institute for History, December 9, 2019**

**Opatička ul. 10, Zlatna dvorana Zagreb, Croatia**

10:00 **Welcome Address**

**Gordan Akrap, PhD**

Hybrid Warfare Research Institute

**Holger Haibach**

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Zagreb

10:10 **„Keynote Speaker “**

**Stibor Kikerec**

Vice Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the  
Republic of Croatia

10:30 **Panel debate**

**Dražen Barbarić, PhD**

University Mostar

**Miloš Šolaja, PhD**

University Banja Luka

**Dr.iur. Damir Arnaut**

Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and  
Herzegovina

**Zoran Dragišić, PhD**

Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia

**Miroslav Tuđman, PhD**

Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia

**Moderation:**

**Holger Haibach**

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Zagreb

**Gordan Akrap, PhD,**

Hybrid Warfare Research Institute, Zagreb

Holger Haibach

Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to start our conference – not only one conference, but a series of conferences on the question of Croatia and its neighbourhood. Especially the West Balkan 6, as they are called in the political world. I would like to say that today we are talking about Bosnia and Herzegovina, but, as I said, this is just the beginning. On behalf of the Hybrid Warfare Research Institute and also from us – the Konrad Adenauer Foundation – we would like to welcome you all. Thank you for coming. Especially a big thank you to the speakers who made their way to Zagreb.

This is going to be the first of a series of talks that we are going to have. We are going to discuss Croatia and its relationship and the situation of all the West Balkan 6 countries. We hope that this is going to help us a little bit in also what the Croatian presidency of the European Union which is going to start 1<sup>st</sup> of January is going to do. Right after that the German presidency will follow soon. And for that matter I am very happy to welcome Mr. Stribor Kikerec who is the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. He is going to start the whole discussion off with his introductory speech. I would also like to welcome the panellists – Dražen Barbarić from the University of Mostar, Nedžma Džananović Mirašćiji from University of Sarajevo who is not coming, then Miloš Šolaja from the University of Banja Luka and three members of parliament. Damir Arnaut out from the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zoran Dragišić, member of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia and of course Miroslav Tuđman from the Parliament of Croatia.

I would especially want to give a few warm regards from my colleague Sven Petke who was supposed to be here today. He is running the office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Bosnia

and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, because of the weather conditions his plane could not arrive in time in Sarajevo, so he can't to be here. The same goes for our panellist from the University of Sarajevo. However I talked to him this morning and he is wishing us all well and hoping for good results for this discussion that we are going to have. With that I would just close my welcome words and hand over to Gordan.

Gordan Akrap

Thank you Holger. I would like to thank all the panellists for joining us here today, as Holger said. I would like to give the introduction presentation speech, because of the position of the Hybrid Warfare Research Institute which has initiated these series of meetings together with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Dear Mr.Kikerec, Your Excellencies Ambassadors, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Dr.Petke, dear Holger with his associates from the KAS office in Zagreb, Ladies and Gentlemen. In particular, I would like to express our gratitude to the panelists who responded to the invitation to come here today to be with us at the conference.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the end of the Cold War, consequently led to the breakup of multinational socialist states into nation states that, as such, tried to become members of desired international organization, European Community and NATO. The bloody disintegration of the SFRY, the implementation of peace by the Washington and Dayton peace agreements, stopped the armed conflicts and laid political ground for the post-war construction of societies and states established after dissolution of SFRY. However, it was only Slovenia and Croatia that succeeded in this plan of building society and state and subsequently entering into Euro-Atlantic integrations. The rest of the states, with the addition of Albania, continue to be seen as an

area characterized by numerous open issues, permanent delays in resolving particular national issues in multi-ethnic communities, unresolved inter-ethnic and interstate relations, as a source of political and economic instability and as a security threat. Not only for the surrounding countries but also for the EU. The democratic consolidation of the societies and WB6 member States poses a serious challenge for these countries, for their neighbours for the EU, and for those countries that consider themselves to have national and economic interests in the area.

In almost all WB6 countries, the answers to the questions about the degree of interethnic solidarity are dramatically different. There is no consensus on common values about current constitutional solutions. All this brings us to the necessity to research how intensive the crisis of state legitimacy really is. Because, without the legitimacy of the state the political community cannot exist.

This is one of the reasons why I think that WB6 states are states with underdeveloped democracies, devastated and divided societies, with weak economies, vulnerable to organized crime, and a possibly easy target for Russia, China and Turkey, which are increasingly aggressive in expanding their influence in this area. If someone really wants to stabilize the democracy it is necessary to create relevant and long-lasting policies for social and political transformations. Serious and demanding work needs to be done to change the existing paradigms.

The primary objective of this project is to broaden the understanding of all the constitutional problems and challenges faced by political elites in the WB6 states in establishing the foundations of the political community and political system. The extent to which politicians in power can establish a dialogue on co-operation is based on the principles of moderation and reciprocity while maintaining the affection of their supporters. Is it possible to achieved those goals within the present

internationally recognized borders of the WB6 states, or will there be an increasing emphasis on advocating for a policy of changing the current borders according to the ethnic principle, and what consequences can be expected with solution like this? What consequences will the non-opening of EU accession negotiations with the Republic of Northern Macedonia and Albania have on the future of the WB6?

What are, and how intense are the complex interrelationships between countries in the immediate environment (Croatia, Serbia) and countries with declared zones of interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, USA), can destabilization processes and events in the Republic of Northern Macedonia affect Bosnia and Herzegovina? Following the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreements, which ended the war at the end of 1995 and imposed peace in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnia and Herzegovina is still far from political, social, national and economic stability. The Bosnia and Herzegovina pluralistic society does not share a common vision of political unity, which hinders the establishment of a political community.

Constituting a political community that will base its legitimacy on the support of all three constituent peoples and all citizens is the most important precondition for stabilizing the democratic political order. However, conflicting interests, different goals, and identities are currently proving insurmountable obstacles. After the October elections last year, the establishment of a new government in Bosnia and Herzegovina proved to be a very uncertain and painful process. The election results for the members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency have added a significant, stumbling block between two of Bosnia and Herzegovina's three constituent nations, Bosniaks and Croats.

Political elites are failing to reach consensus on any significant issue, while nationalist, national, civic and "civic" positions are constantly colliding on the intellectual scene.

The question that is more relevant than ever, after recent parliamentary and presidential elections is - whether in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is possible to establish political community based on the Dayton constitution at this moment? If not, what reforms needs to be done in order to bring Bosnia and Herzegovina closer to that goal?

These are just some of the many issues that we want to open and bring to the expert public at this conference. To only open communication with all interested parties, that will include all parts of the society, can offer solutions that can guarantee the peaceful and secure political development of societies and states, which will also create the conditions for development of all other areas, with an emphasis on the economy as a driver of other positive changes.

Stribor Kikerec

Thank you. Dear representatives of KAS and the Hybrid Warfare Research Institute, Dear panellists and colleagues from the diplomatic corps allow me to welcome you on behalf of the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. Unfortunately the minister is not in Zagreb and cannot greet you in person as he planned to do. At the very beginning allowed me to briefly refer to the title of the series of this conference: Croatia and the Western Balkan States. May I say that this Western Balkan term is part of the vocabulary of the European Union as a technical term which encompasses a heterogeneous area – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia and Albania out of which each of these countries in a certain phase has tried to stabilize its relations with the European Union in a certain phases. Two of the countries - Montenegro and

Serbia –are negotiating about their membership in the European Union; two countries are still candidates for the membership – Northern Macedonia and Albania - and two countries are the so called potential candidates – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. This is actually the only reason why these countries are called the Western Balkan countries and there is no other connection to that. In geopolitical sense this is an area which is surrounded by EU and NATO countries. This term, the title of this conference, the Western Balkans or West Balkan is widely used; but having in mind what were just heard, it is a very indicative term. I am very glad that we have come together to exchange ideas on this so up-to-date topic before the Croatian presidency of the European Union.

