

Balkans

March 27, 2010

Brussels Forum

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Euro Atlantic, Croatia and Albania have become full members at the summit last April just close to a year ago. And we have Montenegro that has a membership action plan, and Bosnia that has submitted a request for a membership action plan. Serbia is a member of the partnership for peace program of NATO. And thus as you see, we are at this stages of moving forward.

The year ended also very significantly with a visa-free regime, to put it very simply, for the countries of Macedonia and Montenegro. And Serbia-Croatia already for a long time has had a regime and Bosnia with all hope will by the summer achieve that regime which leaves Albania, of course, and Kosovo.

Now, this is indication of movement. And the movement basically is predicated upon what we in the region call in the shorthand the Thessalian promise. It is the summit that took place in June under the Greek presidency of 2003 when the leaders of the European Union then said, the western Balkans, the southeastern Europe; this region will be part of Europe. And in the famous words of the then-president of the commission Romano Prodi in an interview without the ifs and buts.

Of course, everyone having to fulfill their conditions for application. And thus, that road has been opened.

Finally, to reassert that commitment, the region was visited by vice president Joseph Biden in May where he said once again reiterating the commitment of the United States to that same movement, to that same effort, working hand in hand with the European union to see that Europe became whole and free and at peace. This is what in the jargon of the diplomats and experts is called the unfinished business in the Balkans or southeastern Europe and in Europe. This is a part of core geographic Europe, if I can call it that, but it is not yet inside the European Union.

We were visited most recently by the new high representative of the European Union for foreign policy and for security policy. Baroness Ashton, who came with a very strong message. This was her first visit outside of the European Union after her visit to the United States. Her message, if I can boil it to down to one sentence was the Balkans enlargement, the Western Balkan enlargement remains a priority in the policy and foreign policy and security policy for the European Union. And of course, we will hear Commissioner Fule was also in the region recently. Again, reiterating that promise and that intention. So that's the moment that we're in. Balkans or south eastern Europe 2010. And we are here to see whether we

are confident about that movement in democratic and economic reform within the countries that are the conditions that we have to meet. Regional corporation, which is one of the desires of ourselves as I am from the region, I use the "we." And also because it is one of conditions that demonstrating opposing European values. And of course, the question is, is that the key gist of 2010 or are we confronted fatigue and we will also come back to that issue.

So, finally, we had some of our media fire power taken away from Brussels forum because we thought that the two presidents would meet here in Brussels here for the first time, but they pulled a quick one on us and they met three days ago for those of you who don't know in the beautiful coastal town of Opatija in Croatia. They had a nice ride on a boat on the sea, had a good Mediterranean lunch, and apparently what we hear had a five hour very intense talk about all and everything demonstrating leadership of some of the two main countries towards the European and the Euro-Atlantic movement.

So my first questions will be to both presidents. And may I begin with you President Tadic. How do you see 2010 in the region? Are we really moving forward? And is there the political will to do so?

H.E. Boris Tadic: I'm sure that we are going towards Europe. And the good news is that all Europe southeast

countries are carrying on top of the agenda -- the microphone is messing up.

Speaker: Is it working better? Okay.

H.E. Boris Tadic: We had some problems before the session with the equipment. But I'm going to make pressure on the microphone, not on you.

Anyway, I'm sure that all southeast European countries are on the parts towards of Europe and European integration. Some of them are very close to becoming member states of NATO. And I see this kind of development very helpful. At the same time, we have to fulfill obligations. That means that we have to implement reforms that is from time to time to very painful. But it is taking some risks. But it is taking some time. I mean, Croatia is doing very well. Croatia is very close to fulfill obligation to become member state of European union and other countries following Croatia in that respect. But we don't have any problem in terms of cooperation and in terms of fulfilling obligations in creating our region, really very close in terms of values to Europe. And that is very, very important.

We have some fields wage all particular countries have to achieve more. There are some reforms very important, the judiciary sector, for example, fighting organized crime, fighting corruption, administration capacities, building

infrastructure, healthcare, and we are doing everything that is possible in that respect.

But what I want to mention on the end of my first sentence that is we are supporting each other. That is very important. We are not conditioning each other in terms of European integration and that is a new spirit. I would like to hear the president of Croatia and then see if he is sharing the views about that perspective.

The last time when we talked to each other in Croatia, when we discussed all particular issues, there are some challenges even today in the Bosnia-Herzegovina, issue of Kosovo, defining frontiers and borders, but we have a good will. And we are cooperating with each other and we would like to achieve a real solution for all of those challenges.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Thank you. President Josipovic, as you know, in the region, there are very many skeptics who are looking at what I call the surface turbulence as our bilateral relations. There was very much skepticism about when the two of you would actually meet.

