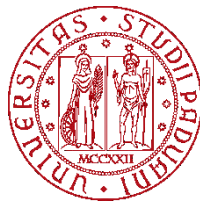


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

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**Master's degree in
European and Global Studies**



The European Parliament and Yugoslavia from the 1970s to the
Wars of Dissolution: Human Rights, Democracy, Integration

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the origin and development of the European Parliament's policy towards Yugoslavia, from the 1970s until the break-up of the Yugoslav federation in the early 1990s. It is a systemic historical study, based on archival documents from the Historical Archives of the European Union (Florence). Through a European Parliament-centered approach, it explores the process of EC/EU external policy-making and institutional response to the Yugoslav question and the wars of dissolution. Looking at the active role of the European Parliament (EP) in EC/EU external affairs, through its incremental increase in powers, especially in the sphere of human rights and democracy, as well as its proactive role in European integration, the analysis concludes that the EP was a significant actor in influencing and shaping EC-Yugoslavia relations in multiple policy areas, including human rights, democratization, and integration. Besides, the thesis argues that the Parliament not only influenced policy outcomes but also was a crucial factor in maintaining and strengthening the bilateral relations over times of crisis and instability emerging from the Yugoslav internal political, economic, and social developments, which directly affected the security and stability of the Balkan region.

Key words: European Parliament, Yugoslavia, Human rights, Democracy, European integration

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
DR Group	Democratic Right Group
EC	European Community
ECMM	European Community Monitoring Mission
ECU	European Currency Unit
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
EP	European Parliament
EP REX	EP Committee on External Economic Relations
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
HAEU	Historical Archives of the European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDR Group	Liberal Democratic Reformist Group
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring Economies
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States
WEU	Western European Union

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the external policy of the European Parliament (EP) towards the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) from the 1970s to the wars of dissolution (1991-1995) with a focus of human rights, democracy and European integration. It examines the origin and evolution of the EP-Yugoslav relationship within the broader context of the Cold War and the European integration process. The focal viewpoint is the perspective of the European Parliament, considering political aspects and motivations for the initiation of contacts and direct links with Yugoslavia as well as the factors influencing or constraining its development.

Besides the general framework of development of the EP's Yugoslav policy, the thesis focuses on specific topics related to the main historical turning points, which have influenced the debate and decision-making in the Parliament in terms of external policy formulation. Principally, it addresses the following questions: What were the political considerations and motivations for the European Parliament to establish direct relations with Yugoslavia and the format and content of these links? What was the role of the Parliament in shaping foreign policy in the face of adverse situation in Yugoslavia, especially the deterioration of human rights in Kosovo, and how did the Parliament incorporate this dimension as an important element in bilateral relations? What were the predicaments of the Parliament amid Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s, between political interests and security, and safeguarding human rights and democracy? What was the reason behind the hesitant and indecisive political action of the Parliament in terms of European integration of the newly formed Republics of Slovenia and Croatia? What was the contribution of the Parliament in the search of peaceful solution to the Bosnian conflict, its responsibility in ending the war and restoring stability in the Balkan region?

These particular topics have not been studied from a historical perspective before; therefore, this thesis will offer a first historiographical contribution to the topic and conclude that the European Parliament in terms of its relation with Yugoslavia was actively engaged in several fields, which will be considered in this thesis. They include: interparliamentary dialogue; parliamentary missions; shaping EC foreign and security policy; political influence on

Council's decisions; initiatives aimed at promotion of human rights and democracy; European integration; conflict management.

This thesis is developed within the framework of four historiographical branches of studies in the existing literature, which intersect with the topic and have influenced the context in which this thesis unfolds.

The first historical background in which the EP policy towards Yugoslavia originated and developed, concerns relations between the EEC and Yugoslavia during the Cold War. Scholars have studied the special role of Yugoslavia as an economic partner of the Community during the 1970s¹, while only a few have considered the political dimension underlining this relation, for instance Tsakaloyannis looked at the economic aspects of the EEC-Yugoslav relations, predominantly in trade and its intersection with politics.² Obadić took a different perspective and studied Yugoslavia's Cold War foreign policy, and the origin and evolution of its relations with the EEC, starting from the 1960s until the signing of the EEC-Yugoslavia Cooperation Agreement in 1980, which centered around economic and trade interests, but as he underlined were relevant for ensuring the political stability of Yugoslavia.³ Zaccaria studied the relations between the European Community and Yugoslavia prior to its dissolution and argued that despite their economic nature, there was a political rationale of maintaining stability in Europe and the Balkans, and preventing expansion of Soviet influence in the region, which was linked to the broader context of confrontation during the Cold War.⁴ His work is concentrated on EEC as a single actor in its interactions with Yugoslavia, considering the role of the European Commission in facilitating the EC-Yugoslav relation, the debate in the Council and the national preferences of major

¹ See Patrick F.R. Artisien and Stephen Holt., "Yugoslavia and the EEC in the 1970s", *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol.18, n.4, 1980, pp.355-369. Stephen Holt and Ken Stapleton, "Yugoslavia and the European Community 1958- 1970", *Journal of Common Market Studies* n.1, 1971, pp. 47-57.

² Panos Tsakaloyannis, "The Politics and Economics of EEC-Yugoslav Relations", *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 5, n.1, 1981, pp. 29-52.

³ Ivan Obadić, "A troubled relationship: Yugoslavia and the European Economic Community in détente", *European review of history*, Vol. 21, n. 2, 2014, pp. 329-348.

⁴ Benedetto Zaccaria, *The EEC's Yugoslav Policy in Cold War Europe (1968-1980)*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

EEC Member States and Yugoslavia itself. However, he does not consider the positions of the European Parliament, as a separate institutional voice in the overall policy.