The area of the so-called Western Balkans is also our neighbourhood and we do not share only geographic areas of South-East Europe with these countries, but also parts of our history and different cultural, political and economic connections. Along with that, there were challenges we share with these countries as safety, security, demographic and other connections. Our relations with some of these Western Balkan countries include many open questions, beginning with the borders, then the rights of missing persons, the human rights and question of the environment. Even though many of those questions are not easy to resolve, we are trying to find compromises and solutions. These relations with our neighbouring countries are something Croatia devotes special attention to and we expect the same from our neighbours. In that context and as a result of our recent activities I may add that Mr Grlić Radman, the Minister of Foreign and European affairs, has invited the other countries to join the Adriatic Trilateral Meeting which we expect to be held in Croatia in Zadar. This year the guest will be North Macedonia. This format is thematically linked to the cooperation of safety and security in the sectoral cooperation, which is environmental protection,

environmental projects and especially in the tourism industry. I am referring to her that because such and similar forms of meetings should also be initiated between other Western Balkan countries in order to deepen their cooperation and in order to resolve other bilateral issues.

I may add another very good development which is the signing of the conference on bilateral questions the Western Balkan Summit 2015 in Vienna in the framework of the so called Berlin Process, by which all the six countries of the West Balkans committed to resolve all the open bilateral questions in the spirit of good neighbours. They will not represent an obstacle to any other state on its way to the European Union. When talking about safety and security matters in the West Balkan countries first of all I think that there is still organised crime and some other challenges like illegal migration, returned foreign fighters from the Far East countries, then radicalisation and the fluctuation of young people – those leaving the country and heading to Western Europe.

Illegal migration still represents a risk for Europe especially to Croatia because our sea border is the longest. It is important to say that the Western European countries are trying very hard to find solutions for these questions. Due to the aforesaid Croatia advocates that matter together with its partners, trying to point out how important cooperation is - because we cannot handle all these problems on our own. The European integration in the Western Balkan countries is one of the priorities of the Republic of Croatia. At this moment the European Union is facing other internal and external challenges, important ones; that has led to exhaustion from expanding the EU. But these challenges should not distract from the Western Balkans and its problems. If one just postpones the problems, it could increase the same problem later and endanger another situation.

The continuation of the expansion of the European Union on the Eastern side is important for the safety and security and for the unity of the European project. That is why during its presidency Croatia will support these plans, gaining the trust back, becoming reliable and in line with the expansion plans of the EU. In that process we will be guided by European values and we will insist in meeting all the criteria for the membership. With this goal and intentions Croatia will organise a meeting in May to bring together the leaders of EU and South-East countries. It is our desire to confirm that the European Union is devoted to the perspective of our neighbours in the years to come. This meeting has been announced during the Western Balkans Summit in Sofia in 2018 and that was the first meeting of that kind after the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003. We hope that after the Zagreb summit in 2020 this type of meeting will become a regular and periodically held meeting. In the European Union there is no unity regarding the expansion policy which has become obvious after there was no decision made in October regarding North Macedonia and Albania. Such a result after the meeting of the European Commission represented an additional threat and influenced other European countries. That is why it is important to work with these partners together in order to change this decision and we hope that this will happen before the Zagreb Summit in May. But we shall see. The countries of Western Europe are also feeling the consequences of this expansion process that represents a problem to some of them.

Even though it is understandable that the motivation is not that huge anymore, it is necessary to communicate to the West Balkan countries that giving up would cause difficulties to all of us. That is why these countries should be self-critical and take over the responsibility for the expansion process especially the rule of law, combating organized crime, and to try to resolve in the best possible way all the issues with their neighbours.

There are concrete goals Croatia will pursue during its presidency are the following: to introduce positive results and to open again the negotiations regarding the accession of North Macedonia and Albania, to continue the negotiations with the other countries, and pursue positive negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to help them to get the status of a candidate country.

At the end allow me to say something on behalf Bosnia and Herzegovina and how important it is for Croatia, as Bosnia and Herzegovina is the topic of the today's first meeting, in a series of meetings as we already have heard at the beginning. The Dayton Peace Agreement guarantees and ensures the integrity in Bosnia and Herzegovina – a continuing statehood a state with democratic institutions prepared for the return of refugees. The Republic of Croatia is in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina being an independent country with three entities and three equal peoples, as it is said in the Dayton Agreement.

The nationalities and the rights that were implemented should remain the basis of the constitution – Croatia will insist to keep things this way. We will also support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its intention to speed up the negotiation process. This forthcoming European integration is on the way to become fully operable as a country. On the way of that country to the European Union along with social and economic reforms it will also be necessary to implement political and institutional reforms which are supposed to ensure equal rights and legitimate political actions of all the constituent peoples. It will be necessary to implement new reforms in order to develop a well-structured country, at all the administrative levels, especially in the context of implementing the legal acquis of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We intend to support Bosnia and Herzegovina on their way. We believe that the development on the way to the Atlantic

Agreement will grant prosperity and new potentials to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Every EU country is sharing this intention to support Bosnia and Herzegovina and to stop any form of stigmatization of this country.

Holger Haibach:

Thank you very much. Especially that part that addresses the importance of the countries that we are dealing with in this series for the European Union. I think that everybody here in this room knows how important it is that the European Union plays an active role in the region. Because if the European Union does not do it, and as we see the US foreign policy is more retreating from the engagement there has to be somebody to fill the void. I am not sure whether we really want it. This is a topic we should discuss with the participants. I would like to hand over the word over to Gordan for questions.

Gordan Akrap

Thank you Holger, before we start with the first set of questions I wish to stress that all who are here are free to pose questions to all of us at the table in order to have full communication. It should not be a discussion between us sitting at the table, but between all of us in the room. I would like to start with a question which some panellists have told me that this is in a question like for the famous TV-quiz for a million dollars. Is there a minimum level of consensus of constitutive peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina around which we could develop a foundation of sustainability of Bosnia in the future and its political and economic development? I would like to pose this question to Mr Šolaja and later Dr.Barbarić can join in.

Damir Arnaut

Thank you, Mr Haibach, Mr Akrap and Mr Prusina, dear colleagues from the Parliament, welcome to everybody from the academic society and from the diplomatic corps. Thank you so much for the invitation and thank you for joining this conference. I am glad to have the opportunity to be here and have the chance to talk about these topics. When talking about the consensus between the peoples I think that we should try to understand the difference between the political elites and the citizens. Whenever it is about citizens, I think that there is a consensus that it can be achieved if we take into consideration the principles of the rule of law. We need to understand that the people, the citizens truly want to live in a country where the rule of law is implemented. Many categories of people are leaving from all the nations, they are heading to western countries where the rule of law is guaranteed. They are leaving to West European countries and also to the United States, Canada and so on. These are the countries of their choice. What you could see at the beginning in Bosnia and Herzegovina is that firstly the people who left were those without a work, but now young people are leaving. Young people with families, because they seek for a better future for themselves and for their families in these other countries. If there would be a consensus between the political elites, well, allow me to say that there is a consensus regarding the status quo between the peoples, because it is a guarantee for certain people to keep the power. Another question is who they will rule when the situation becomes worse and worse. The biggest problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the moment is corruption, lack of the rule of law, and a huge gap between the judicial system and the politics. That is the reason why we have stopped on our way to the EU accession. The only country we can compare ourselves with is Kosovo. But having in mind that Kosovo is a young country with huge problems I am not sure that this is a good comparison. Ten years ago, Bosnia and Herzegovina was at a level above Serbia,

and now we are far behind Serbia on our way to the European Union. And that is the reason why it is no surprise that the 14 conditions Bosnia and Herzegovina received from Europe and except the human rights issues and discrimination when electing the representatives, there were no other political questions. There are 14 conditions which are mostly about the reform of the judiciary, rule of law, combating corruption, conflicts of interest and so on. Under such circumstances the negative influence of Turkey, Russia and more and more China has increasingly become obvious. And it happens all the time.