People like myself who are born optimists knew that this would happen very quickly. Both of you spoke about the spirit of European partnership and as President Tadic said helping each other. Is that the spirit in which you approached also this meeting?

H.E. Ivo Josipovic: Yes, of course. So when we were preparing our meeting, we keep some secrecy. And -- yes, of course. I had launch with European ambassadors to Croatia. And they said, oh, the meeting in (inaudible) unfortunately failed. I said okay it failed, but we are going to meet very soon. And one of the ambassadors says it is not possible. If you do it, you will have a Noble Prize, both of us. So I take it as some kind of permission.

Yes, being before professional criminal law, I recognize it is really a shame that criminals are having better cooperation than states. And we have to change it. We have good examples of cooperation even before this meeting, especially in the field of judiciary. We are prosecuting more criminals than organized crime. And now there is no reason to make our cooperation wider. We have both countries has strategic interest, common strategic interest to be part of the European family that is of global interest. But also we are going to and we would like to share European measures, all European measures, and we would like to establish good cooperation, not only between states, but between our cities. It is much more important and its duty of this generation of politician to resolve the problems we have. We have differences. We have problems, but we should not deliver it to another generation of other politicians.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: That's very reassuring and heartening, especially for us at the German Marshall fund. As you know, we have a project called the Balkans trust for democracy where exactly the intention is to help citizens to actually become more active and meet across borders.

Senator Voinovich, we have three people whose surnames end in "ich": Tadic, Josipovic, and Voinovich. So that speaks to your root in the region.

You have been a friend and a supporter and a critical friendly voice about how we need to move forward. You have just visited all of the countries. And you have just published an op-ed piece with your colleague Senator Jeanne Shaheen called Unfinished Work In The Balkans. How do you see this year and the way forward given the advances that you actually tout saying that many successes have been made but not visible to everyone?

The Hon. George Voinovich: First of all, this is a very happy moment for George Voinovich with the president of Croatia and the president of Serbia.

When I was mayor, I cared about the captive nations. Like so many of you in this room, I never thought that I'd see the wall come down or the curtain turned. Once it happened, my goal was to get as many people as I could into NATO. It is so nice to see (inaudible) here because when I came to the senate, he got the ambassadors from the seven countries that wanted to get

in. We called it "the big bang." We were successful at Prague in 2002. And I, of course, followed what was happening in the former Yugoslavia. I am Serbian. But my people are from Croatia. And my mother is Slovenian.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Welcome home.

The Hon. George Voinovich: And my vision was that to get the old Yugoslavia-southeast Europe into NATO and into the European union. That was the vision to bring them into Europe and we wouldn't go back to what we have seen in some many years. The significance here, think about this, we had Milosovic and (inaudible). Think about that. And the progress that has been made there in terms of democracy and freedom and market economy has been just magnificent. And where I'm at right now there's still unfinished business there.

Senator Shaheen and I visited five countries and our observations were that we need to continue to pay attention to what's happening there. And that we make it very clear to those countries there that are interested, particularly into getting into the European union that enlargement fatigue is there and there is not going to be anymore expansion. And one thing that people fail to realize that Olli Rehn's work -- and it wasn't easy for him -- Olli Rehn's work helped President Tadic get elected. Okay. He came and gave the people in Serbia the hope of becoming a member of the European union that he was going

to take Serbia into the next generation into Europe rather than going behind. So I think for all of you, this is very important, and we shouldn't miss this opportunity that's available to us. I know people are tired, but we must finish the work that needs to be done.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: May I add to what you rightly said. It was, of course, commissioner Olli Rehn but more importantly the 27 member states that stood behind Olli Rehn's recommendation to say that we must make this next step forward. And I think that one of the tasks and challenges that we're all up against, if we are for the business to be finished is that there are burning problems elsewhere in the world that demand attention every minute. And thus, if you are a region such as southeastern Europe that is not burning or making a crisis, it is hard to keep the attention of the policymakers where it is important to actually continue the work of enlargement. And, of course, that naturally brings us to the new commissioner, and may I congratulate you on your election, Stefan Fule, and I think for us even though all of your predecessors were extremely good at their business and understood the need to have someone from a country such as the Czech Republic who has gone through the transition, who has gone through the session, to both the European union and the NATO, you know the difficulties, the day to day work on the (inaudible), the ups and downs and

the fears of Europe as you go.

