

TRANSNATIONALISM IN THE BALKANS:

The Emergence, Nature and Impact of Cross-national Linkages on an Enlarged and Enlarging Europe

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The future successful incorporation of the Balkans into an enlarged Europe does not only hinge on the successful political and economic transition, but also on the region's transnationalisation. The concept of transnationalism is regarded as a crucial conceptual and empirical bridge tying the heterogeneous Europe into a functioning and workable political and geographic whole through the creation of cross-border linkages that foster cooperation despite the persisting differences.

Transnationalisation implies the emergence of cross-national linkages of political, cultural, economic and security nature. The creation of such linkages is itself a sign of the ongoing process of the post-Communist transformation, but also a catalyst, if not a guarantor, of the sustenance of transformation of post-Communist states and societies. The removal of the top-down omnipresent state control allows the emergence of a multitude of interests, and the politics based on it, shaping the domestic political sphere. However, it has also allowed for the pursuit of interests and politics at a transnational scale: be it in a form of cultural exchanges, creation of regional economic arrangements, or designing of new frameworks for security enhancement, etc. Transnationalism creates another mode and scale of national politics that transcends the national scale but does not deny it. On the contrary, by providing for a new level of politics and identity, and, more importantly, by tying politics, economics, security, and even identity to extra-national structures, transnationalisation also stimulates further European integration of post-Communist societies.

We argue that transnationalisation as an analytical concept allows for the study of the impact of contact and interaction on both sides of the linkages, rather than viewing the Europeanisation as a one-way transfer of values from the West towards the East. Importantly, this does not deny the existence of the common values, rights, principles and policies that are the foundation of the European integration process.

The objective of this conference is to analyse from a multi-disciplinary and an international perspective the ongoing process of transnationalisation of the Balkans on the path of its integration in Europe – politically, economically, culturally, but also in security terms. It aims to offer insight into the impact of the multitude of transnational links that have flourished since the fall of Milošević in October 2000, both those promoting greater stability and those undermining it, such as transnational networks, across the region, and we invite proposals for papers exploring the following aspects of transnationalism in the Balkans:

- political transnationalism
- the politics of transnationalism
- economic interconnectedness
- »underground« transnationalisation and criminal networks
- identity cross-linkages
- culture, arts and mass media as a vehicle of transnationalisation
- drivers of Balkan transnationalisation (e.g. technology, regionalisation, etc.)
- obstacles to transnationalisation

Abstracts should not exceed 250 words and should be accompanied with a brief information on the author, institutional affiliation of the author, and the contact details of the author. Successful applicants will be informed in August 2004. The participants' expenses shall be reimbursed.