

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section considers criteria upon which progress in implementing the programme can be judged. Consideration also needs to be given to appropriate measures to ensure the programme's implementation, including constant monitoring and pressure. The experience so far has been that progress in reaching an agreed programme has only been made under sustained international pressure on Croatia, Radic's denials in the Sabor notwithstanding. The passing of the programme was itself encouraging, and a beginning has been made in implementing it. However, the problems highlighted in this report will need to be addressed as part of a continuous monitoring process. The Croatian authorities, both at the central and at the local level, need to be constantly aware that their performance in implementing the programme is under scrutiny. There must be no ebb and flow in international interest in this issue -- international attention needs to be vigilant and constant.

The broad consensus in Croatia behind the desire to integrate into European structures gives the international community leverage in seeking to ensure behaviour which accords with that which is expected of a European state. Pressure and the credible threat of sanctions against Croatia can be effective in bringing results.

While the pressure needs to be maintained, Croatian officials have stressed that constant pressure, without the appearance of reward for compliance with international demands, sends an unfortunate message, which risks resulting in despair of ever satisfying the international community, and still greater defiance. In one sense, it could be argued that it would be inappropriate to reward implementation of measures to which Croatia was already committed. Nevertheless, it would be politically wise to demonstrate that fulfilment of Croatia's obligations will bring greater international acceptance. There should thus, where appropriate, be a clear linkage between performance in complying with particular demands and specific international measures to secure that compliance. Thus it can be clearly demonstrated to Croatia's leaders and to the wider Croatian public that international pressure is not about unfair victimisation of Croatia (as it has often been presented in much of the Croatian media), and that it can be lifted when Croatia meets specific demands.

Given that Croatia's suspension from the European Union's PHARE programme followed the Croatian military actions against the formerly Serb-controlled territories, it would be appropriate to link the reinstatement of the PHARE programme directly with progress in implementing the refugee return programme. In his meeting with Granic in late June 1998, the British Foreign Secretary (representing the European Union, of which Britain held the presidency at the time) stressed progress in implementing the programme as a precondition for the reinstatement of PHARE.⁵⁶ As discussed above, Croatian officials are not expecting an early inclusion in the PHARE programme. With the above in mind, ICG recommends the following:

A. Rigorous Monitoring

- Any comments by officials responsible for the programme's implementation which might in any way suggest a lack of will to see it through should be met with an immediate international response, such as that which Guldemann gave in July

⁵⁶ *Jutarnji list*, 25 June 1998.