Beyond the context of the Cold War, relations between the two parties take upon the involvement of the European diplomacy in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s and its violent break-up, as a second branch of historical studies. Lucarelli provided a comprehensive analysis about the response of Western Europe to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, with prime focus on the management of the Yugoslav crisis and wars and two predicaments, the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, and the possibility for military intervention in ex-Yugoslavia.⁵ Ramet made a review and analysis of literature on the causes of the break-up of Yugoslavia and scholarly debates about the humanitarian interventions.⁶ Glaurdić looked at the breakup of Yugoslavia through the prism of West's involvement and response to the crisis, without focusing on European institutions.⁷ Privitera explored the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, consequent dissolution of the federation and the role of the European institutions in terms of European integration of the Balkan region.⁸ Obadić and Zaccaria have analyzed the EC-Yugoslav relation amid post-Tito Yugoslav crisis, from the viewpoint of the European Commission.⁹ None of these studies had addressed the specific role of the European Parliament, an important European institution and its part in the overall EEC policy.

Beyond the Yugoslav scenario, one additional dimension which has been studied, is the role and action of the European Parliament in EEC external relations with third countries and international relations through its incremental increase in power and competence especially

⁵ Sonia Lucarelli, *Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia. A Political Failure in Search of Scholarly Explanation*, (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000).

⁶ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia. Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷ Josip Glaurdić, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, (Yale University Press, 2011).

⁸ Francesco Privitera, "The Relationship Between the Dismemberment of Yugoslavia and European Integration", in: Jeffrey S. Morton, Craig R. Nation, Paul Forage and Stefano Bianchini, (Eds.), *Reflections on the Balkan Wars. Ten Years after the Break Up of Yugoslavia*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 35-54.

⁹ Ivan Obadić and Benedetto Zaccaria, "The European Commission and the Yugoslav Crisis", in: Dujardin V., Bussiere E., Romero F., Schlenker D. and Varsori A. (ed.), *The European Commission (1986-2000)- History and memories of an institution* (Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019), pp. 606-613.

in the sphere of democracy and human rights. Stavridis and Irrera have analyzed the gradually increasing role of the European Parliament in EC external relations and its influence on EU foreign policy as an international actor in different policy areas, including the promotion of human rights in the world.¹⁰ Tulli argued that even prior its direct elections the Parliament undertook many initiatives during the 1970s to strengthen its role and powers in external relations and to exert control over and shape European Political Cooperation, considered only an intergovernmental policy area, thus enhancing its legitimacy and eventually obtaining the right to direct elections.¹¹ Ross analyzed the political reality and activity of the EP in terms of its institutional development and swift gain in power beyond the treaty provisions, before its direct elections and MEP's role in shaping European integration, by formalization of previous informal conventions, i.e. EP various tools and procedures, disputing dominant views regarding EP as rather powerless prior 1979.¹² Similarly, based on archival sources, Kaiser studied the proactive purposeful role of EP in institutional reform of the EC, between its direct elections and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, focusing on Parliament's activism towards constitutional reforms and contribution to the process of constitutionalization of the EU and deepening European integration.¹³ Likewise, Tulli analyzed the increased role of EP in EC external relations and its coordination and reconciliation with the EPC (European Political Cooperation), enhancing its institutional powers and role and push for developing an alternative European foreign policy, primarily by the promotion of human rights. However, he concluded that regardless of the success and its increase in power by the Single European Act, the role of EP in foreign affairs remained limited.¹⁴

¹⁰ Stelios Stavridis and Daniela Irrera, *The European Parliament and its International Relations*, (London: Routledge Ed. 1, 2015).

¹¹ Umberto Tulli, "Challenging Intergovernmentalism and EPC. The European Parliament and its Actions in International Relations (1970-1979)", *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 13, n.2, 2017, pp. 1076-1089.

¹² Mechthild Roos, "Far Beyond the Treaties' Clauses: The European Parliaments' Gain in Power, 1952-1979", *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 13, n.2, 2017, pp. 1055-1075

¹³ Wolfram Kaiser, *Shaping European Union: The European Parliament and Institutional Reform, 1979-1989*, (Brussels, European Parliament Research Service, 2018).

¹⁴ Umberto Tulli, "The European Parliament in EC External Relations, From the Inception of European Political Cooperation to the Single European Act", *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol 27, n.1, 2021, pp. 121-139.

Finally, there are a few historical studies dealing with the interaction between the European Parliament and Yugoslavia in the 1990s, which only address individual research questions related to the Yugoslav crisis and disintegration, and the Community recognition of independence of Slovenia and Croatia. Concerning the EP's role in foreign policy, Viola investigated the EP stance in relation to the Yugoslav crisis in 1990s and argued that there was a general desire for searching a peaceful solution to the crisis, however due to the EP's heterogenic character, there was not a common position of the constituent political groups on the measures to be taken in Yugoslavia.¹⁵ Similarly, Finizio and Morelli, analyzed the contribution of the EP in the formation of EC foreign policy in the face of dissolution of Yugoslavia, and demonstrated that divisions among the parliamentary groups on the questions of self-determination and the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and the federal government as a stabilizing factor, resulted in difficulties in reaching common positions, which in turn contributed to the Community powerlessness in dealing with the Yugoslav crisis.¹⁶ On a different account, Salmon examined the cohesion of European Political Cooperation with reference to the Yugoslav crisis and the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, in particular, concluding that there existed initial consensus over Yugoslavia, and the Community sought to bring peace through the use of diplomatic and economic pressure. Nevertheless, divergence among Member States along with their national interests prevailed, especially with regard to the diplomatic recognition of Slovenia and Croatia.¹⁷ Finally, Sierp analyzed historical documents of the EP's discussions and debates and concluded that the Parliament played an active role in framing debates on democratization of Central and Eastern Europe, however more often the debates centered around non-uniform opinions, and the developments related to the Yugoslav break-up produced disagreements

¹⁵ Donatella M. Viola, *European Foreign Policy and the European Parliament in the 1990s*, (London, Routledge, 2000).

