



EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR THE VILLAGE AND SMALL TOWN  
CONSEIL EUROPÉEN POUR LE VILLAGE ET LA PETITE VILLE  
EUROPÄISCHER VERBAND FÜR DAS DORF UND FÜR DIE KLEINSTADT

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS**  
**- ITS PRACTICAL ROLE IN**  
**REGENERATION OF THE BALKANS**

*Proceedings of the*  
*ECOVAST Conference and workshop*  
*held at FOJNICA, Bosnia & Hercegovina*  
**11 to 13 October 2001**

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## **Introduction to the Conference**

### **Location**

88 people from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Great Britain, Germany, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, France attended the conference and took part in the workshops.

The conference took place in the Hotel Reumal, a physio-therapeutical rehabilitation centre open to the public as a spa.

Fojnica is a small town of approximately 6000 inhabitants on the river Fojni\_ka, north-west of Sarajevo at the head of a road leading only into the mountains.

The town has a very small mosque from the 15th century and an ugly one from the 1930s.

Towering above the town is a badly restored Franciscan monastery from the 19th century with poorly designed new additions.

Traditional houses can be found around the old mosque. Many of them have the remains of tiny individual mills where the river runs through the town. A big Ottoman period house stands empty and is in danger of collapse through neglect; next to it a large concrete framed building is sited insensitively.

There are many cemeteries with very old turban tombstones in the Ottoman manner.

A sawmill offers 300 places to work, the rehabilitation centre 400, shops and cafés some more but 1700 people are unemployed. There are some small signs of war damage but this is not an area that was badly affected physically by the war and there are indications that reconciliation is taking place in the town.

At the end of the town is a well-kept, widely popular fish-restaurant.

In the mountains immediately behind the town are innumerable springs and watercourses - almost every house in the town might have its own fountain – not despoiled by industry, pure nature with brown bears and wolves, berries and mushrooms; a hiking paradise, wide open spaces, some grazing cattle.

High in the mountains a former guest house of the forest administration is now nicely laid out with an open air grill and higher still an idyllically sited lake.

The ecological society of Fojnica developed a project for ecological education at different schools with finance for one year only. The project cost is 6000 Convertible Marks (KM) a year.

### **Aims and Objectives of the conference**

To develop a methodology for local rural development intended to:

- Enhance and stimulate development at the local level
- Improve inter-ethnic relations in specific locations
- Encourage the return of refugees
- Develop civil society and democracy at the local level
- Explore the role of cultural heritage as a tool for reconciliation and as a social and economic asset

The conference set out to use well-tested methods of inter-disciplinary team working, bringing local people together and local and international experts to:

- Transfer knowledge and experience gained in rural development programmes throughout Europe through the activities of the European Council for the Village and Small town (ECOVAST)
- Investigate the economic, social and cultural possibilities of specific localities
- Build on existing initiatives at the local and regional level such as the ISCOMET Network for Democracy, Human Rights and the Protection of Persons belonging to Ethnic and Religious Minorities in South-Eastern Europe and the TEMPUS Project in Bosnia and Hercegovina
- Build models for the return of refugees and the encouragement of civil society at the local level
- Explore the role of the rural heritage as a tool for reconciliation

### **The Conference programme**

**Working groups.** After an initial plenary session describing the aims and objectives of the conference, the delegates broke out into 3 working groups dealing with 3 specific topics:-

Rural architecture and heritage

Rural development

Tourism

The purpose of these working groups was to enable delegates to understand the particular relevance of their own expertise, knowledge and experience to the problems of the area in preparation for the study tours.

**Plenary session.** The main plenary session was intended to give all delegates a background to the region and to show development models from the experience of others. The six lectures covered the following topics:-

- Professor Silvo Devetak described the 1999 Stability pact and its provisions for the protection of minorities, human rights, promotion of economic development and the development of democratic structures. He pointed out the difficulties arising from intolerance and political manipulation and the overload of government resulting from the Dayton agreement.
- Angus Fowler, president of ECOVAST, gave examples of how non-governmental organisations can play a significant part in building civil society. He described how, on an international level, the relationship between the state and citizen's organisations is changing and described the way in which this experience is changing from his own particular experience in Hessen and Berlin-Brandenburg in Germany.
- On a completely different scale, Jany Hansal described the DESA initiative. An organisation for refugee women of all nationalities in the Dubrovnik region which had been effective in re-establishing their self-esteem and self-confidence through a series of specific projects to develop skills and increase their incomes.
- Aida Daidzic described obstacles in the way of building a civil, democratic society in BiH. She spoke of the long history of civilisation in Bosnia, its specific multi-cultural character and history of tolerance. She showed the effect of the war on that civilisation and outlined the reasons why reconstruction is so slow.

- Fabrice de Kerchove explained the involvement of the King Baudouin Foundation in the region and its programmes for promoting inter-ethnic relations and the cultural heritage as well as its specific projects for children and young people in need.
- Professor Michael Dower set out the questions that need to be answered if local initiative is to be harnessed for rural development and went on to describe the specific problems likely to be encountered in BiH. But he also pointed out the sorts of opportunities which BiH might be able to take advantage of.

**Study tours.** Three study tours were arranged, one in Fojnica itself, one to the medium-sized town of Travnik in Central Bosnia and one to the very rural community of Rama on the border of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Each study tour was led by a local and an international expert acting as moderators and was set the specific task of trying to understand the nature of the place they were visiting, assessing its strengths and weaknesses, looking for the opportunities available to local people and those problems which needed to be overcome and preparing specific proposals for short, medium and long-term actions for the development of the community.

**Conclusion.** At the final plenary session, the findings of the three study groups were presented to the conference as a whole and synthesised by Professor Michael Dower.

The reports of the three study groups and the texts of the keynote speeches follow this introduction. In order to retain the international diverse flavour of the conference these texts are reproduced as presented by their authors with only minor editing.

### **Results of the Conference**

In many ways, the most important result of the conference was to bring together a group of people with common knowledge and skills to share their views and experiences. The main disappointment was that the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> significantly reduced the level of international participation. A number of the contacts made at the conference have subsequently been followed up on an individual basis; for instance, direct contact has been established between ISCOMET and local non-governmental organisations in central Bosnia; a number of the young people present at the conference have been invited to the Youth Heritage Forum to be held in Dubrovnik in May 2002.

We hope and believe that some of the ideas and methods described at the conference will be taken up locally. The difficulty here is to measure any specific results, but a Bosnia ECOVAST group is in the process of being formed and will be able to act as a link between local and international activity in the future. Specific proposals for co-operation are being developed to encourage rural and heritage tourism in Bosnia.

### **Dissemination of Results**

At the end of the conference interviews were given for use on two national radio stations – Radio BiH and Radio Federacija. Interviews were also given to the local paper and the national daily, Oslobodenje.

A report of the conference was made in ECOVAST News and sent to ECOVAST members throughout Europe. This report is being sent to all those attending the conference as well as relevant government departments within BiH, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

*John Sell*

## **WORKSHOP REPORT AND STUDY VISITS**

### **RAMA working group**

#### **1.0. Plan of the trip**

Zapadno – hercegova\_ki kanton (West – Herzegovina Canton)  
Op\_tina Rama – Prozor (Community Rama – Prozor)

Itinerary:

- Prozor
- Stop at the gas station Biser
- \_\_\_it – small peninsula
- house of the host Ante Filipovi\_, his friends and neighbours - Franciscan monastery – House of peace – host Fra Mato Topi\_
- “Ramska ku\_a” – lunch at the house
- “Kod babe Janje” restaurant, owner Ivo Dole

#### **2.0. Visiting card of the Rama-Prozor Community**

##### **2.1. Geographical – Natural Conditions**

- beautiful cultural landscape rich with forests, meadows and lakes
- half Mediterranean, half continental climate
- One part of Rama community belongs to Bosnia and has continental climate, the other part of the community belongs to Hercegovina, and is under influence of the sub-Mediterranean climate.
- This region is a mixture of features of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Winters are cold, and there is a lot of snow on surrounding mountains.
- Summers are hot.
- Radu\_a mountain is about 2000 meters high.
- Rama region is a geographical and cultural bridge between Bosnia and Herzegovina.

##### **2.2. Energy sources:**

- sun
- wind
- bio-mass
- water
- firewood

##### **2.3. Natural sources**

- wild animals: rabbits, foxes, wolves, bears, wild boars, ducks, other birds and fished
- plants: different trees, different endemic plants, very important source of herbs, mushrooms and other nutritive vegetation.
- live stock, crops and domestic products: goats, pigs, sheep, cattle, plum, apple, grapes, honey, sheep products, etc.
- natural materials: stone (quarry), timber
- water: reservoir

### **3.0. Social structure**

- 16.000 citizens
- 75% Croats, and 25% Bosnians. No Serb population.
- high birth rate (influence of the church)
- high percentage of people are working abroad - from each family at least one person is working in Germany
- 50% of citizens live on outside (foreign) pensions
- Interethnic relations (Croats, Bosnians) are very good, and 80% of the pre-war Muslim population returned to their homes in the last years.
- In the industrial plants (two still existing textile factories, metal factory, some electro industry) only 10% of the pre-war employed labour force kept their job till today. This shows a sharp decline in industrial activity – a lot of activities are being transferred to Zagreb.
- Quarry “Gradina” is under privatisation, so it is not known how many workers will be employed there in the future.
- The only real source of work is the hydroelectric power plant.
- There are several schools like Gymnasium, and Secondary School of Economy, but very small number of young people can find job in the Rama region after they finish the school (approximately 10%).

### **4.0. Weaknesses**

- Lack of self-confidence of local population
- Lack of self-initiative – people are used to depend on foreign aid.
- Bureaucratic procedures are impeding many local initiatives. Administrative structure of BaH is imposing many obstacles to local initiatives.
- Improper structure of education is present.
- Distance from the market is evident.
- Roads are poor.
- Lack of water supply and sewerage.
- Water level in the lake changes very often, and it is difficult to use it in tourism.