I am convinced that what Bosnia and Herzegovina needs now is support, and I hope that the Republic of Croatia will use its influence during the next six months and then the following six months Germany and that 2020 will become a year when we can count on their support on our way to the EU. And something else we definitely need to do is to meet all the conditions set, especially in the field of the rule of law. In order to meet all these requirements, to meet them properly, not only in an administrative manner, will improve the standard of our citizens and attract new investments. If the status candidates do not completely meet the said requirements, it is completely pointless without meeting the requirements, because only the politics will be supported by such actions - what has already led us to such a high level of corruption. Allow me to point it out again – it is necessary to meet the conditions.

Something else we can see very often in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the following: it is difficult to find a politician who is supporting that. NATO – yes! The entire Federation is supporting the NATO membership. But if you ask them, all these politicians, do they want to implement reforms in the politics, do they want to implement reform in the country, which is necessary to become a member state of the European Union, their answer is completely

different – the opposite. They do not want any development or any progress on the political scene.

Miloš Šolaja

Thank you Mr. Akrap. Dear Deputy Minister, dear excellences ladies and gentlemen and dear colleagues. First of all I wish to thank the organisers for inviting us because I am at a conference in a city where I got my university degree and my doctorate. It is a city which I know well, and I always come back every time very gladly. I have to mention that unfortunately one man is missing here - Professor Radovan Vukadinović who is one of the founding fathers of the international relations in former Yugoslavia. In any case It is a great pleasure for me to be here. And looking from the perspective of the academic circles coming from the Republika Srpska which determines some views - my personal views and the views of the entity where I come from. In the last five years from the Dayton Agreements we are in a constant cramp fighting for our political identity. It is a fact - as it already has been said – that it is about the equality of two entities and three peoples. But this does not define the interests in the same way. Bosnia and Herzegovina has the only point of identity for all the peoples, which is guaranteed by the Dayton Agreement, and which has full legitimacy –and this is peace. I think at this moment peace is not in question, so what are we lacking? We are lacking a basic social consensus on what kind of state we want to have. This Dayton Agreement has initiated the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its Fourth Annex which was created by the negotiators in the Dayton. These were the five big states, America in the first place, but the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina has never given its own opinion about of these Agreements and they were never accepted in a democratic way. There was one attempt in 1996 and until then Bosnia and Herzegovina had some

ideas to develop conceptually, but since then it has not shown any consequential concept.

Today there is a confusion regarding this - we have three political systems, we have three peoples who are constituents of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are more citizens than national communities. I can agree with Mr Arnaut that these elites on the top have their own interests which are not unique in the world. The national communities lack consensus, also as political entities. Individually, on the level of the inhabitants, we can have a consensus. Because as individuals we cooperate very well between our fellow residents. But there is a lack of political responsibility for development. The people are hiding behind the national interests, and this protection comes from the lack of consensus how Bosnia and Herzegovina should look like, how it should to be arranged and how we should all place all of this on democratic grounds. Apart from these three constitutive elements there is the fourth one, that is the international community.

They ask me sometimes, why do they call me when Bosnia and Herzegovina is questioned. I say, whenever you touch something in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you touch the international community. It is known that America has bombed the Republika Srpska, it is known that the Republika Srpska was forced to negotiate. We know that some delegations were not intrinsically one and the same. The international community has tried to bring Bosnia to life in a certain way and we believe that that path has been wrong in many ways. We are facing now 25 years after Dayton that we have two entities. From Banja Luka we do not see Sarajevo as a capital city, and from Sarajevo they do not see Banja Luka as the capital of the Republika Srpska. And this determines the behaviour and the consciousness of the people.

There is a lack of political responsibility, which is necessary to overcome this.

Today Bosnia and Herzegovina is getting farther and farther from the European Union, instead of getting nearer. I completely agree with what Mr. Arnaut has said - on the political level there is no coming nearer. On the political level we may say that we fulfilled some conditions, but really, this synergetic approach towards the European Union is not present, because nobody believes, nobody sees from this ideology what is the real process of accession that will lead to membership of the European Union. The High Commissioner of the EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a starting element of regulating the Bosnian relations. His last intervention in 2010 after the elections were held on the level of the Federation has created such a confusion. The consequences of it are felt even today. There has been a whole range of competences, which directly and then indirectly through the parliaments, do not lead to a consensus and to the building of a common identity. It is a fact also that today, in a kind of lethargy, there is no desire to develop common identity and to build a common community.

Speaking about the process of integrations, on the formal level some researches show that 60% of the inhabitants of the Republika Srpska are in favour of the European Union. This research has been done for the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it has shown that only 5% of all the people know what is the European Union. The percentage of the support for NATO is 8.5%. This has influenced the recent events in forming the institutions, the avoidance to constitute the Council of Ministers and also the Parliament and sincerely speaking, there were more conflicts where NATO has influenced the situation pushing us to be democratic in any case. If there will be more questions I am open to answer them all.

Dražen Barbarić

Honourable colleagues allow me to say thank you for inviting me, I am really honoured and glad to have the opportunity to talk about my country in a wider context. First of all when you are mentioning the consensus in politics - well I am a politologist, a political scientist, and I do not think that this is a good term. If you see it in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina it becomes a difficult process, you know. Before I go any further, allow me to clarify things and to clarify the concept as well. As far as the consensus is concerned, Bosnia and Herzegovina never ever has tested the citizens' consensus, we have never ever formed something as a fictive social cohesion or to try to understand the desires of our people.

The constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina as much as it seems to be bad to say, is a kind of constitution of three war machines, three war communities. In a specific context the three leaders of the war communities have contributed to that and they formed something called the Dayton Constitution. And this Dayton Agreement works as a kind of overlapping consensus with a minimum of effort. But when you analyse it properly and when you live this political process in Bosnia and Herzegovina you see that it doesn't quite work that way. In the Serbian political entity they are testing it as far as it goes; they are testing how far is Sarajevo prepared to go to use the prerogative of the Serbian entity. I have simplified that, but in the Programme Declaration it is similarly formulated. The Bosnian political elite or the entities somehow understand it as phases of a transition; transition phases towards a final repetition or re-composition of the statehood in order to establish a unified central state with the regional units, with demographic and sociological composition,

which in the end means nothing, as it is said, it might be of an ethnical character.

The Croats are somewhere in between - on one side there was the Dayton Agreement for the Croats was understood as a transition solution, towards grouping of cantons with Croatian minorities. But this is not the case anymore. Due to the dis-subjectivization process the Croats were left as the smallest constitutive group: this has led to the situation that the Croats want to reset the entire situation and to make it as it has been at the beginning. Since Dayton, the Croats have always been in this so-called transition process and their final goal now in a sense is to put everything back where it once was, as it was at the beginning. As far as the political leaders are concerned the political consensus is very simple –in this respect I agree with the previous speakers at this conference.

This is concentrated power sharing. And frankly, they cannot get away from that. In Bosnia and Herzegovina in our media this is called this the mathematic coalition – which is a shallow political content which could feed these coalitions with political dynamics. Something else that might be interesting, just to inform you, is the following: by analysing the political declarations in Bosnia and Herzegovina we found more characteristics of that consensus, which is the democratic and political system, the economic system and the market. But the interesting thing is that even the people's parties do influence this in a social-democratic way in order to find solutions to problems which are ahead of us. And of course there are some other overlapping principles on our way to Europe. So it is not about the Euro-Atlantic integration, like the Bosnian and Croatian peoples want to call it, but not the Serbians. We are therefore speaking only of a partial consensus. This is a what Mr. Arnaut said before, it is a political level of the political entities and the social level of the society. But I didn't see any

consensus here in the society, because our citizens have never ever participated in our sovereignty.

Only our leaders did that on behalf of the people's. So the citizens were not aware of what the consensus could or should include. I do agree - definitely in every country the citizens want a certain level of the rule of law, but if you would ask our citizens about how they would you like their state to be institutionalized according to the rule of law, I do not think that everybody would like to have a Supreme Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. And I am not sure that all the Croats would be in favour of things going on at that level, that the county courts would be elevated to a higher level. Maybe there should be a consensus in principle of the civilization level, civilization values on a social level. But as long as you have to ask for that this consensus, it is just vanishing. That is the problem. And another thing I see as a huge obstacle in the creation of the concept. I do not think that the peoples are good, but there are some corrupt political elites that have made the people turn bad. There is no such thing. It is neither obvious in the political sphere, nor in the media. The media is a topic for itself, because they are contaminating the people so much. On the level of the constitution all peoples, that is the minorities, they do not belong to any group.