¹⁶ Giovanni Finizio and Umberto Morelli, "The Political Groups of the European Parliament in the Face of Yugoslavia's Disintegration and the Discursive Framing of EU Foreign Policy (1991-1995)", in: Manuela, Ceretta and Barbara, Curli,(ed.), *Discourses and Counter-discourses on Europe From the Enlightenment to the EU*, (Routledge, Ed. 1, 2017), pp. 137-163.

¹⁷ Trevor C. Salmon, "Testing times for European political cooperation: The Gulf and Yugoslavia, 1990-1992", *International Affairs*, Vol 68, n.2, 1992, pp. 233-253.

and a right-left rift, which led to the incapacity of the EP to adopt a common position.¹⁸ Besides addressing specific segments of the interactions between the Parliament and Yugoslavia, highlighting the fluid and distinct character of the Parliament as a political body and its internal dynamics, none of these preliminary studies offers a complete overview of the chronological historical timeline of the EP's policy towards Yugoslavia and its wars of dissolution.

This thesis is therefore the first systematic historical study of the origin and development of the EP-Yugoslavia relationship beginning in the late 1970s and 1980s as formational years until the signing of Dayton Agreement in 1995, providing a detailed analysis of the course of events in the years before the death of Tito; the post-Tito period; the Yugoslav crisis and the Kosovo question in the 1980s; the federal disintegration between 1989 and 1991; the emergence of newly independent Republics between 1991 and 1992; the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995); and the end of the Bosnian war with an internationally negotiated peace agreement in 1995. It revolves around the issues of Cold War order, international relations, economic crisis, human rights, democracy, security, conflict, and European integration; accordingly, it will offer a contribution to the historical studies on these topics and fill in the existing gap in the academic literature.

The analysis is based on a European Parliament-centered approach and relies on primary sources from the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence. This research is based on the European Parliament fonds, which include parliamentary documents from a variety of document types comprising reports, meeting minutes, documents concerning interparliamentary delegation activity, correspondence, letters, notes, parliamentary questions, and proposed resolutions. The research covers a period of more than two decades subdivided among five fonds assembled according to the legislative periods. The first fond contains files of all the legislative activity of the European Parliamentary Assembly before direct elections and refers to the period from 1958 until 1979. It reflects the activity of the

¹⁸ Aline Sierp, *Democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe 1989-90: The European Parliament and the end of the cold war*, (Luxembourg: European Parliament Directorate General for Parliamentary Research Service Publication Office, 2015).

Assembly bodies covering; in particular the parliamentary delegations with Yugoslavia. The second fond is related to the first Parliament legislature referring to the period from 1979, the first European elections by direct universal suffrage to 1984, and contains files of all the legislative activity of the Parliament, which are linked to the activity of the parliamentary committees, parliamentary delegations and management bodies. Considering the research topic, the documents concerning the activity of the parliamentary delegations to Yugoslavia were considered, corresponding to reports, minutes of interparliamentary meetings, correspondence, and notes. The third fond is related to the second Parliament legislature, between 1984 and 1989, which witnessed considerable increase in the powers of the Parliament with the entry into force of the Single European Act in 1987. The fond contains collection of files related to the activity of the Parliament during its second mandate. Most of the files concern the work of the parliamentary committees and, most relevant among all, the Economic, Human Rights and Political committees. In addition, documents from the activity of parliament delegations to third countries, among which, Yugoslavia, including reports, meetings, correspondence and notes. The fourth fond concerns the third legislative period starting from 1989 to 1994, and is marked with the evolution of the Parliament's role as a co-legislator by the introduction of co-decision procedure for certain legislative areas, and extending the cooperation procedure to others. The archival collection is based on the activity of the parliamentary committees and the work of the party groups and plenary session, corresponding to parliamentary questions, correspondence, and motions for resolutions. Additionally, this work draws on documents concerning interparliamentary delegations to Yugoslavia, including reports, interparliamentary meetings, notes, and correspondence. Lastly, the fifth fond relates to the fourth Parliament legislature for the period between 1994 and 1999, and the organization of the files is in accordance of the activity of the parliamentary bodies, plenary sessions and documents related to the activity of interparliamentary delegations to the former Yugoslav Republics and South-East Europe.

In terms of its content and structure, the thesis is divided among five chapters, following a chronological order and organized according to sub-periods, which are constructed following the research questions being examined. Hence, Chapter 1 will discuss the beginning of direct

relations between the European Parliament and Yugoslavia; a neighboring state occupying a special place in Europe, its format and the political considerations and motivations, which led to the association and cooperation between the two. In addition, it will investigate the possibility and likelihood of future EC membership and European integration of Yugoslavia, considering the Parliament's position and its detachment from the debate about the European future of Yugoslavia. Chapter 2 will consider the role of the Parliament in EC decision-making in external policy issues related to the economic crisis in Yugoslavia during the 1980s in terms of balancing the Community interests' vis-à-vis Yugoslav expectations. Moreover, the chapter will investigate the deterioration of the situation of human rights in Yugoslavia, as a major implication arising from instability and nationalistic tendencies. Specifically, it will address the question of Kosovo, as the hotbed of human rights questions in Yugoslavia, and the first EP mission to the province, which contributed to the integration of this dimension in the framework of cooperation. Chapter 3 will analyze the role of the Parliament in formulation of EC foreign and security policy in the face of the political developments in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, in the context of Yugoslav crisis and wars culminating in its violent disintegration. In particular, it will address the Parliament's predicament between the commitment to safeguarding the territorial integrity and unity of Yugoslavia driven by political and security interests, and the acknowledgment of the fragmentation of the Yugoslav nation and legitimate independence of its Republics driven by the adherence to protection of human rights and democracy.