### **5.0. Short-term recommendations – six months period**

Short-term recommendations focus on the following three fields of actions:

- Public participation process: the role of the local radio in raising the self-awareness of the local population. Radio is very cheap and simple to use. Co-operation with local schools is essential. Self-identity has to be built up.
- Organising effective local development association: perhaps the existing local tourist organisation could take over a role as a local development promoter, to stimulate production of locally value-added products (consumption of local resources, the use of local labels and local products – bread, meat, cheese, spirits (rakija); to produce the necessary promotion material; to stimulate and co-ordinate particular actions of local groups (self-initiative actions).
- To prepare a local spatial development plan: it is of vital importance to prepare a strategic development vision for the local area, the accordance of the local population is necessary if the plan is to be implemented successfully. The strategic plan is very important to prepare if substantial development process is being envisaged. The plan for new water and sewage system can be instrumental in

directing development in a desired way. The strategic plan represents a base for the preparation of a scheme for seed funding and other investments.

**Particular Note:** Development of rural areas is a very slow process, and quick victories are not possible. Short-term plans should present only a start for the strategic preparation for the long-term development.

### **6.0 Long-term recommendations:**

Long term recommendations follow the objective of achieving sustainable model of development, which will take into account social, economic and environmental factors of local area. Some of the recommendations in this regard could be defined for the following areas:

#### **A. Social structure:**

- the population structure has to be stable, properly growing and balanced in age
- it is necessary to create conditions for young people to stay in the area
- it is necessary to take care for the balanced development of settlements – the planning of water and sewage system can serve to direct this development in order not to pollute the environment
- targeted education: (e.g. catering school etc.) – all in the sense of preserving local cultural identity

#### **B. Economy:**

- to strengthen basic and diversified economic basis. Potential priority fields: agriculture, processing, manufacturing, craft – all activities that can contribute to the added value of local production;
- tourism – is a very volatile activity and can not represent a basis for local economic development. It is to be developed as a supplementary economic activity – priority to be given to eco-tourism and the development of the system of support services;
- agriculture: modern and diversified agricultural production: bio-products, high quality home-produced food and beverages.
- diversified economic activities can be oriented on: cultivation and processing of endemic plants and herbs, production of building material (stone), production of quality souvenirs;
- improvement of infrastructure: traffic connections, communication networks, electrification, water and sewage plumbing
- to attract investment from local people living abroad
- to attract foreign aid for specific projects

#### **C. Environment**

- to stabilise the level of water in the accumulation lake at least during 3 summer months in order to enable exploitation in tourism;
- introduction of a special tax for landscape
- to stimulate ecological projects – protection of the lake, plants, trees
- to attract foreign aid for specific projects

**Special Note:** Outside experts with their valuable knowledge and experiences should be invited to help in close cooperation with local community in preparing strategic plans and actions Rama-Prozor.

## **Fojnica working group**

### **Description of study day**

Our study group was guided around the town by the former Mayor of Fojnica, Mr. Hamza Salihagi\_. The first part of the tour was a presentation by Mr. Salihagi\_, introducing the work of the Ecological Society of Fojnica. This explained how the NGO had been established two years ago and now boasted a membership of over 400. In its own words, the... "main purpose of this society is to insure quality of life in urban and rural milieu, raising of ecological culture, consciousness of inhabitants (especially young ones), and observing and including in global efforts of preserving of nature in area of Fojnica".

Having then seen a video outlining the NGO's main area of concern around the once pristine lake, Proko\_ko Jezero, the group walked a short distance from the hotel to the thermal spa source. After a brief explanation about the qualities of these waters and the facilities around the source, the study group followed one of two rivers running through the town up some tens of metres to a small fish farm and restaurant at the top end of the settlement. After sampling the ambience of this location we then passed along the old part of the town and up to the commanding Franciscan monastery.

For the second part of the study tour, the group travelled by mini-bus along a rough track up the route towards Proko\_ko Jezero. Due to time limitations we didn't travel the whole way to the lake but instead stopped after about 15 km, at a recently established restaurant to sample some local cuisine and hospitality. The restaurant, situated in the middle of dense forest next to a babbling mountain brook, had facilities indoors, but due to the mild weather we were able to relax *al fresco* on picnic style benches and tables.

After a barbecue meal, we then travelled back down to Fojnica. The route took us through rough pasture land and forests. Virtually the only sign of human activity away from the road was the existence of several old charcoal burners which were still in use.

### **Assessment and recommendations**

On the day following the study tour, the group that visited Fojnica entered into a 'brain-storming' session in an effort to identify relative advantages, weaknesses, possibilities, methodologies. The conclusions of this session are summarised as follows:

#### ***Advantages***

- The surrounding natural environment of mountains, forests, and their associated flora and fauna.
- Water: both as thermal springs and clear rivers and lakes.
- 'Tradition', the wealth of cultural heritage in central BiH from buildings to song, dance, costume and cuisine.



- Existence of forward looking environmental NGO (Ecological Society of Fojnica), which aims to address major local issues and to gain greater influence through networking with similar organisations in the region.
- The collections stored in the town's Franciscan monastery.
- Certain attractive, historical buildings - including one rather run-down but still interesting old Bosnian house, and one charming (but currently closed) riverside café called '1001 Nights'.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The general scruffy appearance of the town. Industrial features are situated in some prime riverside locations, whilst other more aesthetic constructions are tucked away and not easily found. Furthermore, the regulation of the river through the town is very unattractive and could be vastly improved.
- The town's industrial output focuses around timber, textiles and printing. These are generally 'low income industries' which produce no final products and so have a limited earning power.
- There appears to be no clear, consistent town planning. So for example land-use is poorly organised and roofing materials vary dramatically in style and colour
- Again in terms of planning and policy, there seems to be an unawareness of the town's relative advantages, and a general lack of connection with the town's tradition and heritage.
- Overall self-confidence is absent and bureaucratic regulations act to impede local initiatives.

### ***Possibilities***

- The global interest in genealogy is reflected by the fact that family history is the second most frequent reason for using the Internet. Therefore the monastery's unique books and records could be turned into a significant asset for people exploring their 'roots' both in the immediate region and in the wider Balkans.
- The potential for medical tourism can be improved. Also the physical presence of the thermal waters could be made visible (e.g. creation of water features/fountains).
- The production of organic foods, and the tradition of warm hospitality is familiar to many households. With a small amount of investment opportunities for bed & breakfast/guest house accommodation could be realised (currently the only rooms open to tourism are those in the large hotel).
- Also linked to the production of organic foods, the 'fruits of nature' such as wild mushrooms and berries could be made into a final product. At present these are simply picked and the raw product exported predominantly to Italy where they are processed into luxury goods (e.g. dried or roasted fungi, antipasti etc).
- The local textile industry could produce more traditional finished products rather than just the simple cloth currently produced.
- A greater diversity of activities of interest to tourists could be realised. For example a small amount of alluvial gold is present in the local rivers and streams. With a little training local guides could show tourists how to pan for this gold. Then there is significant potential for walking and hiking in the surrounding forests and mountains. We were assured by the former Major, that landmines and unexploded ordinance were not present in vicinity. The outdoor market is also located on an attractive site by the river. With greater attention, this too could be made into a more pleasant feature, and an outlet for selling some of the locally produced 'final products'.

### ***Methodology***

- Through the direct engagement of local citizens and built upon the experience and know-how of existing structures/bodies.
- By providing seed money to fund small projects and enterprises.
- Utilising the work of local societies/NGO's and strengthen these initiatives by linking and networking with similar partners regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Regular cleaning of the city and in particular the river courses, and the creation of more green space through planting.
- Creating of a website covering the municipality, but featuring inputs from local SMEs, NGO's, segments of the community as well as the official local government. This would provide a range of information for residents, tourists or potential investors (modelled on existing Kanton Information Network in Tuzla?).

### **Travnik working group**

The visiting group was made up of various professionals from across Europe including Bosnians. Moderator: Jane Wade; Rapporteur: Mirna Pedalo

### **Brief History of Travnik**

The oldest and most conspicuous building is the Fort, first built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by the Bosnian State. From 1463 the Ottoman Empire added a tower, mosque and jail, but its present form dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although it has lost its roofs.

After a fire in Sarajevo, Travnik became the main residence of the ruling viziers from 1697 until 1850. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there were consuls from France and Austria and in 1878 the Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied the country.

### **The Town**

*Travnik is set in the Lasva valley with the fort set on a hill dominating the town. Many streams rush down the hillsides through the neighbourhoods which worked many small mills, creating a sound known as \_ubor.*

There are several mosques, including a beautifully painted one with small shops around it in the centre of the town. The mosques serve the mahalas – districts of Bosnian houses – and there is also a madrassa or boys school. Elsewhere there is a Jesuit church with two schools each side, one private, one state, a nearby Convent and a Music School.

Along the main road there is an Orthodox church, which until the recent war had good icons which were removed for safety but it is not known where they went. On the wall is an old sundial superceded by a nearby 19<sup>th</sup> century clock tower. Opposite are decorative Islamic mausolea.

A 19<sup>th</sup> century consul's residence remains by the river and a print in the museum shows the viziers more traditional Turkish House, which was pulled down in 1950. Another print shows the overhanging timber living quarters which topped the fortified stone base of the manor house,

which stands above the road.. Near the town centre, Ivo Andric's House has been reconstructed to commemorate the Nobel Prize winning novelist.

### *People*

Before the recent war there were approximately 30,000 Muslims, 26,000 Croats, 13,000 Serbs but the town is now mainly Muslim.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century until 1941, there was a Jewish community who were mainly doctors and traders.

Displaced people are largely unemployed. Many people are supported by those working abroad. Young people are still leaving.

### *Industry*

There is a factory for shoes and another for clothes, which is very successful but the pay is only 220 DM per month. Unemployment in the town is 60-70%. Nearby Novi Travnik, where there used to be work in the armaments industry, has an unemployment rate of 90%. There used to be iron ore mines in the vicinity.

Teachers are paid 320 DM a month but were last paid three months ago. The Museum which also has the Fort and Ivo Andric's house to look after has no resources and too few staff.

