



CFSP

and Serbian Accession
to the European Union

ISAC'S CFSP POLICY OPINION

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On relations between Europe/European Union and the United States

The positive thing about the USA President's administration is that it is in favor of strong Europe, not of the weak Europe, which hasn't always been the case. And I think that this should not be taken as given, we always have to work on it, but for the present time, I think this is obviously the position of the Obama administration. Beyond that, the Americans have difficulties to understand functioning of the EU, you find few people, if any, in the Congress, who understand it, and that is what they have in common with the Russians. Only that Russians now have discovered that the EU has a need to be taken seriously. They take the action against the EU and their major conflict is about the values which we define in the Charter of Paris and in the OSCE. And therefore there is a debate at this time in Germany, and I think that the active elite is united on it across party lines – not everybody in Germany – but the active people are united on it that we might possibly be in a new phase of our relationship with Russia.

On relations with Russia

I will again be very blunt, I have all my life been fighting for a good relationship with Russia, I was in favor of détente, I was in German-Russian and German-Soviet Parliamentary group, I've been more than 50 times in my life in Soviet Union and later in Russia. And after 1989, we hoped that we could have ever closer relationship between the EU and Russia, and the basis for it was the Charter of Paris, which has a commitment to secure boundaries, guarantee boundaries, but also clear commitment to the rule of law and democracy. And Russia has signed it and the Soviet

Union has signed it, so it's not a paper imposed on them. And there is an element of principle being involved, because if we allow bigger powers to change boundaries by force in Europe, we are again back in a total different situation. And again there is a second element to it, which we always communicate to Russians – when the time is over that Americans and Russians, or Americans, Russians, French and Germans together can in a concert of powers decide about the future and destiny of smaller nations, or about nations in between Germany and Russia. We will not do that, because then we will recreate the old problems. And in that sense, I'm not neutral, I'm committed to the Minsk agreement. And later on our dealings with Russia are based on principles and therefore if Russia is living up defining its policy against these values, they have not formally retrieved from those papers, but they acted against them. If they are acting against those papers, they set a totally different basis for our relationship with Russia.

So the real debate, which you need, which we also need in Germany, is on which principles we will base our relationship with Russia. And our principles are rule of law, respect of boundaries and respect of smaller nations, not only of bigger nations, not only big powers game.

On the case with Germany, its foreign policy in the light of European politics and CFSP

The German debate is in a certain way becoming more European than many people expected after the German reunification. Many people expected us to become less European. Over the years the EU became a re important foreign policy theatre. It has changed our culture. When you now define our views and national interest very often we consult with our European partners. While you don't have majority views, majority decisions in the EU, you have convergence of the debate and we are mutually influencing one another by process and by in substance. We do not only avoid conflicts among ourselves, but purpose is that we project stability to the outside.

For example, when our Prime Minister was again nominated for minister, what did he do? He first opened up to 10-20 conferences which included people from inside Germany, but also our neighboring countries and from the US, and asked "What do you think is wrong in German foreign policy?". This was not seen by us as the element of weakness and it does not mean that we don't have our own ideas – it simply means that we are, as Germans, too small to implement our national aspirations in a national way. We can only implement it if we pull our sovereignty, and we get more influence if we stick together, and we harmonize our views. It's impossible to think that we can do it alone.

On the future of the CFSP and CSDP and possibilities of having the European Army one day

The European Army, before it will happen, it will be decades. Does it mean that it's irrelevant for now? No, it is not, because when you have that in mind, and I mean before we were here where we are in the EU now, it took 50 years. So in terms of Common Defense policy, a decade is a short period. And therefore we are on our way to learn how to project stability abroad. And we start from different narratives. We start from conflicting national identities, but we develop a common purpose. And therefore the European Army idea is the idea that you say if we, for example what we are doing now with the Dutch and we'll do with the Poles, that we have bi-national and multinational formations, means that in a situation of conflict, the Poles and the Dutch have to rely upon whatever the German constitution is saying, that in practical way we will not leave them all alone. So we have to rely on them, and they have to rely on us, and therefore our cooperation can be more intense than it would otherwise be. And it means also that our debate about specific missions of our troops can no longer be a national debate.

On the role and place of Serbia in this new world order that is arising

There is a problem in how you communicate to the Serbian audience. The problem is not whether you want a good relationship with Russia, the problem is not seriously whether you are in favor of sanctions or not, because there can be different argumentation against sanctions, but on which principles and values is your relationship with Russia based on. If it's based on the principles of the Charter of Paris, you will have sooner or later problems with their policy. If it's based and have smaller and more limited problems with the EU, if you think you can be neutral, in terms of these values, and serve both sides, you will be in between, which is not a very comfortable position to be in. It's non-alignment in a negative sense, because then you have hostile reactions on both sides.

And I think that this positive vision, not that the EU wants something from you, you have to decide what you Serbs want, which role do you want to play in Europe. Do you want hostile neighbors as we had after the Second World War, or do you want to have friendly neighbors like we are having. You can't change your geography. I think this European debate is very much about what Serbia wants to be. It's about your identity, your aspirations, your elements of hope and your future visions. If you don't develop that, no tactical agreement will help.