Former Yugoslavia: prospects for developping regional cooperation

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The committee unanimously adopted the report by Mr Daniel COHN-BENDIT (V, D), marking its support of a "Conference for peace, democracy, sustainable development and stability in south-eastern Europe". This conference, to be convened within two years under the aegis of the EU, should help to bring stability to the region, provided that certain conditions are in place. The rapporteur's strategy seeks to combat secessionist trends and convince former warring factions to cooperate, the role of the EU being to encourage them to do so. For example, efforts need to be made to stop regional cooperation between "zones of Bosnia-Herzegovina and neighbouring states" in areas which come within the jurisdiction of the sovereign state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This cooperation should engulf not only the countries of former Yugoslavia and Albania but all the border states in the region. Creating this type of multilateral framework, which is essential to political dialogue, would result in a "regional stability pact for peace and development". This could be achieved if the EU took large-scale measures in keeping with the challenge facing it and the ambitions which it pursued. It should: - within the framework of a UNO or OSCE mandate, grant itself "autonomous peace-keeping capacities" which would help it to programme specific actions in the area of the CFSP. One means of achieving this would be to create a "European military and civilian peace corps"; - appoint a special emissary to the region in charge of coordinating its efforts with those of other intervening parties; - draw up, in parallel to the Conference, an "ambitious and long-term" programme in order to work towards stability through concerted, multilateral economic intervention; - use its budgetary resources to promote regional projects, such as a single telephone and telecommunications network for the whole of Bosnia or a rail/road link from Sarajevo to Zagreb via Banja Luka and from Sarajevo to Dubrovnik via Mostar etc.; - create a "Foundation for democracy" to support the implementation of social, democratic, cultural and civil structures, especially by support for the independent media, training for journalists and support from NGOs. Finally, the committee proposed making a symbolic gesture towards the young people of Bosnia by organizing a pop music festival in Bosnia during the summer of 1998. Reconciliation will in fact be brought about by the young people who will build the future society, which is why young people of all ethnic origins in south-eastern Europe need to be brought together.