So after your visit and with your background, how do you see this movement forward and we will meet fatigue obstacles?

The Hon. Stefan Fule: Enlargement fatigue is something we refer to, or at least some of us. And I hope very much that we will be able to delete it from our vocabulary because it does not correspond with what I have seen in the region and the kind of aspirations of the leaders that you have.

I think we don't need a political engineering. We need political stewardship. We need the quality of the process. The fact that the two presidents today have commented to help each other in implementing the European aspirations is very important because the follow-up to what I have seen personally, it is a new element. The enlargement process when you arrived at the beginning, it has been turned into being very technical. It has been turned into benchmarks, into a very technical process which was sort of not in the center of our attention.

Your leaders of the regions and your cooperation is sort of taking that back to the main focus. It is actually one of the ways of how to make Europe not -- inaudible -- in western Balkans. The member states have made it absolutely clear. The whole region, all member states, they have a European perspective and commission is very working very hard helping the countries to achieve that.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Thank you very much. I will resist temptation to go for a second round of questions. I will turn to the audience immediately because time is returning out. And I see the author of the history of the Balkans to maybe ask the first question.

Audience: I think at this moment I'd like us to think about the significance of this event here. In the 1990s in the form of Yugoslavia, we had roughly 200,000 people killed. We had millions upon millions of people displaced from their homes. We had the most terrible massacres. We had states emerging, collapsing. We had U.N. sanctions. We had a blockade on Macedonia. This was a terribly, terribly traumatic event for the region. And, of course, we had NATO's first war. The last war in the form of Yugoslavia was the mini war in Macedonia, which didn't quite make it. It was almost that they didn't have the full commitment to go to war, which was a good thing.

Ten years later, look at what we've achieved. There has been no peace process as successful as what we have seen in the form of Yugoslavia, given the depth of the trauma of the 1990s. So the significance of having both of those two presidents here in front of us is really immense. And it is also immense because if Serbia and Croatia are cooperating, if they are respecting each other and deepening their relations, then it is very hard for anywhere in that region to collapse into war again. And

so that's why I think we really ought to welcome this moment as being really of historic significance.

Having said that, during that trauma, one of the things that happened was that there was a very severe penetration of the political process in all of the countries in the form of Yugoslavia, and it is unwise to identify individual countries because it happened absolutely everywhere, of organized crime into political parties, into the institutions of state. This has been hugely damaging and all of the countries still suffer from the influences of these people and the economic influence of these people.

Can I ask the presidents and also everyone on the panel if they have ideas: What are the concrete steps, the operational steps, if you like, that can be undertaken to start to diminish the influence of these people who as we know are still causing havoc in the countries social and political life?

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: I will go back to the panel with this question because I also believe it is extremely important, and because I think we also see very positive developments there.

So whichever of you wants to talk, President Josipovic.

H.E. Ivo Josipovic: Yes, we are aware of the dangers of organized crime influencing our political life, our economical life. But we have done some steps, very important steps. Firstly, we have to recognize in our countries dangers that is

above us from those people.

Secondly, we have to recognize that organized crime has no citizenship. It's spread all over Europe and all over the region. And countries already did some important steps. I encourage everyone to think about those steps because they are very important for all countries, including special agreement between public prosecutors offices.

Then we have special agreement with -- inaudible -- and I hope with Serbia as well about extradition and execution of criminal sanctions from the other countries.

Then there is extensive cooperation of our police. We have several important cases that are resolved by common activities of police in Serbia and Croatia. One is still now pending before the Croatia court, but it is a good result of Serbian police and Croatia police as well.

But I think it is in the very beginning of the process, but it is a very optimistic beginning. And I hope that tomorrow no one will take advantage of border, performing criminal activities in one country and hiding in the other country.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: The remark that the President Josipovic said at our conferences in the Balkans was that there was fantastic regional cooperation among our criminals. I think the tide is turning now that actually our states and our governments and our security forces are actually now being

better at regional cooperation. But president Tadic, please
. . .

H.E. Boris Tadic: Well, that is one of the most challenging situations we are facing with. I have to say that we are working very hard on that issue, both of us and our countries. That is becoming not only our regional problem, but also a European problem. In that sense, we can be very helpful. Users for narcotics and for those kinds of criminal activities are not in our original countries but in the European union. That is how we are contributing to the stability of Europe.

In that respect, Serbia's intelligence is working very hard with intelligences from Great Britain and the United States. And the last year we achieved so many results in the world record in capturing tons and tons of cocaine in the Atlantic Ocean. That is something very important for our stability and our security.

