PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS

The **Project on Ethnic Relations (PER)** was founded in 1991 in anticipation of the serious interethnic conflicts that were to erupt following the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. PER conducts programs of high-level intervention and dialogue and serves as a neutral mediator in several major disputes in the region. PER also conducts programs of training, education, and research at international, national, and community levels.

Individuals and institutions wishing to receive PER publications should write to:

PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS **PER**

15 Chambers Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08542-3707, USA
Telephone: (609) 683-5666
Fax: (609) 683-5888
E-mail: per@per-usa.org
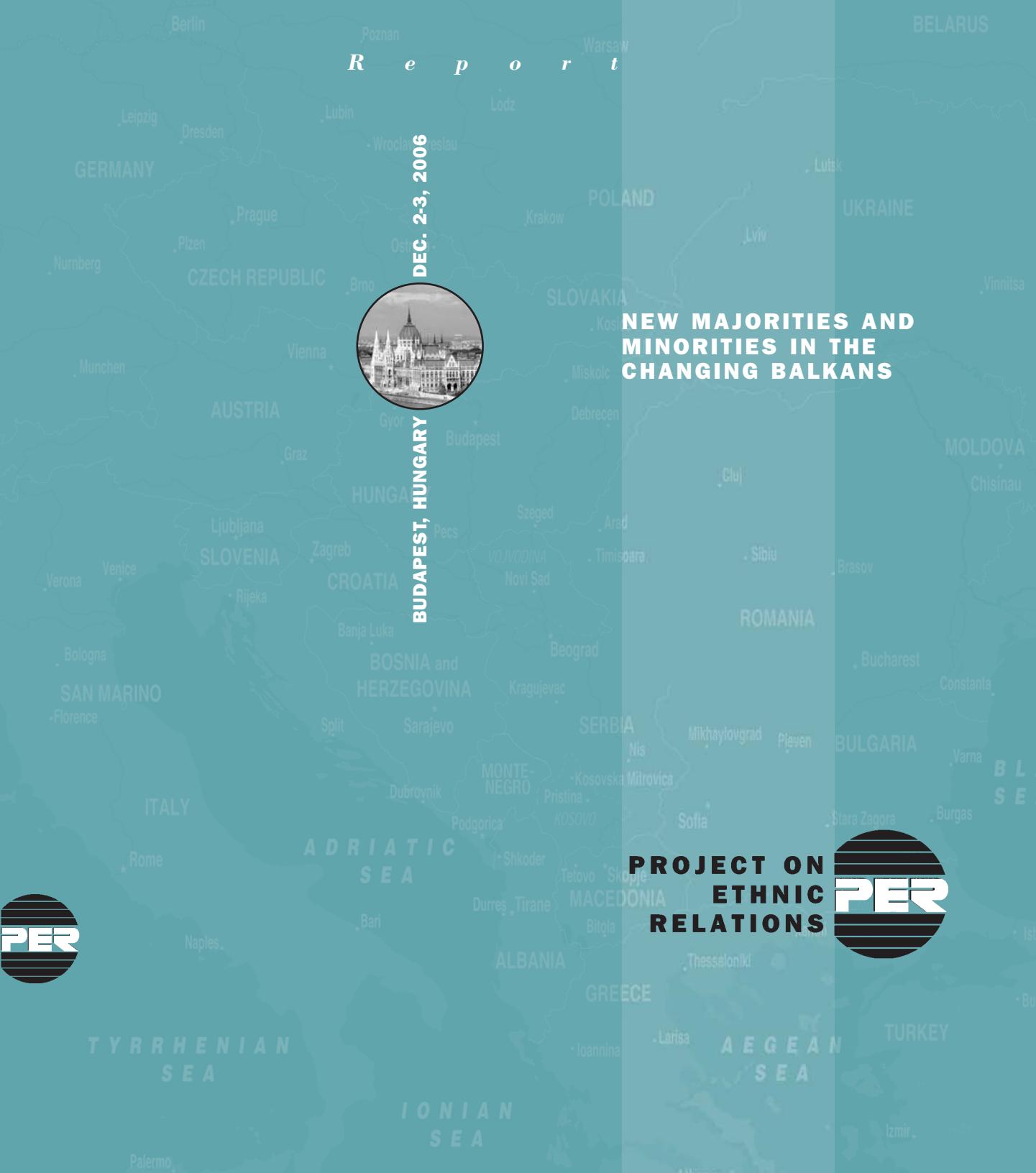**Web Site: www.per-usa.org**

Report

DEC. 2-3, 2006

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

NEW MAJORITIES AND MINORITIES IN THE CHANGING BALKANS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

During the last decade in the Balkans new interethnic dynamics have been created by various regional settlements. Many of these settlements not only changed the dynamics but created new ethnic majorities and minorities. Overnight former ethnic minorities became majorities. This new set of circumstances requires changes in the way these societies are governed. This is especially true for Kosovo, the status of which the international community is determined to resolve in 2007.

