



The European Center for Peace and Development



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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*

**OPENING REMARKS**

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

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to declare open 5th Conference "National and Inter-ethnic Reconciliation, Religious Tolerance and Human Security" in this beautiful and historical setting of Brioni Islands, Istria Region, Croatia. I would like to express hearty appreciation to the overall support of the Government of Croatia, President of Istria region and the Mayor of Pula for ECPD activities and for convening this Conference in Brioni. Mr. Yasushi Akashi preferred to make video presentation this time in view of his recent extended testimony to the Criminal Court for former Yugoslavia in the Hague, and we welcome Mr. Francois Fouinat from Advisory Board on Human Security of UN. He will read the message from Mrs. Sadako Ogata in support of our Conference. We also welcome Ambassador of Japan Mr. Shigeo Murata to show the continued support of the Japanese Government to our Conference.

ECPD, as affiliate of the University for Peace of UN, has been carrying out many post graduate educational courses for master's and doctor's degrees on various subjects and researches for nearly a quarter of a century since its establishment in 1985. Since 2005, we have convened 4 International Conferences on National and Inter-ethnic Reconciliation, Religious Tolerance and Human Security and 8 meetings of International Permanent Study Group to prepare such Conferences, within the framework of the programme entitled "The Balkans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- the ways Leading to Peace and Stability in the Balkans". Last year's Conference was convened in Miločer, Montenegro, while Study Group meetings were held in Belgrade, Sveti Stefan, Montenegro and Prizren, Kosovo.

Through the deliberations of the Conference and Study Groups, the points stressed were roughly the following. It was widely recognized that, although there are positive tendencies toward stability and peace, the Western Balkan region is still in a state of crisis. There are still many issues not solved and threaten to jeopardize peace and stability in the region. Long-time suffering during fratricidal conflicts inflicted new wounds on different ethnic and religious groups, stirred up hatred and animosity being still carried deep within them Reconciliation requires patience and time. Recognition of past mistakes, wrong doings and crimes committed during 1991-1999 war, public presentation of excuses by all parties concerned and punishment of the key persons responsible for the last conflicts should be carried out. Importance of the roles of political leaders, education, media, women, development of economic and health conditions were stressed. Integration into EU will provide ultimate solution of the problems of Western Balkan region and all out efforts should be continued towards this end.



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Our Conference today is being convened in a crisis moment of the world. Politically, instability and unpredictability of the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo was reflected in the Caucasus, in the crisis in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, creating, at times, almost a cold war like atmosphere between Russia and US and EU. Economically, sub prime loan crisis in US has led to the bankruptcy of key US firms, causing the global financial crisis, involving developed and developing countries, and the west Balkan region was seriously affected by this crisis. The Western Balkan situation is far from being stable and peaceful, especially in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. The situation is still volatile and requires attention.

On the other hand, the present financial crisis and political unpredictability is considered as a challenge and an opportunity. The present crisis is the worst since the Great Depression of 1930s, but there is a remote chance of the repetition of the Great depression, since concerted efforts are being made in UN, G-8, G- 20 and other organizations and groupings of states in order to restore sustainable economic development and to reform of global financial institutions. The new Obama government has departed from bellicose unilateralism of Bush administration and calling for cooperation on multilateral basis, creating a real chance of resetting of US-Russia relationship and negotiation for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and better earth environment which may be new world order of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our Conference today has acquired greater significance in coping with the global crisis as well as the problem of peace and stability of the Western Balkan region against this background.

Our Conference is expected to devote itself to detailed discussions on the ways and means to come out of the present political and economic impasse. We are also expected to prepare concrete schemes for solution of the problems and tasks, so that they can formulate a general framework and outline for achieving reconciliation, tolerance and human security in the Balkan region. We have prepared a document “The Balkans: the Current Situation and Future Development- an Assessment“. We shall discuss this document during this Conference, so that we can adopt it as an authentic version.

Also we have prepared draft of “Declaration on Implementation of the Human Security concept in the Balkan countries“. We shall discuss this document so that we can adopt it at this Conference.

Our unique attempt is to firmly establish the principles of human security through deliberations on reconciliation and tolerance during 5 years of sustained efforts not only in the Balkans but throughout Europe. It may well offer a model for other conflict areas in the world.

Our International Conferences have been established as an important part of the overall activities of ECPD for peace and stabilities of the Balkans. We would like to continue our efforts in more less similar mode in future, beginning in 2010. From this perspective, I would like to invite your discussion on how and what we shall be deliberating in our Conferences to follow from the year 2010, the first of such Conferences will be held in Slovenia, probably in Ljubljana, in 2010.

Last but not the least, I would like to express gratitude to the Region of Istria and to the Government of Croatia, major financial contributors to the Conference, as well as to the London Office of the Mitsui and Co. Ltd which has made financial contribution to IPSG and the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference, to make it easier in this time of crisis.

Thank you for your attention.



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