

## ROBERT SCHUMAN'S PERSPECTIVE OF PEACE AND STABILITY THROUGH RECONCILIATION: A LEGACY OF CONTINUING ACTUALITY ALSO FOR THE BALKANS

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### ÖZET

*Bu makale, 1990'larda Balkanlarda yaşananların ardından yeni bir doneme geçişte Avrupa bütünleşmesi bağlamında gerçekleşen uzlaşma olgusunun Güney Doğu Avrupa için bir model oluşturma olasılığını tartışmaktadır Avrupa bütünleşmesinin oluşumunda Robert Schuman'ın temsil ettiği, uzlaşma yoluyla barış ve istikrarın sağlanması şeklinde goze çarpan yaklaşımın günümüzde Balkanlarda meydana gelen çatışma ve uyuşmazlıkların çözümünde de geçerli ve etkili olacağı savunulmaktadır Bu bağlamda, öncelikle bu uzlaşmacı yaklaşımın Avrupa Bütünleşmesi sürecinde oynadığı rol üzerinde durulmakta, kalıcı barışın ancak uzlaşma ile sağlanabileceği ve geçmişle hesaplaşmanın bu sürecin önemli bir unsuru olduğu vurgulanmaktadır Balkanlar'da yaşanan şiddet ve intikam duygusunun kırılmasında bu yaklaşımın en etkili yöntem olacağı görüşü ortaya konurken, uzlaşma olgusunun içerdiği unsurlar incelenmekte ve bu çerçevede, bir yandan Avrupa Birliği üyeliği perspektifinin, öte yandan 1999 yılı başlarında meydana getirilen Istikrar Paketi'nin olumlu etkilerinin sınırları ve kapsamı tartışılmaktadır Sonuç olarak, Balkanlarda da gerçek anlamda bir uzlaşma için zamanın geldiği ve AB'de yaşanan genişleme sürecinin bu uzlaşmayı sağlayabilecek en önemli etken olacağı belirtilmektedir*

Historians will have to judge whether the year 2000 really was a turning point in the history of the Balkans – or whether it was just a brief respite for a region which has become synonymous with turmoil, instability and chauvinist aggression in recent years.<sup>1</sup> Four wars in the Western Balkans in only one decade, the 1990s, appear to have confirmed all the stigmas and stereotypes of South Eastern Europe which first emerged during the break-up of the Austro-

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<sup>1</sup> This text is based on a presentation the author gave at a conference in Zagreb on 28 April 2000 titled "Fifty Years of the Schuman Declaration What Message for South Eastern Europe"

Hungarian Empire of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the Balkan Wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: the “powder keg” of Europe, where deeply rooted ethno-nationalist conflicts once and again produce genocide, ethnic cleansing and enormous refugee flows. It will take time to overcome these stereotypes, as does the healing of wounds inflicted years and decades ago.

Surely, with the death of Franjo Tuđman in Zagreb and especially with the ouster of Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade two of the most daunting figures of the past decade of Balkan politics have left the scene. In Zagreb, a new European-minded government has come to power in January/February 2000 which has managed to end the period of self-imposed international isolation, started negotiations with the aim of joining the euro-atlantic institutions, and demonstrates its sincere willingness to overcome old divisions in the region and work together with all neighbors in a spirit of good neighborliness. In Belgrade, the picture is not as clear yet. Given the election results of 24 September and 23 December 2000, a phase of transition to democracy, economic recovery and rule of law has begun, which will be full of stumbling stones and setbacks in the years to come. Whether really a “revolution” took place in Belgrade or just a change of nationalist-minded elites, unable to fulfill the many dreams of the Serbian citizens, is still open to question. Obviously, there is a power struggle among the new elite in Belgrade going on which will also decide on the European orientation of the country in the years to come. Yet, given these profound changes in the two major countries of the Western Balkans, there is a real chance to come to terms with the dreadful past, open a new chapter of hope and progress for the whole region and, finally, catch up with the rest of Europe, after losing more than ten years since 1989 when all the other East Europeans embarked on a similar process of reform and transformation.