These factors and the timing prompted the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) to organize in cooperation with the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the support of the U.S. State Department through a USAID grant, in Budapest on December 2-3, 2006, a regional round-table of political leaders from Southeastern Europe. This regional round-table discussion, the eighth such endeavor organized by PER between 2000-2006 was titled New Majorities and Minorities in the Changing Balkans. The meeting brought together political leaders, decision-makers and officials from the region, the U.S. State Department, the European Union, the Council of Europe, and OSCE to discuss the changing dynamics of interethnic relations in the area as the international community prepares to resolve the issue of Kosovo's status.

One of the main purposes of the roundtable was to encourage the region's policy makers to think constructively about the new reality that is being created in the region during the last decade by various Balkan settlements and about changes in policies that this new reality requires. The participants shared their experiences on interethnic governance and debated whether interethnic models are applicable across borders or

Participants in the roundtable.

From left to right: Imer Selmani, Jozefina Topalli, Kinga Goncz, Livia Plaks, Gabriela Konevska Trajkovska, and Zoran Loncar.

whether each country ought to develop its own model: Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro and Romania as well as other countries in the region have found their own answers for interethnic accommodation. The participants from these countries shared these "models" with the other participants. Could there be a lesson in it for other countries in the region? There was a strong consensus among the participants that the multiethnic character of the population must be reflected in the institutions, policies and practices of the Balkan states.

Two issues dominated the discussion: Kosovo's future status and relations between so-called mother countries and their ethnic kin living in neighboring states. Not surprisingly, there were disagreements about what the future status of Kosovo should look like but there was general agreement that the integration of minorities would be of paramount importance under any status outcome. The integration of the Serbs, the Roma, and others into Kosovo's life was considered as one of the biggest challenges of post-status Kosovo. On the subject of mother countries the participants debated the issue of limitations to the responsibilities of such countries for their ethnic kin living outside their borders and how much loyalty, if any, do these ethnic kin have to exhibit to their mother countries and whether loyalty to one's native country is more important.

The participants also discussed how to help ethnic moderates to implement their programs and to stay in power.

We would like to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Dr. Kinga Goncz, for her interest and participation in the roundtable. We also would like to show deep appreciation for the assistance given to PER in organizing the roundtable by diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, particularly by Oszkar Nikowitz, Andor David, and the staff of the Hungarian consular offices in Serbia, including Kosovo, and in Macedonia.

I would also like to thank PER staff in Princeton and our representatives in Southeastern Europe for their hard work in planning and organizing this roundtable. Special thanks go to the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development for making the project possible.

Professor Steven Burg of Brandeis University, a member of the PER Council for Ethnic Accord, is the author of this report with additional comments from PER staff.

In order to encourage frank and open dialogue, it is PER's practice to publish remarks by participants without attribution. This report has not been reviewed by the participants, and PER assumes full responsibility for its contents.

Livia B. Plaks, *President*

Princeton, New Jersey
January 2007

From left to right: Jozefina Topalli, Kinga Goncz, Livia Plaks, and Gabriela Konevska Trajkovska.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this report, the spelling of the name "Kosovo" is used (rather than "Kosova," the spelling preferred by Albanians, or "Kosovo and Metohija" or "Kosmet" preferred by Serbs) because that is the spelling most commonly used in the English-speaking world. For the same reason, Serbian names of places are used, for example, Pristina and not Prishtina. However, the spelling "Kosova" is used in the names of Kosovo Albanian political parties and organizations. The term "Kosovo" is used as an adjective for Kosovo's inhabitants, whether Albanians, Serbs, Roma, Turks, or others.

"Serb" is used as an ethnic term, whereas "Serbian" is employed when referring to Serbia.

From left to right: Stefan Lehne, Agron Buxhaku, Ali Ahmeti, and Veton Surroi.

From left to right: Michael Christides, Hashim Thaci, Skender Hyseni, and Nagip Arifi.

INTRODUCTION

The President of PER opened the roundtable by stating that this is the eighth time this kind of discourse is organized by PER with previous ones having taken place in Budapest, Athens, Lucerne, and Bucharest. This new effort in Budapest is organized with the sponsorship of the U.S. government through a USAID grant and with the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary.

She stated that we are at a defining moment in the history of the Balkans with the last of the puzzles to be solved, the status of Kosovo which will have a lasting impact on life in Kosovo and in the region. The neighbors sitting around the table will also feel the consequences of the events that will unfold in Pristina and Belgrade in the coming months and thus have a stake in the process and are entitled to have their opinions heard.

Overnight former ethnic minorities became majorities.

Many of the participants at the roundtable have been dealing with majority-minority issues of their own, she said, some with greater success than others. PER has organized the Budapest meeting so that participants could share their differing experiences in this area, identify those institutions and practices that appear to offer the best prospect of success, and understand the conditions that make success possible. Success, of course at this point would mean the establishment of stable and democratic governments which all groups, majorities and minorities, view as legitimate and their own.

The Hungarian Foreign Minister welcomed participants, reminding them that Hungary knows the question of majorities and minorities quite well from its own history. There are large ethnic Hungarian minority communities beyond Hungary's borders, and Hungary knows the sensitivity of these questions. Speaking about borders and territories is always very painful, she acknowledged. Ethnic identity is like family identity, and speaking about it is also very painful. She suggested that if participants can develop personal relationships across borders and ethnic identities, it will facilitate talking about these issues.