But at the same time, I am very proud. It is the very time after many, many years that we are exporting security. We have been in support of security for decades. This is the first time that we are exporting security and we are cooperating successfully with our partners from Europe and the United States. And we are going to continue those kinds of actions.

But what is my approach to that issue and on the investigation side, showing clearly that organized crime is

connected with the war criminal in the past. You cannot have a break between war criminals from the 1990s and organized criminals today. You can see flowing of resources of money from that period until today. I'm underlining once again, that kind of actions are crucially important for stability in the region. That is how we are contributing to the stability of European union countries and European Budgetary policy.

At the same time, we have been providing real security for generations, generations in our country. I hope and I am sure and I am very optimistic that we are going to cooperate with each other on that issue highly and successfully in the future. And I would like to mention extremely good cooperation between our intelligences, Croatia and Serbian intelligence in that respect.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Senator Voinovich, I guess you're aware of this cooperation between the U.S. agencies who are fighting organized crime like the DEA. Is this a known issue in the U.S. Administration how the region now is actually coming together?

The Hon. George Voinovich: Yes, it is. And the FBI and the DEA and the other agencies are working with Serbia and Croatia. And I think that one of our concerns is that it has to be made a priority in the European union to cooperate because so often the tentacles reach out into other areas. And I think it is incumbent on all of the countries to cooperate. If you

don't solve the corruption problem, it is going to be very difficult to get to a better economy and a better quality of life for people.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Stefan Fule, is this a serious priority on the agenda of what we need to do in these countries?

The Hon. Stefan Fule: Very much so. It reflects one of the key components of Copenhagen's criteria. And it has been set up or adhered that the organized crime could be tackled only if you efficient offices, efficient judiciary, if you have effective police in place. The commission, particularly during the talks, have instruments of how to help and to monitor the progress and the candidate of countries. Particularly in this area, what's important for the commission is that the countries show not only the homework done as far as taking the (inaudible), but that it is working, that there is a track record of this working and the legislation is working.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Thank you very much. May I now recognize and welcome the minister of foreign affairs of Montenegro -- inaudible -- to say a few words and ask a question maybe.

Audience: Hello. Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: Unfortunately, I do not speak English so my colleague, my ambassador will help me because he speaks several languages and he's the future of the European integration for

my country.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: I speak Russian but I'm not sure whether everybody here speaks Russian. Well, everybody here still does not speak Russian.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: One of my American friends told me here, how come you do not speak Russian? English, we already learned it.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: I have a long memory, but I still do not recall such a good panel that is here, organized around here, and especially because of the high level of the attendance of the two presidents of the two most important countries of the region and especially having the Commissioner Fule present here and Senator Voinovich, who is our great friend from America.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: Many of the people here have expressed their satisfaction and I have a long memory. I especially have a long memory when it comes to the dissolution or at the time of the dissolution of ex-Yugoslavia.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: I have a really long memory as I said, and I remember even before the time of Milosevic -- inaudible -- there was a meeting, a closed-door

meeting of the ex-Yugoslavia leaders. And one of the leaders said to the Serbia leader, the way we make an agreement here will decide the fate of the country. And you know what the fate of the country was after that.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: Just look at the situation today. We have the two modern leaders coming from the two main countries. Serbia is at the threshold of joining -- inaudible.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: And Serbia has made a huge step forward with the presidency of the President Tadic.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: And we the small countries of the region, their neighbors are really looking forward to their success because it only helps us on our way.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: In Montenegro, as you know, is like that unwanted child in the family. No one was really happy when it came.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: But sometimes like it happens in life, this unwanted child really makes a huge success.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: And in a short time, we have made the good

progress in the European and the Euro-Atlantic -- inaudible.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: We are conscious that we are a small country.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: And nobody is going to take us for granted.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: We have to deliver and to finish all of our tasks.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: And more than anything, we are aware of the fact that door of the European and NATO are now open in Brussels but in -- inaudible -- but in the region.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: Our people has a saying that God said that you should help yourself and then I will help you.

Audience: Speaking foreign language.

Interpreter: So that's what's happening in the region. We are helping each other in order to help the European in order for NATO to help us. Thank you very much.

The Hon. George Voinovich: I think we would be remiss also to not recognize the fact that Croatia and Slovenia have come to a conclusion in the regard to the bay of Piran. Slovenes wanted this taken care of before they would allow the Croatia to come into the European union. And this was a controversial

issue. They brought it to arbitration. And they're working this out. The Slovene court has ruled that the arbitration is fine and so on.