### *Tourism*

There is not much tourism at present but the traffic along the valley road through the centre of the town generates some coffee and ice cream stops. There are two hotels one private, one public but neither are particularly good, and one motel.

There is a private firm organising trips in the area, but there are no town guides so the museum provides this service.

The Ivo Andric House has a museum and library upstairs and a pleasant café behind, which helps to pay for the reconstruction. This arrangement was considered controversial by some townspeople. The town museum is well organised and varied and has a room for changing exhibitions. There is no entry fee, nor museum shop or café.

A pre-war conservation plan has been up-dated but at present there is no money to implement it. **Travnik is a picturesque town with much genuine old character left which could attract tourism if a little better presented. It has a lot of future potential in this market if the right decisions are made. Building regulations are not enforced as well as before the war and there is a real danger that the appearance of traditional houses will be lost by insensitive modernisation.**

## Non-Government Organisations

1. *Alter Art* which caters for 17-25 year olds and has about 30-50 members. This was represented by an interesting and professional exhibition of photos and some surveys of old local Bosnian houses and their details at the museum. Other activities include an internet club, a café and a 7-day rock concert held in October which finances itself.

2. *Stari Hrast (Old Oak Society)*

This has 15 active members but more supporters and is concerned with both the natural and cultural heritage of the wider area. The EU helps with finance. They have been particularly involved in rescuing medieval early Bogomil tomb stones at risk from being destroyed due to development. (Elsewhere in Bosnia old tomb slabs are being destroyed by re-use).

3. *Sumja Woman's Group*

This is nationally based and provided our group with an excellent traditional Bosnian lunch at an old house at the entrance to the fort.

4. *Kaleidoscope*

The organisation which is financed from abroad (possibly Sweden), is very popular, particularly with young people. It runs a contemporary art gallery with frequently changing exhibits, there are books and theatrical events. Everything is free.

The formation of these groups shows that there is initiative and a will to improve the quality of life and of the environment.

## VISION for 10 years hence

Bullet points in no particular order

- A developed tourism achieved by the sensitive repair of historic buildings and improved hospitality such as bed and breakfast in private houses as well as good hotels, and town guides.
- An independent local media which represents the interests of the town. It could have a page that promoted and advertised local goods and services.
- Townspeople to have a better consciousness of environment and cultural heritage.
- An organically based building industry with capacity to sell elsewhere.
- Work opportunities for displaced people as well as local unemployed.
- An annual Music Festival and revival of the outdoor theatre in the fort.
- Regeneration of woodland which, at present, is being destroyed for heating purposes
- The main road through the centre should be diverted so that the two sides of the town can be easily accessed by pedestrians and visitors and do away with the unpleasant pedestrian underpass.
- All historic buildings protected and correctly repaired as part of an overall plan to enhance the area of the old town, including buildings across the river and old mahalas. This should include those that are privately owned.

- Replace the timber storey to the fortified manor house as a small high standard guest house with an old world atmosphere.
- No more exodus of young people because there are enough opportunities in the town.
- To reconnect the town to the river make plans to eventually replace the line of white high rise flats the destroys the scale of the old town.

### **SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES within 6 months without additional finance**

Bullet points in no particular order

- Volunteers to take rubbish out of the river on a regular basis.
- Repair steps up to fortress which are becoming dangerous due to missing stones near the top.
- Hold a competition for best shop window display – make it an annual event
- Create courses for young people to improve their understanding of their environment and cultural heritage to include all groups.
- The unemployed to be trained to work on cultural heritage (citizens' projects) with suitable input and guidance to save what is left – this would need knowledgeable overseeing but worked in East Germany. Retired people with knowledge of traditional methods may be willing to give advice.
- If help is available from outside, make sure local people are involved in deciding how assistance should be used. Search for cultural heritage Trusts or Foundations. Use contacts abroad for this.
- Local authority to promote pride in the locality. Specialist local agricultural products should be in the shops. In addition, local crafts and surplus garden products should have a special shop or market stall, initially provided by the Town Council.
- Implement existing planning regulations more strictly to prevent loss of cultural heritage from alteration and modernisation. This is the town's best asset for the future.
- Earmark priorities for Feasibility Studies out of the 10 year list and try to obtain funding. (For instance plans are needed to move the main road out of the town before traffic increase is intolerable.)
- Town twinning with similar towns to exchange ideas and create a supportive partnership. Use overseas contacts for this.
- Make a photographic record of all traditional buildings, particularly private houses which are vulnerable to change. Drawn surveys would also be useful especially if they also show the internal structure and details. These records should be kept at the Museum. It may one day be possible to restore the historic details.

## TRANSCRIPTS OF SPEAKERS' PRESENTATIONS

### **Inter-ethnic relations and local democracy in South-Eastern Europe**

Professor Dr. Silvo Devetak

President of ISCOMET and Acting Director of the Miljenka Fischer Devetak Foundation

First of all I would like to thank the organisers for giving me the opportunity to address this eminent gathering. The title of my presentation is pertinent to the geographical area of South – Eastern Europe (SEE) and of former Yugoslavia in particular. As a starting point in considering this issue it is necessary to underline that nationalism and centralisation of power in the hands of ethnic leaders in most situations have been the main tool for instigating hate and for pushing people to destruction. How to push this evil to the margins of society's structure, in order to open new ways for modernisation, is thus one of the basic issues at stake in the region.

The process of healing the wounds and of moving to the better – after the bloodshed and destruction on the soil of former Yugoslavia - has hopefully begun. The international community is fully engaged in supporting this process. In addition to bilateral engagements of particular European and other states, there are three tools –as a reflection of the common EU policy – of paramount importance for the realisation of the new process:

**First**, the Stability Pact for SEE adopted on 19 June 1999 after the bombardments of FR Yugoslavia. The Pact envisaged, as it is known, three sectors as a priority of international and domestic activities related to SEE:

- democracy, human rights and good governance,
- economic development, and
- security

The main method of the Pact's activities is the organisation of projects in the three areas of its activities which would be financed by individual states and by the European Union (EU) and other international banking and economic organisations.

**Second**, the EU so called “stabilisation and accession process” adopted by the EU Council in Vienna in 1999. This “process” has been implemented by the Council's regulation of 5 December 2000, which has among other things provided this policy with the financial line for developing activities which should promote democracy, economic stability, return of refugees and displaced persons and which would finally support the structural preparation of Croatia, Bulgaria, FRY, FYROM and Albania for gradual inclusion in the EU.

This policy has two main tools:

- the Community Aid for Reconstruction, Development and Stability (CARDS) program in which framework about 4,65 billion Euro are available for all five countries in the EU budget period 2000-2006
- the conclusion of stabilisation and accession agreements with these five states. The first was concluded with FYROM and the second will be signed in these days with Croatia.

**Third** financial line, important for the region, is the INTEREG III initiative from last year, which that is dedicated to the encouragement of the cross-border co-operation and spatial planning between the EU member states and candidate states. With its regulation adopted on 23 August

2001 has the European Commission provided a legal basis for the cross-border co-operation between the Italian regions and those of the third countries of the Adriatic area and for the involvement of Austria in external cross-border co-operation programmes. In addition it has considered the possibilities for promoting co-ordination of INTEREG III and the “accession and stabilisation process” involving five before-mentioned countries of the Balkans.

Two pre-conditions should be fulfilled if the policies sponsored by the EU are to be successful :

- the improvement of inter-ethnic relations and of the protection of ethnic and religious minorities as a mean of stabilisation of the countries concerned and
- the democratisation of these countries by decentralisation and by the enlargement of regional and local democratic structures.

As to the first issue I would like to draw your attention to the suggestions and proposals which have been adopted at different activities of ISCOMET in the recent 11 years in SEE and which could be in short way seen in the Appendix to this paper.

At this occasion I would put forward some issues whose realisation is, together with the economic development and social stability, *conditio sine qua non* for stabilisation and progress in the region:

- return of refugees and displaced persons, with regulation on a voluntary basis of problems related to property, social security etc.
- peaceful solution of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia
- the reconciliation process as a result of efficient endeavours in the fields of education, mass media, political parties’ activities, influence of religious communities, civil society activities etc
- elimination of negative contents in school curricula and textbooks and of the hate speech as well
- adoption of adequate policies regarding education, culture, language, socio-economic and spatial development, and similar matters
- adoption of measures which will provide judicial – national and international – procedures for redressing abuses of inter-ethnic, inter-religious or inter-race relations
- protection and maintenance of cultural heritage as a main “visible” manifestation of the multicultural and multi-religious character of the societies in the region
- development of different models of cross-border co-operation and spatial planning
- promotion of local democracy including different models of autonomy
- adoption of adequate legal enactment aimed at the realisation of the declared goals.

The centralisation of power in more or less all SEE countries has pushed the citizens to the margins of the decision- making process concerning their life and work. The restructuring and deepening of regional and local democracy is thus one of the pre-conditions for the successful realisation of the development policies, including those sponsored by the EU.

The citizens must regain the possibilities to take active and decisive part in decision-making concerning such matters as sustainable local development, spatial planning, protection of environment, jobs, creative investments, and the similar. And finally, regional and local democratic structures are the most commended tools also for improving inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations, for the protection of ethnic and religious minorities, for the maintenance and

protection of their cultural heritage as a mean of the preservation of multi-cultural society, and the similar.

In concluding I would like to stress again that nationalism and national and religious exclusiveness have been the main source of conflict that pushed the people of former Yugoslavia into bloodshed and destruction. How to eradicate efficiently that metaphysical evil of the countries concerned remains thus one of the basic goals on the way to modernisation of SEE and especially of the countries which have descended from former Yugoslavia.

Thank you for your attention.

### **The development of civil society and democracy at the local level – an international view**

Angus Fowler, President of ECOVAST

Rather than give a theoretical treatment of my subject, I have decided to show slides to illustrate the various aspects of the work of NGOs at local level, based on the experience of the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen e.V – Marburg and Berlin-Brandenburg*).