BUILDING DEMOCRATIC INTERETHNIC GOVERNMENT

A participant from Macedonia opened the discussion of democratic governance and interethnic relations in the region by acknowledging that Macedonia is often referred to as a "success story" in the Balkans. But this participant pointed out that Macedonia still has a long way to go before it reaches its goal, which is membership in the EU. "Candidacy means more responsibilities than rights," this participant suggested, and Macedonia must demonstrate capability and understanding of the meaning of EU membership. "Macedonia is a multiethnic state. We respect the rights of persons in our country." At the same time, this participant acknowledged that it is always difficult to achieve consensus between government and opposition. Nonetheless, there is "mutual consensus on the principle that rule of law is above all interests." According to this participant, "continuity" with the policies of the previous government is the "basic principle" of the new government. "Everything done by the previous government [to meet the requirements of EU accession] must be accepted, and unfinished tasks must be completed. We are not playing with the fate of our citizens. We are not doing this for Brussels, but for our citizens. We are always willing to work with the opposition to reach consensus." This participant recognized that, in order to reach consensus, the government must be open to dialogue. Such dialogue offered the government an opportunity to make use of the "knowledge and experience" of the opposition.

This participant singled out two areas of policy in which international cooperation and domestic political consensus were particularly important: the fight against corruption and the fight against crime. "Fighting corruption and crime is a point of global interest and understanding," this participant argued. "Although there must be an effort to achieve consensus through dialogue among interests and groups, in the end the national interest must be achieved." For this, "it is the government and the majority party that has responsibility." This participant distinguished between "consensus" and "common understanding" on policy matters, pointing out that "there will always be some groups who are not satisfied." In order to achieve a common understanding, "drafts of laws must be discussed in advance with all parties and interests; the government must listen, and share its concepts or ideas; and political and economic factors, as well as the demands of the *acquis communautaire* must be considered."

Another official from Macedonia emphasized the importance of implementing the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA). This participant summarized the meaning of Ohrid as "neutralizing the personal and material consequences of (the) 2001 (conflict)."Although the constitution has been amended in accordance with the OFA, and numerous laws have been passed implementing specific elements of the Agreement, work on implementation remains to be done. Achieving "adequate representation" of minorities in government administration is a key goal of the new government. Three months ago, "the government adopted an action plan for ensuring adequate proportions of minorities on the basis of the 2002 census, and tripled the resources allocated for minority employment and representation in the government." This participant reported that the government is working on this issue with advisors familiar with the experience of other democratic countries. "Full implementation of the OFA will benefit not only the ethnic minorities," this participant argued, "but all the people of Macedonia, including the majority Macedonians, because it will bring Macedonia closer to membership in the EU."

The multiethnic character of the population must be reflected in the institutions, policies and practices of the Balkan states.

Another politician from Macedonia agreed that there was full consensus in the country on such issues as organized crime, NATO, and EU accession. In his view, "these are not achievements of any political parties, but of the state." He cautioned against any sense of "satisfaction," and suggested that more must be done with respect to the status of the Albanian language and the provision of benefits to former members of the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA), as provided for in the agreement that ended the fighting in 2001. Noting the fact that more Albanians in Macedonia voted for the Albanian party presently in opposition than for the Albanian party presently in government, he questioned the legitimacy of the latter in government and, therefore, of the government as a whole. This participant warned against any effort to "forget the past," as this might lead to "repetition of a painful past."

Another Macedonian participant was prompted by these remarks to defend the previous government. This participant pointed out that "great

progress has been achieved in Macedonia, not just by this government, but by the previous government, as well. This period was a great test for the country and all citizens are grateful for the progress that has been achieved. There was participation and support from the international community for this progress, but Macedonian politicians showed real consensus on the basics." This participant argued that "nothing done by the government has been in violation of the constitution," and questioned "why are some parties still questioning the legitimacy of the government?" The creation of the government coalition was achieved in a manner entirely consistent with constitutional and parliamentary procedure. This participant acknowledged that "the big issues will be driven by the EU and NATO, not by the parties of government or the opposition. They are not a question of political will, only implementation of what the EU and NATO demand."

Success, of course at this point would mean the establishment of stable and democratic governments which all groups, majorities and minorities view as legitimate and their own.

With respect to the use of Albanian in Macedonia, this participant noted that language use is governed by a pre-existing law, not by any new action or policy on the part of the government. "Macedonia is a civic state, not a national state," this participant argued. "The principle of trust requires open minds and an effort to take a civic perspective on shared interests."

A participant from Romania suggested that the Romanian "approach" — "not model" — might be instructive for other countries. This approach was developed in cooperation with PER and the Council of Europe, the most important organizational guardian of human rights and minority rights in Europe.

The Romanian approach involved, first, a debate over the nature of the state; over what the term "national state" means today. This participant suggested that the word "nation" in the first article of the Romanian constitution does not mean ethnic nation, but civic nation. "Even in order to strengthen national security, the state must be civic and multi-cultural. There is no room in Europe today for a state in which one group dominates others. No state is homogeneous, and in the modern era domination is impossible." This participant went even further, arguing that even the term "multi-national" no longer makes sense. This term suggests some groups are recognized, he suggested, while others are not. "The term civic, or multi-cultural, captures the notion of diversity of the state, the idea of the state as a legal personality."

