

**MESSAGE TO THE BRIONI 2010 ECPD CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL
AND INTER-ETHNIC RECONCILIATION, RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE
AND HUMAN SECURITY IN THE BALKANS**

In October 2005, I sent a message to the ECPD Conference on National and Inter-ethnic Reconciliation and Religious Tolerance in West Balkans. I am asking the organizers of the Brioni gathering to make available this earlier message to the participants.

I am pleased to see that these important conferences continue to be organized annually, thus contributing to dialogue, cooperation and coming together in this region. Even more, I am very happy that today one can see easing of earlier tensions, greater cooperation in various domains, and growing ties arising from economic, political and geographic requirements and commonalities that bind peoples, societies, economies and countries of the region into an organic and interdependent whole.

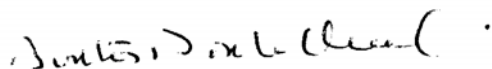
Thus I rejoice to learn that a joint railroad company has been created by Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, joined by Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to modernize, rationalize and facilitate freight transport in West Balkans which sit astride the key transport corridors and represent the crossroads between Europe's regions, and between Europe and Asia. Such cooperative projects and activities will build mutual trust and pave the way for pooling together of resources and efforts, and gradually removing the barriers that state borders represent for free movement of people and goods.

I am heartened at the reemergence of communication and interaction between peoples and societies, which has been referred to as "Yugosphere" by an astute observer of Balkan affairs. This will pave the way for growing cooperation and mutual trust in the years to come.

This is a process that should engage the younger generation, in particular. They will inherit the future of this unique and wonderful region, and the task of consolidating the emerging community of people and nations in West Balkans in the larger context of European and global processes of cooperation and integration.

My expectation is that economic and financial difficulties caused by the worldwide economic and financial crisis will provide added opportunities and incentives for greater cooperation within the region as a means to overcome some of the hardships caused by global turbulences.

I feel confident that the future of peoples and states of West Balkans will be a positive, peaceful and cooperative one. I wish success to ECPD, and to the Brioni Conference, in the pursuit of the noble goals of reconciliation, cooperation and peace in West Balkans.



Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Former Secretary-General of the United Nations
President of the ECPD Honorary Council