There is a strong temptation in Zagreb and even more in Belgrade, to close now and forever the chapter of Southeast European history just written, push away all the unpleasant memories of the past and, instead, concentrate on recovery and a better living. This is understandable, not least for us Germans who themselves after 1945 tried to follow the same pattern of evasion – though the occupying powers forced us at least to a certain amount to investigate in those years of the Nazi regime which left a dark mark in so many biographies. Looking back fifty years later, one lesson can be drawn: conflicts which are simply pushed aside and negated, not explicitly solved, will come up in one form or another. The past will not rest in peace. It re-emerges again and again: in the case of Germany, e.g. in the 1950s in the form of reparations to be paid for those who suffered terribly in concentration camps, in the 1960s in the form of massive student revolts who violently protested the habit of their parents to wipe out twelve years of their biographies, today in the form of a divisive debate about forced laborers under the Nazi regime who will now, finally, get

some money by the German government and many firms which employed such unpaid laborers during the war.

In times as these it is good to look for examples of successful reconciliation with the past which might offer some help in such an unprecedented, painful and delicate effort. One of those might be the legacy of German-French reconciliation, for which in the early years Robert Schuman was one of the driving forces, a distinguished statesman who served as minister in several cabinets of post-war France. Later he was elected the first President of the European Parliament in 1958.

Schuman was one of those visionaries the European integration process is so much both lacking and urgently needing today. His political philosophy transcends time and geography. His legacy not only bridges five decades of European politics; it also bridges the Europe of the European Union, which is still confined to Western Europe, and South Eastern Europe, since what Schuman stood for continues to be relevant not only for the Union, but also for the Southeastern part of our continent.

Robert Schuman formulated French and European politics after two devastating World Wars in Europe which solidified what became notorious as the German-French inherited enmity („Erbfeindschaft“). Germany and France, the two major powers and neighbors in Central Europe, had by then fought three wars in only 75 years, inflicting human and material losses surpassing imagination, leaving in the minds of the contemporaries horrible memories of humiliating occupation, ethnic expulsion, terrifying air raids and concentration camps. In the eyes of many, this enmity seemed to continue on without an end as the Second World War stirred up emotions even further.

However, there was a grass-roots movement that had sprung up during the war, in France, Germany and many other countries of Western and also of Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> This movement, called the Europe Movement, centered around the idea of how to make another war in Europe impossible and how to overcome the dreadful legacy of nationalism, power politics and ethnic hatred that had dominated the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The concept the protagonists of this movement all across Europe came up with almost simultaneously was indeed revolutionary, even though from today's perspective it may seem self-evident and almost logical: the concept of integrating all European countries in what was at that time called the “United States of Europe“. It was not the economic rationale – the desire to create a common market for European products – which developed only later with the Treaty of

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<sup>2</sup> For the following see e.g. Curt Gasteyer, *Europa zwischen Spaltung und Einigung 1945-1990*, Bonn 1991.

Rome in 1957; rather, it was the political rationale, the concept of peace building that fascinated those early Europeans. The basic idea was to integrate all the nations of Europe into one supranational institution where conflicts would be dealt with peacefully and a wealth of shared interests would develop over time.

At first, most protagonists – like Winston Churchill in his famous Zürich speech in September 1947 – advocated an institution encompassing all the countries of Europe, East and West. However, in the late 1940s, disillusionment about Stalin's drive to install communist regimes wherever possible led to the conclusion that this Union could at that time only be realized in the democratic and free part of Europe. Today, since the fall of communism and the democratic revolution in Eastern Europe, we are back to square one: we have begun to re-discover the concepts of the early federalists, the Europe-wide concept of integration – and this time the odds are better for realizing this concept to its full extent.

Robert Schuman was at the core of this Europe Movement after the War, as were Winston Churchill, Paul-Henri Spaak, Jean Monnet, Alcide de Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer and many others. Given his personal biography, Schuman could have chosen both: either the traditional path of continued, relentless enmity between France and Germany – or the revolutionary path of peace and stability through reconciliation. He chose the latter. Actually, Schuman had many reasons for becoming a fierce protagonist of French-German enmity after the War. He had personally endured two German invasions. He was arrested by the German Secret Police (Gestapo) in 1940, and he suffered two years of internment in Germany before escaping and becoming part of the French "resistance". On the other hand, Schuman's bi-national biography made him an ideal agent for reconciliation between the two countries. He grew up in Alsace-Lorraine, a French-German border region around Strasbourg which was the very focus of German-French enmity for decades. Since Alsace-Lorraine became German territory in 1871, Schuman was born as a German, raised in a German school and studied in Bonn, Munich and Berlin. However, due to the erratic nature of European history at that time, in 1919 Schuman became a French citizen as Alsace-Lorraine was returned back to France in Versailles. Schuman thus personally experienced the absurdity of nationalism and great power politics – and he was determined not to allow this to happen again.

