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Reconciliation and political dialogue between the countries of the former Yugoslavia

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Pietro MARCENARO and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The conflict which in the 1990s ravaged the territory of the former Yugoslavia and provoked its dissolution has left deep scars which still have not healed. In spite of the democratic character of their institutions, their common membership in the Council of Europe and the OSCE and their aspirations towards EU membership, the legacy of the war still hampers the relations between the states issued from the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.

At judicial level, the process of judging responsibilities for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed during the conflict continues through the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which has so far indicted 161 individuals, two of whom – Goran Hadžić and Ratko Mladić – are still at large. In addition, both Bosnia and most recently Croatia have sought legal action against Serbia before the International Court of Justice on the grounds of genocide, with Serbia now declaring that it will lodge a similar application against Croatia.

It is certainly important that justice takes its course. However, alongside the work of the courts there should be a political process, undertaken in the first place by the leadership and the political forces of the countries concerned and intended to help the public understand the past, come to terms with it and move on. Unfortunately, public statements by high-ranking state officials of acceptance or apology for the atrocities committed during the conflict are still a rare occurrence. This is a missed opportunity for the facilitation of inter-ethnic dialogue within a given country and for the creation of sound foundations for reconciliation and genuine political dialogue between neighbouring countries.

In a sense, it is paradoxical that, while most states issued from the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia make progress towards further European Union integration and entertain closer dialogue with Brussels, their bilateral relations seem to deteriorate, especially judging by the tone of certain public statements and the discourse held by nationalist politicians.

The Assembly should therefore consider the state of bilateral relations between the countries issued from the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and underline the positive actions undertaken at a political level to overcome the legacy of the past and foster reconciliation with their neighbours. In the light of this analysis, the Assembly should make recommendations aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing dialogue and co-operation between the countries concerned, consistent with the Statute of the Council of Europe and the values which lie behind it and for the benefit of regional stability.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

MARCENARO Pietro, Italy, SOC
AUSTIN John, United Kingdom
BRANDE Luc, Van den, Belgium, EPP/CD
CHITI Vannino, Italy, SOC
EÖRSI Mátyás, Hungary, ALDE
EVANS Nigel, United Kingdom
FASSINO Piero, Italy, SOC
GARDETTO Jean-Charles, Monaco, EPP/CD
GIARETTA Paolo, Italy, ALDE
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
HANCOCK Mike, United Kingdom, ALDE
ISLAMI Kastriot, Albania, SOC
IWIŃSKI Tadeusz, Poland, SOC
KOSACHEV Konstantin, Russian Federation, EDG
LINDBLAD Göran, Sweden, EPP/CD
NÉMETH Zsolt, Hungary
OJULAND Kristiina, Estonia
POURGOURIDES Christos, Cyprus, EPP/CD
RIGONI Andrea, Italy, ALDE
SYDOW Björn, von, Sweden, SOC
SZABÓ Zoltán, Hungary
VITALI Luigi, Italy, EPP/CD
VOLONTÈ Luca, Italy, EPP/CD
WILSHIRE David, United Kingdom, EDG

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group