Chapter 4 will focus on the developments following the proclamation of independence of Republics of Slovenia and Croatia with the view of European integration, comparing their divergent paths, namely the uninterrupted progress of Slovenia and the stagnation of the Croatian case. Particularly, it will deal with the lack of political action and weakness of the Parliament, being a product of its internal party dynamics, as well as the overall hesitation of EC decision-making, including the factors that facilitate or forestall Community integration. Chapter 5 will finally study the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina with tremendous humanitarian implications and significant security repercussions. The contribution of the Parliament in seeking a peaceful political solution and its self-criticism concerning, on one

hand, responsibility of the international community together with the EC to protect the Bosnian people, and on the other hand, the “success” of the actual contributions towards peace and security in the Balkan region, will be also considered. It will reflect on the lessons learned through the institutional weakness and inability to halt the fighting, as well as the necessity of retaining the EC’s prominent role in the Balkan region, through the acknowledgements of its strengths and capabilities.

In the conclusions, the thesis will demonstrate that the European Parliament as an institution, indeed, had its own part in the EC decision-making and played a significant role in shaping foreign policy and influenced political outcomes. That was true for the period prior its direct elections, and only intensified in the period after, especially with its swift gain in powers and control, mainly in the area of external relations. The Parliament’s interactions with Yugoslavia was, moreover, one of the parliamentary activities, which greatly contributed to the maintaining and strengthening of the EEC-Yugoslav relations and was an important legitimate and democratic voice throughout the rapid changes in the Yugoslav internal situation and the Community external policy adjustments responding to these developments.

CHAPTER 1: The EP and the origins of EEC-Yugoslav relations

This chapter will establish the origins and the beginnings of the European's Parliament (hereafter EP) external policy towards Yugoslavia, exploring the format in which such relations took place and their political importance, as well as the content in terms of matters of concern within the scope of different policy aspects. Furthermore, it will look at the drivers and motivations behind the initiation of diplomatic contacts, dividing them into three interconnected categories contributing to the association and eventual cooperation between Yugoslavia and the EP. As the gradual cooperation resulted in a signature of an EEC-Yugoslavia Cooperation Agreement (1980), providing a framework and foundation for a stronger cooperation, the chapter aims to discover whether the political will on both sides manifested in the Agreement, was enough to transform the cooperation into a further stage; the vision and hope for future membership, conditioned on a strategic political choice, and the likelihood of such future.

1.1 The origin of EP-Yugoslavia relations

Historically, the very first formal contacts between the EP as institution and Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) were established during the 1970s, namely before the Parliament's direct elections. These interactions primarily took the form of leadership visits, among which the first-ever in 1972, by President Walter Behrendt, and more notably, in February 1978, the visit of President Emilio Colombo accompanied by Mr. Enzo Bettiza, president of the EP delegation to Yugoslavia.¹⁹ This delegation was part of the Parliament's efforts in fostering international contacts with the world aimed at developing a parliamentary dimension of international relations. Shortly after the talks of President Tito and Colombo, in September 1978, the delegation carried out a meeting with representatives of the Yugoslav Assembly, making it the second meeting between delegations after the one in 1976. The friendly and open exchange during the delegation visit resulted with an overall impression

¹⁹ Historical Archives of the European Union, Florence (hereafter HAEU), Parlement européen - Première législature, Note on relations between EC and Yugoslavia Luxembourg, 27 June 1980.

about Yugoslavia being an open and inclusive society consisting of clearly defined nationalities, which were nevertheless concerned to maintain their mutual ties. Yugoslavs themselves perceived their society comprising of nationalities with equal rights whose federal republics were governed by a democratic system of representation. The link of the Federal Republic with the European Community (EC), at the time, was strictly concerned with economic and trade relations, since Yugoslavia was willing to maintain and benefit from exports and investments in the pursue of strengthening its own economy. Following the visit, the delegation concluded that Yugoslavia was also prepared to develop political relations with the EC, provided that they were accompanied with more satisfactory economic relations.²⁰

Regardless of the fact that the initial relations established between the EP and Yugoslavia were constituted on occasional meetings of leaders and delegation representatives, lacking any permanent structure or purpose, and were predominantly focused on mutual economic interests, surprisingly enough with a very positive outcome of close friendship. With the start of the mandate of the Parliament's first legislature elected by universal suffrage in 1979, and thus the start of the formal mandate of the Parliament's Delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, the attitude towards Yugoslavia as a partner and friend continued to prevail, even after the death of the Yugoslav President Tito in 1980.

