

THE BALKANS: Searching for Solutions

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Only one month before the Dayton accord was signed, we organized the conference *Bosnia: Searching for Solutions* in November 1995 in Bergen. One could imagine that the organizers as well as the participants of the conference either would contrive a solution for Bosnia or decide to extend their endeavour to the entire Balkans. None of these outcomes have appeared. Seven years after the war and the Dayton accord, the appropriate solution for Bosnia has not been found, and it can be rather safely stated that without such a solution the Balkan issue cannot be resolved. The Bosnian and Balkan challenges are interlocked.

This second conference in Bergen on *The Balkans: Searching for Solutions*, held in May 9-12, 2002, directed major attention to the Bosnian-Balkan interlinkages. On the one hand, it is hardly conceivable that the Balkans will move towards enduring peace, political stability and economic prosperity unless Bosnia restores its former multi-cultural society (imperilled by genocide) by returning refugees, provides political re-integration (divided by nationalisms as well as the Dayton accord) and launches a self-sustainable economy (destroyed by the war). On the other hand, Bosnia or, better to say, the international community as its tutor, will not achieve these objectives until the Balkan environment, i.e. Bosnia's neighbours, eventually give up their pretensions towards it.

Seven years ago, in the first quest for solutions for Bosnia, participants from all parts of former Yugoslavia came to Bergen. Among them was also professor Miladin Zivotic, the founder of the creditable, but helpless, Belgrade Circle, a group of Serbian intellectuals who have persistently been in opposition to the aggression and crimes in Bosnia from the very beginning, representing »an other Serbia«. Miladin Zivotić is not among us any more, but at the second conference his disciple and new leader of the *Belgrade Circle*, professor Obrad Savic, took part, symbolizing the continuation in critical perception of current political development in the Balkans and Serbia.

With the Department of Comparative Politics and the Stein Rokkan Centre, University of Bergen, as hosts, the Second conference on the Balkans was organized as part of the Project *The Politics of Democratic and Welfare Development in South Eastern Europe: A Network for Research and Education*, lead by professor Stein Kuhnle, and with the support from the Norwegian government's *Programme for South Eastern Europe*, administered by the *Centre for International University Cooperation* and the *Norwegian Research Council*. Our partners in the *Network from the Balkans* are the universities in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. The project is open for other partners in the region. Participants and speakers at the conference represented our partners from the Balkans (Suada Buljubasic, Dusan Janjic, Marija Kolin, Jovanka Matic, Dragomir Pantic, Ivan Siber, Boris Tihi, Radovan Vukadinovic), as well as other partners (Daniel Lindvall, Ørjar Øyen). The conference was opened by Kirsti Koch Christensen, Rector of the University of Bergen.

The editors of this booklet would like to thank all participants for submitting revised versions of their presentations at the conference and for their overall contribution to searching for solutions in the Balkans. We thank Peter Cripps for providing crucial control of the quality and style of the English prose of all contributions, and we thank the Rokkan Centre for secretarial and organizational help in bringing about this publication.

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