

NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS PRECONDITION TO EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Main message of the 22nd Igman Initiative held in Belgrade on October 14th 2011 - "European perspective, cooperation and stability of the region" was the idea that West Balkans' European perspective must be built on the foundation of neighborly relations which include addressing a number of open issues between the Dayton Agreement signatory countries.



www.igman-initiative.org

22nd session of Igman Initiative gathered over two hundred participants, representatives of the international community, government bodies and institutions, non-governmental organizations, experts and other international and national media at the Palace of Serbia in Belgrade. Igman Initiative was the host of this meeting, which was attended also by the President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadic, President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipovic, President of the Republic of Montenegro, Filip Vujanovic and President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zeljko Komsic.

refugees, processing war crimes, succession and citizens' status and property issues.

„With EU support, Igman Initiative began to work on the project focused on citizens' status and property issues. We already have first results of the experts' work on this subject. Deadlock on all other issues, such as borders and succession, requires betterment of the quality of mutual relations and greater degree of readiness to face the past..Finally, we must devise a more lasting plan of humanization of this region. We, members of Igman Initiative, see this process as a potential transfer of experiences from the Nordic Council, for the



During the opening speech, Aleksandar Popov, co-president of Igman Initiative from Serbia reminded the participants about five crucial issues identified during the 22nd Igman Initiative session. Those issues that still remain unsolved in the context of mutual relations between Dayton Agreement signatory countries include: borders and

purpose of institutionalization of cooperation between the Parliaments of countries signatory to the Dayton Agreement. With assistance of our friends from the Nordic Council of Ministers, we will commit ourselves to this work in the next few years" - Sasa Popov, co-president of Igman Initiative in Serbia, said during his address.



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**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**



Guests and participants of the 22nd Igman Initiative session were also greeted by other co-presidents. Vehid Šehić, co-president from Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed out that war crimes must be sanctioned and that Igman Initiative is going to do everything that is necessary to “create a different ambiance in this region”. Zoran Pusić, co-president from Croatia made a very picturesque comparison by saying “enough with the

balkanization of Balkans”. He said that we need to follow experiences which give positive results. Branko Lukovac, co-president from Montenegro, emphasized the need for mutual assistance between the countries of this region as a precondition for quicker solutions. On behalf of Friedrich Ebert Foundation, a co-organizer of the meeting in Belgrade, director Michael Ehrke welcomed the participants and guests.



MESSAGES OF STATESMEN



„European perspective is the principal flywheel of stabilization and development of the whole region. Joint strategic goal can be accomplished only by reinforcement of cooperation and by a dialog based on mutual reconciliation. In this process, Serbia made huge progress in the field of regional cooperation during the past few years, which was also confirmed by the European Commission's last report“

Boris Tadić

President of the Republic of Serbia

„We have a responsibility before our neighbors to prevent export of crisis, stop making enemies and avoiding obligations. Truth is not an easy matter, but partnership is necessary.. not only in regard of pressing historical issues, but also in regard of missing persons, refugees, succession, property and responsibility for war crimes...”

Ivo Josipović

President of the Republic of Croatia



22nd IGMAN INITIATIVE SESSION

"Progress of our four countries, naturally different for each country, but also indisputable for each country, reaffirms our resolve to promote and improve regional stability and cooperation. If the whole region becomes stable, companies and entrepreneurs start maintaining regional cooperation, conditions will become favorable for numerous high-profile investments, successful privatization, banking operations. In short, successful economy will be possible, which also increases citizens' standard of living"

Filip Vujanovic

President of the Republic of Montenegro



"Our mutual relations at the level of Chiefs of State are an example of good regional cooperation in all spheres. That is because we all share a common vision of West Balkans as a constituent part of European Union... However, I believe that governments of our countries must intensify activities focused on solving disputable issues, bilateral and multilateral. Let me thank the organizers of the session for this opportunity for an open discussion about problems that we face on this shared path"

Leliko Komsic

President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

"West Balkan countries have done a lot in the process of building lasting reconciliation, understanding and regional cooperation, which are the key principles listed in the recently adopted strategy of EU enlargement for 2011. I believe that Igmán Initiative offers a very good platform for identification of problems and promotion of joint solutions"

Stefan Fule

EU Enlargement Commissioner



The Nordic model presented

During the afternoon session, Haldor Asgrimson, General Secretary of the Nordic Council of Ministers, presented the Nordic model of cooperation between Nordic countries. Experiences from this model may be useful for processes of development of regional cooperation between countries signatory to the Dayton Agreement.

Project results

During the 22nd Igman Initiative session, first results of expert team's work within the framework of the project focused on citizens' status and property issues after the break-up of former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia were presented. Publication "Preliminary report of the expert group" was handed out to the participants. This project was supported by European Union.