It was a fortunate incident of history that this man became French Foreign Minister in the immediate post-war period from 1948 to 1952, in those formative years when the future of German-French relations had yet to be defined and the European Movement gained momentum. What Schuman did was to link both ideas brilliantly. His instrument was the so-called Schuman-

Plan which he proposed on 9 May 1950 at a press conference in Paris<sup>3</sup>: the idea of a joint German-French production and administration of their respective coal, steel and iron industries. It would be regulated by a High Commission with an authority exceeding the powers of the French and the German parliament and even the French President and German Chancellor. Hence, France was willing to submit the industry which is the backbone of weapons production and war fighting, one of the most precious pillars of a nation-state, to a supra-national body, giving up a significant portion of its sovereignty. This was indeed revolutionary. The new institution, as Schuman explained it, would be open to others. It would be "the first step to a European federation", which it was indeed. The rationale Schuman gave was not less far-sighted: "The unification of European nations", he proclaimed, "requires extinguishing the century-old opposition between France and Germany."<sup>4</sup> He knew that the German-French enmity was the main obstacle on the way to peace in Europe; thus, this enmity had to be overcome first.

For many contemporaries in South Eastern Europe, this is far away in time and place. South Eastern Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems to be completely different in every respect. Of course, all historical analogies are inadequate to explain the present. As one famous German historian of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Leopold von Ranke, asserted: "Each epoch is unique before God." So why such an elaboration of history? It is because there are conclusions to be drawn from this post-war experience which are still relevant today, conclusions which might also include lessons for South Eastern Europe.

Firstly, the idea of European integration came up as a response to the terrible experience of two World Wars and the obvious failures of past politics to achieve lasting peace. The cycle of never-ending violence, revisionism and hatred had to be broken. People were desperately looking for a way out of the seeming determinism of history. This is not much different from the situation today in the Western Balkans. So where is the concept for South Eastern Europe which will be able to overcome the cycle of violence and revenge which has predominated this part of Europe for centuries? It is two-fold: it is the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe which was inaugurated in July 1999, and it is the prospect of full integration in the European Union for all countries of the Balkans which was articulated in the Stability Pact documents. The problem with both is: they did not originate in the region. The Stability Pact was invented in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in early 1999; and the enlargement process is as old as the Union itself. This is different from the

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<sup>3</sup> The "Schuman Plan" actually was a Monnet-Plan, as Jean Monnet, head of the French Planning Commission, drafted the plan which Schuman accepted immediately and published in a press conference on 9 May 1950.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in *Deutschland - Frankreich. Ein neues Kapitel ihrer Geschichte. 1948 - 1988. Chronologie. Dokumente des Deutsch-Französischen Instituts Ludwigsburg, Bonn 1988, p. 11.*

Schuman Plan of 1950. Drawing the parallel is only possible if the peoples of South Eastern Europe identify themselves with both ideas as the West Europeans did in the early 1950s. Only then will both concepts generate the magnetic power to overcome the dreadful legacy of the past in this region.

There are plenty of reasons to criticize the Stability Pact. However, the Pact is a unique chance, maybe the last for the region, as the economic and political gap between the Europe of the Union and South Eastern Europe will soon become insurmountably wide. The Pact has many facets.<sup>5</sup> One that is stressed again and again by the international actors, and rightly so, is the requirement to increase regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe considerably. This region has a serious lack of regional cooperation and a long history of conflict and segregation – and most people in the region are even not aware how much their region is lagging behind the West European standard. But whoever wants to join the Union must demonstrate peaceful, fruitful and trusting relations with its neighbors, as expressed in the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993. The European Union could not have been established and would not be such a lasting success if Germany and France, Germany and the Netherlands and many other countries would not have acted in a spirit of good neighborliness after 1945, solving vexing problems such as territorial and refugee disputes in a mood of cooperation and compromise.

Enlargement of the Union is about stability transfer. It is about enlarging the unique zone of stability, peace and freedom which has been grown over more than five decades in Western Europe to the East of Europe. Those countries already engaged in accession negotiations with the European Commission have realized that they must solve the conflicts with their neighbors first, prior to accession. The new spirit of cooperation between Hungary and Romania is a good example in this respect. The encouraging new policy of Croatia towards Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia is another. A wise Czech saying reads: "Protect yourself not by a fence, but by friends." That is the rationale of good neighborliness in a nutshell. To be sure, no country will be admitted to the European Union lacking such a spirit of good neighborliness; and everyone in Brussels knows how many miles there are still to cover in many countries of the Balkans.