Today the work of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) at international, national, regional and local level is vital and necessary, for instance for the preservation of the cultural heritage in the widest sense, helping to maintain local and regional identity, collective memory, cultural values and often representing minority culture in various forms in many parts of Europe. The financial contribution of NGOs towards the costs of repair, restoration, maintenance and upkeep of historic buildings and their invaluable voluntary work, also enabling cultural activities to take place, is very considerable and all the more important and necessary as funds for culture from state and official authorities in many European countries are often decreasing rather than increasing due to the present difficult economic situation.

The NGO contribution, the so-called ‘Third Sector’, is now a major force which governments and other official authorities increasingly rely upon, accept and recognise, previously often rejecting it as dangerous, rival competition, an infringement of an area regarded as a state monopoly in many countries. Without the lobby work of NGOs, many more important historic buildings would have been irretrievably lost. NGOs have done much to prevent demolition, destruction and decay. NGOs are an important expression and a necessary force in a sound and healthy civil society and in functioning democracies.

There is now – at least in most western and northern European countries – an increasing awareness that citizens – after all voters and taxpayers – should be increasingly responsible for the preservation of the cultural heritage and should be more involved in policies and action regarding the cultural heritage. In the past in western Europe, and still today in many central and eastern European countries, it was considered the almost exclusive right of state and official authorities to be responsible for the protection, restoration and maintenance of the cultural heritage. Even now today efficient legal protection and legislation by the state – indeed in good, well-ordered functioning democracies – will continue to remain necessary to protect the architectural, landscape and cultural heritage and environment from destruction. The financial support of state and official authorities will remain essential, indeed citizens should insist that a greater proportion of their taxes should be used for cultural purposes.



After this brief introduction to illustrate my talk in a practical way I show slides of the important religious architectural heritage at local level in Hessen in Germany, famed particularly for its wealth of timber-framed churches. I describe and illustrate the very real threats and dangers to the heritage posed in the years of the 'Economic Wonder' from the late 1950s to the 1970s in western Germany: the great pressure for new buildings, supported by strong financial resources from greater revenue from church taxes, the demands of modern theology for new, more comfortable and functional buildings, resulting in the abandonment and redundancy of old churches, their decay and very often destruction by demolition or at the best major alteration with damaging results, justified by claims that the buildings were in poor condition, too small, unsuited to modern needs, etc. These arguments are very similar to those used in Poland to justify the abandonment and destruction of wooden churches in the last ten years and now in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans where many old buildings have not only been swept away by war damage and destruction but increasingly now by speculative development and demolition in peacetime.

In the 1960s the destruction of churches in Hessen – particularly but not only timber-framed ones – was strongly supported by official church and civil authorities, who themselves set the architectural tone with new, often poor quality, public buildings. In the post-1945 period, there was also a tendency in Germany to forget the historical, architectural and cultural heritage, which unfortunately had often been misused in the past particularly between 1933 and 1945. Instead politicians and population now often sought the future in progress in the modern world, words used by one rural Mayor to justify the demolition of a timber-framed church. Under pressure from clergy, church councils and civil authorities the local population acquiesced in this destruction. In Hessen not only were over 100 old churches completely destroyed from the 1950s to the 1970s (of these over 50 were timber-framed) but also some 60 former synagogues in villages, many of them also timber-framed, which had survived pogroms and destruction by the Nazis. As a reaction to this continuing destruction, a protest movement began to develop in the late 1960s – parallel to the student movement in the same period.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century protest initiatives had already developed, for instance with the development of democratic movements in many states. The preservation of historic buildings and monuments which had begun to be regulated by princely decree in some states in Germany already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, now became a major concern of the many historical and archaeological societies which were founded in the period after 1815: the preservation of the historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural and ethnological heritage was often a major aim embodied in their statutes. A further wave of protest initiatives developed later in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, inspired by the example of William Morris, his Manifesto of 1877 and the foundation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and later of the National Trust in England (1895), in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands the so-called *Meimatschütz* movement.

In Germany in the 1960s however these organisations founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were no longer as active as they had been and new organisations, such as the *Interessengemeinschaft Bauernhaus* (concerned particularly with the preservation of farmhouses and farm buildings), or the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen* (concerned with the preservation of churches in danger) both founded in 1973 developed in the period following the student unrest of the late 1960s, characterised by many opposition movements outside parliamentary institutions. Many of these new organisations started first in towns. Often outsiders were prominent because they

appreciated the cultural heritage of a locality better than the local inhabitants who took it for granted.

In the town of Marburg for instance protest against demolition of old buildings in the town which had got steadily worse in the 1960s, developed rapidly in 1969/70 following on the destruction of a well-known inn (the *Wirtshaus an der Lahn*) and when it became known that a development plan was being prepared for the demolition of much of the historic town centre. In 1970 an initiative group was therefore founded to help save the townscape and to prevent further demolition wherever possible.

At that time the official state authorities responsible for the protection of historic buildings were very weak, lacked sufficient finance and no effective law for preservation existed. Individuals therefore had to take the initiative - to create a lobby concerned for the preservation of the heritage; to raise public awareness at all levels by active publicity work; to identify and at least document the threatened heritage before it was irretrievably destroyed; and then – realising that there was still no adequate legal protection – to protest against demolition, organising, mobilising and informing public opinion and then creating necessary non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the form of associations which would be recognised legally and fiscally as charitable organisations with the right to accept donations etc. (and to discuss certificates giving to donors tax relief). In the course of these developments, the *Förderkreis Alte Kirchen* was founded in 1973 by interested persons: academics at the University of Marburg, architects, artists, etc. first to stop successfully the demolition of one particular church, in Bügeln near Marburg.

Our friends and colleagues in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans and south-eastern Europe have told us that their organisations which exist have little or no influence on politicians and have been unable to stop bad developments. They were often just not recognised, simply ignored and the laws and regulations which exist were not enforced, the press and media also have shown little concern or interest. From my own experience and illustrating this by some case examples, I tried to show how our NGOs can indeed influence politicians and institutions and how important the press and media can be if used properly.

In 1974 the Social Democratic Government in the German Federal State of Hessen proposed to drop the draft law for the preservation of historic buildings (*Denkmalschutzgesetz*) being considered by the State Parliament (*Landtag*) because there was little time left for it at the end of a legislative period. After talks with politicians had produced no effective results a friend with active political experience and lobby work suggested that the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen* (FAK) with other interested groups should organise a major congress of NGOs with financial and organisational help from a major foundation, the *Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung* (associated with the Free Democratic Party which was quite interested in the cause of the architectural and cultural heritage). The congress, which was very well attended and well-publicised by the media, generated massive criticism of the destruction and demolition then taking place in many towns and villages. The pressure on the politicians was so great that the preservation law was duly passed in Parliament in 1974. (However some time elapsed before its provisions and protection could be put into effect).

Some years later in the early 1980s the case of one church threatened by translocation and practically much loss of original building substance was taken up by the Petitions Committee of the Hessian State Parliament. A debate and vote on its fate took place in Parliament. The battle

for the preservation of the church *in situ* was only very narrowly lost and the Social Democratic Government almost defeated: 54 members of parliament voted for demolition and removal of the church under pressure from the church authorities, 49 voted to preserve the church on its original site – an alliance of most Christian Democrat and Green Party members of the parliament, a few Christian Democrats however helped to save the government by voting with them to save the face of the church authorities. Again the issue was given very prominent cover by press, radio and television.

In this way NGOs were important in developing local grass-roots democracy, important factors in maintaining cultural and local identity. They often have to fight for their cause using the media to win recognition of their work as a legitimate activity. This means the development of a political climate in which they can find legal and fiscal recognition as a legal basis for their work so that they can receive and collect financial resources, raise subscriptions from their members, receive gifts, etc. to be able to finance their work and often pay for the preservation of historic buildings carrying out necessary repairs etc.

In the right fiscal climate, donors can receive tax relief encouraging them to give even more financial support. This is necessary for the practical work which NGOs can develop, even acquiring buildings and property and also landscapes, which is done for instance by the National Trusts in Britain, the Churches Conservation Trust, the Friends of Friendless Churches, the Historic Chapels Trust in England, the Scottish Redundant Churches Trust, the various *Stichting Oude Kerken* in the Netherlands and on a smaller scale by the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen* in Marburg which has taken over four churches into its possession to save them from demolition. All these organisations which themselves carry out repair and restoration work on historic buildings are therefore greatly interested in the eventual success of the current campaign to reduce Value Added Tax (VAT) on works carried out on historic buildings, cultural landscapes, etc. within the European Union and in the long term also in states outside it.

*Förderkreise Alte Kirchen Berlin-Brandenburg* in eastern Germany (founded with the support of the FAK Marburg in 1990) has not itself taken over churches into its possession but has given grants to help churches in particular danger from decay. Like the FAK Marburg already in the 1970s the FAK Berlin-Brandenburg has promoted cultural events in churches to show how they can be suitably used more often. It has organised excursions, public talks, exhibitions, charity events such as concerts, issues its own periodical magazine with news about its activities (the newsletter 'Alter Kirchen'). It has itself received much generous support from the Robert-Bosch Foundation (Stuttgart) which has been supporting civic initiative in western, then eastern Germany and now in central and eastern Europe (including a very generous grant for this conference organised by ECOVAST in Fojnica). With the support of the Bosch Foundation the FAK Berlin-Brandenburg has not only been able to organise major exhibitions with a booklet on the work of NGOs working to save churches, but also a prize competition for successful initiative to save and use churches, the project *Offene Kirchen* (open churches) *Brandenburg* opening up churches for visitors in the summer after the Swedish model 'Wayside Churches' with booklets appearing in 200, 2001 and now 2002, also partly financed by the State Government of Brandenburg.

The present project for 2002 and 2003 is aimed to help recently formed initiatives and associations with a starting capital of 2,500 Euro. A very important part of the work of the FAK

Brandenburg is to advise and if necessary give some financial support to local associations working to save and use individual churches.