In a telegram sent to the Yugoslav Assembly aimed at delivering condolences for the loss of President Tito, Mr. Enzo Bettiza, the President of EP Delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, summarized the attitude and start of the relations between the Parliament and Yugoslavia as following:

“The European Parliament resulting from direct elections does not forget that it is under President Tito that we have established interparliamentary links since 1977, thanks to which our delegations have already met twice for particularly fruitful and friendly work. Strengthening ties between our two assemblies will constitute a living and lasting testimony of the spirit and the desire for

²⁰ HAEU, Assemblée parlementaire européenne et Parlement européen avant l'élection directe, Summary for the President and the members of the Enlarged Bureau on the visit by the EP to Yugoslavia, 18-22 Sept, 1978.

cooperation particularly between neighbors and friends, which characterizes the policy of the late President Tito. “²¹

The close relations between the European Parliament and Yugoslavia as Mr. Bettiza pointed out on a different occasion “exited in times of happiness, when the Cooperation Agreement was signed, and in times of sadness, on the death of President Tito”, referring to the attendance of Parliament’s delegation composed of the President Mrs. Veil and the delegation President at Tito’s funeral. ²²

Finally, in the summer of 1980 two months after the funeral of Tito, the EP President Simone Veil, made an official visit to Yugoslavia and held meetings with high authorities of the Yugoslav state, government and the Federal Assembly. This visit constituted yet another proof of the great interest given by the EP to cooperation with Yugoslavia and continuity of friendly relations. During her visit, Veil underlined that the EC and the EP intended to develop in-depth cooperation with Yugoslavia, stressing how the enlargement of the Community to Greece underlined the “European” character of Yugoslavia and inevitably had a positive consequences on the cooperation. She also expressed her belief that the people united in the Community felt Yugoslavia’s cultural belonging to Europe, without calling into question the Yugoslav non-alignment. The European Parliament wished to be associated in the most direct and appropriate manner with the EEC-Yugoslavia cooperation, in substance through monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement signed. ²³

Following the presidential visits and the meeting of delegations, the rapprochement between the European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly exhibited continuity through a well-established practice of sending official invitations and scheduling interparliamentary

²¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Telegram from President of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia to the President of the Yugoslav Assembly, Luxembourg, 5 May 1980

²² HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Summary of the third meeting EP/Federal Assembly, Strasbourg, 14 Jan 1981

²³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Report on the official visit of President Simone Veil to Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 15-17 Jul, 1980

meetings. This way, the previous occasional meetings, were replaced by a more regular contact, which could be periodically planned.

The interparliamentary dialog was in principle conducted by a Parliament's Delegation as a political body, which reflected the political forces in the Parliament, as in their sitting, not by nationality, but political groups. Namely, the distribution among representatives of the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, and their belonging to a political group was the following: three Socialists, two Christian democrats, and one from each of the European Democrats, Communists, Liberals, and DEP (European Progressive Democrats), and the Coordination Group. The work and activity of this delegation was very comprehensive and extensive, and thus was not seen to be comparable with other similar delegations to other countries also "encouraged" by EC Agreements.²⁴ The distinction and conception of interparliamentary delegation in the context of relations between the European Parliament and the Federal Yugoslav Assembly, was in the nature of this delegation, being more egalitarian and with precise function, compared to simple friendship groups found in national parliaments. It originated from the necessity for mutual examination with their partner of particular problems and specific points that did not find a solution within the framework of intergovernmental contacts, and in addition, represented a democratic aspect of the external relations.²⁵ This dual function of the delegation was actively and freely exercised whenever it responded to the interest and request of one or the other partners. Matters discussed during the interparliamentary meetings of delegations within the mandate of the first parliament legislature include, but are not limited to, EC-Yugoslavia Cooperation Agreement of 1980, its ratification, economic problems such as trade deficit and debt situation in Yugoslavia, Yugoslav migrant workers in the EC member states, export products to the European Community, enlargement and Mediterranean policy. The discussions tackled regional and international questions as well, such as the Osimo Agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia,

²⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Note on the history and activity of the EP delegation for relations with the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia, 7 Oct 1980

²⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Elements of the speech of Mrs. Veil on the occasion of her official visit to Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 15-16 July, 1980

relations with other Balkan countries, the role of Yugoslavia within the non-aligned movement, relations between the East and West disarmaments and other issues of interest.²⁶

To this end, the parliamentary delegation was also in contact and cooperated with other parliamentary committees concerned with the issues discussed during the delegations meetings, such as the political committee, foreign policy committee, and transport, economic or monetary committee. The EP delegation was therefore, well informed and could act as a spokesperson for the community interest, but also the challenges and gaps in terms of meeting the Yugoslav interests, and was able to discuss solutions and defend ideas capable of changing the situation in a desirable direction. The EP delegation inquired the concerns of the partner country and at the same time obtained answers directly from the Community bodies regarding the issues of interest. The interparliamentary activities in their essence played a mediating role in making different interests compatible, transmitting direct and precise information and providing a space for exchange of opinions and concerns, which could be appropriately channeled and taken into consideration.

On a more general account, it can be noted that the discussions encompassed economic, social and political aspects, thus were not bound by subject nor competence of the delegation, but were related to issues of interest and concern of one of the partners, therefore were very constructive and pragmatic. Additionally, the work of this delegation clearly demonstrated the active and deep involvement of the Parliament in development and shaping of the bilateral relations, positive interest, support and open and frank approach. The EP was indeed, really invested in development of the overall relations between the Community and Yugoslavia and had an important role to play in encouraging continuous communication, mediation and creation of impetus for advancing the relations on the long term. With the mandate of the second legislature of the Parliament, the attention attached to Yugoslavia did not change, on the contrary, on the first meeting of the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, in reference to deciding priorities regarding the contacts European Parliament maintained with third

²⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Information note on the activity of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia during the first mandate (1979-1984), 21 Jan 1985

countries, members recognized that as a neighboring country, Yugoslavia was among the priorities.²⁷