But the thing that I'm really impressed with is that each country is interested in their own situation, but they all recognize that what happens to the region, as you point out, has an impact on them. They are looking at this whole area as a region rather than I'm just worrying about myself. And I think that we ought to realize that there are still challenges there. We have Kosovo. We have Bosnia-Herzegovina that we've tried to bring to together in terms of their constitution and flexibility. We have the problem in Macedonia with firearm or Macedonia to work that out. So there are some real challenges that are still here. But the progress is being made, and again, the fact that they are looking out for the other person, that President Tadic knows that if things are going all well in Croatia and President Josipovic knows that things are going good in Serbia, that they're working as a team, that they're united, that they're working together, that they're all going to be better off than if they go off and do their own things. It is something very, very significant.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: I think that if I may, what you're seeing here is the awareness in realization that if we work together in spite of our outstanding challenges and the issues between

us, we would move forward more quickly. As the opposite and converse is true, if for example, when Slovenia and Croatia were having an open issue that blocked everything, it was a bad repercussion on all of the rest of us. As soon as that was unblocked, there was suddenly a positive move, i.e., we do function in this region as communicating vessels. The positive reflects on everyone. The negative, likewise.

I will now take three questions to move on quickly and I will start with Heather -- inaudible -- from the open society institute and could we have a microphone in here please.

The second microphone will be for SONYA, please.

Audience: Thank you. In fact I wanted to ask a question exactly on the point that senator Voinovich raised which is the potential for bilateral disputes in the region still to cause major problems in the -- progress and in the progress of all of the countries. This is something that's a structural weakness in the process -- because there are so many veto points because unanimity is required at every single stage of the process for opening chapters and closing chapters and so on.

Any member state can block progress. Now, fortunately, the crisis dispute has come to a conclusion. There are many unresolved issues in the region. There are still open court cases. There is the international court of justice case about Kosovo, for example. Hopefully, that will be finished

by -- certainly by the time Serbia becomes a candidate. Still, there is plenty of stuff there for politicians who are perhaps less enlightened than the ones we had before us to take advantage of and to make big populous causes out of. And the only merit principles of countries joining when they are ready also suggests that the regions are not going to join together. In fact, they could be some big gaps between countries joining. This potential for sort of a chain reaction of, well, we were believed when we were outside of the union and now we are going to turn the same on our neighbors. There are populous in the region who could easily take advantage of that. So how do we deal with this? Should there be some kind of regional commitment by all of the countries in say some binding way I can imagine it under the aegis of Commissioner Fule, for example, to say we will not use this weapon after joining. And is there any way that you can hold them to that?

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Hold the question please. I need to take all of the questions before it. This is such a good question.

(Inaudible.)

Audience: Thank you. I must give the congratulation part to the gentleman Marshall fund, but I still must say that I think that is a very important symbolic thing here that under the auspices of such a transatlantic organization of two presidents

with us. There are many people who believe that the cooperation between Croatia and Serbia is so important for the region as it was the cooperation between France and Germany. As we know, coal and steel were the basis where Germany and France met. And there was some talk about it during the forum. I would like you to look into the future. What do you think would be of the coal and steel of Serbian-Croatian cooperation for -- inaudible?

Thank you.

Audience: I'm John (inaudible). I was the deputy American head of the Dayton delegation. And then special on the Balkans for two and a half years afterwards. And it is now 15 years since Dayton was signed and we're still basically using the same constitutional order in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We thought it would last maybe three years or five years, maybe. This is a historic occasion, I agree.

Vice President Biden was also in Bosnia that demonstrating renewed American interest which had fallen away, I'm sorry to say for a while. Can't we now perhaps have real commonality? You both have important communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. And Croatians in Bosnia can vote in Croatian elections, for example, which I am not sure is the correct thing to do.

Maybe the coal and steel of this operation could be a joint EU, United States, Croatian, and Serbian effort to finally move

the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina forward because it is not good. It is not stable. It would be nice also if we could get Macedonia into both. And I say Macedonia, not (inaudible), into the EU and into NATO. If we could achieve those two things, that would be really of a great celebration for this occasion. Thank you.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Because I stopped you, you are the first to speak.

H.E. Boris Tadic: Thanks. First of all, I totally agree that this is one of the real preconditions in terms of integration of the western Balkans, some of the European family of the nations. We are ready to say that we are not going to condition other countries in terms of integrations. And that is exactly what we have been talking to each other a few days ago.