The work of the FAK Berlin-Brandenburg can illustrate in particular how the work of NGOs can develop in a region which has suffered almost continually from totalitarian government first under the Nazis and then under Communists from 1933 until 1989. Important cultural work did take place but not in a free democratic atmosphere where civil courage and innovative thinking and action could freely develop and if necessary bureaucracy and official forms of thinking can be combated and challenged as took place in the late 1960s and 1970s in western Germany.

Using methods which had already been practised in western Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen Berlin-Brandenburg* was able with a thorough use of media to save two churches from destruction, in Saaringen near Brandenburg on the river Havel and in Leopoldsbürg/Milow near Rathenow. Particularly spectacular in the latter case was the cover given not only by the well known magazine *Der Spiegel* but even more importantly for the greater public by the boulevard newspaper *Bildzeitung* with a great mass circulation, almost half a page with the caption '200 churches in Brandenburg threatened by destruction'. Even if this was not exactly true or accurate it at least conveyed the urgency of the situation to a very large public and put so much pressure on leading government politicians, anxious for their image in the run up to an election of the local parliament (*Landtag*) of Brandenburg that the matter was considered several times by the Cabinet.

There are some similarities in attitudes and positions for instance in Bosnia and indeed in many other countries in central and eastern Europe as formerly also in western Europe where the preservation of historic buildings had often been considered a monopoly controlled by official state, communal and religious authorities and jealously guarded by them. For this reason, an important part of the work of NGOs is to convince these authorities that the work of NGOs is legitimate and indeed necessary, and represents an increasing financial resource as official funds and resources decrease. Partnerships with these official authorities must now be developed. After much initial jealousy, distrust and even exclusion, within a period of 10 years the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen Berlin-Brandenburg* is now fully recognised as being necessary and indeed complementary by church and state authorities in Brandenburg.

Particularly important though often forgotten (because unpaid), but in fact a major saving on one hand and financial contribution on the other hand is the voluntary work done by NGOs. This has been recognised at European level by the declaration of 2001 as the Year of Voluntary Work by the Council of Europe. Organisations such as the National Trusts in Britain have developed voluntary work on a massive scale. They have also important programmes for education and youth – we must not forget that we are preserving our heritage for future generations and that we have to encourage and train young people to protect it. I myself was active in the 1970s involving young people and schoolchildren in archaeological work in Hessen. The *Förderkreis Alte Kirchen Marburg* has also organised several cultural events in churches specifically for children such as puppet theatre.

Finally I wish to point to the international dimension – for instance the search by the FAK Marburg for international partners working in the same field to create an international lobby. There are similar organisations working elsewhere to preserve threatened churches. I have named some already above in Britain and the Netherlands, in France also *Sauvegarde de l'Art*

*Français.* The FAK Marburg gave inspiration and help to found the Polish organisation for saving wooden churches from decay and destruction, *Kochajmy kos\_ioly drewniane* ('let's love wooden churches').

The FAK Marburg became a member of Europa Nostra and has worked closely in co-operation with this international organisation for the protection of the heritage. In this way, we became involved in the work of the Council of Europe culminating in the submission of a report on 'Redundant Religious Buildings in Europe' in 1989. The search for possible international partners in the field of the rural heritage and development led eventually to the foundation of ECOVAST (European Council for the Village and Small Town) itself in 1984, organised mainly by the *Förderkreise Alte Kirchen Marburg*. Both Europa Nostra and ECOVAST have developed lobby work as NGOs at an international and local level. This effort has included :

- campaigns of Europa Nostra to save the site of Delphi threatened by the building of an aluminium factory in the early 1980s; to save wooden churches in Poland from 1995 onwards; and currently to save the site of Marathon from massive Olympic development
- the campaign for the reduction of Value Added Tax on repair, conservation and maintenance of historic buildings, landscapes and gardens
- the campaign by ECOVAST and others to save villages threatened by 'systematisation' in Romania in the late 1980s under the dictator Ceauçescu
- the protests of both organisations against destruction of villages, human settlements, flora and fauna and landscape for brown-coal mining
- the involvement of ECOVAST at various levels with Agenda 2000 and Agenda 2001 for instance in the Baltic Region
- the documentation and development of good practice, for example in sustainable rural tourism through the Heritage Trails Projects in Slovenia and Croatia
- the concern particularly together with ISCOMET/International Scientific Conference Minorities in Europe Tomorrow (Maribor) and also Europa Nostra for multi-cultural, inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue particularly in south-eastern Europe, for instance here in Bosnia-Herzegovina, also in Kosovo and elsewhere in the area of former Yugoslavia, in which the role of NGOs so very necessary.

### **A practical example in the encouragement of the return of refugees and displaced persons**

Jany Hansal, director - DESA

De\_a is a women's organisation based in Dubrovnik. It was officially founded in 1993 as a peace and humanitarian NGO to meet the psychological needs of women victims of the war, both displaced women from Croatia and refugees from Bosnia, regardless of their nationality or creed. Today, nearly nine years later, De\_a's main aim is to promote economic and community development through public education, while continuing to provide a space for women to support one another.

De\_a's initial programme was a considered response to the situation in which Dubrovnik found itself in 1991/92 - a city crowded with refugees and displaced persons in an environment devastated by the war. In that scenario of general suffering, De\_a's founders chose to offer help to refugee women who were wondering around aimlessly in a traumatized state, with nothing to do but queue up for humanitarian aid. It was imperative to start some kind of activity which could keep them busy and help them feel useful in order to regain their self-esteem.

De\_a organised handicraft workshops in the hotels which were housing this unfortunate population. Handicraft activities represented a form of therapy while the finished product could be sold and thus provide a small income. Between 1992 and 1995 De\_a developed and ran seven workshops in as many locations at which more than 3000 refugees women had taken part.

With each change in the general situation, De\_a sought to adapt its activities, in order to provide answers to the new needs of women. As the refugees started returning to their homes, De\_a put still more accent on self-help activities. Aiming to assist women in their task of turning ruins into homes, De\_a introduced courses in sewing and weaving, and even in traditional home decorating ideas used during Christmas and Easter periods.

Since the main economic activity of the Dubrovnik region is tourism, De\_a gave priority to educational programs aimed at enabling women to partake in tourism related activities. Since 1995 De\_a has been organising regular courses in foreign languages, and as of 1999 De\_a offers also computer laboratories.

### **Silk project**

The majority of the refugees whom De\_a assisted came from the nearby region of Konavle. Women of this area had not only had their homes devastated, but they had also lost a part of their identity - their preciously embroidered traditional costumes. To make new costumes, they needed silk thread. De\_a therefore introduced the Silk Project. In 1994 De\_a traced a silk producing association in France, which supplied a small quantity of silkworm, which one of De\_a's activists literally smuggled into Croatia. With funds raised with the help of Croatian TV, De\_a was able to purchase 1,000 saplings of dwarf mulberry tree, required for silkworm breeding and to distribute them among interested farmers.

So far only a part of the original Silk project has been realised, because of insufficient financial support, expected from the government. De\_a had planned to restore a burnt-down building in one of the villages and to establish a small silk factory there, to be run by a co-operative of silk thread producers. The original project was always seen as a stepping stone for future possibilities. Today, about 25 families in the Konavle region are engaged in silk-worm breeding. De\_a activists are very proud of the fact, that a number of silk-worm breeding families have taken their own initiative and are now offering welcome and an organized presentation to visitors. **They are offering also to the visitors their farm products and they gain a small income.** By giving due attention to the restoration of their ancient art of weaving and embroidery, De\_a has helped the women of this region to bring its authentic embroidery product back on the souvenir market and to expand their activities into other areas.

### **Rural tourism development**

Repairing damaged buildings and providing silk thread for the embroidery was not enough to bring life back to the war ravaged area of Konavle, which has only small-scale farming activity to rely on for its livelihood. De\_a has therefore undertaken the task of enabling single households to develop their own small-scale businesses by taking advantage of the resources they already have : their homes, the produce from their land, their animals, and their rich environment.

De\_a sees the rural tourism development project as a "return to life" programme, a form of self-help activity, which can further the economic well-being of the local farming population in the

most environment-friendly way, by bringing potential customers directly to the farmers' doorsteps, and with them a new life to the community. Farmhouse holidays are currently very attractive to hard-working city dwellers from the heavily industrialised regions of Europe. Farmhouse holidays offer greater relaxation, in close contact with an attractive and unpolluted natural environment, plus homegrown food and local specialties.

De\_a's rural tourism development project was first started in the year 2000, in cooperation with the French organisation "Accueil Paysan" based in Grenoble, which offered their clients' farmhouse accommodation in the rebuilt houses of the villages of Popovici and Radovcici. After the first year's trial experience, in the spring of 2001 De\_a has organised a series of educational programmes for the local hosts, to enable them to improve their hospitality options and to communicate better with their clients. The programme included a course in French language and basic requirements of French tourists. Additionally to the tailor-made courses for the hosts in Konavle, De\_a has offered seminars for wider groups of users, on the organisation of home hospitality, on various ways of improving and promoting home-stay holidays offer, and also lectures on local heritage, which hosts might be asked to transfer to their guests.

The rural tourism activity offers an extra bonus. While each family unit concentrates on the improvement of its own household potential, it develops a feeling it is building for the future. De\_a hopes that this kind of project will persuade the younger people to recognize the job opportunities within their home region. With the tourist economy developed, more young people may stay on with their families, instead of thinking about emigrating elsewhere.

**Achievement of the project : this year, 20 French families spent their holidays in our two villages in Konavle.**

During the 2002 summer season De\_a intends to organise special courses in embroidery and silkworm thread spinning, for the holiday making visitors, to be held in the village of Popovici, where a charming old house, its garden and farmland, have been put at De\_a's disposal by the owners, to serve as the platform for De\_a's future educational programmes : organic farming, alternative ways of exploiting the endemic flora, the introduction of new species of fruit or vegetables, new technologies in vine and olive growing.

**De\_a has preached and continues preaching self-help.**

In a changing world we must learn to adapt. Organizations, such as De\_a, must help women who have gone through a traumatic war experience, to find orientation in the new circumstances. They must be helped to understand that there is no Big Mother who can dispense ready solutions for each individual's problems. Government who provide everything, housing, jobs, education and so on, are a thing of the past. Today we have to rely on ourselves, and we also must help each other. Helping each other is a two-way street. People of common needs must fight together for common rights. Groups are more successful in building communities, than single individuals. Common interest groups help the community spirit, a precious commodity, from which all members of the local environment can ultimately benefit.

