



Conclusions IED seminar

EU-WESTERN BALKANS: A Future in Common?

Kotor, March 26, 2022

Two objectives and two panels for this seminar: identify the philosophical, cultural, political and other points of convergence allowing the stability of the region to be grounded; measure the effectiveness of the instruments of dialogue and the initiatives of inter-regional collaboration.

The feeling is divers, embracing all sensibilities, expressed at length, in a constructive dialogue.

Francesco Rutelli has set the tone, in his introductory speech, by stressing Western Balkans' diversity as a common land, needing to find a path for the future, on which we can move forward together, in Europe. If the Horaces and Curiaces did it in ancient times, we can do it too.

Andoni Ortuzar reacted to the burning news -the invasion of Ukraine- underlining that democratic conquests cannot be taken for granted, and warning that Russia may be tempted to export war to the Balkans.

Back to hope - in this constant coming and going - with Ulrike Müller, for whom the main resource of the Balkans for European integration is not economic policies but people: especially youngsters and women, despite their lack of societal integration, due to the deficit of gender equality.

Another handicap of Balkans public life, outlined by Tsvetelina Tsvetanova, is the absence of civil society in the governance process and the little interest in the much needed implementation of local policies for sustainable development.

For Aldo Bumci there is hope for the future of the Western Balkans, because their security is guaranteed by both the EU and NATO. And this has already transformed Europe.

Andrea Angelini, who has spent his life in the field working for these two organizations, testifies to this, with the precision and rigor of a high-ranking military officer.

Montenegro, with its transparent electoral system and the absence of tensions between the majority and the ethnic minorities is there to prove it, for twenty years, underlines Andrzej Potocki, another field actor.

Current peace in the Balkans is perceived differently in the East and in the West, a cleavage constantly debated and deplored in the background.

"You have lived in peace", said Veton Surroi, "not us".

For him, peace is a dynamic process, rather a temporary absence of war in the region.



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The solutions for the future are given by the same Veton Surroi: a convergence of trust, both between the Balkans countries and the mutual trust of their relationship with the EU.

Not all joint initiatives are necessarily effective, there are too many geopolitical hidden motives for Miodrag Vlahovic. Like other speakers, he is opposed to the Open Balkans regional project.

Mikel Burzako concluded by calling for a global security agreement, once again, in the current war context. And to the emergence of new leaders, capable of carrying it, at a time when the democratic world and the autocratic one are harshly confronted.

Therefore, we cannot afford to neglect the Western Balkans, we need to accompany them more than ever.

Europe can't tolerate the existence of a black hole, between Greece and Croatia, subject to all kinds of covetousness.

Nicolas Don

Moderator of the event