The second element of the Romanian approach, this participant reported, was a debate over the character of the national minorities as communities. "The status of groups changes over time, with majorities becoming minorities and minorities becoming majorities. The psychological legacies of changing statuses create sensitivities that must be addressed. Only the strategy of a common project offers an opportunity to overcome psychological issues."

Third, the Romanian approach included the sharing of political power. Rights are not predetermined, this participant suggested, they are the result of political dialogue, which itself is a form and a consequence of power sharing. "Are rights social, political, or economic?" This participant argued they are not economic; economic rights are determined by markets. They are cultural, identity rights. "Cultural, identity, and spiritual rights should not be conceived on a territorial basis. The territorial issue should be put aside." Dispersed groups, this participant argued, have the same rights as those concentrated in certain territories.

The fourth debate in Romania concerned the scope of minority rights. "Harmonization and stabilization" of interethnic relations contributed to consolidation of the democratic state in Romania, he argued. "There should be no contradiction between respect for and recognition of diversity, and cohesion of the state." Ultimately, the limit on scope of rights is defined by the requirements of cohesion of the state. "If you don't grant rights, you will have to grant territory. Minorities must feel secure, and feel a sense of dignity." Security and dignity, this participant went on to conclude, require "equality;" between individuals and between communities, but not between groups and the state. There are two approaches to security and dignity. One may be labeled "protection," the other "association." The "protection" approach defines one group as protected, the other a protector. It is asymmetric. "Association"

If you don't grant rights, you will have to grant territory.

calls for decentralization or devolution as a means for achieving security and dignity.

A participant from Hungary disagreed with some of these points. He suggested that there is no "golden rule" with respect to whether minority rights should be based on territory. He pointed out that there are some examples of territorial rights that are "good and viable and working," and some examples of cases that are not "working." "We should not say that this principle is right or wrong. We should simply insist that every solution must be based on the agreement of the concerned parties, including the majority and the minority. I do agree that no solution can be expected to last forever, and that there is no solution that can be applied to every country." He noted a tendency in Europe toward decentralization and devolution in governance, "processes which sometimes result in the creation of ethnic entities, and sometimes not." This participant also noted the longstanding debate between advocates of individual rights and advocates of collective rights. He acknowledged the validity of arguments in favor of individual rights, but wished to argue in support of collective rights. He also noted that there are many labels for collective rights, including community rights and even individual rights that can be exercised only in collectivities, but wished to focus on the substance of the principle. "There are many rights that are very substantial and important for minorities, and cannot be exercised by individuals alone. These are mostly linguistic rights. And these cannot be attached to every individual in society. These can be attached to some of the groups [in a society]. In Hungary, there are 13 national communities that enjoy collective rights to self-government, schooling, etc. There are many others, such as immigrants, who do not have such rights. Only the old, traditional, groups and the major ethnic minority, the Roma, have these rights." Finally, this participant questioned the wisdom of adopting a new constitution in Serbia at this particular moment, especially a constitution containing provisions on Kosovo that, in his view, complicated the issue.

On the question of territorialization of rights, the prior participant noted in response that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had recently asked member governments to avoid the organization/administration of their territories on an ethnic basis. Decentralization and devolution should, therefore, be conceived in civic, not ethnic terms. And, finally, he offered a legal nuance to the definition of collective rights. He pointed out that "the subjects enjoying the rights are collective, not the rights."

A participant from Serbia viewed interethnic relations as the key to full security for all states in the region. "Serbia, like other states in the region," he declared, "views its future in terms of membership in Europe." He affirmed that ethnic diversity in Serbia is a national resource; "it enriches the country." But he also acknowledged it is an area in which the quality of democracy in Serbia will be measured. This participant pointed out that the law on national minorities adopted in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2001 (this law is still valid in Serbia) gave all ethnic minorities the opportunity to establish their own national councils as representative organizations, and arenas for debate over community interests. The presidents of these councils constitute an advisory body on policy for the government through their membership on the state council for national minorities, established two years ago. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes other key ministers among its members.

The new constitution adopted recently in Serbia, this participant reported, was supported by the full consensus of all political parties, and by the people of Serbia, in a referendum. "It therefore enjoys a high level of political legitimacy and consensus in Serbia." The new constitution, he argued, embodies the principle of full protection for all ethnic identities. He reported that it recognizes not just individual rights, but collective rights, as well. These include protections against discrimination or forced assimilation, the right of association for members of ethnic communities, the right to equality in public services, and other provisions. A new constitutional mechanism has been established, the "constitutional appeal." The office of an ombudsman has also been established, and enjoys a mandate to protect minority rights. Beyond these legal provisions, he argued, the new constitution also affirms the responsibility of the state to ensure equal economic opportunities, equal development, for all citizens, regardless of ethnic identity. The constitution also calls for decentralization of the Serbian state, which the government views as a precondition for achieving the development of Serbia as a whole. A council on national minorities is about to be established in the multiethnic province of Vojvodina, which represents the application of constitutional principles at the level of the province. This participant

> *There is no room in Europe today for a state in which one group dominates others.*

expressed the hope that representatives of the Albanian population of South Serbia would soon choose to participate in the institutions of the Republic.

