



From the Secretary General

The first semester of 2008 was marked by Kosovo’s declaration of independence on 17 February, the shift from the Stability Pact to the Regional Cooperation Council on 27 February, and Radovan Karadzic’s arrest on 21 July. These major events provided the background for many articles and interviews.



While finalizing our new book *Regional Cooperation in South East Europe and Beyond: Challenges and Prospects* (see page 2), we started the first reflections on a process that could establish a South East Europe forum. “SEE Levels – Out of the Box” seeks to provide an open space in which a range of actors involved in diverse regional initiatives can reflect on and exchange experiences (see page 4).



In partnership with IDM and Osservatorio sui Balcani we are currently working on a two-day conference “Dealing with the past and reconciliation processes in the Western Balkans”. This international symposium will be organized in Vienna on 10-11 November 2008.



These activities will also pave the way for subsequent activities that will prioritize three sectors: regional cooperation; justice and reconciliation; and the EU integration process. The intention is to move forward with in-depth analyses which we hope to publish in forthcoming books.



Of course, Russia’s recent recognition of the secessionist Georgian provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia has fuelled new discussion of old geo-political conflicts across Europe that also affects South East Europe. For sure, the international conference organized in Berlin (12-13 September) by the Southeast Europe Association and the German Federal Foreign Office (“The EU and the Western Balkans: The Objectives of the Slovenian EU Presidency – Implementation and Continuation”) will take account of this new situation. Navigating in the labyrinth of international relations becomes more challenging and will require new efforts. CEIS, with its means and capacities, will contribute to the ongoing debates.

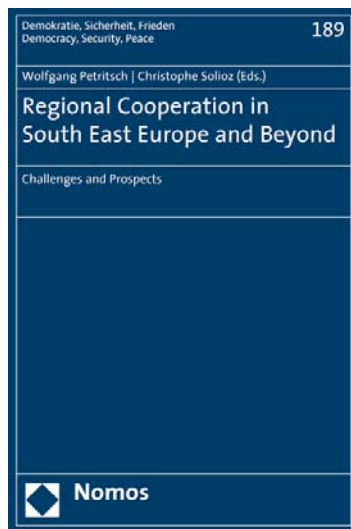
Above: some pictures from seminar in Grožnjan (June 2008)

Geneva, 29 August 2008

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NEW CEIS PUBLICATION

Regional Cooperation in South East Europe and Beyond is a collection of essays that examine the challenges of regional cooperation in South East Europe and outline prospects for its future development. Among the issues considered in this collection are the increased diversity in the region, the paradox of new divisions and contradictions produced by the latest round of European Union enlargement, the connection between economic development and cooperation in the region, the coexistence of many cooperation programmes and the still unresolved security challenges. It also discusses why these countries should embrace the process of wider regional cooperation by moving beyond regional frameworks that are too narrowly conceived. The region should be seen less as a homogeneous space than a multifaceted network linked to other networks. It is now time to network these networks; proactive and forward-looking regional cooperation should follow less the logic of sovereign states and more the notion of mutually assured connectivity. Both the EU and South East Europe must seize this perspective and achieve regional cooperation as a truly innovative political project.



Regional Cooperation in South East Europe and Beyond. Challenges and Prospects is edited by Wolfgang Petritsch, and Christophe Solioz, with contributions from: Othon Anastasakis | Martin Dangerfield | Milica Delević | Vladimir Gligorov | Wolfgang Petritsch | Christophe Solioz | Goran Svilanović | Theodor H. Winkler | Gregor Zore

(Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft [Democracy, Security, Peace No 189, ISBN 978-3-8329-3413-2], 2008), 187 pp.

Regional Cooperation in South East Europe and Beyond illustrates that collaboration through a circle of neighbourhood friends strengthens both the logic of EU membership and its effects. Upgraded and broadened regional cooperation between South East European countries also demonstrates that the region can work together and has a contribution to make to the EU. Regional cooperation not only boosts the region in meeting its common challenges, but builds confidence outside the region in the whole enlargement and cooperation process.

Janez Potočnik, European Commission, Commissioner for Science and Research – Brussels

Fears and suspicions/spoken and unspoken/, economic realities and electoral calculations; requirements of European integration and the change of generations, all these factors shape the dynamics of the regional integration in the Balkans. But if you want to understand why the regional integration is an imperative for the European future of the Balkans, you should read this important, informative and insightful book.

Ivan Krastev, Chair of the Centre for Liberal Strategies – Sofia

This volume assembles stimulating explorations of the regional cooperation in the Balkans; it deepens and broadens our understanding of a complex process characterized by post-war transition, state building and EU integration.

Boris Nemšić, CEO mobilkom austria – Vienna

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CONFERENCE

On 26 July 2008, Christophe Solioz presented: “SEE In and Out of The Box: A pan-European Framework for Subregional Cooperation in South East Europe,” at the international conference *What keeps us apart — What keeps us together?* organized in Ljubljana by the Central and East European International Studies Association (CEEISA) and World International Studies Committee (WISC).