If it is about a minimum of consensus, the line is very thin, because there is not even a minimum of consensus achieved. That is the biggest problem I can describe. What I understand as being an opportunity is the Canadian model, which I favour the most. In this model the ethnic, national and cultural differences are not pointed out, they are politically subjective and they are creating a joint citizen's sphere which includes the rule of law and a common media sphere. But we are millions of miles away from that.

Holger Haibach

Thank you very much. I just would like to add something to what I just have said. I think now after almost three decades after Dayton, it is pretty clear that the Dayton Agreement has its pros and cons and if you were to negotiate it again, most probably you would negotiate it in a different way. Why? Because if you look at the question of a national consensus - and that has been stressed by all the speakers - there is not much of a consensus to be seen, actually.

Coming from Germany, and Germany is a very federalized state, I can safely say that federalism is good on the one hand, because it creates competition, but if there is no consensus on how a country should be, it creates also a lot of problems. So I think that nobody will ever try to renegotiate Dayton, because not only that there is no consensus within Bosnia and Herzegovina, no, there is also no consensus among those who back then negotiated the Dayton Agreement to find another agreement. So most probably we have to live with what we have at hand.

However I would like to ask our two parliamentarians – Dr Tuđman and Mr. Dragišić – the question: from your perspective, being not only in the neighbourhood, but being involved, how do you see the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and also how do you evaluate the European perspective of this country.

Miroslav Tuđman

Ladies and gentlemen, just a few comments connected to the first question. We are speaking about Dayton, but forget two facts which are important to understand the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1991, one third of the countries in today's Europe have come to existence. So, with the break-up of greater communities we see an emergence of national states, not as a result of some wild nationalisms, but as a result of the demand

for the democratic process, and at the same time the demand for European and Euro-Atlantic integrations. Also, let us not forget the so-called European plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Cutileiro plan, the Stoltenberg plan have basically started from the thesis that there are three constitutive nations. So Bosnia and Herzegovina will be formed according to the entities, which were called cantons, provinces, republics formed according to the national criteria.

In other words a federal concept. Half-way this solution is contained within the Dayton Agreement. As it has been said Dayton is an annex, the Dayton Constitution is an annex imposed by international powers, particularly the United States and there has never been a consensus. It has never been accepted by the three constitutive nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore I think that this discussion that the problems are the political elites is on one hand exact, but also it is problematic because these elites are the production of the system that the Dayton Agreement has imposed. These elites are not capable to change Dayton, because the international community is the one which guarantees and supports this constitution and if you want to make its even sharper, for 20 years Bosnia and Herzegovina was under the protectorate of the High Commissioner. So this is a problem which needs to be discussed. This elites cannot be abolished, but we have to see what the possibilities are to change the current state. Many people are leaving the country because they are not satisfied with the legal system. But we need to be aware of the fact, that all new members, some 15 or more new members of the European Union, which have entered the Union in the last 20 years, they were all under pressure, they were all faced with the leaving of the workforce. This was the case in the Baltic States up to the less democratic ones.

This is the fact of the European labour market and this element cannot be decisive for the political system in Bosnia and

Herzegovina. What is decisive and here I see a possible way out is what Mr. Haibach has said today - the idea of federalism to put it into practice in a consequent way. Somebody has mentioned Canada – but today in democratic countries there is no country which does not have some element of federalism most often mentioned in Switzerland, Belgium, Germany is a federal state, the United States is a federal state, Great Britain too. All these countries have federalism in their constitution. This is practically a concept, with in my deep conviction, enables a consequent federal arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It would guarantee stability and future without major traumas. In this sense I believe we should try to find a solution. Maybe I should stop here and later I can join in the discussion.

Zoran Dragišić

Thank you, dear organisers, for this brilliant opportunity to be here again and to have the chance to talk at this meeting. I shall continue where Dr. Tuđman stopped. I do share your idea that Bosnia and Herzegovina should become a federate country and federalization is a sustainable solution. It is easy to say this at this very moment and I would agree with what the previous colleagues have already said. Mr. Barbarić mentioned something very important, what I would call a sort of construction mistake. Please do not misunderstand me, because it is a mistake of the constitution. If we have in mind that this is an obstacle to the constitution, which is again the consequence of the Peace Agreement. Please allow me to remind you, the Dayton Agreement was a peace agreement, and it was an agreement with a consequence, because three nations fighting each other were – if I may put it in these words – were forced to terminate the war. It is not normal for a country to operate and function as a country according to an agreement, after so much time has passed. It was accepted for this constitution to be the only constitution that has

led or should have led to a peaceful situation and it should implement a democratic constitution based on the opinion of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But that never came up. This opportunity has never been provided and I can understand why: because the Dayton Agreement actually was the only thing upon which the peace was founded on. And this fear that war could break out again has stopped them in doing something. I can say that at this moment Bosnia and Herzegovina does is not any longer threatened from any violations of piece, but we all together should think about that how to establish a new constitution, because we need an act to constitute Bosnia and Herzegovina again as a stable and sustainable country with an European and Atlantic future.

We have seen that the efforts so far for a social consensus were unsuccessful. There is a Bosnia and Herzegovina identity, but that is all. When in sports Bosnia and Herzegovina is playing, nobody in Herzegovina is cheering! But we have to speak out, talk about the situation as it is.

I have to agree with Mr. Barbarić that on one side there is no bad political elite, which has poisoned good people who cannot wait to start living with each other. That is not the case. When we think about the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this is first of all a question for its citizens, for those living there. And the question is how to provide reconstitution of this nation into political society to allow them to live a proper life. I share the opinion of Mr Tuđman that federalization, which very often is not a welcome term when you mention it to the people. But I believe it could be a sustainable solution, which could satisfy the national aspirations of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the other hand it could also meet the requirements for Bosnia and Herzegovina to become the country of its nationals. That will be the moment to talk about the rule of law, to talk about structuring such

characteristics and such features that would lead us to other associations.

What we need to do is to make certain efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But I am afraid with cannot resolve anything without the help of others, without the help of our neighbours – first of all of the European Union.

Miroslav Tuđman

Allow me please just to add something related to this topic. I believe that we should understand that the problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina is not the problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina or the problem of the Western Balkans, no, it is a problem of the European Union, of the entire world. But this actually concerns the Western world as well. You have the problem of Catalonia and Spain - the basic criterion is that federalization or this concept of federalism is a solution for multi-ethnic countries, for countries with many nations. But there are not strict rules on how to implement that. Let us not forget what at the very beginning Mr. Stribor said that the Western Balkans has become a term in the year 2000 but you can read in European documents, in internal documents, why this term Western Balkans has been invented. In order to point out that the Balkan solutions are not European solutions, that means that it has caused another gap in this situation. But now we should point out that the problem of a federal constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a European problem. And this problem should stand behind these plans as it stood behind these solutions 20 years ago. Then we can expect them to be reintegrated, no that is a wrong term, to find its way into the European approach and the Atlantic countries approach.

Miloš Šolaja

I think there the problem of a consensus is a key question. The problem of the consensus has two possible answers: it is or it isn't.

Bosnia and Herzegovina never had a plan. There was no political oligarchy or political elite. Why? Because they never have tried to find a way towards this political consensus, which actually was supposed to be a consensus of the nations, of the peoples. Not in a populist way, no, I think that all the institutions should be included – political, scientific, cultural and so on. We have many diagnoses, but we do not know what therapy to apply, what remedy to use. Which way should we go?