This Serbian participant declared the upcoming elections in Serbia (scheduled for January 21, 2007) will ensure the authentic representation of ethnic minorities in the Serbian parliament. He reported that the number of signatures required on petitions nominating candidates for ethnic minority parties has been reduced to make it easier for candidates of ethnic parties to gain a place on the ballot, and the electoral threshold for minority representation has been lowered so as to guarantee the presence of minority representatives in parliament.

Finally, this participant called for settlement of the status of Kosovo on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, and the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia. Such a settlement would require compromise. But, any solution that did not take these principles into account would not be acceptable to the government of Serbia.

A politician from Republika Srpska (RS) in Bosnia-Herzegovina reported that right-wing forces were defeated in the last round of elections, and this has "calmed down radical elements" in the influential Serbian Orthodox Church. Yet, in the view of this participant, basic questions of equality between the nations of Bosnia have not been resolved. "We tried to revise the constitution, under strong international pressure, and agreed on a compromise. But that compromise could not win a two-thirds majority in parliament." This participant argued "the House of Peoples should control vital national interests under the new constitution, but this was not adopted." According to this participant, "the Bosnjaks don't want entities. They want a highly centralized state. Serbs want to preserve the RS. Croats are dissatisfied with their representation in the Federation and on the national level." In arguing for preservation of the RS, this participant suggested "there is proportional representation of ethnic groups in the state administration. The government [of RS] is not exclusively Serb." The main problem in Bosnia, according to this participant, is that "confidence and trust between ethnic groups has still not been restored." Many people hold "negative images of the 'other' as those who were 'on the other side of the front lines'." This participant suggested that the solution to these and other problems in Bosnia was integration of Bosnia Herzegovina into the EU.

This participant suggested that determination of the future status of Kosovo would have important consequences for Bosnia. "Politicians in the RS are frequently asked not to mention Kosovo at all," he reported. "But people in the RS are following the dialogue on Kosovo more closely than they are following what is going on inside Bosnia. People see Kosovo as a vital issue," and they view it "emotionally." He warned that "without the consent, or consensus of people in Serbia and Kosovo, there cannot be a stable solution." He contrasted "imposed partition in Kosovo" to "imposed unity in Bosnia," and cautioned "an imposed solution will cause problems. People will ask how is it possible to have independence for Kosovo and not have independence for the RS?" He stated that "no one will take up weapons," but he warned "there will be widespread feelings of frustration if there is imposed independence for Kosovo."

Another participant from Bosnia began his remarks by stipulating that his was not "another' or "different" voice from Bosnia, not an opposing voice. He wanted to be heard as only "one more" voice. He first addressed the issue of territorialization of ethnic identity, rejecting it as a lasting solution to interethnic relations. He agreed the only solution for the Balkan region is integration of the whole region into the European Union. He reported the number of "serious" central state institutions in Bosnia has increased considerably since the Dayton Accord. This development of common state institutions, he declared, was accomplished with the full agreement of both entities and all three nations. "The view of Bosnia as a state in which internal differences mean nothing gets done without direct intervention by the international community is no longer correct," he argued. He reported the requirements of EU accession have led Bosnia to adopt 45 new laws and to establish 27 new common institutions. But these actions, he insisted, were not undertaken solely because of EU pressure. They were undertaken because they served Bosnian self-interest. "The capacity of the Bosnian state to act has not received appropriate recognition," he declared. He anticipated that by June significant progress toward accession will be achieved, the office of the High Commissioner will have been eliminated, and the "Dayton phase" of Bosnian development will give way to a "Brussels phase."

A participant from Montenegro suggested his country was a good example of a multiethnic state that had conformed to European demands. He attributed at least part of the internal opposition to independence to "xenophobic, conservative, and nationalistic" attitudes among some people.

Nonetheless, he affirmed that the independent state of Montenegro would continue to pursue interethnic harmony. He cited the support of ethnic minorities for independence in the recent referendum, criticized by the nationalistic opposition who suggest independence was won by "minorities" and not the "majority," as evidence of the good interethnic relations already established in the country.

A participant from Albania emphasized the importance of fulfilling the requirements of her country's stabilization/association agreement with the EU as a precondition for accession. In connection with this, she underscored her government's "zero tolerance" for organized crime, as this is a major obstacle not only to accession, but to establishment of the rule of law. The most important issue for citizens, however, is improving the standard of living in Albania, which ultimately requires continued economic development.

A politician from South Serbia suggested that the implementation of the agreement ending conflict in that region had, in his view, produced no positive results. On the contrary, he argued, "there is continuing pressure from the Serbian police." He supported the view that minorities should enjoy collective rights, and called for the regionalization of Serbia, and the establishment of regions that respect ethnic identities. He cited interethnic agreements in Montenegro as a model for resolving problems in Serbia. But he added "the Presevo valley must have special status, special treatment inside of Serbia."

Another participant from Serbia argued that significant progress has been achieved in South Serbia. But he suggested that for the past three years the Albanian minority there has not been willing to make use of all the rights it enjoys under Serbian law. Serbian law "gives sufficient room," he argued, in such areas as culture, education, and the media. It was not until very recently that the Albanian minority in the region was willing to set up a national council of its own, as 14 other minorities have already done in Serbia, which would enable the Albanian national minority to exercise such rights.

