Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1146 (1998)[1]

Recent developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and their implications for the Balkan region

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The deteriorating political situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) risks having serious implications for the stability of the Balkan region. All of the neighbouring states of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are members of the Council of Europe, with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has requested such membership.

2. The Assembly deplores the failure by the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to implement the democratic reforms recommended by Mr Felipe González, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, and endorsed by the Assembly

3. The Assembly notes with concern the progress made by political extremists in the recent parliamentary and presidential elections in Serbia. It is also concerned about the findings of international observers who described the re-run presidential elections in Serbia in December 1997 as flawed.

4. The Assembly welcomes the agreement between Montenegrin President Djukanovic and his predecessor Mr Bulatovic to hold parliamentary elections in May 1998, as a means to resolve the political crisis in Montenegro which followed Mr Bulatovic's and the Serbian authorities' refusal to respect the outcome of the recent presidential elections.

5. The Assembly considers that only the immediate introduction of democratic constitutional and legislative reforms, guaranteeing, in particular, the freedom of the press, the independence of the judiciary and the protection of human rights and rights of minorities, as well as a fair and clear democratic attitude shown by the political leadership, will enable the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to rejoin the European family. Such reforms are also the only way to prevent extremists from dominating the political scene.

6. The Assembly condemns the continued repression of the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo, which has led to the appearance of armed resistance in Kosovo. While supporting the principle of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's territorial integrity, it calls for the instant and full restoration of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the ethnic Albanian population. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should also enable the international community to establish a permanent presence in Kosovo and implement the agreement on education concluded between Mr Milosevic, then president of Serbia and Mr Rugova, leader of the Albanian community in Kosovo.

7. The Assembly expects the political representatives of the Albanian community in Kosovo immediately and unconditionally to condemn and refrain from the use of violence as a means to resolve the conflict with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

8. It calls on Albania to use its influence on the Albanian community in Kosovo to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict, to continue its dialogue with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to prevent smuggling of weapons looted during the events in Albania in early 1997.

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1. Assembly debate on 28 January 1998 (4th Sitting) (see Doc. 7986, report of the Committee on Political Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Bársony). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28 January 1998 (4th Sitting).

9. The Assembly is ready to assist in contacts between representatives of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Albanian community in Kosovo. The Council of Europe has considerable expertise in the relevant areas, such as human rights, minority rights and education, which it could put at the disposal of the parties.

10. The Assembly notes with concern that the tensions between the ethnic Albanian minority and the rest of the population in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" led to violent incidents in July last year. It also calls on the Albanian minority to refrain from the use of violence and to respect the law. It calls on the authorities to respond positively to the legitimate demands of the Albanian community, on the basis of relevant Council of Europe instruments and principles. It welcomes recent improvements in relations with Albania.

11. The Assembly welcomes the improvements in relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia. It calls on the Croatian authorities to improve legislative, administrative, material and security conditions for a voluntary return of Croatian Serb refugees currently on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

12. The Assembly considers that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has so far failed to comply fully with its obligations under the Dayton Peace Agreement. It expects the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to use its influence on the Bosnian Serb leadership to ensure their full co-operation in the peace process, to bring the agreement on special parallel relations with the Republika Srpska in line with the Dayton Peace agreement, and to arrest immediately and hand over to justice all persons indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia who are on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

13. The Assembly supports the efforts for an agreement on regional arms control, and welcomes the decision by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to appoint a special representative to help organise and conduct negotiations, as foreseen by Article V of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

14. The Assembly welcomes and supports recent initiatives for multilateral regional contacts, such as the recent Balkan Summit, held in Crete, as well as the Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of South-Eastern Countries, held in Athens, and recent meetings of the South-East European Co-operative Initiative and the Central European Initiative. It considers that a regular and constructive dialogue between the countries concerned is essential in the search for durable solutions to all regional problems. In this context, the Assembly welcomes also the appointment of a co-ordinator for the process of stability and good neighbourliness in south-eastern Europe (the Royaumont process).

15. The Assembly calls on the European Union, the United States, and other states concerned to agree on a common approach concerning the application of the "outer wall" of sanctions and the use of economic incentives such as preferential trade regimes. Positive steps by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should be rewarded by economic assistance, while sanctions should be kept in place, or increased, in case of persistent failure to comply with the demands of the international community.

16. The Assembly calls on the governments of Council of Europe member states in the region to respect the obligations and commitments resulting from their membership. An increased use should be made of the Organisation as a political forum for discussions on stability and co-operation in the Balkan region.

17. The Assembly considers that the solving of the question of succession will contribute significantly to a lasting peace, security and the settlement of relations among the states formed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Referring to the findings of the Badinter Commission, the Assembly emphasises that all five states are equal successors to the disintegrated Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.