And answering the second question about Bosnia-Herzegovina, I remember the first time one president -- inaudible -- had a meeting -- inaudible -- near to the frontiers between -- in 1991. They have been talking about the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Last time when we met each other in -- inaudible -- we concluded that we have to do everything that is possible to protect integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. And this is not changeable policy. We are supporting integrity and serenity of our neighboring states

Bosnia-Herzegovina. And that is a totally different policy and a totally different approach. And that is how we are delivering stability, not only in the region, but also on the European side. That's very important from my point of view.

H.E. Ivo Josipovic: If I may, during my campaign was a few months ago, I promised there would be no preconditions and bilateral questions are not going to be mixed with European questions. So definitely Croatia will not misuse a position of European country towards those neighbors who are not being (inaudible) in Europe at this moment. I have to stress that in the past, keywords for many states and many politicians was leadership. Who's going to be leader? Very important for me. I have to take my historical role. Now, I think today, the situation in western Balkans needs to make affirmation to the other keyword: It is partnership. And partnership is keyword for future. It is keyword, not only for our European future, but for security and stability in this part of the world.

And concerning this question about coal and steel, I think that our real coal and steel will not be something from the area of trade and commercial but people. It is very important. We have a specific situation because our people shared history. We have families connected from both sides -- from both countries, for all three or four countries. I have more neighbors in Montenegro than in Croatia. I have more

cousins -- inaudible -- than in Croatia. For historical reasons, I'm full Croat, but I have neighbors in Montenegro.

H.E. Boris Tadic: Are you sure?

H.E. Ivo Josipovic: Yes. Yes. I'm not sure for friends but cousins for sure. But that will be our coal and steel. And it is very important because it's much more powerful than coal and steel.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: As some of you know, President Tadic was born in Sarajevo but was originally from Montenegro.

H.E. Boris Tadic: I mean, we are exporting security. Montenegro is exporting leaders. All Serbians are from Montenegro. And you never know in Montenegro. (Inaudible).

The Hon. Stefan Fule: The first question was really an important one for the sake of the whole region. And I think that a new high level of region of cooperation is one of the answers. I think we need to use this -- inaudible -- to express ourselves today I hear from the leaders to make one additional step and to find a mechanism of how to detect these mines and how to diffuse them in pile to the -- inaudible -- process because if we allow the -- inaudible -- process to deal with the volatile issues, then I am afraid that we will make a bad service to the enlargement process. And I feel that to be understood more and more in the region. I'm very thankful to the leaders to talk about the regional cooperation about helping

each other because this is a way how to address it in addition to clear political declarations.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: I think this is exactly what we wanted to do with this panel to really show the moment in time in 2010 and the atmosphere between the leaders and the leadership that they're now doing.

I will now go to the next round of three people and our colleague from Russia here. Microphones, please.

Audience: Inaudible -- I just wanted to fill up on what John (inaudible) said. It is very nice to hear about the progress that the region is making but looking from, well, outside of the region are quite a few of unresolved major issues there. One is Bosnia has a government to speak to. I have a lot of friends who work for (phonetic) NGOs there and most of them say that it could remain frozen like that for decades to come. So what to do about that?

What do two presidents think about the danger of Islamic radicals penetrating the region? There are quite enough of them already.

And thirdly, the third issue, European integration of the -- inaudible -- states of the western Balkans might not be looked unkindly -- let's put it mildly in the very BBC (phonetic) manner, by some elements in the Russian government that thought that pipelines and a lot of other things already

in their pockets. So how would you, how this team panel, will come into that?

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Hold your horses. We have (inaudible) former of minister of affairs of Serbian Montenegro.

Audience: I'd like to be brief because I have a -- inaudible -- from what we are going to hear from the presidents (inaudible) this is exactly what we have been looking for years, a clear message in support of integrity for Bosnia to follow up on the questions we have heard. I would say the time has come to change the policy, not to engage on the (inaudible) Serbs and Croats, it is a time to offer a helping hand to the Bosnia and I think the two of you can do what has not been done for years.

And the question that goes to Stefan Fule and I hope that you will join, this is, I do have a fear. It is part of the efforts of the good people. And this is that the development in some of the very important, very relevant member states including the possibility of -- inaudible -- might lead us into a break up if the Balkans. That is the reason for fear.

I would like to appeal to the presidents, both of them, as well as to the other leaders including and of course you too commissioner, to engage in communicating with Paris and others to send a strong message that we don't want to see a break up. That would be tremendous for all of us living in the region.

And I hope that the help will come mostly from the states. Thank you.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Thank you. And the final question in this round.

Audience: Alexander from the Department of Defense in Washington. I raised my hand for the same reason that as John and Constantine -- inaudible -- I certainly share the great joy in seeing the presidents of Serbian and Croatia here and all of the progress that they're making.