An international participant asked "what have been the incentives for those minority representatives who have cooperated in the effort to build democratic institutions in their countries?" And, he asked "why have those who cooperated with majorities, and won concessions for their people, still lost political power?" This region-wide pattern might lead some to conclude that existing incentives to cooperate are insufficient if these politicians risk the loss of power. "Is the hope of membership in the EU still a strong enough incentive," he asked, especially in light of recent changes in public opinion and official rhetoric in the EU? These questions remained unanswered.

Another international participant noted that "there is nothing in the *acquis communautaire* about ethnic minorities." EU insistence on resolution of interethnic issues is "part of conditionality for accession. The EU will not import problems," he warned. He suggested that "the promise of living in an integrated region without obstacles to travel, movement, or employment should be especially significant for groups divided among several states." He later declared "after Kosovo, the territorial organization of the whole region will be set, and all governments will be required to endorse this."

BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC AND MULTIETHNIC KOSOVO

A politician from Kosovo opened the discussion of the challenges of building a democratic and multiethnic Kosovo by pointing to the elections in Serbia scheduled for January 2007 as an important opportunity for "potential partners" in the process of defining the future status of Kosovo to come to power. He insisted that "it is time for the international community to resolve the final status after the elections in Serbia, via a new resolution in the UN Security Council." He warned that the decision on status must come soon after the elections, "it cannot be months." He argued that "for now, there is an opposition moratorium in Kosovo in order to maintain consensus over the process of gaining independence." But "the future of Kosovo must not be held hostage; that would be very dangerous." He also rejected drawing any parallel between Kosovo and the RS. "The RS was created through violence, while Kosovo was created by peaceful means," he insisted. A participant from Albania also rejected any comparison between Kosovo and other cases. "It is a special case," she insisted. "Further delay is unacceptable. Even if there are elections or events elsewhere, they are unrelated to Kosovo." Another participant from Kosovo characterized Kosovo as "a *sui generis* case."

An American participant argued that "Kosovo has passed all laws demanded by the EU." He argued that "the current situation cannot be

maintained." He pointed out that "the expectations of Albanians have been raised by all outside actions" and must be fulfilled. The resistance of "Serb leaders north of the Ibar does not reflect the will of the population," he insisted. His discussions with local Serb residents, this participant reported, lead him to believe "they will not leave Kosovo."

A participant from the EU took a somewhat different position, asserting that "not all the ingredients to take a final decision are in place yet." But he also acknowledged that it is "the key capitals that will make the real decisions." He warned that "it is extremely important for leaders and the people to keep their nerves. Violence would be extremely counter-productive."

A participant from Kosovo argued that the proposals put forward by the Albanian side in the Vienna talks "redistribute power and redraw boundaries so that 92-95 percent of Kosovo Serbs will be in self-administering territories." This is evidence, he insisted, that the Kosovo Albanians "have crossed their own redlines in order to accommodate the Serbs." He argued that "for Kosovo to become a democratic and stable state, it must be a functional state with contractual capacity to enter into agreements with international and multinational institutions." Any "partition" of Kosovo "would feed non-democratic forces in Kosovo." And, finally, "absent integration, Kosovo will be a stagnant society."

After Kosovo, the territorial organization of the whole region will be set, and all governments will be required to endorse this.

Another participant from Kosovo emphasized that the proposals put forward by the Albanian side in the Vienna talks reflected a full consensus among "all political forces in Kosovo." "We hope the Ahtisaari report will include the proposals of our side," he declared, "because ours exceed even the national standards applied elsewhere in Europe."

Another participant from Kosovo argued that "an independent Kosovo in its current borders is a compromise in comparison to other options." He characterized these other options as "returning Kosovo to Serbia; partitioning Kosovo between Albanians and Serbs; and creation of a Greater Albania." He argued that "the countries that are functioning well are those in which there is agreement on 'stateness.' Those in which the question of 'stateness' is still alive are not functioning well." He concluded that there must not be any question about the "stateness" of Kosovo.

A participant from Albania asserted that "independence is very close to becoming a reality no matter how people perceive it. Independence is the solution that promises regional stability."

"Multiethnicity looks different to Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo," cautioned another participant from Kosovo. "For Serbs, it means real influence, not necessarily a 'veto' power. For Albanians, it means simply having Serbs in institutions and organizations." He pointed out that the language law was in fact first rejected by the Kosovo Assembly over the objections of Serbs, and later adopted only under international pressure. He asked "what are the guarantees that must be in place after independence in order to secure the Serb role in Kosovo?" He answered his own question by asserting the need to establish a "double majority" principle.

"Why are Kosovo Serbs not participating in Kosovo institutions?" asked a participant from Serbia. He argued "after political changes in 2000, Serbs did participate until March 2004. But, if you want to be part of a dialogue, you have to build trust and confidence. After March 2004 Kosovo Serbs no longer had trust in Kosovo institutions." He suggested that Kosovo Serbs did not have even the most basic of human rights, freedom of movement, or even basic security. He argued that "there cannot be an independent Kosovo. No document of international law makes this possible. Even one exception will open other problems, such as the RS." He rejected any linkage between Kosovo and Montenegro, however, pointing out "Kosovo never had independent statehood prior to becoming part of Serbia," while Montenegro did. The latter point was supported in remarks by a Montenegrin participant who, in seeking to legitimate Montenegrin independence, did so by asserting "Montenegro was never part of Serbia."