**The Difficulties the Bosnian Society Encounters in the Development of the Civil Society and Democracy – an Inside Look**

Aida Daidzic

When you land at Butmir Airport in Sarajevo, you probably do not know that the area has been inhabited since Neolithic times. Our country is full of the traces of ancient civilisations and cultures that crossed these extents leaving, naturally, their own imprints. Evidently, Bosnia has been attractive as a living space for thousands of years. Being on the fringes of great empires, Bosnia has been distant enough from the power centres for life to be comfortable.

"What is the civil society and where does it stem from?" was the question puzzling me while I was preparing this presentation.

- Did the Illyrian population of Aruba, today's Vranduk, resist so bitterly the Roman legions because they were protecting their "civil" society?
- Did the medieval Bosnia take up so passionately the heresy and Bogomilism (Katharism), which had such clear characteristics of an anti-authoritative social system, because it craved the "civil" society?
- Were the frequent rebellions, uprisings and murders of viziers the "civil" Bosnia's resistance to the Ottoman Empire?
- Was the resistance to fascism, at its strongest, and the support for the partisan movement, "civil" resistance?

An example of the high civil culture, which is still so vivid in our memories, is the resistance of the Sarajevans to the 1,400 day siege of the City, without electricity, water, heating, but with film and theatre festivals, countless concerts, exhibitions and performances.

The crucial mistake of Tito's was that, instead of building a stable and developed Bosnia and Herzegovina which could have been a stability factor for the whole former State, he had arranged a power vacuum in this area, which grew into a battlefield between the Serbian and Croatian nationalities and their greed for new territories. He simply did not understand - and I have often thought that the same thing has not been understood by the leading European heads either – that the **good-natured, naive** Bosnians, with their tradition of respect for the different, are the guarantee for the stability of the South-East of Europe.

In order to establish an association of citizens in a society which, by calling itself socialist, covered up dictatorship with a relative success, you needed to recruit 30 members and a huge administrative feat. (By the way, thirty citizens are still needed to set up an association of citizens, while, for instance, in Germany you need seven). In case your association discontinues its work, all the property it has earned belongs to the State.

I love my country and my firm decision is to live in it. These two things have determined my responsibility which is, in fact, the same as the responsibility of each citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the same as the responsibility of each inhabitant of Europe who, for years, had been passively watching on their TV screens genocide being committed in this country – our responsibility to save and develop **the most valuable asset of this country**, i.e., its social culture and multicultural respect, which were so brutally attacked both with the war and post war events.

Between 1992 and 1995, of some 3.9 million Bosnia's pre-war inhabitants, some 250,000 were killed, while 2.2 million left. Intellectuals and prominent citizens, promoters of the civil society and civil culture were targeted and killed by hit lists.



After the Dayton Agreement, 609,883 (27.76%) people have returned to the B&H Federation, 160,994 (7.31%) to Republika Srpska, and 7,824 (0.36%) to Brcko, which is 35% of the country's total number of refugees.

Concerning the minority returns, after the Dayton Agreement 173,784 (7.9%) have returned to the B&H Federation, and 70,241 (3.2%) to Republika Srpska, which is in total 244,025 (11.09%) out of 2.2 million of refugees and displaced persons (DPs).

But, the exodus of the population continued even after the Dayton Agreement had been signed. Before the war, about 40,000 people lived in Srebrenica and Bratunac. In an attack, in the UN-protected zone of Srebrenica, about 10,600 persons were massacred in 1995, while 17,500<sup>1</sup> displaced persons were registered in the B&H Federation. Of those displaced persons, between 7,000 and 8,000 were issued the USA immigration visas, and to date only some 120 (0.3%)<sup>2</sup> of the original population have returned to Srebrenica. Clearly, it is easier for the Srebrenica people to reach the States, cover 10,000 or 15,000 km, learn a new language and get used to a completely different lifestyle than to return to Srebrenica, which is about 160 km away from Sarajevo.

We cannot even talk about the returns to rural areas<sup>3</sup>, since almost all returnees are the old people returning to their destroyed homes mainly to die there.

The post-war Bosnian society is being additionally weakened by the exodus of the educated population (brain drain), and at the same time, among the returnees the fewest are professionals and educated people, because they are gladly accepted in the host countries. I do not have, unfortunately, the reliable figures about this migration, but a significant indicator could be that less than 1% of the registered job seekers<sup>4</sup> at Job Bureaux are university-educated, which means that the ones who should bear the country's development simply are not here. According to a devastating study by UNDP, 62% of the youth see their future in other countries, not in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Today, in Bosnia and Herzegovina 400,000 of its inhabitants are employed, 400,000 unemployed, and 400,000 are school and university students, with another 400,000 pensioners<sup>5</sup>.

The Bosnian society is a society going through a triple transition - from the war to post-war society, from the planned to the market economy, from the centralised to the decentralised administration - with a population which was exposed to incredible brutality and which is a war

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<sup>1</sup> All figures have been rounded off.

<sup>2</sup> According to Dr Ilijas Pilav of the Union of Demobilised Combatants of Srebrenica

<sup>3</sup> OSLOBODJENJE, Wednesday, 17 Oct. 2001, p. 9 Edina Kamenica, ILLUSIONS TO PEOPLE – THE BUCKS TO THE COMMISSION: The Fund for Refugees and Displaced Persons, stipulated in Annex 7 to the Dayton Peace Agreement to have been founded and managed by the Commission, CPRC. As it is known, it consists of four members from the B&H Federation, two from Republika Srpska, and three, including the President, were appointed by President of the European Court for Human Rights. As its name suggests, the Fund was intended to financially support the return process and returnees; however, six years later, it has not yet been founded.

<sup>4</sup> Employment Bureaux in Sarajevo, Travnik, Tuzli, Banja Luka and Mostar

<sup>5</sup> These are round figures.

trauma victim. Let me quote the American psychotherapist Yael Danieli: **democracy cannot be built by the hands of broken souls**<sup>6</sup>.

The problems we have been facing are complex and cannot be limited to the mere reconstruction of the material substance, nor is it a task soluble by means of pressing the keyboard buttons in bureaucratic institutions, national or international ones.

If we roughly simplify the Dayton Agreement, then the deal was the following: armed activities were stopped, and although the crime perpetrators have not been brought yet to justice, or sanctioned, the international community will invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina thus supporting democracy and welfare, while its population, i.e., Bosnian men and Bosnian women, will work towards the building of the democratic and civil society.

Huge financial means have been invested in the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it would be erroneous to regard that money as the money stimulating investments. That was the money used to buy peace and to gain time<sup>7</sup>.

The reconstruction of the Bosnian society is a monumental task. Although much has been done so far, it is still far from being sufficient. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the poorest country in Europe. GNP in Bosnia and Herzegovina is US\$ 1,200<sup>8</sup> (the pre-war GNP was US\$ 2,500, but even then we were the least developed republic in the former State).

According to the international community, US\$ 6 billion have been invested in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the infrastructure has been significantly rehabilitated, although, for example, in the centre of Sarajevo one cannot see the war traces, you will have to agree that such a huge sum simply cannot be seen.

**Declaratively**, the international community has dedicated itself to the building of the civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is absolutely clear that enormous amounts of money have been streamed in that direction. I can witness that money is not **particularly visible** in the non-governmental sector.

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<sup>6</sup> The Public Debate held on the premises of the Jewish Community, 10 Oct. 2001

<sup>7</sup> OSLOBODJENJE, Wednesday, 17 Oct. 2001, p 2; Slavo Kukic - FAITHFUL TO THE IDEA: "Nor was the projected change, the high principles, supported by all the money from the international community. Simply because, still today, there is no genuine readiness for co-operation with the Hague Tribunal, although it is legally sanctioned, not to mention the extradition of Karadzic and Mladic. There is not, either, true support for the exercise of the citizens' right to return to their pre-war homes. On the contrary, still today attacks on and intimidation of the people who decide to return are part of the everyday life there. Not only that. Indifference to, or even tendency to participation, are manifested by the state authorities – police and courts first of all, but the local authorities as well. Finally, the resistance to empowering the B&H State Institutions is still strong. It can be recognised, first of all, in the demands for imperative, and definitely unconstitutional, Entity politicians' mandate in the State Institutions. It is, however, recognised also in publicly expressed reluctance of the Entity Prime Minister to accept determination for such institutions as a requirement for BiH's accession to the Council of Europe. Because, for Ivancic too, they are a road to unitarising – and imagine this – the loss of RS sovereignty".

<sup>8</sup> As quoted by the World Bank

Today, when you open a newspaper, you can read headlines like:

- "OHR legalises the plunder of Aluminij" (Oslobodjenje, 24 August, 2001, pp 4-5)
- "For a Loan of  $\approx$  10 Million,  $\approx$  19.5 Million<sup>9</sup> go to Foreign Experts" (Oslobodjenje, 6 October, 2001, p 5)
- Zepce Citizens protest outside of the Sarajevo OHR Building" (Oslobodjenje. 11 September, 2001, p 8)
- "SFOR Knows Karadzic's Whereabouts" (Oslobodjenje, 5 September, 2001, p 5)
- "Council of Ministers Asks Pardon from Ms Stieglmeyer" (Oslobodjenje, 10 August, 2001, p 3)
- "SFOR Soldier Hit me in Stomach" (Oslobodjenje, 5 October, 2001, p 5)

My aim is not, by any means, to **beautify the reality of the local authorities**, or to hide the weaknesses of the local corruption and **the passive & blocking attitude** of the concrete-like heads in the administration machinery, but I have the impression that by reproaching them, the objective weaknesses of the international activities **are covered up**.