The prospect of integration into the European Union is today probably the strongest impetus for change in South Eastern Europe – and it was a wise decision to open the Union to this region as part of the Stability Pact philosophy. This prospect of joining the Union is probably the only impetus

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<sup>5</sup> For more details see Biermann, Rafael, *The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – potential, problems and perspectives* (Discussion Paper Series of the Center for European Integration Studies, C 56), Bonn 1999, and Mintchev, Emil, *Europa und die Probleme des Balkans Ein Jahr Stabilitätspakt für Südosteuropa in Internationale Politik*, Nr 8, 2000, S 53-58

which might be strong enough to overcome the centuries-old pattern of conflict in the region. To be sure, at present, the signals from Brussels are still ambiguous and wavering concerning eventual membership, reflecting a considerable uncertainty and division among the EU partners as regards eventual membership of countries like Albania or Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Union. There are strong forces resisting further invitations, on the one hand feeling overwhelmed with the accession negotiations already going on, on the other hand fearing a "Balkanization", a severe weakening of the Union's capacity to act by allowing the countries of the Balkans to join the Union.

This ambivalent approach is, of course, counterproductive as it weakens the impetus for change all over South Eastern Europe. Instead, what is needed is clear, outright language about the prospect for membership, especially for those countries such as Croatia which have embarked on a positive, though painstaking effort to comply finally with European norms and principles. The European Union is not primarily about agriculture, fishery and regional funds; at the heart of the Union was and is the idea of how to bring lasting peace to all of Europe. Joining the Union is about joining a network of nations where war has become unthinkable because problems are solved peacefully and compromise is accepted as the way of life. Thus, the aspirations of all countries of South Eastern Europe fall in line with the desires of all Europeans to create a European-wide peace order which cannot be built without or around these countries.

There is a second lesson which can also be derived from Robert Schuman and his time: Peace-building is about reconciliation, and there is no lasting peace without reconciliation. Some people might view reconciliation as a term confined to Christian belief, the offer of reconciliation by God with mankind. They might view reconciliation as some kind of unreachable moral standard which is out of tune with reality. However, reconciliation is an imperative of enlightened self-interest, in private as well as in public. It is falling in line with the basic values the Union of European democracies upholds.<sup>6</sup> It is about "Realpolitik".

Schuman knew that his European project would utterly fail if France and Germany did not succeed in overcoming the legacy of the past and building a new future in their relationship. And he succeeded, not least because he found a like-minded statesman on the other side, Konrad Adenauer. This first German Chancellor, in his inauguration speech in parliament in 1949, had expressly put the reconciliation with France, Israel and Poland on top of his political agenda. Thus, German-French reconciliation became a success story in post-war

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<sup>6</sup>Some dictionaries even circumscribe reconciliation by "peacemaking". See e.g. Dictionary of Contemporary English, Langenscheidt-Longman 1981.

Europe, perhaps the major reason for the unprecedented period of more than fifty years of peace in Western Europe. Both countries became the co-founders of the European Union, concluded a treaty of friendship in 1963, the Elysée Treaty, which was incomprehensible only a few years before, and both are today the motors for European integration. This is a miracle of European history, and the way this came about is indeed a source of inspiration also for South Eastern Europe.

Thirdly, reconciliation is about coming to terms with our past – and as we build the future, we can not escape the shadows of our past failures. There is a strong tendency to look ahead in times of change and to push aside the unpleasant, still open issues of yesterday, because dealing with the past is painful. It involves admitting guilt and accepting the failures of one's own history. The domestic electorate does not honor this. And it evokes new conflicts and strains in relations with others where past conflicts just seem to fade away. But there is no escape from history. Chile is a case in point. The open question of bringing justice to what happened during the dictatorship of General Pinochet has time and again seriously hampered the democratic recovery of Chile.

The history of South Eastern Europe, especially in the last century, is a history of failed reconciliation. After 1945, the history of the first Yugoslavia, of the Ustaca terror and of the civil war was negated under the new Socialist motto of "unity and brotherhood". As the riots in 1968, the Croatian spring in 1971/2 and the events in Kosovo since 1981 have demonstrated, the ghosts of the past simply could not be suppressed and left the bottle. The falling-apart of the second Yugoslavia had much to do with this failed evasion of history.