This conference paper examines the challenges of regional cooperation in South East Europe (SEE) and outline prospects for its future development. Among the issues considered are the increased diversity in the region, the paradox of new divisions and contradictions produced by the latest round of European Union (EU) enlargement, the connection between economic development and regional cooperation, the coexistence of many cooperation programmes and the still unresolved security challenges. It also discusses why SEE countries should embrace the process of wider regional cooperation by moving beyond regional — in fact subregional — frameworks that are too narrowly conceived. To this end, this paper ventures to explain why upgraded and broadened regional cooperation in SEE would not interfere with, but rather complement and reinforce, both EU integration and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), while requiring innovative thinking and the careful recalibration of previous regional initiatives.

The CEIS homepage provides access to the keynote speeches, galleries and, when available, videos at <<http://www.ceis-eu.org/events/2008/events.htm>>

EVENTS

On 18 January 2008 Jakob Finci — CEIS president — was selected by the Council for America’s First Freedom as the 2008 recipient of its International First Freedom Award. The Awards Selection Committee, in making its decision, considered not only Jakob Finci’s role as humanitarian activist during Yugoslavia’s war and the many high posts he have served globally, but also his enormous personal commitment to humanitarian relief, reconciliation and interfaith dialog around the globe.

On 14 May 2008 Wolfgang Petritsch presented at the Conference organized by the IPP in Vienna a case-study in post-cold war conflict management discussing the Russia’s involvement in Kosovo and the Balkans. This keynote speech is now published as “Russia, Kosovo and Europe — A Case Study in Post-Cold War Conflict Management,” *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen* (2008, no 1), pp. 6-17.

On 14 May 2008 Wolfgang Petritsch presented a lecture — *Der Balkan als europäische Herausforderung* — at the University of Zurich. This lecture was organized by the Swiss Institute of International Studies and the Europe Institute of the University of Zurich.

On 25-28 June 2008 Christophe Solioz (CEIS) met with Goran Božičević (Miramida Centre; Regional Peacebuilding Exchange), Srđan Dvornik (freelance researcher), and Paul Stubbs (Institute of Economics), in Grožnjan/Grisignana (Istria) to begin work on planning a South East European Forum to promote political, economic, social and cultural development and dialogue in the SEE region. The event will be the first of a number of consultation events prior to the Forum planned to take place in Istria in Spring 2009.

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**Focus on a forthcoming 2009 project:**

Conceived more as a forum rather than a formal conference, **SEE Levels – Out of the Box** seeks to provide an open space in which a range of actors involved in diverse regional initiatives can reflect on and exchange experiences; gain new knowledge, skills and analytical insights; reflect on ‘lessons (not) learnt’; and engage in mutual learning. The event provides an opportunity to initiate new collaborations, envision new possibilities, and build sustainable strategic partnerships. Whilst difference and diversity in assumptions, concepts, practices, and visions can be a source of disagreement and misunderstanding, they can also provide a rich canvas in which subversive critique can meet practical realism and move beyond mutual suspicion towards new creative tensions, sparks and ideas for the future.

SEE Levels – Out of the Box is an event which seeks to understand South East Europe as a space in which multiple levels and networks interact and produce new meanings, understandings, mutual learning and new forms of communication, and visions. By bringing together diverse actors who are, in their own sphere, key agents of change but who rarely interact with each other, the forum aims to encourage, promote and facilitate ‘out of the box’ thinking challenging taken-for-granted assumptions and moving beyond ‘business as usual’ in the region.

SEE Levels – Out of the Box aims to bring together activists, artists, business people, policy makers, politicians, scholars, and others, providing an open space for reflection, lesson learning, exchange, and new collaborations. Heterogeneous, facilitated, working groups

SEE LEVELS – OUT OF THE BOX

will make recommendations regarding how to deepen and widen regional initiatives.

The event aims:

- 1) to promote debate and constructive exchange among diverse constituencies committed to deepen and widen regional co-operation in South East Europe;
- 2) to learn lessons and develop skills relevant to regional co-operation initiatives of various kinds; and
- 3) to make recommendations to key policy making bodies regarding future trajectories of regional co-operation.

The process is designed to facilitate learning, exchange and collaboration. Some 60 – 70 participants, chosen for their creative engagement in regional initiatives in a range of spheres, will meet together in September 2009 in Grožnjan/Grisignana for an intensive experience offering a mixture of policy relevant plenary discussions, facilitated small group work on cross-cutting themes, applied knowledge and skills-building workshops, as well as a number of interactive artistic and cultural performances.

In terms of both time and content, small group work constitutes the central working method of the forum. Each group will cover the same broad range of cross-cutting themes but in a flexible way. Substantial time will be allocated at the start of the workshops to explore experiences, backgrounds and starting points, and at the end for reflection and evaluation.

CEIS homepage will bring this Autumn further details.