But John is a former diplomat but he was very diplomatic. I will be less diplomatic today. And I think that the situation in Bosnia is not just frozen. I think there's a danger that all that was accomplished over the last 15 years is now at tremendous risk of literally falling apart. The state is barely functional. The international leverage that came from an international military presence has declined. And despite active engagement by my government, by the European union, under previous presidency and the current presidency, we fear that there is a risk of a serious breakdown. So it is very good to hear that Serbia and Croatia today want to support the integrity of Bosnia.

But I would be interested in whether the two presidents can here today say that they may take a more active approach, much more active involvement in the process that is necessary to

reverse whatever increasingly visible separatist tendencies, especially among the Bosnian Serbs but to a large extent among the Croats, the spirit of cooperation among the Bosnia -- inaudible -- all of that great. What more can the states of the region do because I think regional problems ultimately need regional solutions. And I think as Serbia and Croatia make tremendous progress, they have an increased responsibility to help save Bosnia from a downward spiral that is all too real a possibility.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Okay. Thank you. Presidents?

H.E. Ivo Josipovic: Of course Croatia and I'm very sure Serbia as well, we are aware of the dangers of terrorism, of the solution of Bosnia-Herzegovina and all of this political events. But now I think the message delivered by Boris Tadic (inaudible) and previous messages from my side clearly shows that Croatia and Serbia are willing to help. And no aspiration to include part of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Serbia or into Croatia or to support some forces that would like to split from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We need some time. I already started some discussions with people from Bosnia-Herzegovina to support the process of making new order in Bosnia because it is very important to fulfill two tasks. One is to make Bosnia-Herzegovina as a functioning state because today it is not. Sorry. There are someone from

Bosnia. But I think it is obvious.

And secondly, Bosnia, Serbs, and Croats and Herzegovina because it is primarily their task. No one can import solution from Bosnia-Herzegovina. We can just help, but we cannot create new states there.

So everyone must also have in mind that this country must be society of three equal nations. So two requirements, functioning states and equality of three nations and of course equality of every individual in the whole country.

Yes, it is very general, very general promises. But I think it is clear that we have to develop (inaudible) and to help Bosnia, Serbs, and Croats from Bosnia-Herzegovina to find proper constitutional solutions.

H.E. Boris Tadic: If you want me to comment on those questions -- I mean, the general attitudes that we are supporting integrity is a really (inaudible) condition in terms of stability. That means that we are not supporting any action in terms of division or partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina. But at the same time, we would like to be active in terms of solving problems in the situation that is existing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. But we cannot impose a solution and no one can impose a solution. That is very important. I totally agree with the President Josipovic when he's mentioning three equal nations. But that is the framework in which we have to

find a solution.

Today, there is Dayton agreement, which means that two entities and three nations, three representatives of the nations, has arrived to find a solution. We are ready to support, but we cannot impose. We cannot define what is the solution for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

And always when in connection our community is trying to support, I have a concern that someone is trying to impose a solution. We have to avoid that kind of scenario. But be sure that Croatia and Serbia are not going to stabilize Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is crystal clear. I have been saying that in (inaudible) also you have to know that Serbia is doing everything that is possible in terms of reconciliation between Serbs and Bosnia. In the next few days, we are going to adopt a resolution about (inaudible) or crime in our parliament. That is going to be next week. I have been paying respect on the tenth year anniversary of that war crime in (inaudible). We are doing really everything that is possible. But at the same time, there are some problems, open issues that have to be solved.

We also have some open issues, but we are ready to solve these issues step by step. And we will find how to do that. We have our representatives that are working on those issues. That is very, very important.

In terms of Islamic radicalism, I have to say that we are carefully watching and monitoring what's going on. But there is not only Islamic radicals. There is radicalism in other religious communities also. And we have to care about that, to be totally honest with you. And for that reason, we have to understand that only supporting each other is the way towards (inaudible), is a way towards solving problems and avoiding this (inaudible). That is from my point of view, important.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: We, like Bosnia need time, but we're running out of time here and I would like to apologize for all those who have raised their hands to ask questions. I will go straight to the concluding statements.

Of our panelists, may I introduce this brief conclusion. You will have about a minute each to say that in the region we are 20 million. We are aspired to join a family that has half a billion people called the European union. Will 2010 in your regard be a year where we make significant steps and open towards resolving our challenges, or do you feel that we might get into a threat of stagnation?

I would like to start with you, Senator Voinovich.

