

THE EU AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AFTER DAYTON: A Canadian Perspective

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The search for finding the best way for the "europeanization" of the SEE countries continues to be an issue that generates much heated debate both inside the EU as well as in the countries concerned. There is little doubt that whatever strategy the EU chooses to pursue in the region, sceptics will always be able to present powerful counter-arguments. The question of conditionality is a central feature of this debate. Should the EU pursue a pragmatic, 'high politics' driven strategy in the region at the expense of its conditionality principle, or should the two not be seen as mutually exclusive? Does positive engagement strengthen the prospects of reform, or is punishment and isolation the only way to overthrow repressive regimes? Is the selective application of conditionality better than no conditionality at all? None of these dilemmas have easy answers and, along with the region's complex and changing political, economic and security environment, should all be taken into consideration whenever an assessment of EU's strategy is attempted.

For both the Greek government and the people, one of the keys to a successful "europeanization" process of SEE countries has been EU's long-term and committed planning to the region. In light of the 2002 Copenhagen decision on enlargement and the progress made up to this day in the region but also its fragile nature, the Greek Presidency has pledged to keep the issue of SEE high on EU's agenda ensuring that the governments and peoples in the area of the European Union's support for their European vocation as potential candidates for membership. The priorities, which the Greek Presidency has set, are:

- (1) To deploy all efforts for further consolidation of peace, stability, democratic development, the strengthening of human and minority rights and regional co-operation.
- (2) To carry forward the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) and prepare it for the new environment after enlargement.