

## Seminar

### “2008 – Challenges and perspectives for European International Policy”

17 – 20 April, 2008

Hotel „Strimon“, Kyustendil

---

## SUMMARY

The seminar “2008 – Challenges and perspectives for European International Policy” was jointly organized by the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Bulgarian office of KAS and the Media Development Center Sofia. 27 journalists participated in the seminar, mainly editors in chief and correspondents from the international departments of almost all relevant print and electronic media in Sofia, Kyustendil, Plovdiv and Blagoevgrad. The selection of the journalists was made according to the topic of the seminar as well as the need to define clearly a target group to be made familiar with the topic. The venue was chosen on the basis of its facilities as well as in view of its geographical position on the crossroad between Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo.

The following topics were discussed at the meeting:

- Priorities and challenges ahead of Bulgarian foreign policy as part of the Common European Foreign Policy with regard to the region of South East Europe (Kosovo as well as the countries negotiating about a full membership in the EU)
- Priorities and challenges ahead of German/ European foreign policy: in search of the right balance (Russia, NATO, the new members of the EU, Kosovo)
- NATO priorities after the Bucharest summit and its relevance for the South East Europe
- Challenges ahead of the European foreign policy in view of NATO, USA, Russia and the Balkans
- Kosovo – challenges and perspectives – a journalistic view

Dr. Andreas von Below, chairman of the KAS Sofia, Dr. Dirk Förger, head of the Media Program for South East Europe of the KAS, Yana Pelovska from the Media Development Center

and Peter Paunov, mayor of Kyustendil, delivered welcoming addresses. Bulgarian and German experts, who were invited by the Media Development Center and the KAS, held also lectures.

The first lecture was „Priorities and challenges ahead of Bulgarian foreign policy as part of the Common European Foreign Policy with regard to the region of South East Europe (Kosovo as well as the countries negotiating about a full membership in the EU) being held by Bisserka Benisheva from the European Union directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mrs. Benisheva talked about the current status of the Western Balkans countries with regard to their European policy, namely Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She also touched on the measures being taken by the European Union in order to improve the relationships between them and the EU such as: 4 billion EUR planned to cover the period 2007 – 2011, liberalization of the visa regime, increasing the amount of scholarships for students from the Western Balkans as well as the creation of a regional school for public administration in Montenegro. As was pointed out, regional cooperation is not an alternative to European integration, in fact a part of it. Another tendency is the development of networks in the region which will also contribute to a closer integration of the participating countries.

The questions which were posed in the ensuing discussion relied to the modalities of the recognition of the independence of Kosovo, the Kosovo view on the Serbian-European relationship, the Bulgarian support for Macedonian EU membership and how it intends to handle the negative stance towards Bulgaria in Macedonian media. Two things ensued which are thought to lead to a possible change of the situation: Mr. Falenski said that he would bring up the question of Bulgarian-Macedonian relationships in the Bundestag, and Mrs. Benisheva admitted that the Foreign Ministry has difficulties in handling the issue and would work on it.

The second topic was the lecture of Hans-Joachim Falenski, foreign policy adviser of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German parliament, about “Priorities and challenges ahead of German/ European foreign policy: in search of the right balance (Russia, NATO, the new members of the EU, Kosovo).” The main points of the lecture were:

- Fundamentals of German foreign policy
- Russia and its relationships with the EU
- Common foreign energy policy of the EU
- Kosovo
- Mediterranean Union – Barcelona Process
- EU enlargement

- Turkey and its European prospective
- NATO and the Bucharest summit in April 2008

As far as Russia was concerned, Mr. Falenski said that the EU member states do not have a common Russia policy, the EU has stipulated more conditions concerning the energy charter to Russia than vice versa, the uncertainty whom Europe will be dealing with, i. e. Medvedev or Putin as well the hope in Europe that Russia will become a strong economic partner because only in this way it will be a reliable political partner. As far as the energy security is concerned Mr. Falenski emphasized following basic points:

1. The need to develop a strategy of securing energy supplies
2. Bilateral agreements between one or more EU countries on the one hand and Russia on the other are not in the interests of the EU
3. A culture of energy solidarity within the EU is needed.
4. Common energy reserves standards are needed.
5. Need for energy diversification
6. A code of conduct of the member states is needed.
7. Transit countries seen as problematic must be stabilized the bigger part of the energy supplies coming from them.
8. A policy of energy efficiency is needed.
9. A strategy guaranteeing the infrastructural security is to be developed.
10. Countries which develop nuclear industry should be supported by the way of uranium supplies as well as systems of depleting it.