The political goodwill of the European Parliament for maintaining and developing cooperation with Yugoslavia was obvious and undeniable, and the value of dialog established at the level of the Parliament and the Federal Assembly was remarkably recognized by the delegations of both partners. However, members on both sides questioned the concrete decision-making power to actually increase the cooperation between Yugoslavia and the European Community. In particular, the President of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia within the second legislature, Siebel Emmerling recognized that there was a gap in political will between the EC institutions, because there were governments within the Community, which had a more restrictive policy towards Yugoslavia. In her view, as much as the EP was concerned, it was supposed to exert more influence on the Council level for influencing the Community's attitude towards Yugoslavia.²⁸ It seemed rational that if the parliamentarians were to exercise their power towards a better understanding of the problems and the fairer and more complete economic and political assessment of bilateral relations with Yugoslavia, support from the other EC institutions was an obvious precondition. As a result, as much as the Parliament was invested in building its relation with Yugoslavia on the parliamentary level, for the relations to move forward the same attitude had to be adopted by the other institutions. The only way forward for the Parliament, given its competences and capacity, was to exert political pressure and advocate its positions among EC Member States who determined the positions of the Council, which in turn held complementary decision-making power.

1.2 Motivating factors

The gradually established connection and its development and formalization into the periodical parliamentary meetings that certainly shaped the Parliament's external policy was

²⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième legislature, Summary record of the preparatory meeting of the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Brussels, 29 Jan, 1985

²⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième legislature, Summary report on the working sessions of the sixth meeting EP and Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 16-19 Sep, 1985

motivated by several driving factors, which could be traced and identified in the interactions and communications of this institution. The motivations could be categorized into three interconnected and overlapping factors that contributed to Parliament's close association and cooperation with Yugoslavia.

The first uniting element for the two partners were the mutually shared values of commitment to independence and peace in terms of international relations, interaction between developed and developing countries and the world order structured among the conception of the two "blocs". By achieving unity on the basis of a common market, the countries of the European Community had, on one hand, the ambition to strengthen their economic power, and on the other hand, to consolidate their unity towards safeguarding independence and peace in Europe and beyond.²⁹ Similarly, Yugoslavia as a member of the non-aligned movement and its initiator, as well as part of the developing countries group, was very much attached to ensuring that international relations were based on independence and integrity of all states, regardless of their development stage, economic power or political influence. At international level, Yugoslavia advocated for a degree of détente and solidarity and endorsed the rejection of "blocs" which were incapable of resolving world problems, but posed a great danger to peace.³⁰ Yugoslavs were aware of the impossibility of immediate dissolution of the existing international order, therefore, advocated for improvements of the international relations between the East and West, and North and South. The political views of the European Community and Yugoslavia regarding the Cold War dynamics were substantially shared and inclined towards the same direction of promoting world peace and détente. The European Community highly defended the principles of freedom, peace and stability, therefore, the partnership and cooperation between the two, had in this regard, an important role to play in preserving the balance of international relations. Moreover, it was due to the exceptional position of Yugoslavia between East and West, its dynamic role in international negotiations, and its self-managing economy, that the EEC was interested in strengthening their relations.

²⁹ HAEU, ADLE- Groupe de l'Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe au Parlement européen, Speech by Mrs. Veil on the occasion of dinner hosted by Mr. Markovic, Belgrade, 15 July, 1980

³⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Summary of the third interparliamentary meeting between EP and Yugoslavia: Third working session of the delegations, Starsbourg, 14 Jan, 1981

The second feature that attracted the EC to move closer to Yugoslavia was the chief principle governing the Yugoslav foreign policy, the principle of non-alignment that was created and promoted by the Yugoslav President Tito. Recalling Tito's legacy in his tribute, Lazar Kolisevski, President of the rotating Presidency of Yugoslavia, referred to the fact that Tito had worked for the building of a happier future, the establishment of close ties, cooperation, and friendship with the peoples of the whole world as well as the strengthening of peace, security and international cooperation. He recalled on a political struggle against the invader and fascist atrocities, but also resistance to pressures of all kinds and attempts of interference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs at the time of whirlwinds of the most virulent Cold War and confrontation of the two blocks. It was exactly against this reality that the emergence of "Tito's historical vision of the policy of non-alignment, perceived as the only alternative that opens up to the contemporary world in the face of the dangers of nuclear catastrophe".³¹ Yugoslavia was determined to defend the principle of non-interference, regardless of who was involved, and was putting efforts in peaceful resolutions to the international crisis and stop the spread of military intervention. As part of the non-aligned group, whereas all of its members were fully independent in their internal and external affairs, Yugoslavia outrageously criticized the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and other interferences elsewhere.

³² The movement itself could not be seen as a homogeneous unit with mutual views and understanding of all members, but a unit of countries unified by a common view and positions on certain issues, while maintaining their differences in specific matters. The key leadership position of Yugoslavia, within the movement, allowed for its key role in international forums for mediating peace and seeking restoring balance on a global level. For instance, its involvement in the North/South dialog. Besides, the Osimo Agreement, between Italy and Yugoslavia, was a great example of the pragmatism and understanding between two countries regardless of their different social systems.

³¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Eulogy to Tito by Lazar Kolisevski President of the Presidency of Yugoslavia, 28 May 1980

³² HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Summary of the third interparliamentary meeting between EP and Yugoslavia: Third working session of the delegations, Strasbourg, 14 Jan, 1981

The post-Tito foreign policy continued to lay stress on the principle of non-alignment and was based on respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.³³ However, while remaining faithful to the principle of non-alignment, Yugoslavia moved economically and politically closer to the West, which tendency was confirmed by the signature of the Cooperation Agreement between Yugoslavia and EC in 1980. Notably, Yugoslavia highly praised the fact that the relations with the EC were based on the observance of Yugoslavia as an independent, non-aligned, Mediterranean, developing country. The Vice-President of the Yugoslav Federal Assembly, Sinan Hasani, perceived the strong independent international position of Yugoslavia as a guarantor for its internal development and self-management. In his view, “the whole world and Europe was interested in independent and non-aligned position of Yugoslavia and its further active and constructive role in international relations, since such policy served the cause of peace, stability and security in the immediate and wider neighborhood region, in Europe and the world”.³⁴ The close cooperation between the Community and Yugoslavia could certainly bring a greater weight in the actions for ensuring balance of international relations amid Cold War confrontations. President Veil recalled that the basis of the EC construction was the fundamental intention to maintain peace and guarantee the independence of European countries; the Parliament therefore, wished to strengthen the unity of Europe and supported any initiative aimed at a more stable balance. The role of Yugoslavia as an independent state and leader in the Non-aligned Movement was indeed, one such initiative, and the Community and Yugoslav policies could complement each other and cooperate in their efforts for exercising a moderating role and promoting a balance in times of international crisis.³⁵ In Veil’s own words: “Europe cannot be an isolated oasis of peace while the rest of the world is in tension and turmoil; it has a responsibility to moderate peace and restoring balance on the global

³³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Working document: The political situation and foreign policy of Yugoslavia, 19 Dec, 1983

³⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Toast of the Vice-President of the Assembly of SFRY Sinan Hasani, Strasbourg, 13 Jan, 1981

³⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Report on the official visit of President Simone Veil to Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 15-17 Jul, 1980

level. This responsibility also falls within the role of the neutrals and non-aligned countries.”³⁶

Third significant factor in driving relations between Yugoslavia and the European Community was the geopolitical position of the former, at the center of the Balkan region. As a European country, on the border of the Mediterranean Sea and part of the group of developing countries, Yugoslavia occupied a very special place on the European continent. Apart from the EC Member States, candidate countries and the members of EFTA, Yugoslavia was the only European country to have maintained good relations with the EC for years. Its role for thirty years and its weight within the Non-aligned Movement, as well as within the Group of 77, were universally recognized. ³⁷

Considering the geopolitical interest of the EC itself, the accession of Greece in the Community in 1981, was one of the driving force behind the intensification of political relations and presence of EC in the Balkans, including Yugoslavia. As President Veil has anticipated during the first delegation meeting after the direct elections of the Parliament:

“Through Greece’s membership, the Community will have greater access to the Mediterranean basin, and there will be an increase of the interdependence of the member states’ economies, particularly in transport, which will be channeled through Yugoslavia, as a result inevitably bringing Yugoslavia closer to the EC.”³⁸

The same notion has been confirmed by the EP President Dankert in his statement in 1984:

“Yugoslavia occupies a well-defined place in Europe, for the Community, it is close to two member states: a founding member Italy, and the most recent member Greece. The accession of Greece transformed Yugoslavia into a real link for us. The movement of people and the intensification of communications have

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Note: history and activity of the European Parliament delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, 9 Oct 1980

³⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Speech made by Mrs. Simone Veil on the occasion of the lunch given for the delegation from the Yugoslav Federal Assembly, Strasbourg, 13 Jan, 1981

further strengthened the de-facto rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the Community. The Cooperation Agreement, gives bilateral relations a specific framework and quality, and places Yugoslavia among the first partners of the European Community.”³⁹

Beyond the consideration of Yugoslavia as interlocutor between the Community and its enlargement to Greece, the closeness of Yugoslavia to the EC carried an element of security as well. At the time of dangerous competition of the “great powers”, seriously jeopardized world peace, concerns about deterioration of the Cold War détente brought about through interference in internal affairs of other countries in various parts of the world and the growing arms race, the security of the Mediterranean was highly threatened. This region was vital for European security and the presence of the “super powers” and the buildup of arms and nuclear weapons in this region created major concerns for Europe. Therefore, it was of a great interest of the EC to work towards a mutual agreement with Yugoslavia, regardless of their differences in political systems, in order to make the Mediterranean a peaceful zone, in a world being less peaceful.⁴⁰ Consequently, both economic and political stability of Yugoslavia was indispensable for ensuring internal peaceful existence of a community of people of different nationalities living together in one country, and prevent external pressures and any security threats to interference. With ensured stability, Yugoslavia could be on equal standing with the countries of the world, actively participate in international relations, and benefit the European Community and its relations with Yugoslavia.

1.3 The Cooperation Agreement (1980)

As anticipated in several occasions previously, the motivations and the political will for cooperation between the EC and Yugoslavia, has been demonstrated by the efforts and negotiations for concluding a Cooperation Agreement (1980), which primarily opened the door to stronger economic ties and exchange, but also laid the foundations for development

³⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Speech elements of the President of the EP Pieter Dankert, Strasbourg, 17 Jan 1984

⁴⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Summary of the third interparliamentary meeting between EP and Yugoslavia: Third working session of the delegations, Starsbourg, 14 Jan, 1981

of further relations in the future. The European Parliament, as argued before, has always expressed itself in a very positive manner regarding development of relations with Yugoslavia, and the Cooperation Agreement itself was one particular instance, where the role of the Parliament in supporting relations with Yugoslavia was highly evident.