That is why I beg you to excuse my frustration. But, when I see in the newspapers that Vim Timermans as an OHR expert, who was reviewing the Mostar "Aluminij" privatisation, writes in his report that, although the privatisation was carried out **illegally**, it still "would not be the wisest thing, for political, practical, economic and social reasons, to quash the illegal decisions made by Aluminij – the change of the capital is questionable, but the OHR experts do not advise the financial auditing"<sup>10</sup>, then nothing in this world can convince me that the international institutions in this country are not just as corrupted.

If the international institutions, which came to this country with an aim to help with the establishment of **the state of law**, while with their highly paid "services" they support the **illegal** plunders, then allow me to wonder what the purpose of their presence here is.

Our journalist, Envera Selimovic, asked the EU Ambassador, Hans J. Kretschmer, if it was true that practically only  $\approx$  1 of invested  $\approx$  5 is invested in the country. Mr Kretschmer decidedly denied the allegation, but he refused to disclose the real proportion. However, the rumour spreads that the real proportion is 2.5 DM for Bosnia and Herzegovina to 7.5 DM for the organisation and administrative costs, which remain either for the donor countries, or the international organisations.

Isn't it absurd that the OHR Office is paying  $\approx$  21 per 1m<sup>2</sup> for the use of the office space at the Mostar "Ero" Hotel, the ex-Pensioners' Home<sup>11</sup>, usurped by the HDZ (radical Croat party), and thus directly fills the HDZ coffers.

Just another concrete example of the administration incapacity: the Austrian Government, i.e., Bundeskanzleramt granted a loan of  $\approx$  3.5 million aimed at stimulating the building of private housing units. The credit line was implemented through the Bundeskanzleramt of Austria and KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) of Germany. Although the KfW committed itself that it

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<sup>9</sup> All money values are expressed in \$ or  $\approx$

<sup>10</sup> Oslobodjenje, 26 August, 2001, p 3

<sup>11</sup> Oslobodjenje 12 Jan. 2002

would not make profits on that transaction, the credit requirements for ₺ 15,000 were the interest rate of 12-16% (normal consumer interest rate is 6-8%) with a repayment period of 5 years and the grace period of 6 months. In practical terms, for the **grant** loan of ₺ 15,000 you pay off ca ₺ 21,500 within five years. Of course, you were forced by no one to raise that loan, but in practice, **incredible money laundering is made possible**: it was only black marketeers, Mafia members and **war profiteers** that took such loans repaying them as soon as the grace period, to have interest rate costs low and to legalise the money received.

After a large number of such and similar incidents, the incredible élan and will the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina had in 1996 for reconstruction, **simply vanished**, and were replaced by passiveness, resignation and depression.

I am the élan of the Women's Organisation BISER<sup>12</sup>, founded in 1992. The Organisation is extremely small in terms of the number of its members. It consists of 15 university-educated professional women working on a voluntary basis. Our work concerns the most vulnerable category of the society – the women refugees.

The total amount of money we provided during and after the war is ca ₺ 4 million. Additionally, the Organisation managed to provide, build or reconstruct 3 women's centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Travnik), with some 7,000 direct beneficiaries annually<sup>13</sup>.

For years we have used **the major part** of our time and energy to provide finances. Here is only one of many examples:

Last spring, one team of two PhDs, one economist, one sociologist, and myself as the planning expert, was preparing applications for two European projects. The projects had recommendations/support from all the mayors of the respective municipalities, and also from Hans Koschnik, the Stability Pact Commissioner, for the return of refugees. One of the projects, "Agora for Women", whose overhead costs were 1.5% for the total number of 11,000 women beneficiaries, was refused on grounds that the education was not compatible with the development of democracy, and the other, called "Working with Trauma", whose overhead costs were 2%, meaning 10 cents + for each ₺ 5 for the total of 4,000 direct and 8,000 indirect women beneficiaries, was also refused with the explanation that in the project it was not possible to differentiate enough the women victims of torture from the women war victims.

Our decision is **not to apply any more** for any projects with the EU, as they are too exhausting and humiliating, and we simply cannot accept that the most creative team of our Organisation, instead of working with women, constantly wear themselves out in a race after money. A few of my colleagues believe **that it does not make any sense to continue** our activities. My Organisation's experience is that we made tremendous effort and did our part of the deal successfully. We were very naïve and we feel desperately let down.

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<sup>12</sup> BISER International, International Women's Initiative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, founded in 1992 (visit: [www.biser.de](http://www.biser.de)) BISER filed charges against Radovan Karadzic in 1992 and won the first legal punishment for this criminal in New York in August last year.

<sup>13</sup> The Program is a combination of the evening school and club. In the Center, we organise for them various courses, then medical and psychological support, as well as a debate club.

We are not the only organisation that is exhausted and discouraged by the situation. According to the IKVA 2000 Directory, there were 173 international and 365 local non-governmental organisations. Recently, the numbers have been dramatically falling.

I will finish by quoting the recent statement by a professor of economics, Dragoljub Stojanov: "Too highly paid international experts in our country have made too many too serious mistakes."

### **The King Baudouin Foundation in Southeast Europe: strengthening community development**

Fabrice de Kerchove, Programme Officer – King Baudouin Foundation

Since 2000, the King Baudouin Foundation<sup>14</sup> has been focusing on this main goal through three programmes that support initiatives taken by local organisations in South-East Europe<sup>15</sup>. These three programmes are aimed respectively at improving relations between ethnic groups, preventing the neglect of children and eventually enhancing citizen's participation in heritage and cultural projects.

While dealing with quite different themes, areas of activities and partners, those three programmes share common values and features that this paper briefly underlines, before presenting in more details the Living Heritage programme, which best fits with the conference's main topic.

First of all, all three initiatives aim at building mutual respect between communities, as well as at encouraging those communities to engage in a dialogue with local authorities and take part in decision-making. To that end, they share the same general approach to work consisting of facilitating cross-sectorial partnerships and empowering local communities.

All three programmes combine a regional scope covering seven countries and a strong local focus. In each country, they are meant to be designed in order to address appropriately the local needs and opportunities. To this end, the programmes are being carried out within the framework of a partnership involving not only financial partners, such as the national Soros foundations, but also local co-ordinating organisations. It is therefore up to all partners to set the priorities and strategies at local and national level.

This decentralised approach to programme management allows the Foundation and its partners to provide small but well targeted financial support to local initiatives. However, grant giving is not enough, and these programmes also consist of technical assistance and training aimed at both our co-ordinating partners and the beneficiaries.

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<sup>14</sup> The King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) is a Belgian independent organisation working in public interest. It was established in 1976 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of late King Baudouin with the aim of improving the living conditions of the population. In other words, the Foundation develops and supports initiatives both in Belgium and abroad in the areas of poverty and social exclusion, labour and employment, sustainable development, governance as well as the development of civil society. The KBF is based in Brussels with a staff of 85. It also has a small branch in the United States, the King Baudouin Foundation US, which is located in Atlanta.

<sup>15</sup> Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Yugoslavia

Advocacy is also a very important feature in those three programmes. Beyond specific activities aiming at raising awareness among decision makers, the Foundation hopes and assumes that the power of examples, of successful local initiatives mostly developed in remote areas where very few donors are present may contribute to eventually influence policies in our fields of interest.

### **Living Heritage : community development through cultural resources**

For the last twenty years, the King Baudouin Foundation has built a valuable experience in the field of cultural heritage, both in Belgium and abroad. More recently, the Foundation has shifted its approach to heritage from restoration and preservation projects to a broader understanding of heritage considered as a means rather than an end, and therefore using it as a resource for strengthening the communities and improving the living conditions of the population.

**A widening concept.** It has been quite a number of years that the concept of heritage has changed and goes today well beyond the traditional typologies - such as natural, architectural, archeological, movable or immovable - to deal with more intangible notions such as lived history, memories, traditions and activities of people. Moreover, in the recent international texts, the typologies and categories of heritage are progressively being taken over by such concepts as integrated conservation and cultural landscape which consider heritage in a much broader context, being cultural, natural, social and economic.

This evolution shows also how the preservation and management of heritage have become a shared responsibility which depends more than ever on the abilities of communities to appreciate the values of monuments and sites. In this respect the growing success of awareness raising events, such as the European Heritage Days, signifies the degree to which the general public identifies itself with these values. In other words, our heritage is what we value and what gives meaning to our lives and the places where we live and work : that is why it must be kept alive.

**A new role within society.** Heritage is not only a source of pride for local people and a source of interest for visitors, it is also a resource. This has been most often recognised in economic terms, particularly in relation to the built heritage and cultural tourism. But in recent years, our understanding of the developmental value of heritage resources has been deepening to encompass issues of social and community development, including education, local capacity building, social cohesion, participation or reconciliation.

In such a context, heritage is entrusted with a new role within today's society which calls for a global approach involving stakeholders at all stages of projects. This unifying, citizen-oriented approach to heritage is mentioned in most international texts dealing with integrated conservation but one must admit that it is actually rarely put into practice, especially in Eastern Europe, where the conservation of heritage remains cut off and is subject chiefly to technical and financial constraints.

**The Living Heritage in principles.** This interaction between heritage and society is precisely the challenge which the King Baudouin Foundation is willing to address through the Living Heritage, a grant and capacity development programme aimed at enabling local community development in Southeast Europe through the promotion of sustainable culture and heritage initiatives.

Key elements of the Living Heritage are the following:

- working with local communities, public authorities, NGOs and other partners;
- facilitating open, fair and participative processes in every stage of development of Living Heritage projects so as to establish mutual commitment and local ownership;
- gearing the work according to the specific features of local situations;
- boosting local expertise, knowledge and organizational skills.

The programme combines a grantmaking scheme, capacity building and technical assistance as well as evaluation and exchange of experience at local, national and regional level.

The Living Heritage in practice

The programme is operational in Macedonia and Bulgaria and is under preparation in Romania. It will be launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Yugoslavia in 2002. Albania and Croatia should follow in 2003. Before the decision was made to focus on the seven countries covered by the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, some pilot projects were developed in such countries as Russia, Czech Republic and Slovenia. Hereunder follow, as a conclusion, two case studies that illustrate how some of the basic principles of the Living heritage are implemented on the field.