About the topic of the Mediterranean union – the Barcelona process Mr. Falenski referred to factors such as terrorism, climate changes as well as the security of energy supplies.

The morning session of the second day of the conference was dedicated to the topic of the NATO priorities after the Bucharest summit and its implications for South East Europe which was presented by Mr. Avgustina Tsvetkova, president of the Euro-Atlantic Education Initiative. Mrs. Tsvetkova analyzed the results of the NATO summit and the errors of Bulgarian foreign policy as well as the loss of profits after the declaration of the official Bulgarian position and the Bulgarian-Macedonian relationships. It was pointed out that within NATO, new global partners (not only the “partnership for peace” participants) as well as the NATO transformation are under discussion. As was said, Romania is much more active as far as Black Sea initiatives are concerned and it has already launched four international projects in that area.

Mr. Simeon Vassilev, director of the Information programme of Balkan Bulgarian Television (BBT) held a lecture entitled „Challenges ahead of the European foreign policy in view of NATO, USA, Russia and the Balkans.” Mr. Vassilev spoke about additional factors for European foreign policy such as the oncoming elections in the USA, current events in China and Tibet as well as the missile defence. His lecture was considered a part of the global approach analysis of the foreign policy strategy of the EU.

The third topic, „Kosovo – challenges and perspectives – a journalistic view” was presented by Mr. Boyko Vassilev from the Bulgarian National Television. Mr. Vassilev made a brief historical and political overview as the background of the recent declaration of independence resp. the (denial of) recognition by different states. He also referred to the current situation of the state of Kosovo and expressed his concerns about possible future conflicts on South Serbia and Macedonia.

The relevance of the conference and the discussions was also shown by its wide media coverage from which we give just some examples.

| <b>№</b> | <b>Media</b>                                       | <b>data</b>      | <b>hour</b>      | <b>kind of coverage</b>         |
|----------|--|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1.       | Bulgarian News Agency /BTA/                        | 16th April, 2008 |                  | short information               |
| 2.       | Bulgarian National Radio,<br>Christo-Botev-Channel | 18th April, 2008 | 9.00–11.00<br>am | extended<br>information         |
| 3.       | Colour TV, Kyustendil                              | 18th April, 2008 | 7.30 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 4.       | TV SAT West, Kyustendil                            | 18th April       | 7.30 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 5.       | Colour TV, Kyustendil                              | 18th April       | 8.00 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 6.       | TV SAT West, Kyustendil                            | 18th April       | 10.00 pm         | coverage                        |
| 7.       | Colour TV, Kyustendil                              | 19th April       | 7.30 am          | coverage                        |
| 8.       | Evrokom TV, Plovdiv                                | 19th April       | 7.30 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 9.       | Colour TV, Kyustendil                              | 19th April       | 7.30 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 10.      | TV SAT West, Kyustendil                            | 19th April       | 7.30 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 11.      | Colour TV, Kyustendil                              | 19th April       | 8.00 pm          | coverage in the<br>central news |
| 12.      | TV SAT West, Kyustendil                            | 19th April       | 10.00 pm         | coverage                        |

|     |   |            |               |                                   |
|-----|---|------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13. | Evrokom TV, Plovdiv                             | 19th April | 10.30 pm      | coverage in the central news      |
| 14. | Colour TV, Kyustendil                           | 20th April | 7.30 am       | coverage                          |
| 15. | Radio Blagoevgrad                               | 21th April | 11.30 am      | coverage and extended information |
| 16. | Bulgarian National Radio, Christo-Botev-Channel | 25th April | 9.00–11.00 am | interview with Mr. Falenski       |
| 17. | Evrokom TV, Plovdiv                             | 26th April | 7.30 pm       | interview with Mr. Dr. Förger     |
| 18. | newspaper Nabliudatel, Kyustendil               | 28th April |               | extended information              |