

Meanwhile, the civil war in Yugoslavia has provoked Western governments to cancel promised assistance.

Although Western assistance through the G-24 will envelope every one of the former communist party states, including Albania by 1992,¹² the differential pace of reforms and thus the staggered timing of assistance has created a sharp disparity between those first off-the-mark (Poland and Hungary) and the others. As Appendix IV reveals, by early 1991, Poland had received 34 percent of the total G-24 assistance actually allocated and Hungary another 26 percent. The other former Comecon countries received minuscule shares: Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (8 percent), Romania (5 percent), and Bulgaria (5 percent). The CSFR may be expected to catch up rapidly now that negotiations with the IMF and the EC have put that country in line for macroeconomic lending and special association status with the European Economic Community. As well, the large-scale Czech privatization programme has attracted some major buy-ins by Western multinational corporations.

A striking disparity will likely remain between Europe's northern and southern tiers as most Western officials simply dismiss the possibility for Bulgaria and especially Romania to make a fully democratic transition. This attitude raises the worrisome question of history repeating itself. The cultural/religious affinity and geopolitical self-interest which bonds Western Europe to the three northernmost countries could, if aid disparities persist, make stagnation and alienation in the Balkans a self-fulfilling prophecy.

12 In July 1991, EC Vice-President Andriessen asked the Council of Ministers to consider including Albania in the G-24 process, after the Brussels Network of all 24 officials had so recommended. EC, Directorate General for External Relations, G-24 Coordination Unit, *G-24 Update* no. 5 (6 August 1991). The USSR has never been included in the G-24 coordinated assistance programme, although both the G-7 and the EC twelve try to reach consensus on whether and how to assist the USSR and/or the republics. The three Baltic states were brought into the G-24 assistance programme in September 1991.