Future activities

During the second working day of the 22nd Igman Initiative session held at the Hotel Park in Novi Sad, Aleksandar Popov, co-president of the Igman Initiative in Serbia, spoke about building partnership between European Union and Igman Initiative. Members of Igman Initiative discussed about future projects and cooperation within this movement of non-governmental organizations. Next session will be held in Podgorica in 2012.

22nd Igman Initiative session was organized with support from European Union and Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Solemn moment in silence in memory of Zivorad Kovacevic

With a moment of silence, participants of the 22nd Igman Initiative session paid respect to the late Zivorad Kovacevic (1930-2011), Chairman of the Igman Initiative Board, person who completely dedicated his entire moral and expert potentials to this movement of non-governmental organizations focused on quicker normalization of relations between countries signatory to



STATEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP

Joint statement “Partnership for European Future of the Region” was signed in Belgrade, on the occasion of 22nd Igman Initiative session. Statement was signed by the President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadic, President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Zeljko Komsic, President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipovic and by the President of the Republic of Montenegro, Filip Vujanovic.



PARTNERSHIP FOR THE EUROPEAN FUTURE OF THE REGION

*Statement made by: President of the Republic of Serbia,
The Presiding of the Presidium of B-H,
President of Montenegro and
President of the Republic of Croatia*

We, Presidents of the Republic of Serbia, Republic of Croatia, Montenegro and the Presiding of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the presence of the EU Enlargement Commissioner,

gathered in Belgrade on 14 October 2011, at a meeting of the Igman Initiative, a network of NGOs from our countries, asserting our commitment to the principles, values and objectives on which the European Union is founded, **state that we:**

Firmly believe that the prospects of EU membership, determined at the 2000 Zagreb Summit, endorsed at the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit and reaffirmed in the 2006 European Council Conclusions, are a driving force and a guarantor of peace and stability in the region of South-Eastern Europe, as well as a generator of increasingly good mutual relations among our countries and citizens;

E**Express** our satisfaction with the fact the Republic of Croatia successfully finalised its accession negotiations and that it is to sign the treaty of accession, as well as our expectations that it will be ratified soon following its signing; that Serbia will be granted a candidate country status and a date of opening accession negotiations by the end of the year; that accession negotiations with Montenegro will be opened and that Bosnia and Herzegovina will submit its candidate status application by the end of the year;

R**emain** firmly committed to resolving open issues through dialogue and negotiations in the spirit of neighbourly relations and on the basis of international law;

C**onfirm again** that we are determined that each of our countries acts in mutual relations in a manner as to assist others in meeting all necessary requirements for full membership of the EU;

B**elieve that the principle** of solidarity and mutual support is a fundamental principle on which the four countries wish to build their common European future;

A**gree** that the process of reconciliation that is underway has to continue. With respect to that, a close cooperation of the judiciaries of our countries is decisive, not only in prosecuting and punishing for war crimes, but for all forms of organised crime jeopardising the welfare of our citizens;

T**o that end**, we particularly appreciate the role of the civil society, that is, we support participative democracy fostering and greater openness of political and administrative structures with an aim of fighting corruption as one of their tasks;



Are aware of a deep economic crisis in Europe and in the world and we agree that economic openness to each other and elimination of all forms of constraints in economic cooperation make all of us together and each of our countries individually more resistant to the crisis and readier for the recovery of our economies;

Jointly invite the European Union and all its member states not to oversee, in spite of the challenges caused by the crisis, the importance of the enlargement process as an instrument in stabilisation of peace among the countries and the peoples in our region and as the most efficient instrument in internal building up of democratic systems and legal order in each of our countries.

We are willing to, both bilaterally and through the existing multilateral meetings, including those of the Igman Initiative, continue our talks on the future of the region and partnership of our countries aimed at the European future of the region in the spirit of a constructive dialogue.

President of the RS

The Presiding of
the B-H Presidium

President of MNE

President of the RC



IGMAN INITIATIVE, AN EXCEPTIONAL PARTNER IN THE PROCESS OF REGIONAL RECONCILIATION

During the last few days, EU Enlargement Commission made a report on the strategy of EU Enlargement and respective challenges in this process between 2011 and 2012. The report was delivered to the EU Parliament and to the Council of Europe. Main segments standing in support of the accession process were put under scrutiny and unresolved issues between West Balkan states which obstruct reform processes required for getting the green light for becoming an EU candidate country were identified.

EU Commission also conducted a special analysis of the role of non-governmental organizations and the civil society in the process of reconciliation between the states, ie. citizens of the West Balkan region. Within this analysis, EU Commission pointed out the important and successful role of three NGO and civil society networks. Those are: Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Truth and Reconciliation, RECOM Commission and Igman Initiative network of non-governmental and civil society organizations. EU Commission's last year report on Serbia's progress on the path to EU accession also included acclamation of Igman Initiative's role in the given process. Appearance of Boris Tadic, President of the Republic of Serbia, at the ceremonious session of Igman Initiative held on May 29th 2010 in honor of the past decade of its existence, was observed by the EU Commission as a positive act.



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