Especially the last decade in former Yugoslavia has left deep wounds in so many families which are still hurting. Every day new mass graves are detected, excavations to identify the remains take place and reburials of the dead remind those left of a dreadful past. Reconciliation, thus, is the task of today and tomorrow in order to escape the cycle of violence which dominates Balkan history since the crumbling of the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire: reconciliation between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, between Croats and its Krajina Serbs, between Bosnians and Serbs, between Macedonians and Albanians, Macedonians and Greeks etc.. Finally, after the changes in 2000, the time has come up in South Eastern Europe to begin this process of reconciliation in earnest.

There is a window of opportunity today. Because coming to terms with the past only works in times of relative peace, when conflicts have ended and a period of second thought has started. This is the time for reconciliation – and



South Eastern Europe has now entered such a period of time. How long it will last, no-one knows. Two major benefits can be expected: In order to avoid schemes of collective guilt to emerge, individual responsibility has to be addressed and determined. That is exactly the purpose of the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. And when there is room to talk about and remedy the wounds of the past, real cooperation among the governments and peoples of the region in a spirit of real trust may slowly evolve.

Coming to terms with the past can be achieved with a wide variety of instruments. When the ice of the Cold War melted away, the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl saw the chance to fulfill what Konrad Adenauer couldn't achieve during the Cold War: the reconciliation with our neighbor Poland. In 1989, Germany and Poland issued a joint declaration about the trouble spots of the past; and in 1991 both of our nations concluded a treaty of friendship. Another means was used by Chancellor Adenauer in 1951: He gave a widely recognized speech in parliament confessing deep shame for the Holocaust and asking the Jews to forgive. On 27 January every year, the day Auschwitz was liberated in 1945, the German parliament commemorates the Holocaust to keep this memory alive. Next to the parliament building in Berlin the German government is now erecting a monument to the Holocaust warning future generations not to repeat the tragedy of Nazi Germany.

Sometimes it is political symbolism which can express more than mere words. The German Chancellor Willy Brandt kneeling down at the Warsaw ghetto has done a great deal to reconcile Germany and Poland after the war, as did the gesture of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Mitterrand holding hands above the graves of those who lost their lives in the bloody German-French battle of Verdun in World War I. When German unification drew nearer in 1990, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's visit at the grave of Foreign Minister Schewardnadse's brother in Brest who lost his life while fighting against the German invasion in 1941 helped to reconcile the Soviet leadership with the perspective of a new, unified Germany.

Thus, there are numerous ways to come to terms with the past. Surely, there are no prescriptions or magic formulas. Every time and region has to find its own expression and form to deal with the past. However, immediately after the changes in Croatia and Serbia both countries were confronted with their past, as the European Union made a rapprochement dependent on full cooperation with the Tribunal in The Hague and on reconciliation and cooperation among the countries of the region. Serbia will have to carry a heavy burden in this process, as Slobodan Milosevic was not the sole, but the main instigator of gross violations of human rights in the wars which led to the break-up of former Yugoslavia. The extradition of Milosevic to The Hague was a signal of great importance for Serbia as well as for the whole region that Serbia

has started to face its own past. However, the domestic opposition to this and especially to further moves in this direction was and is strong. The extradition of Milosevic can only be a first step. Most of the steps have to be taken by Serbia herself; the neighbors as well as the European Union will closely follow the internal debate on this topic in Belgrade.

Establishing a truth commission in Serbia like in South Africa might be a good approach, also in order to inform the public about what really happened after years of propaganda which left a strong mark on people's minds in Serbia. Before the Members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg President Kostunica himself talked about the possibility of establishing such a commission in order to investigate the past.<sup>7</sup> Foreign Minister Svilanovic added that "responsibility for crimes is a topic that cannot be skipped. We cannot, and should not, avoid facing the consequences of war and responsibility for crimes."<sup>8</sup> However, the first year in office of the new government in Yugoslavia were not as encouraging as these declarations signaled. A truth commission is not established yet. The long-time refusal to extradite Milosevic and his companions to the International Tribunal in The Hague, the cool reception of the Chief Prosecutor from The Hague in Belgrade and the avoidance of any regret during the first visits of Kostunica in the neighboring countries<sup>9</sup> evoked distrust and mischief in Sarajevo, Tirana and Zagreb. What happened in Vukovar, Dubrovnik, Sarajewo, Srebrenica and Racak – places that still ring a bell all over Europe when their names are mentioned – will not be forgotten by the neighbors. President Mesic's justified call on Belgrade to "go through a catharsis"<sup>10</sup> expressed what most of the neighbors expect from Serbia.