Allow me to point out two points: seven years ago, that was in 2012, one of the German foundations, this time it was the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, organized a simulation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the year 2025. The result were five possible solutions. All the national entities were included there. And these solutions were the following: starting from a centralised Bosnia and Herzegovina up to a country falling apart, including the status quo, including the regional features and so on. It is an entirely different matter that the European Union never had a conceptual answer to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Allow me to provide two examples for that. One is, as Dr Tuđman has already said, but allow me to remind you, that the Americans commanded a few years ago, when the Europeans didn't succeed not because they did not want it, but because they did not have the power and were not supported. And that is the final way to Dayton. And then something we have defined back in 1998 to get more powers.

Someone who has from the very beginning criticized the authorities. But, may I say, that was the worst favour they ever, because we cannot hold our politicians responsible. The International Community has taken over that role. You can imagine what kind of country you are, when the president is being nominated and the bank managers as well. So, the High Commissioner had really big authorities. That is no democracy. Our politicians are not responsible and cannot be held

responsible. They think they are responsible only towards the peoples, but think that is the biggest problem and it does not lead us to any mechanism; we cannot implement any mechanism in order to build up a country, in order to make our politicians responsible for what they are doing and for the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the Dayton Agreement we still have in place, I think there will not be any discussion for quite a long time about this consensus, because I believe that everybody is afraid to start this, as the results are not predictable.

Holger Haibach

Thank you very much. I would like to say something before I give the word to Mr. Barbarić and then to Mr. Arnaut. I would like to add to what you just said. I think the biggest problem, as far as the European Union is concerned, is that there is no consensus not only on how to deal with Bosnia and Herzegovina, but with all the other countries that are part of the so-called Western Balkans. My concern is that especially with these now obvious differences in opinion between Berlin and Paris that this whole region will be like a scape-goat and is going to have collateral damage. This is something that is rooted much deeper and has to do with the problems of the European Union as such. And that might be of great damage for all of us.

However, I would like to give the word to Mr. Barbarić and then to Mr. Arnaut and I would like you to touch upon exactly the same question: if the European Union were as powerful as it should be, and if it could have the influence that it should have, what should it do?

Dražen Barbarić

Thank you. I just wish to clarify the terminology when speaking about federalism. Federalism of the German kind is an administrative and technical federalism from our perspective. I am not sure if you know what I mean. I have simplified it. In order for a minimum of consensus to exist, I am not sure that we would agree to the concept of federalism. How would it arrange the entities and the regions and so on? This is a big problem. However, the current problem with federalism is a kind of red herring, it is like a magnet for stickers.

In a public space, in the academic media space you cannot speak from the point of federalism, because you will get a sticker that this is a policy of the 1990s, that this is a revitalization of the criminal policies of the 1990s. So, federalism as a discourse is not possible.

In the years 2000 we had a kind of democracy where you could speak in the public sphere without being labelled as a fascist. There has been a major shift in the socialisation, for the federalization as a concept; it should mature, it should come on the agenda. So that it is being discussed without being labelled as a fascist or so on.

Regarding the technical implementation part of the concept of transition, well we always speak that Bosnia should be drawn into this frame of transition when things are lined up, when the whole process of transition and consolidation is introduced and when we have a stable market economy. Then all the other problems will just fall back, but this is not true. I believe that all of you know that concepts of transition within the political science have never been applied, developed for multi-national societies. This concept of transition must be mediated by an associational model in order for it to have an institutional sense.

There have been hundreds of round table discussions on the topic of transition, but nobody has ever built in this important theoretical issue. Regarding the office of the High Commissioner - with all due respect to various people who have discharged from this duty, who have tried to influence our political system, but they have changed the original Dayton. The Constitution of the entity where I come from was changed without any desire of the people to change this concept. In this case it was the Croatians. High Commissioners are part of the crises which we have today, not the famous suspension of the central electoral committee, where the government was formed by decree. Nobody is speaking about such consequences and such responsibilities. The High Commissioner is functioning as a monarch. They compare him to the maharaja in India. It is about a self-fulfilling prophecy where the High Commissioner has the capacity to interpret his own decision without filtering it through the media or through any other social components.

One more thing which I think that it has been placed on completely wrong grounds. The High Commissioner leads to absence of political responsibility, especially at the time when the High Commissioners were taking important decisions. Why would the local politicians make any decisions themselves? You do not need a consensus, because whenever you are in conflict, I as a High Commissioner, as a representative of the ultimate power will decide instead of the central electoral commission. So the political responsibility in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with all the complexity of the political system, is largely caused by such irresponsible actions of the international community, which is of course acting through the High Commissioner.

Damir Arnaut

We should take into account that we in Bosnia and Herzegovina for ten years have not had any substantial interventions by the High Commissioner. So, this last ten-year period cannot be explained by actions of the High Commissioner. Speaking without any emotions, pragmatically, the story about Dayton 2 has been around for many years, but there will not be any Dayton 2. In fact, in the meantime, we are only wasting time. I am convinced that between the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a consensus, not about national and high statehood questions, not about that, but there is a consensus between people who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina that they do not want to give bribes to administrators. This is a consensus. There is a consensus between people that they do not want wild urban developments, because somebody has bribed somebody else and got the permission to build. There is a consensus that they want fair courts, and fair judiciary. It does not mean that they will become less nationalistic if they get that. But if become a state with less corruption or no corruption, economy will be better, we will have more foreign investment and the country will be more stable. But the old nationalisms will remain, this is out of question.

So, what is the connection between the arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the fact that we do not have an acceptable law of conflict of interest. We have no obligation of declaring property by officials. This is because these political elites who are frightening the people, they are making the people vote for this. So all of these laws have not been passed.

Bosnia has received the worst opinion about the judiciary, where a huge amount of connection has been shown between politics and the judiciary. When speaking about the European Union, it is doing what it does best: it should adopt an administrative approach, continue with the administrative approach and insist on implementing these conditions. The conditions are clear, and

once they are implemented, they will make Bosnia and Herzegovina a better state, more stable and which will be readier to enter the European Union. Given the candidate status or any other privileges without the fulfilment of these conditions, will not work. Thank you.

Gordan Akrap

Very interesting answers. With these answers you tried to explain the process which is visible Bosnia and Herzegovina. Which is to try to find a consensus, which is necessary to happen in order to achieve a constituting solution between all the nations. So far it has not been defined. I agree with the colleague Arnaut. The question of the trust of people into the judiciary is very difficult to separate from all other questions you have pointed out, you and the other speakers. This concerns the election processes, and the election results.

When having in mind that you needed 14 months after the elections to start to establish central authorities, and in Mostar there were no elections for 11 years, there are serious questions regarding the legitimacy of the process. Željko Komšić is the representative of the Croats there? This is not a positive basis for the development of the society founded on law and legality. But let me go back to something else: which is the level and which is the point of view the nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina have? And what do they think about the EU accession and the NATO? And another question: what is the possible influence of Russia, Turkey and China in the process of Bosnia and Herzegovina on their way to open the negotiation process for the EU accession? Colleague Arnaut, I would like to start with you.

Damir Arnaut

As I already said when I spoke before, Russia and Turkey are acting in a way as they have found a fruitful ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote their interests. And they are interested in everything else but the democratic process. They are only pulling us away from democracy. They do not help us, not at all. It is clear to all of us that the Russian interest is primarily in the line with the Serbian interest, and the Turkish with the Bosnian.

Something that worries us even more is, that these leads us to the attempt of these countries, especially Turkey at the moment, to put pressure on us. Remember, we had to discuss about the returning of citizens of Turkey which Turkey believes to be the enemies of their regime. Turkey wants us to hand them out, to expel them. I believe this happened due to the lack of engagement of other EU states, that has been the case so far. But what is encouraging, for example, is that the US has returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and appointed their special representative, Mr. Palmer.

This is again very encouraging, that the US will be present here and will continue to be present. And the European Union will insist for these criteria to be implemented in order to weaken the Russian and the Turkish influence. They play sometimes one motions, but with the exception of that there are no other economic parameters, nothing. There are no Turkish investments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there are few Russian ones. If you compare that to EU investments, or other countries, it is almost nothing. So, I believe that it is very harmful for Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue to allow this influence. You can only combat that with a better influence or higher influence of the EU or the US.