A participant from Hungary, in closing the discussion on Kosovo, reminded participants of the assertion of a distinguished Hungarian historian, who attributed the tragedy of Eastern Europe, including Hungary, to the fact that borders had historically "been moving back and forth." All nations, this historian added, "identify with that period of history in which its territory was the largest." But, this participant noted, this moment came at a different moment for each nation, with the result that those large territories overlap. "All the countries of the region are

now struggling with the fact that a part of the history of each nation now lies outside the borders of the contemporary national state." This participant, noting that every nation approaches these questions with the burdens of history, and all its "traumas." "But those in the contemporary majority have a very special responsibility to the minority. The problem is that it is sometimes very difficult to be generous; because of the previous historical events and because of all kinds of fears." With respect to the earlier discussion of territorial autonomy, this participant suggested "territorial autonomy might not be a threat if the minority is treated well enough, if they feel they can keep their identity. But because of the historical sequence of events, territorial integrity might be seen as a threat to the integrity of the country."

"MOTHER COUNTRIES" IN INTERETHNIC RELATIONS

A Romanian participant opened the discussion of the role of "mother countries" in the region by questioning the very concept of a "mother country." "This metaphor is neither appealing nor correct," he argued. "Children do not like to be instructed or disciplined by their mother, just to be protected and fed. Once we talk about protecting, feeding, educating by one state of citizens of another state, we have certain problems." The key issue, he suggested, was the nature of the state itself. "If states are ethnic states, then the relationship of kinship is clear. But if they are civic states, states of all ethnic groups who live in them, what does it mean to be a 'kin' state?" he asked. He argued minority rights, human rights, "are not just matters of national interest. They are matters of international interest." In his view, "any state is entitled, even obliged to intervene when human rights are violated. Therefore, any state has the right to oversee, or examine the status of minorities. But this must be done within the framework of international law." He suggested "the establishment of relations between Serbia and the Serbs of Kosovo might function as an incentive for Serbia to agree to independence."

A Hungarian participant declared "this is not a question of mathematics. It is about emotions." He pointed out that, "in practice, no state is 100 percent ethnic or civic. And, the changing size and status of groups over time must be reflected in changing legal and political frameworks." He argued "nations are not groups defined by state borders. The nation is a spiritual community defined by a cultural heritage. This is a special

relationship that cannot be put into writing." He cautioned that "the Schengen regime is going to close the border, with the result that communication between Hungarians in Serbia and their mother country will be much more difficult."

A participant from Serbia cautioned "the concept of mother country is very difficult to define. It implies a collectivity." He asked "is Albania the 'mother country' of Kosovo Albanians? If so, what does this imply about the eventual future of Kosovo?" Similarly, he asked "is Serbia the 'mother country' of the 20 percent of its population who are not Serbs?" He raised the question whether this concept implied that diaspora populations should have the right to vote in their 'mother country'."

A politician from Montenegro declared "Montenegro can be my state, but it can never be my mother. Albania is my mother." He declared another participant from Montenegro "can be a good colleague and neighbor, but he cannot be my brother. But that does not mean we cannot live together and cooperate." A civic state, he argued, "allows spiritual, cultural and physical contact with the mother country, so I can preserve my identity." An international participant questioned this perspective later in the discussion. He asked "if we understand the role of mother country and especially the allegiance of minorities to their so-called mother country in this way, I wonder if they condemn themselves to become aliens in the country in which they live? The danger is if something happens between those two countries—the first victims would be the national minority."

Minority rights, human rights, are not just matters of national interest, they are matters of international interest.

"Countries do not create people; people create countries. But, not all the people. Some people might have made a different choice" if given an opportunity to choose, said a politician from Kosovo. He pointed out that sometimes people are forced into a state. A participant from Albania shared this perspective, declaring "the issue of a 'mother country' was created by the great powers when they chopped up the Albanian lands."

Another participant from Kosovo suggested the "emancipation, or education of Albanians in Presevo, Macedonia, and Montenegro all took place in Pristina," thereby suggesting Kosovo played the role of 'mother country' for these Albanian communities in the former Yugoslavia. Now,

he argued, "when it comes to minorities we must be realistic and cannot apply double standards. There can be cooperation at many levels, but it must always be transparent and based on common interest and according to common standards." He declared that the Kosovo government "has respected the rights of minorities at the highest level, in all our documents. We want them to participate at all levels, even in government, but in an integrative manner, within existing institutions, and not to create parallel or alternative, autonomous institutions."

A participant from an EU country declared "it would be better for the Balkans if the concept of 'mother county' lost some of the political weight it now carries, as 'mother countries' have not played entirely constructive roles. There are, and should be, limits on the rights and responsibilities of 'mother countries'." Another participant declared "it is the collective responsibility of European states to protect minority rights through political and other means. But this must be done with great care."