Other steps towards reconciliation will involve the whole region. It might, for example, be wise to establish bilateral commissions of historians to discuss the black spots of the past, as Germany did with France in 1951 and does with the Czech Republic today, a very painful and agonizing process. The negotiations among the former Republics of Yugoslavia after the end of the Milosevic regime to distribute the assets of former Yugoslavia and to resume diplomatic relations demonstrate, however, the difficulties such an endeavor encounters. Commissions to design common school books about a common past will also be absolutely necessary, as most of the school books in all the countries of the region carry grossly distorted images of the neighbors and the own history. Educating the coming generations in a spirit of cooperation and trust will be key to reconciliation in the long term.

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<sup>7</sup> Neue Züricher Zeitung, 16 November 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines, 6 November 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Kostunica explained that crimes had been committed on all sides; he would not feel any necessity to apologize for what happened; BBC, 19 January 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines, 22 November 2000.

This is far from reality today. Up to now, there has been a telling absence even of political and scientific dialogue in the whole region about the failures of the past. All the countries of the region see the Tribunal in The Hague through their national lenses. Most of them, with the exception of Croatia, are unwilling to extradite war criminals who have allegedly committed terrible crimes against humanity. Official apologies for past misbehavior have not been heard, with the rare exception of the Montenegrin President Djukanovic who expressed his "regret" of what Montenegrin forces did in 1991 when shelling the old town of Dubrovnik.<sup>11</sup>

In Bosnia, five years after the Dayton Accords, the "inter entity boundary line" is still separating peoples hardly willing to come together. Minority returns of refugees are still few, though rising. Revisionism still looms large among Serbs and Croats in Bosnia. Many of the parties and figures responsible for the crimes during the war are still in power. Reconciliation still has a very weak constituency in this country. The "Intercultural Council" of all four religions which was constituted already during the war and has since several times called for reconciliation and started own projects like multiethnic schools is an exception which is worth mentioning.

Concerning Kosovo, the first two years under the international presence in Kosovo has proven just how difficult reconciliation is. The incidents in Kosovska Mitrovica prove that neither side is willing to reconcile and compromise. The memories of genocide and expulsion, going all the way back to the time when Serb forces brutally conquered Kosovo in 1912, are still vivid and powerful. Individuals like Adem Demaci, one of the leading human rights activists in Kosovo who spent 28 years in communist Yugoslav prisons, are isolated when they talk about the necessity to forgive, arguing that "forgetting only leads to history repeating itself"<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, the international community has replaced its call for multiethnic cooperation by mere peaceful "co-existence" (Madeline Albright), a term stemming from the Cold War, meaning a minimum cooperation to avoid sliding into hot conflict. Such a

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<sup>11</sup> During a meeting with the new Croatian President in Cavtat near Dubrovnik Djukanovic said "As President of the present-day democratic, European Montenegro I want to express, personally as well as in the name of those Montenegrin citizens who share my political and moral conviction, my deep regret for all the suffering, human sacrifice and material destruction which was inflicted upon the Croatian citizens and especially the citizens of Dubrovnik and its neighborhood by the members of the Yugoslav People's Army from Montenegro", cited in Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 3 July 2000

<sup>12</sup> On the first anniversary of the end of the NATO air campaign in Kosovo, Demaci spoke at a mass gathering in Pristina's sports stadium. „Do not forget the Serbian people who have decided to stay in Kosova. It is our duty and obligation to open up prospects for them. Help them. They are depressed and scared and it is up to you to create safe conditions for them." When Demaci uttered these words, however, the stadium erupted in whistles and jeers, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Balkan Report, 26 January 2001

peaceful co-existence is always inherently unstable and may shatter by only a minor incident.

Occupation forces such as the ones in Germany after 1945 or protection forces as the ones in Kosovo and Bosnia today can secure a negative peace, i.e. the absence of war and violence. They cannot secure a positive peace, which means lasting stability by reconciliation, good neighborliness and cooperation. Thus, reconciliation depends on the willingness of those concerned. Seeing the international community as the "deus ex machina" or the cure to all only implies evading unpleasant realities and tough choices.