Miloš Šolaja

When speaking from the Republika Srpska may I pose a very complicated question. Ok, nobody will say that 22 countries are the same and that the security policies are the same in every country. When speaking about the influence of Russia and Turkey, Turkey is mostly trying to influence Bosnia and Herzegovina by influencing its politics through the Bosnian parties. A few days ago, it wasn't the situation as my previous colleague has described. It was much better. But in the meantime, Turkey has invested a lot in Serbia. And whoever knows Turkey, knows that this is normal. Turkey works in its own interest. They did not continue to invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina because it doesn't pay off.

In the Republika Srpska there is this emotional frame, the so-called historic frame, the Orthodox and Slavic frame. After the Munich Conference in 2007 there were some features pointing out that Russia is trying to gain power again. In 2007 or 2008 the support of NATO to the Republika Srpska was around 35%. Never up to 50%, but it was around 35% - after that it went down by for times, so who is to blame? NATO has never declared themselves in favour of the Republika Srpska. They have always spoken about Bosnia and Herzegovina. They have never been honest. Allow me just to describe something else. When talking about Bosnia and Herzegovina we should understand one thing, but not many people understand that. From the point of view of the executive authorities, those who are implementing politics, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the executive power is the Republika Srpska in their 10 cantons. So the joint institutions, together with the Presidency and the Parliament, that's the executive. The Federation the same way. So the point is in the cantons. How are they going to negotiate, it is up to them. It is a federation based on the Dayton. It is not a federation of administrative and other interests. Republika Srpska is also there.

The NATO never said a word for a long time, but they have always tried to be ideological. So one day when we will join the NATO, it will be better. There will be greenfield investments and things will go on better and it will be safe. Yes, there are Russian investments of course, not as much as the EU investments, of course, but every 50 km in the Republika Srpska and in one part of the Federation when you see green petrol stations, these are Russian petrol stations. Every 50 kilometres. Also investments into refineries. These are processes requiring further elaboration of the situation.

Another question: let us suppose you are a politician and you need money would you accept Russian money, or would you wait for the NATO to be safe and then start to invest? So, this is a very practical point of view. Back then when it happened, we were in the situation that the Republika Srpska is not, and will not be in favour of NATO for quite a long time. What is important to be said is that this is a factor for the decision maker. And without them there is no NATO. We have seen how at the Council of Ministers this document has been established. So in difference to those who said they don't know what this is saying, I know it is not an obstacle to acceding NATO. Well, in order to constitute an entity with almost no authorities, it is not easy. Regarding these executive authorities sometimes the politics is so wrong and makes so many mistakes. If you go to EU institutions as a representative of the Bosnia and Herzegovina institution and you promise something, it turns out to be something you cannot stick to. And then they come to Sarajevo, the representatives come to Sarajevo and try to analyse what has been accomplished. That is the only thing they do, visiting us.

Dražen Barbarić

To come back and to sum the previous two issues. The relationship of the EU to Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is one

problem: in our media space and political space we have a certain leap, a quantum leap from the Dayton phase of statehood, which is as it is – very conceptual, very lethargic, with a number of problems, like corruption, brain drain, and the impossibility to constitute a government. We are now going into the so-called Brussels phase of statehood. But nobody knows what it should imply. Everybody is quoting European values, European principles, the question of Europeanisation is used up to the level of prostitution where it has no value at all.

Allow me to use a short metaphor, an anecdote which should not have happened in history: European anthropologists made researches on an island where the Aborigines had a macabre death dance. So generations of anthropologists have come where this macabre dance had taken place. But once the anthropologists have learned the language of the tribe, this people said that this dance does not exist. This is an improvisation. They knew what the European anthropologists wanted to see, so they improvised on the spot this macabre dance. So this is Europeanization with us. This is a dance macabre. Nobody knows the steps, but everybody pretends to dance the waltz.

Professor Dragišić will know from the former mandate of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Dačić and Mr. Hashim Thaci, they made a statement to the Croatian television. Ivica Dačić said that there is no question of recognizing Kosovo, but that with Kosovo they will build relations on European principles. Hashim Thaci said that there is no question of exchange of territory or similar, but that Serbia must recognize the statehood of Kosovo. But, that they are ready to establish their relations with Serbia on European principles. So who is the crazy one here? Where is the ratio? What are the European values and European principles? What does it actually mean in establishing the relations between two actual countries?

The similar thing happens, if you noticed, when the borders between Kosovo and Albania were abolished, where the officials of Kosovo and Albania said that this is a Schengen principle. So, you can use the European principles to smuggle some small items of European solutions into the Balkans.

Speaking about federalism, in our interpretation it means an aggrandizement of the territories where people live. Here the Serbs would say, this is in the declaration of the Serbian ruling party, we have no problems with that, they are able to go as an entity into the negotiations with the EU. Where the Confederation will be within the European framework. On the other hand the SDA, the Bosnian subject has no problem with European principles, but they claim they want to have a unitary central state. So you have three completely incompatible concepts of political systems and they are all wrapped up in the concept of Europeanisation. On the other hand, if you ask the European officials, they are not very skilful and they are not very happy. What would be a genuine European practice of solving the problems of divided societies? What would it be? Is it the south the South Tyrol, is it the Belgian model, is it the Spanish model, is it the Cypriot model? When one part of the territory enters the European union, it was symptomatic for me and even threatening from the former head of the European Commission when he said in case of the Scottish referendum: "If the Scots opt for independence I am not sure how you will enter the EU." So, the European Union had its own dance macabre. If it were sure it would not stop on the back stop, why would it be a problem if this solution has been passed through the so-called Europeanization process. So, we can delude ourselves with the European values, but they are actually an abstract mixture of various models.

Miroslav Tuđman

Just a brief comment. My colleague has said that it is a problem to even mention federalism. This is another indicator of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where you have a federation, but cannot mention federalism, where you have Republika Srpska, where you cannot mention confederation. So as I said, this is an European problem. And some of these basic rules nevertheless do exist even in the European acquis and are applicable to multinational states, for which they say that the Declaration of human rights is the basis that says that every people has the right to self-determination. So all the basic human rights are one foundation, which is a valid basis here nevertheless.

Concerning the other question about the Russian and Chinese influence, and the other influences, of course, like Arab countries in Bosnia and Herzegovina we should try to seek an answer in the European Union. Because to be frank, Bosnia and Herzegovina has no oil or any valuable resources, but it has something else, a fact, as the colleague Kikerec said in his introduction, these six countries of the Western Balkans are the soft belly of the European Union, they are surrounded by the NATO alliance or the European Union, so the concept of the European Union cannot be completed until these countries are integrated sooner or later. I am not specifying the time frame, but they should be integrated in the EU. Therefore, these European players, including Turkey and Russia, wish to position themselves in this space, in order to promote their interest vis-a-vis the European Union, not because Bosnia and Herzegovina or all the six countries are such a big market that they would profit enormously from – they would not.

So looking from this point of view, that we are dealing with the countries that are surrounded by the NATO alliance and EU members, this is another reason why the EU should pay attention

to these processes that are going on in the space of these countries.

Gordan Akrap

I wish to switch now to a broader context. Colleague Dragišić, a question: How do the processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina influence the process in Serbia and vice versa?

Zoran Dragišić

We are free to say that Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia function as connected vessels, because Serbia is the signatory of the Dayton Agreement, there is the entity Republika Srpska with more than a million people, although this number is unfortunately decreasing, but a large number of Serbs is living there, nevertheless. This makes it an issue of importance for Serbia. It has been the attitude of all the governments of Serbia from Dayton onward that Serbia supports the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and has no territorial pretensions.

I think that Serbia is trying to play as constructive role as possible. Bosnia and Herzegovina is firstly a European problem and should be resolved in that context. If Europe does not find applicable solutions for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia will not be able to do it by itself, neither Croatia as a member of the European Union. Although Croatia, as the presiding member of the European Union next year, will be especially responsible for this.