An international participant responded to the vigorous discussion by declaring "This is a complex issue and it is an emotional issue, so emotional that I doubt that even most of the researchers would be able to discuss it without emotions." He expressed concern that "the existing European framework is not sufficient in regard to these issues" and called for "creating an international framework on this issue. If we are creating a European cosmopolitan society, where all rules and laws are universal, there is no need for a mother state in a classic sense as we knew it today, a mother state that is taking care of its co-ethnics if their rights are violated. There would be no such need if an overall European concept is in charge. The European Union would become the mother country for all. Europe would be the mother for Kosovo, for Albania, for Serbia, and for Montenegro. Under these circumstances the only role for so-called mother states is in the cultural sphere. In fact, I am not so sure if the concept of a mother state is not dangerous in the 21st century. Because, if taken out of cultural sphere and cultural relations, it could bring dangerous consequences; as it did in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and even earlier, in the Sudetenland in the 1930s.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants in the roundtable shared a strong consensus that the multi-ethnic character of the population must be reflected in the institutions, policies, and practices of the Balkan states. The participants agreed that minorities should enjoy the same human rights as all other citizens, as well as extensive cultural rights required to preserve their identities, however they differed in their views on the territorialization of minority rights. Political equality, reflected in equitable representation of ethnic communities in state institutions and meaningful influence of these communities over state policies, was seen as a key component in the establishment of stable democracies in countries with multiethnic populations.

Accession to the EU was viewed both as a highly desirable goal, and as a strong incentive for Balkan governments and their oppositions to cooperate in the establishment of European norms of democratic governance including respect for human and minority rights. The role of so-called 'mother countries' in interethnic relations was the subject of a vigorous discussion that ended without a clear consensus.

From left to right: Steven Burg, Alex Grigor'ev, Adrian Severin, Nenad Djurdjevic, and Osman Topcagic.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS*
(English alphabetical order)

Republic of Albania

Arta Dade, Secretary for International Relations, Socialist Party; Vice President, Foreign Relations Committee, Parliament of Albania

Jozefina Topalli, President, Parliament of Albania; Vice President, Democratic Party

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska; President, Alliance of Independent Social Democrats

Osman Topcagic, Director, Directorate for European Integration, Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Hellenic Republic

Michael Christides, Director, Directorate for Southeastern European Countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Republic of Hungary

Kinga Goncz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

Laszlo Szoke, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, Member, European Parliament (Alliance of Free Democrats)

Oszkar Nikowitz, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

Andor David, Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

Ivan Gyurcsik, Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary

Attila Pok, Director, Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Member, PER Council for Ethnic Accord

Republic of Macedonia

Ali Ahmeti, President, Democratic Union for Integration; Member, Parliament of Macedonia

Agron Buxhaku, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Integration, Democratic Union for Integration; Member, Parliament of Macedonia

Gabriela Konevska Trajkovska, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia

Imer Selmani, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia; Vice President, Democratic Party of Albanians

Republic of Montenegro

Ferhat Dinosha, President, Democratic Union of Albanians; Member, Parliament of Montenegro

Miodrag Vukovic, President, Committee of Foreign Relations and European Integration, Parliament of Montenegro (DPS)

Romania

Adrian Severin, Member, Parliament of Romania (Social Democratic Party); Member, PER Council for Ethnic Accord

Republic of Serbia

Nagip Arifi, Mayor of Bujanovac

Miroslav Bozinovic, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia

Petar Ladjevic, Director, Service for Human and Minority Rights, Government of Serbia

Zoran Loncar, Minister for Public Administration and Local Self-Government of Serbia; Head, Vojvodina Board, Democratic Party of Serbia

Kosovo

Ardian Gjini, Minister for Environmental Protection and Spatial Planning of Kosovo

Skender Hyseni, Principal Political Adviser to the President of Kosovo

Oliver Ivanovic, Head, Serb List for Kosovo and Metohija, Member, Kosovo Assembly; Presidency Member, Social Democratic Party

Veton Surroi, President, ORA Movement; Member, Kosovo Assembly

Hashim Thaci, President, Democratic Party of Kosova; Member, Kosovo Assembly

Swiss Confederation

Thomas Greminger, Ambassador; Head, Political Division IV, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Roland Salvisberg, Programme Officer for South East Europe, Political Affairs Division IV, Human Security, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

United States of America

Craig Lang, Kosovo Office, Office of South Central European Affairs, Department of State

Jan Paul Emmert, Director, Democracy and Community Development Program in Serbia, Agency for International Development

Meg Gaydosik, Senior Media Development/Rights and Tolerance Advisor, Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, Agency for International Development

Council of Europe

Marc Scheuer, Director of Political Advice and Cooperation, Directorate General of Political Affairs

European Union

Stefan Lehne, Special Envoy of the High Representative for Common Foreign and Defense Policy

Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Clarisse Pasztory, Deputy High Representative; Head, OHR Banja Luka

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Andrzej Mirga, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Project on Ethnic Relations

Steven Burg, Member, Council for Ethnic Accord; Professor, Brandeis University

Nenad Djurdjevic, Representative in Serbia

Alex Grigor'ev, Director, Western Balkans

Leon Malazogu, Representative in Kosovo

Alan Moseley, Program Officer

Livia Plaks, President

United Nations

Bernd Finke, Director, Office of Political Affairs, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Steven Schook, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in Kosovo

From left to right: Arta Dade, Ardian Gjini, Gordan Milosevic, and Milorad Dodik.

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