The Hon. George Voinovich: I think that first of all in terms of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the European union has got to make up its mind whether or not they are going to give them visa waiver. NATO has to decide whether they're going to give them

(inaudible) before the election. It has been offered to (inaudible) and they would like to have it. There are many people that are reluctant to do it, but there is a number of people there of good will. They are frustrated with the leadership. They will probably get reelected. I think no progress will be made between that time, but we should reach out and let the people know that we're concerned about it, that they're important to us. That's important.

I think the other issue is can we work out the issue of the name in terms of Montenegro with the Greek community and Kosovo. The point is to work it out the best that you can. I will say this to you. I think that these two gentlemen and some of the others in the region ought to get together and figure out how they can make a difference in Bosnia-Herzegovina, possibly look at also the Kosovo situation. Right now, it is the United States, the EU, Sandy is talking about coming in there. I think that we'd be much more successful if the solution to how things work out would come from the people in the region rather than have somebody come in and say, okay, this is what you're going to have to do.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Thank you. Commissioner Fule.

The Hon. Stefan Fule: I think the year 2010 would be good to go for the region. It would be good to go in a sense that we need to have the four elements of our policy working together.

And if not, we fail. The first one is call it the before (inaudible). The second region of cooperation. We were talking about that. And the third, is the political -- inaudible -- I also mentioned that at the beginning. And the fourth and this is extremely important. European and Lisbon has a unique opportunity to show particularly in the region of the western Balkans how this new external policy is working.

We have Baroness Ashton in charge of the foreign policy. She's actually double-headed. So she is bringing to the region instruments of the common (inaudible) policy together with the community instrument and that's (inaudible) important that which have to use this region.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: President Josipovic.

H.E. Ivo Josipovic: It is always that I'm very optimistic the things that I believe that Croatia is going to finish negotiations. But from the other side, I'm very optimistic towards future cooperation regions, especially about partnership between Croatia and Serbia and our common efforts to Bosnia-Herzegovina as well.

I'm very optimistic and I hope that probably 2010 will be the last conference where in which I will be participating, discussing Croatia and the region as a problem. I would like to attend in 2011 another conference about great success of

international community, success of our region and all states in the region.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: What are your final thoughts?

H.E. Boris Tadic: That is also my comments on the (inaudible) question. I mean that 2010 is going to be very important first of all because of enlargement (inaudible) That exist in European union circles. I'm not saying "countries."

Second, the question is what we can do to be closer to Europe, not what Europe can do for us.

And I'm sure that we have to implement reforms in the judiciary sector, or in fighting organized crime, corruption, building infrastructure, administration capacity building. But that is very important.

We are facing with a financial crisis like all other countries. And we have to resolve some economic problems as soon as possible. A situation in Croatia and Serbia and all other countries are very fragile in that sense like in all other European countries. We need some kind of understanding and support. The situation is not critical, but the situation is very difficult. And in that respect, we have to continue our international processes. I hope that Serbia is going to be candidates until the end of this year, candidate country for European union membership. That means that Serbia has to fulfill some obligations. (Inaudible). And we are doing

everything that is possible to finish that obligation. But at the same time, we have to fulfill a lot of obligations to create reforms.

From my point of view, it is very important that we are supporting each other. We are not blocking each other. We are not (inaudible) each other. That is something to telling you. We are talking about partnership between Croatia and Serbia. This is European partnership.

Last time on the press conference and after our meeting, we've been saying this is European partnership between Croatia and Serbia. That means that we want to become member states. If Croatia is going to become member state of European union in 2011-2012, that is going to be success, not only for Croatia but also for Serbia. That is how I see further development.

I hope that all other countries are going to support Serbia in that respect. And that is new spirit, European spirit. I am not saying that we don't have open issues. I am not saying that we don't have problems. Kosovo is one of them. We are not reorganizing Kosovo, but we are trying to find a solution, a compromised solution, that can be a contribution to the regional stability. And I'm sure that we can achieve compromised solution.

In all other respects, the issue between (inaudible) Macedonia. We are saying Macedonia. Our Greek friends are

saying (inaudible).

And Greece is also very important issue between Slovenia and Croatia. And that is how we can resolve some particular issues and how we can support each other. We are expecting that Europe is going to support us.

Dr. Ivan Vejvoda: Thank you, President Tadic.

I've heard two words here "leadership" and "partnership," both in the sense of supporting each other on the road to Europe, but we need in the region to do the work. I may think or hope that we have bought a ticket for a preliminary at the next Brussels forum, but that is not for me to judge, maybe for the others. So join me in thanking the two presidents and the panelists.

Thank you all. That was terrific.