Accepting responsibility for one's own history and fate is a sign of political maturity. This implies accepting the territorial integrity of one's neighbor, even if it includes large minorities of one's origin within its borders. There is no room for confidence to grow in an atmosphere of continuous territorial claim. Revisionism is the enemy of reconciliation. For Germany this meant giving up one third of former German territory at the time of German unification – territory which was lost during the Second World War, a homeland of millions of Germans who were cruelly and illegally expelled from their homes after 1945. There would be no peace today between Germany and Poland, hence in Central Europe, without this reconciling move of enlightened self-interest by the German government. For the countries of South Eastern Europe, the time has come for equally hurting, but unavoidable steps. The unequivocal statement of the new Croat government to respect the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which implies a repudiation of all attempts to regain the territory of mainly Croat Herceg-Bosna, has set a good example which should be followed by the Serb side as concern the Republica Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fourthly, coming back to the time of Robert Schuman, reconciliation was inspired by some men in Western Europe who hardly represented the majority of their peoples at that time, though the wide-spread war-weariness prepared the ground for their revolutionary approach. Men were needed with integrity, charisma and a vision exceeding the next election date to overcome the firm grip of the past. It was leadership at its best that was practiced by the Europeans of the first generation. Konrad Adenauer, for example, accepted the Schuman proposal out of hand, without even asking his cabinet, parliament or the population where the mistrust against all proposals coming from France still loomed large. Times of change are times for leadership – and South Eastern Europe at this point of time urgently needs such visionary men like Nelson Mandela who led South Africa out of conflict or Vaclav Havel who became a symbol of the "Velvet revolution" in former Czechoslovakia. The continuing instability all over the region demonstrates how much such personalities of vision and compromise are lacking in the Western Balkans. The Titoist

Yugoslavia did a good job in wiping out all non-conformist thinkers who might have had the potential to become charismatic leaders in a good, democratic sense.

Without such leaders it is indeed very difficult to pursue a policy of reconciliation. For reconciliation always has strong enemies, domestic as well as foreign. And it needs a lot of determination and will to overcome the forces of the past: the will not to let the mistrust that has taken root dominate the future; the will to paint a positive image of one's neighbor, thus sowing seeds of trust for future generations; and the will to go an extra mile to find common ground and to search for genuine compromise. This is incredibly difficult, as some wounds hurt terribly and memories hardly fade away. Reconciliation is about emotions, individually and collectively, and whoever has experienced being expelled from home, being attacked by enemy air planes or seeing his relatives being killed knows how difficult reconciliation is.

However, Schuman and Adenauer realized that there was only one alternative to reconciliation – preparing for the next war. Setting off guilt against guilt, again and again, had come to a dead end. The role of victim and culprit had alternated many times in our history. Reconciliation meant breaking out of the deadly cycle of history. And both mustered the political will, held up the vision, overcame the forces of the past and led their nations into a better future.

Fifthly, reconciliation has to grow. It takes years of patient, arduous work, amidst drawbacks and new quarrels stemming from the past. It took four years until France put an end to a policy which had tried to keep Germany weak and fragmented after the war. De-nazification, maximum exploitation of their occupation zone in Germany, control of the main industrial zones (Saar and Ruhrgebiet), vetoing the establishment of a new German federal government – that was French policy until 1949, and for good reasons. The memories of defeat and occupation were still too strong. The Schuman Plan was the turning point, a strong signal of a new French willingness to build a new, constructive relationship with postwar democratic Germany.

For Israel and the Jews it took even longer to be able, mentally and emotionally, to start a process of reconciliation with Germany. It was not before 1960 when David Ben Gurion met Konrad Adenauer on neutral ground in New York that the breakthrough occurred. And still today many Jews, having experienced Auschwitz, are not able to visit German soil again. Thus, reconciliation takes time. And it has to grow from inside, by conviction. It cannot be decreed from above. Adem Demaci rightly acknowledged: "We will need quite a lot of time before we are able to soften our stand."

Sixthly, reconciliation needs more than a change of rhetoric. It has a price. In the German language, reconciliation etymologically comes from atonement („Versöhnung“ – „Sühne“). It means naming the guilt of past behavior, but it also includes repairing the damage that has been inflicted on the victims of the past – at least as far as possible. Thus, democratic Germany started the dialogue with Israel in 1950 with negotiations on reparations for the victims of the Holocaust. In 1952 the Luxembourg agreement was signed which obliged the German government to pay 3.4 billion German Marks during the next twelve years to Israel. The ten billion German Mark in compensation the German government and the industry now have to pay, 50 years after the war, to those who were forced to work in German factories during the war is another case in point.

