

A number of lessons can be drawn from the management of the FYROM crisis. To begin with, the speed with which the international community acted in FYROM helped to avoid a physical separation, which today makes the cohabitation of Albanian Macedonians and Slavic Macedonians more acceptable to both communities.

The FYROM example also shows that if two conditions are met, 1) that minority groups have access to power in a democratic setting and 2) enjoy a form of autonomy, they find ways other than armed violence to voice their grievances, and extremism has less appeal.

#### *Importance of getting all regional players to participate*

The participation of Yugoslavia and all the other countries of the region has been a necessary condition for the effective operation of the regional stability pact. In the Caucasus, the task of including all of the territorial entities in a common pact will be more difficult than for the SPSEE because of the secessionist republics that lack international recognition. A pact for the South Caucasus has to find a way of getting all the players to participate and thus avoid gaping holes in the map of the pact while placating the sensitivities of the original states.

Beyond mere representation for the various regional players, it is essential that they have a real grasp of the process involved and that pact activities take place in the region itself. Indeed, SPSEE's activities show that the greater the involvement of regional countries – for example, when they organize their own activities under the SPSEE or initiate projects that express their own concerns – the more meaningful the outcomes will be.

#### *Need for a strong incentive*

Without trying to minimize the real impact many SPSEE projects have had, it does seem that the prospect of EU membership and the necessity of regional cooperation as a prerequisite for this membership are the main factors explaining the new relationships between SEE states.

With the CSP project, this key factor is the creation of an SCC that involves a promise of major economic benefits from oil development. The promise of a fairer division of this resource may give additional leverage for encouraging groups to stabilize their relations and agree on a common future.

There is no certainty, however, that a future SCC is an attractive enough incentive to “force” the protagonists to set their disagreements aside. In the case that interests us here, the CSP is recommending something that was immediately rejected for SEE on political grounds. Since the future SCC is the cornerstone of the project developed by the CEPS, the CSP's chances of success in its current form seem fairly poor.