### **The Kras Landscape Expressions I and II (Slovenia, 1999-2001)**

This project was developed in two phases (1999-2000 and 2000-2001) within the framework of a regional development plan for the Karst initiated by the Slovenian authorities with the support of the Council of Europe covering 4 municipalities with a population of about 30,000 inhabitants. It consisted of forty-six small-scale, local activities, mainly targeted at school-age children and young people, each one focusing on a different way of looking at the region, its heritage, both cultural and natural, its traditions and promoting them.

From March to May 2000, and from March to May 2001, numerous meetings involving the stakeholders and two series of workshops and training sessions were organised in different places around Karst to prepare the mentors for their future work with the young participants. By the end of the summer in 2000 and 2001, the different activities had taken place, with the participation of primary schools high school, students from both the Slovene and Italian sides of the border, a number of artists and craftsmen, and various local companies and associations.

Outcomes (achieved) :

- new models of heritage education
- local identity and ownership
- increased capacity and visibility of NGO's and citizen's initiatives
- increased public support

### **Living Heritage in Macedonia (2000-2003)**

In partnership with the Foundation Open Society Institute of Macedonia, four projects were launched late 2000 in Skopje, Krushevo, Prilep and Bitola. Except for Skopje, where the project consists of a campaign raising awareness for the revitalisation of the old Bazaar, the other initiatives focus on the restoration or reconstruction of built heritage at the benefits and with the

participation of local communities. In all three towns, a consultation process involving NGO's, local authorities and the inhabitants was set up to determine the object to restore and decide upon its new use. In Bitola, for example, the initiative was taken by a youth association in partnership with the municipality to establish a youth cultural centre within a former pioneers house which had been abandoned for ten years. All four project teams were provided with a training in project development and a small grant to further elaborate their initiative. Full grants will be provided for late 2001 on the basis of comprehensive proposals including action plan and partnerships agreements.

Outcomes (in-progress):

- models of local consultation and partnerships developed
- communication and interaction through heritage
- urban regeneration.

### **Enhancing and stimulating development at the local level**

Professor Michael Dower, ECOVAST Vice President

I offer a definition of local development; and a brief description of three initiatives that ECOVAST have taken, which are relevant to the challenge of local development now facing the countries of South East Europe.

Local development may be defined as 'a sustained and sustainable process of social, cultural, economic, political and environmental change which is specifically designed to improve the lives of those who live in a particular area'. All the words in this definition merit close attention.

As to the ECOVAST initiatives ... first, we organised in 1999 a series of **training programmes** in integrated rural community development for the Carpathian Foundation. Participants were people involved in local development work in parts of Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the Ukraine. The experience showed that high value can come from the exchange of experiences between people from different countries, who are all working at local level. The training material is available in published form.

Second, we launched in 1997, after a 2-year study, a pioneer **Heritage Trail** in Slovenia. This was an effort to show how the people and businesses of a rural area could benefit from sustainable tourism based directly on the natural and cultural heritage of their area. It has proven a real success, and has been followed by the creation of a second Heritage Train in another region of Slovenia and by a current effort to create a similar Trail in Croatia. The idea could well be applied in other parts of South East Europe.

Third, we are currently working with other non-governmental organisation on the **PREPARE programme** – Pre-Accession Partnerships for Rural Europe. The aim is to strengthen local democracy, and promote international exchange in rural development with specific focus on the 10 countries of Central Europe who are recognised candidates to join the European Union. The belief underlying this programme is that rural development programmes will be more effective and sustainable if people at local level are actively involved. Within this programme we are just starting a first national project in Slovenia, to strengthen the village movement there. Again, this idea could well be applied in the countries of South East Europe.



## Summary of Conference Conclusions

Professor Michael Dower

We have had a most stimulating conference, thanks to the ready welcome of our Bosnian hosts and the many different perspectives of those who took part. We who come from outside Bosnia have been humbled to witness the pain caused by the recent war; we are aware that we do not well understand what the country now needs.

We have been thinking about Europe, and specifically about South East Europe and the major and difficult transition which the seven countries of the Stability Pact are undergoing. We have gained some insights into the challenge of the regeneration of Bosnia, still so heavily affected by the trauma of the war.

We have focused, in the tradition of ECOVAST, upon the great duality – the people and the heritage. We have discussed the great challenge facing these countries – to rebuild morale and confidence; to enable the people to live decent lives; to strengthen and diversify the economy of households and communities; to improve the infrastructure; to understand, celebrate and protect the multiple cultures of the people; to respect the heritage and the environment; and to do all these whilst addressing the hard issues of security, resettlement, return of refugees and respect for all cultures and minorities.

We have noted the means that are available to address this challenge – the structures of government; the aid agencies; the formal programmes, such as the Stability Pact; the professions; the non-governmental organisations; and, most important in terms of long-term regeneration, the energy of the people with their traditions, skills and resources. We have emphasised the need for co-operation between these many different interests.

Our field trips – in Fojnica, Rama and Travnik – have provided a rich set of ideas. From them I draw conclusions under four headings:

### *People*

Bosnia, more visibly than many other countries, is multi-cultural, with major and distinct religious and ethnic groups. Development programmes must relate coherently to these cultural differences.

In many localities, the pressures of war and of weak economies has caused intolerance between age groups and genders. Effort should be made to correct this imbalance. Many people, and many local communities, lack the self-confidence to initiate, or participate actively in, the development process. However, there are some effective entrepreneurs.

The history of Bosnia has given it a rich and highly varied cultural heritage. This is reflected in the buildings and monuments that we have seen, in arts and artefacts, in costumes and customs and in manifold aspects of everyday life. This heritage is closely related to the identity and pride of ethnic and religious groups. This heritage and this identity, should be respected and seen as a major asset in all developmental activity. There is a great need to raise awareness among citizens, and particularly among young people, of the multi-faceted culture of their country.

Education should be used to promote the interest of young people to stay in and rebuild this country, rather than to escape from it.

Many people in Bosnia lack housing. High priority must be given to provision of houses and to the extension of private ownership of houses and land, so that people have the incentive to invest and to improve their prosperity. In this work, close attention should be paid to the sensible location and good design of houses; to the appropriate use of materials; and, whenever possible, to continuity of or harmony with, traditional building styles.

### *Environment*

Bosnia has a magnificent heritage of landscape, ecosystems, wildlife and man-made structures. It is rich in natural resources, with a varied climate.

These resources, if well used, offer a sound basis for high quality of life for all the people and for a diversified economy. For example, the country can use its water resources, wind, sun and biomass to create ample supplies of renewable energy. Many wild species – for example mushrooms, berries and medieval herbs – offer potential for enhanced economic use.

Bosnia needs a massive and continuing effort to improve the infrastructure of roads, electricity, water supply and sewerage systems; and also a modern system of information technology, which could have crucial importance in rebuilding its economy.

The effort of rebuilding should be aided, and guided, by spatial planning at regional and local level. This is needed in order to bring some order, harmony and calm into towns which are now beset by traffic, refuse and neglected land.

### *Economy*

Bosnia's economy has been ravaged by the war. Many thousands of people have left the country to seek work abroad. Unemployment levels are appallingly high. There is thus an urgent need to strengthen and diversify the economy. This effort demands action by governments, but it should be rooted in the strengthening of the household economy. People need, first, to feel secure within homes and their basic necessities. Many can meet their own basic needs from their gardens, orchards or small holdings. Small enterprises can start from the home.

The primary industries – agriculture, forestry, fishing, mineral extraction – can continue to provide the strong foundation for local economies in much of Bosnia. There must be high potential to add value, in local economies, to the products of these primary industries – for example, through processing of milk or meat or wool, through use of timber in building and other trades.

The traditional trades of Bosnia – leather work, textiles, metalwork, wood carving and much else – have declined drastically, but they offer a 'rootstock' of new life in local economies.

The great effort of rebuilding in Bosnia means that the construction industry plays a major role in the economy. There is much to be gained – for both the economy and the cultural traditions of the country – through the use by that industry of Bosnia's own resources of stone and timber.

Tourism should not be seen as the sole basis of any real economy in Bosnia. But it has much to offer as a complement to other economic sectors. It can be built upon the traditional hospitality of the Bosnian people; the high natural beauty, and rich cultural heritage of the country; and the widely varied opportunities for outdoor sports and activities. Tourism should be so developed and managed as to bring social and economic benefit directly to the people at local level; and to respect, and where possible, enhance the heritage and the environment. Bosnia, with its high natural qualities, is well-suited to the development of 'green' or 'sustainable' tourism.

### *The Process of sustainable development*

All parts of Bosnia need determined efforts, and a long-term process, of sustainable local development. This process is not one for 'quick fixes' but rather for patient rebuilding of confidence amongst the people, resettlement of those who have been (often cruelly) dislocated, return of refugees, provision of infrastructure; repair and extension of housing and strengthening of social and economic structure.

Integral to this process must be support and encouragement to the people, so that their confidence returns, and they are enabled to take an active part in their own local development. Local authorities, non-governments organisations and the media all have key roles in this supportive process. The development process should, indeed, be highly people-related, responsive to the needs and priorities which the people express. It should be highly practical, tackling real problems on a step-by-step basis. It should aim to motivate people by directly aiding their own initiatives, rather than (as too often happens) demotivating them by 'top-down' priorities and excessive bureaucracy.

Private enterprise should be encouraged by means of credit systems, tax concessions, grants, advice, training and other forms of support.

There is a strong need for active partnership in local development efforts, between public authorities (at regional, canton and local level), non-governmental organisations, and aid agencies of all kinds. The aim should be to bring aid as directly as possible to local communities, in a manner that is integrated, flexible, responsive to specific local needs and free of excess bureaucracy and of corruption.

The Conference will wish to thank those who organised this stimulating event. ECOVAST, ISCOMET, the new Miljenka Fischer Devetak Foundation and the TEMPUS partnership stand ready to help further with the regeneration of Bosnia and with local development efforts elsewhere in South East Europe. But the initiative must come from within the countries, from people and organisations who are rooted in locality.