Resettling and repatriating refugees all over South Eastern Europe who were expelled for ethnic reasons will also cost a lot of money, in Krajina as in many other places. Financial help of the international community is of course welcome and already offered, not only by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, but also by the Stability Pact. But finally this burden has to be carried by the respective country. It is just a little moral and financial remedy for the suffering those hundred thousands of individuals had to endure who lost years of their lives as refugees abroad. And it does not help to point to the malicious behavior of others who have committed similar crimes against humanitarian law in war.

Seventhly, reconciliation has not only an external, but also an internal dimension. Reconciliation begins domestically where there is a legacy of maltreatment and suppression of all opposition forces under autocratic rule. This includes releasing political prisoners, maybe paying remedies to them, and clarifying the fate of those who were murdered by the security forces or simply disappeared, like the predecessor of Milosevic as President of Serbia, Ivan Stambolic.

After the change of government in Croatia and Yugoslavia the issue emerged of what to do with those who dominated all aspects of public life before, especially in ministries and media: treat them as they treated us, or try to make peace with the former oppressors. Of course, truth and justice cannot be compromised. A new beginning requires new people in strategic positions. But the democratic parties which have come to power are setting an example of how to deal with former autocratic rulers. Practicing revenge means laying the foundation for further suppression, tension and conflict. Practicing reconciliation means laying the foundation for a new, civilized society. The success of transformation in Warsaw, Budapest, Prague and elsewhere since the democratic revolution of 1989 actually has a lot to do with the ability of the new elites to find a working balance between justice and grace.

Finally, a last word about practical steps towards reconciliation. Reconciliation is about what in Germany was once called a "policy of small steps", of course with a grand design in mind. It is about confidence-building, thus creating a reservoir of trust which could be drawn on in times of crisis. Germany and France have realized that the more contact there is among our nations, the more understanding and peace there is. For the more contact there is, the less conflict emanates from misconception, communication failures and idle stereotypes. This confidence building needs to involve all people, not just the elites – for only then can reconciliation take a firm hold in societies. Germany and France have therefore created a distinct institution fostering youth exchange („Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk“) which has brought together six million youth since 1963 and has now started to expand its activities also to Poland. Both countries have enormously increased the exchange of students, teachers and university professors during the last decades. Both have created hundreds of partnerships among many French and German cities where a regular, sometimes very intensive exchange is taking place. And both have now widened the focus by creating similar partnerships with the former adversaries of the Cold War in the East. Thus, in late 1999 the German Foreign Minister sent a letter to many city mayors in Germany asking them to establish as many such city partnerships with the opposition cities in Serbia as possible. Looking at the low number of visits among the countries of South Eastern Europe, at the few border crossings, at the very few highways, railways and air connections in many parts of the region, combined with the sometimes strict and arbitrary visa regulations it is obvious that there needs to be a completely new quality of intra-regional contact and communication in South Eastern Europe.<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, trust and understanding can hardly grow among the people of the region.

Summing up, it is worth repeating that the concept of European integration originated after the war from statesmen of high integrity and vision such as Robert Schuman. For them, building a Union of European democracies meant building peace in war-torn Europe. They knew that peace could only take hold where reconciliation is practiced, in words and in deeds. This meant accepting responsibility for ones own past, facing and addressing historical truth without ideological excuse, naming guilt where guilt is, abdicating all forms of revisionism, and in some cases also paying remedy to the victims. Reconciliation implies breaking out of the cycle of revenge and retaliation. It therefore demands strong will and determination, calling for visionary leadership to overcome all the obstacles ahead: still bleeding wounds of the victims, vested interests of those not interested in reconciliation for personal reasons, or simply the temptation to evade the past and concentrate on the future. This all takes time. However, there is no valid alternative. And the time

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<sup>13</sup> A very good overview with many telling examples can be found in the study of the European Investment Bank, Basic Infrastructure Investments in South-Eastern Europe, prepared for the Regional Funding Conference of the Stability Pact on 29-30 March 2000 in Brussels.

has come in South Eastern Europe to start this process. Surely, the price is worth the cost and effort: creating the conditions for lasting peace, security and prosperity where war is becoming impossible as a means to solve conflict, and becoming part of the zone of peace and reconciliation which has grown in Western Europe over more than fifty years now. That is what enlargement in the final analysis is all about.