We often hear voices about some negative influences of Serbia or Croatia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but I think there are no proofs for such voices. As regards political processes, the relation towards NATO is particularly interesting. In the Republika Srpska, we have a very low support for NATO, just as the support for the entrance of Serbia into the NATO is very low. The number of

supporters is decreasing and is lesser than in 1999 when we were bombed. And why do we have in the Republika Srpska at the same time a decrease of the support of NATO?

This is a very concrete political connection, which we see between Serbia and Republika Srpska. In any case, the political processes in Serbia, the gradual accession towards the European Union and the acceleration of the opening of the negotiation chapters – all that will affect Republika Srpska, what is evident and normal is that Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina look toward Serbia and the politics which is led in Belgrade, has a strong reflection to what has happened in Banja Luka. And I see nothing bad in that. In this constellation of powers it is not threatening the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Regarding this question of foreign meddlers in the Balkans one thing is clear: no geopolitical space will ever be void - when you leave, somebody else will fill it up. The advancement towards the Western Union is like rowing up a river, and this river is pushing you back. Speaking about Russia, China and Turkey, these are three completely different influences. Speaking about these influences, these countries have a completely different approach to the Western Balkans and their role is different.

So, speaking about Turkey the relations between Serbia and Turkey, I think never in history, except perhaps in the times of Kemal Ataturk, I think Serbia and Turkey have never had such good relations. I think that this is very important. Rationally looking, nobody can mind such a development. The two countries which until recently were almost enemies, and Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Kosovo. In all the warring developments Turkey was always against Serbia, the perception of Turkey in Serbia was very bad, but now, you have

many Turkish tourists in Serbia. And for next year we expect our trade volume to exceed two billion dollars.

The motorway Belgrade – Sarajevo is another important project that will connect the two countries and connect the Bosnians and the Serbs. We must also not forget that Turkey is a NATO member and China is present through the 17+1 project which is part of “One path one road” and 17 billion dollars is the amount of the Chinese investment so far. Of course, there will be a certain political influence after that. But if we analyse the Chinese political influence to this area I am not sure about it. We do not have the time to analyse it now. As regards the Russian influence, we do not have significant investments from Russia or any visible help. More or less they invest in propaganda campaigns, they invest in campaigns that should deter this part of Europe from entering Euro-Atlantic integrations.

In North Macedonia, for instance, we had some concrete activities against that. So we must know that a void political place will be filled. The fourth country is the United States. Do not forget, in the nineties we had a Europe that tried to do something all the time in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Then the Americans came, a power that came from out of nowhere and resolved the problem. Now we see that America has two representatives in this area, in Southeast Europe. I personally would like to see a greater involvement of the United States, especially in resolving the relationships between Belgrade and Priština in the seeking of a solution.

We are speaking here of the Western Balkan 6, but as far as I am concerned this is Western Balkan 5, as we cannot agree on the Kosovo question. It is not a topic today, but it is an open question. On this question many powers outside of Europe are playing on this. This is firstly a message to the EU: if you are not present in

this area, someone else will. This is the crux of the matter. It is a different issue of how to conceptualize concrete strategies. So I think this panel today is one of the important initiatives thanks to the Foundation which is the organizer of this meeting. For us, from the Western Balkans, looking at Croatia, who is kind of relative, allow me to say, who is living in Europe and who will use its authority of presiding the EU. As colleague Šolaja has said, this is a diagnosis that we have and we try to find a therapy. Thank you.

Gordan Akrap

Thank you for the answer. Of course, when we are talking about NATO, it is understandable that the United States is involved. We have not pointed out this fact, but it is worth repeating. We have not also mentioned Saudi Arabia, but their influence is important, as well.

Damir Arnaut

Thank you, allow me to add the following. It is perfectly clear that the role of Turkey is different in Serbia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I think we should take that into account. The role of Turkey in Serbia has economic grounds, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina it refers to culture and colonialization at a certain level. So there is no economic aspect at all. There is no Turkish economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But they have opened five universities, around ten schools, they are constructing students' homes with separate accommodation for women and men, which is completely against the culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are organizing large meetings in stadiums – as I said, it is so much against everything we believe in. The crisis that started around three years ago resulted with NATO putting large pressure on

them to give up their intentions, because they understood that the role of Turkey in Bosnia and Herzegovina is negative.

Miloš Šolaja

Sometimes we forget there are certain interests. As far as I know, the most important interest of Turkey is to become a member. And everything they do, they do in that connection. The only continental connection is the Balkans. When you travel from Belgrade to Zagreb, 70% of the Lorries riding on that motorway are Turkish. They are using that route very frequently. They are protecting that route via Belgrade and Budapest to get to Western Europe. It is very important to be there. And at the end everything is kept in the spirit of the doctrine of zero-conflict with the neighbours. Try to be friends with your neighbours.

As regards NATO there is one disadvantage of NATO when talking about Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is about the lack in establishing the Council of Ministers. This goes back to the times when Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted to establish a MAK. In order to do so, all the members of the Presidency should be in favour of that, but they were not. Once that happened it caused a constitutional crisis. What happened then? In 2010 in Tallinn there was an informal meeting of the ministers where Haris Silajdžić with his representatives formed a lobby regarding the issue of calculating military pensions. They wanted to set up accounting for all military pensions. So after five years in a school of international relations one high official of NATO, whom I shall not name, said: "We were wrong, we did not need that requirement." So the military pension accounting was a requirement. And what happens now? NATO is dropping the plan of accounting military pensions and it has actually caused a change in the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, because the authorities of the High Commissioner would have been transferred to somewhere else.

This annex 4 speaks about that, but it has been changed. Not in paper, actually.

Holger Haibach

Thank you very much. I would just like to come in on this question of foreign meddlers. I think one should differentiate between those countries which are trying to influence the situation in a country, and not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and not only there, but in the whole region. If you look at the Chinese interest for instance, with their “Road and Belt” or 16 + 1 initiative, right now it is actually more or less 18 + 1 because Italy and Greece are on board. It is a long term economic project. If you look at what Russia wants – Russia wants no further NATO enlargement, and this is why they try to get influence. On the other hand the United States are doing the same, but exactly with the opposite idea. So, I think the problem of the European Union to my mind is that other than for geo-strategical reasons we should have this region in sight and we should try to get them to become members. The EU has not really defined what it wants with countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other countries we are going to talk about on the upcoming events. That is something that also – as I mentioned earlier – has a lot to do with the fact that the European Union is in a crisis itself, obviously, it’s got the Brexit on its hands, and it has this rift between Berlin and Paris, which obviously cannot be solved on a short time. That, as far as I can see, is the reason what the EU is not more proactive, as it is right now. This is just a description of the circumstances, and I am not sure how it is going to be resolved.

Since we are coming close to the end of this conference, I would like to pose another question to everybody who wants to join in. There is this idea of mini-Schengen between the countries that we

are talking about. I would like to hear from you whether this is a good idea, or a bad idea. Anybody who wants, please.

Zoran Dragišić

I think that this is an excellent idea, and it occurred after Albania and North Macedonia were rejected by the European Union, what caused major upheavals in North Macedonia, especially because of the history of Macedonia and what they went through. Macedonia certainly will enter the NATO alliance soon, and that is one of the rewards Macedonia will receive, for their very constructive approach and solution finding process with Greece regarding the name of the country.

I think that it is a great idea – not to wait for something, for the first time in the Balkans we do not sit and wait and blame others for what happened to us, but to try to – and I shall agree with the colleague Barbarić – to implement European standards, whatever that might be. But in this case it is about the free movement of goods, capital, ideas, free movement of people. Whatever it is, it will implant the foundational idea of European values, and to try to implement that in our regions. I think that this is a good idea. At the moment this idea includes Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania. And I know that this idea isn't too fresh, and it is not only the reaction of being rejected by Macron regarding the opening of the negotiations for North Macedonia and Albania. Especially the problem was in Northern Macedonia, because they did so much in order to resolve the issue concerning their name, and they went through a very turbulent period and they were exposed to serious hybrid attacks. And Macedonia will be rewarded with the NATO accession. But in Macedonia they understood it as a hand stretched out towards them by the United States, not Europe. They feel betrayed by Europe, especially Macedonia.

