



University for Peace  
Universidad para la Paz



European Center for Peace and Development  
of the University for Peace established by the United Nations

*Fifth ECPD International conference*  
**NATIONAL AND INTER-ETHNIC RECONCILIATION, RELIGIOUS  
TOLERANCE AND HUMAN SECURITY IN THE BALKANS**  
– RECONCILIATION AND HUMAN SECURITY –  
*Brioni Islands, Croatia,  
October 29 – 30, 2009*

---

## CLOSING REMARKS

---

*by the Chairman, Professor Dr Takehiro TOGO  
President of the ECPD Academic Council*

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In closing the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on **National and Inter-Ethnic Reconciliation, Religious Tolerance and Human Security**, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for your ardent participation and enthusiastic discussions in these two days. All these discussions were testimony to your deep commitment to the cause of peace and stability in the Western Balkan Region.

Our discussions touched the ways and means to come out of the present global financial crisis as well to the solution of remaining problems for reconciliation and tolerance. The general feeling during five years since the Conference started was that the West Balkan situation has made visible advance toward peace and stability although it became clear that a number of problems still remain unsolved. Heated discussion took place on the present and future of the West Balkan Region. Issues raised included:

- 1) Western Balkan countries were badly hit by the present global financial crisis, and downturn of economy and higher unemployment is an issue which should be tackled in many countries, especially in Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and also in Croatia. At the same time, structural problems also should be addressed. This is making ethnic and social problems in the region harder to deal with.
- 2) EU integration is not a solution in itself, but only the stimulus for the solution of the problems in the West Balkans. There is a cost in integration, by pooling sovereignty, sometimes marginalization may follow. They must construct among themselves stronger political, economic and legal system by collaboration among themselves before entering EU. This will make their position stronger in EU.
- 3) Role of women role in achieving reconciliation and tolerance should be stressed.
- 4) In Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, although there are certain moves toward stability, there are still many problems that require efforts for constant dialogue among them.
- 5) The problem of minorities including Roma people should be properly addressed for the overall stability in the region. It is important to expand in-group sympathy against out- group inferiority complex. Internally displaced people should be given opportunity to return to their original places of residence or adequate compensation should be provided,
- 6) Human Security is important in the Balkan region and especially environment is a serious issue to be solved in this regard.
- 7) Younger generations should be invited to the Conferences to be held in the future. It is important to educate them through peace studies.



Government of Montenegro



Universal Peace Federation



Japan Foundation



**MITSUI & CO., LTD.**



University for Peace  
Universidad para la Paz



European Center for Peace and Development  
of the University for Peace established by the United Nations

8) Mass media as an important factor in establishing inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance, understanding and cooperation in the Balkans. A first International Expert Roundtable on this topic is organized by the ECPD and will be held in Belgrade on November 3, 2009.

The document “The Balkans: Current Situation and Future Development - an Assessment” provided an opportunity to express the importance of regional cooperation based upon the mutual trust and at the same time showed that still much has to be accomplished along these lines to achieve a peaceful Balkan region to be integrated into peaceful EU. It was agreed that further discussions are necessary and that inputs of all participants are welcome.

The importance of the concept of Human Security in the Western Balkan region is an agreed upon principle. A final Declaration still needs some further elaboration and shall be sent to the participants for adoption.

It is hopefully a good omen that the Conference was held in Brioni, so many times a place of national dialogue and cooperation. At the same time, the location of this place showed so clearly the necessity to take concrete steps in regional cooperation in the fields of tourism, transport and trade.

These Conferences are conducted as an important part of the activities for peace and development in the Balkans by ECPD. It was agreed that the future activities would be adapted to concrete needs. The next Conference will be most probably held in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2010, the year of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of ECPD. It may be advisable to hold such Conferences on a smaller scale on different subjects each year to tackle with many unresolved problems by inviting specialists on those subjects.

- 1) Human Security in the Balkans
- 2) Ways and means of the way out of the financial crisis
- 3) Education of young generations through peace studies and others in collaboration with universities
- 4) General rules of protection of minorities including Roma people
- 5) Trans-border cooperation
- 6) Remaining questions toward integration into EU

I should like to renew my appreciation to all participants for their commitment to the cause of peace and stability of the Balkan region, as well as to the leadership of ECPD which has been fighting courageously with a forward looking vision and perspective in this difficult time. My respect and appreciation also goes to the efficient interpreters who made our dialogue mutually meaningful

I should like to express gratitude to the Government of the Region of Istria, which has provided the major part of the costs for the Conference, as well as to the London Office of the Mitsui and Co. Ltd for the financial contribution to make our IPSG and 5th Conference easier in this difficult time of global financial crisis.

Thank you for your attention.



Government of Montenegro



Universal Peace Federation



Japan Foundation



**MITSUMI & CO., LTD.**