Now they have announced the new elections that was the next step.

Try to imagine that the Putin administration will form something in Macedonia. That could cause new problems there. I think this initiative is very good, because the values of Europe which are reflected in a free movement of people and capital. If we will be capable to implement all that into administrative procedures, in order to enable free business and opportunities between us, as well as the exchange of ideas.

I am an university professor always thinking about the exchange of students, exchange of researchers and the exchange of professors. We shall definitely create a better and safer area, more resilient to any influence. I think it would be very good if also other countries of the Western Balkans decide to join us. Of course, we expect help from the European Union members in our region – Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Croatia because they are around us, they are the countries in the region. And we expect support from the central EU administration, we expect support from Brussels.

We already hear that there are certain administrative procedures which are against all that. So please, we accept a more flexible approach from Europe, a better support of the initiative. I believe that we could become more stable. I think that this initiative is good, and it is very obvious from which areas these obstacles are coming and these are very negative forces being imposed upon the Balkans.

Miloš Šolaja

Allow me to say that in one of my studies, I have defined 14 different regional initiatives in three phases: one before the Cold War, the other just after the Cold War and the third in the

European macro region. I have also defined the disadvantages of these initiatives and so far not one has provided results. The only characteristic of all these initiatives was that they were more or less initiated by the international community. If that is the ultimate idea, I think it is good. But this idea has to be very precisely elaborated, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro because they intend to accede the European Union. Because this has also become part of a very high level of administration and organization. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a huge problem with migrants and the migrant crisis. The point of view of the European Union is, that this is our problem. We had to cope with such a statement recently.

What about the regional initiative which I have never written down, which is the regional initiative of organized crime in the Western Balkans. They do not hold summits and meetings, they do not put together resolutions, they do not have any interpreters, they do not speak any foreign language, but they understand each other perfectly. If this will enable them to work even smoother than before, then we have a big problem. In principle, nothing better could happen to us, because we as a region do not meet the European standards of industrial production, neither the economic standards or any other standards, and we are forced to communicate between ourselves and to trade between ourselves, up to the moment when we shall reach the European level. And what if everything what is wrong, and which is a disadvantage, what if these people will be ahead of us, because the criminals are always faster than any institution? That is my dilemma.

In any case, if we handle that as something that is progressive, because it is something that is a proven fact, I already have mentioned that all the regional initiatives have been supported from outside. This is a proof that the Balkans, not only the

Western Balkans, but the entire Balkans has the capacity to do something by itself due its own interest.

Dražen Barbarić

Along with everything we have heard we cannot agree on a rational level, but we can agree that this is a regional initiative. If these things will not be respected as basic principles, we shall put it into force. Taking into account the economic effect and regional cooperation. That is important. But if the entire story is pointed at the geopolitical level it is actually pointing at two important elements: on one side is this national Albanian corpus and potentially being aware of certain elements coming from Albania. The complementary advantage is the so-called positioning of Republic of Serbia in this area as the regional leader, as the so-called trigger of the entire region.

If this is understood as something to take away the understanding from what is important in order to open the negotiations towards becoming a candidate and to apply the EU acquis – that is not good. Especially if the European Union is institutionalizing its relation in order to slow down the negotiations. Macron has stepped back from that and explicitly he has said that the material has become fatigue. It is actually an internal European story to position France in a new recomposed structure of the European Union, having in mind that Brexit is waiting us. And the other important thing is that the German Chancellor as a dominant political figure for so many years – for Germany and the European Union – will retire from this office, so some cards will have to be shuffled again. I think that Macron is trying to fortify his position and to recompose the entire thing. The only thing I am afraid of – allow me to put it this way – this could become an obstacle to the Croatian presidency, because Croatia will be in the position to

bluff, if this EU enlargement should become a priority during the entire period.

That is one thing, and the other thing, there is a serious sector – the French president who is very reserved towards this project the entire story would not be too convincing even though every obstacle represents a potential challenge. And the creators of the Croatian foreign policy could understand this as a challenge towards certain synergies of bigger players in the EU. The entire process has to be turned around to minimize this gap. In a certain way, it needs to be talked about in an open way. If the negotiation process would be open to all the countries I do not think that this would do any harm to the European Union, and the entire process and these regional initiatives would be of secondary importance. And it would be welcomed in the end. They would just support this most important process we are expecting. It does not matter what this mini-Schengen would like, it would not contribute to legal issues, like the rule of law and the like. This really big process of EU-accession will be introduced to these countries. This is my sceptical opinion.

Damir Arnaut

As long as we have the migrant crisis I cannot support this on the part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We should additionally strengthen the control of our eastern border, and not to open it. So, if mini-Schengen means the same as the big Schengen, and this is the flow of people, at this moment, which has no signs of subsiding for Bosnia and Herzegovina, it would not be in our interest.

Gordan Akrap

In any case, I have the opinion that this is one of the processes where president Vučić wants to position Serbia in the situation where he faces the final resolution of the situation with Kosovo. I agree that the positioning and the strengthening of the borders of this area should start in some other spaces, just as the question of migration should be resolved at the very source. Gradually, we are nearing the end of our discussion. Is there any topic which one of you would like to open, that we have not touched at this brief encounter. Because it is difficult to touch on all the topics, it is difficult to discuss everything. We see that the question of inner stabilization and the inner constitutional arrangement of constitutive peoples in Bosnia is extremely demanding. It was mentioned several times today that we should speak about a new constitution adapted to the times. But if we know that for 14 months they have discussed how the government should be constituted, how long would it take to agree on a new constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Miloš Šolaja

When Mr Akrap offered the possibility, I would like to raise the question of identity. This is a question which demands a more thorough analysis than I will give. But in very brief: firstly, most citizens of Republika Srpska do not identify themselves with Bosnia but with Serbia. This has practical repercussions. If there were no changes, post-Dayton changes, the people would fulfil all their interests in Republika Srpska, they identify themselves with that, there is the national element, and so on. On the other hand we have an identification especially of the people in the Bosnian part that the international community should design Bosnia and Herzegovina according to their desire and some have seen this as a transitional phase. Finally, I think that the time for final solutions has gone and we should approach this with full responsibility. I do not think that we can do anything radically

new, I think that the solutions will move around what the current constitution is offering. But we must legitimize it in a civil way. This should be our constitution, we should not be an item of calculation for the changes, we should not be a starting point for separate interests and then we would be in the position to deal with the real problems of life such as economy, security, social policy. But, in this way we are always circling around the same territorial and constitutional issues.

Holger Haibach

I do very much agree, as I said before, there will not be a Dayton 2, it's not going to happen. Not only because of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but very much because of the international actors – they do not have a joint idea of how to renegotiate it. I would say that you are perfectly right when you say that we have to work with what we have at hand and try to fill that with life. That would be a big step forward, as far as I can see. The question of identity is a difficult question, especially in this region, as we all know. If I think about a country like Romania, with a large Hungarian minority, if I look at other countries, I think the idea of an ethnically clean country will not work in this region, because it is not like that. If I look at the people who I know from here, in the second generation the latest, they will have somebody from Bosnia and Herzegovina in their family, or someone from Serbia, or whoever. So the concept of statehood cannot really be connected to the concept of identity, at least not in this region. Having said that, I think we have tried to cover subjects as complicated as possible in a very short time. I would really like to thank all of you for participating and sharing with us your views. I think it was one of the best discussions that I have seen, especially when it comes to this very complicated subject. I would also like to thank Gordan and the Hybrid Warfare Research Institute and my colleagues from the Foundation. Thanks to the

interpreters as well. We are very close to the end of the year, so I think it is very appropriate to invite you to a small reception and to wish you Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope to see you soon. Thank you very much.

Conference video is available at:

<https://www.kas.de/de/web/kroatien/veranstaltungsberichte/detail/-/content/kroatien-und-die-westbalkan-staaten-wb6-2>