Initially, there was a non-preferential agreement between Yugoslavia and the EC signed in 1970, covering a period of three years, after which, it was replaced by another agreement of five-year duration concluded in 1973. The agreement was aimed at consolidation and extending of the economic and commercial relations between Yugoslavia and the EEC, taking into account their development, while promoting cooperation on the basis of reciprocity.⁴¹ Unlike the first, this agreement did not have a preferential character and was based on reciprocal concession of the most-favored-nation clause. Before its expiry, since 1977, negotiations for a new Cooperation Agreement were initiated, so as to reflect the new political and economic developments, and such actions were not affected nor delayed due to Tito's illness and deterioration of health.⁴² The agreement was a natural follow-up to the Declaration of Belgrade (1976), which called for the development and strengthening of relations between the Community and Yugoslavia. At the same time, it contained reference to the Helsinki Final Act. Specifically, the Agreement was designed to contribute to Yugoslavia's economic and social development, extend financial cooperation, promote trade and regulate other aspects of cooperation taking into account the accession of Greece to the Community.⁴³ The Agreement also formally recognized the Osimo Agreement, posing no obstacles to its provisions, and the established free zones.

The main goal of the EEC- Yugoslavia Cooperation Agreement of 1980 was to intensify and strengthen the relations between the two partners, taking into account the position of Yugoslavia as a non-aligned, Mediterranean, European state, and member of the developing countries. It was of indefinite duration and global in nature covering industrial, scientific,

⁴¹ HAEU, Assemblée parlementaire européenne et Parlement européen avant l'élection directe, Meeting minutes of Joint meeting of the Political Committee and the Committee on External Economic Relations, Strasbourg 3 Jul, 1973

⁴² HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Meeting minutes of the preparatory session of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Brussels, 27 Feb, 1980

⁴³ Ibid.

technological fields, as well as migrant workers, agriculture, truism and environment. It was of interest to the Community for Yugoslavia to have a strong and stable economy, which would enable it to preserve its non-aligned position and resist any external pressure.⁴⁴ Whereas, for its external economic relations Yugoslavia was driven by the principle of common interest and mutual benefit, and was certainly willing to maintain political relations provided that these relations are accompanied by economic relations satisfactory to the Yugoslav economy.

When it comes to the role of the European Parliament as a complementary actor in the EEC's external affairs, in the coming to life of the Agreement, the first contribution was the advocacy and political pressure during the process of negotiations. Particularly, at the beginning in 1978, the Parliament insisted on a rapid and favorable conclusion of a broad agreement, whereas in 1980, the Parliament considered that it is essential to conclude a good agreement, so as to promote continuity in the post-Tito period.⁴⁵ The Parliament's consideration with the start of negotiations was that it was important to establish a framework, which could serve as a starting foundation having a broad scope so that it could provide a space for future advancement in numerous directions. However, with the death of President Tito, the Parliament put a focus on ensuring that even after the disappearance of Tito, there was a policy continuity based on the same principles. As the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia President Bettiza has put it in his address: "the Cooperation Agreement must be a *sui generis*, reflecting the non-aligned, Mediterranean and socialist character of Yugoslavia."⁴⁶

The EP's association with the Agreement was very strong, and did not change after the direct elections, in the sense that it put great efforts towards Agreement's subsequent accelerated conclusion, which was praised and recognized by the Yugoslav side.⁴⁷ In addition, the

⁴⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Note: Background documents on EC-Yugoslavia presented by the rapporteur of the delegation, Strasbourg 1981

⁴⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Meeting minutes of preparatory meeting of delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 14 Feb, 1980

⁴⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Delegation for relations with Yugoslavia preparatory meeting minutes, Strasbourg, 4 Feb 1980

⁴⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Report on the official visit of President Simone Veil to Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 15-17 Jul, 1980

Parliament has exerted even greater influence in ratification of the Agreement by EC Member States.⁴⁸ The members of the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia closely followed the process of ratification of the Agreement in the national parliaments.⁴⁹ Moreover, through its political function of control, the Parliament was also involved in monitoring of the implementation and the resolution of any concern arising from the implementation through the interparliamentary dialog mechanism discussed previously. Accordingly, the Parliament was involved and influenced in every stage of the process, from the negotiations to the actual implementation of the Agreement, incorporating its political positions and judgements in the EEC policy creation, certainly relying on its democratic weight and legitimacy.

On a political consideration, the Agreement was a turning point for the relations to reach an enviable level and reflect the principle of cooperation. Following its ratification and entry into force on 1 April 1983, the relations between the Parliament and Yugoslavia have entered into a new improved phase, whereas the former provided strong political support for the implementation.⁵⁰ In the context of close formalized cooperation, the political character of the Agreement emerged to be more important than the commercial aspect, since it contributed to a political stability of the region. With the solid foundations for cooperation established with the Agreement, the Yugoslav side wished that the EC considered Yugoslavia as a full European country, which was economically and culturally oriented towards Europe.⁵¹ Likewise, the EC acknowledged Yugoslavia's cultural belonging to Europe, without of course, questioning the non-alignment policy.⁵² Moreover, succeeding the ratification of the Agreement and its entry into force, 1983 was a very positive year for the EC-Yugoslavia relations, due to the visit of Milka Planinc, President of the Federal Executive Council, in

⁴⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Note on the history and activities of the delegation for relations for Yugoslavia, Annex: Detailed Timeline 9 Oct, 1980

⁴⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Meeting minutes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, 2 Oct, 1980

⁵⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Summary of the 5th interparliamentary meeting, Strasbourg, 16- 18 Jan, 1984

⁵¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première legislature, Report on the visit to Yugoslavia by Simone Veil, Belgrade, 15-17 July 1980

⁵² Ibid.

Brussels, being the first visit of a Yugoslav personality to the EC.⁵³ This visit gave an additional political dimension to Yugoslavia's relations with the EC, since the talks with the Commission President Gaston Thorn, were focused on the situation and prospects of cooperation. Both parties expressed conviction that the continuation and deepening of the existing relations between Yugoslavia and the EEC represented an important contribution to the strengthening of cooperation and security in Europe.⁵⁴

The Parliament shared the same opinion and strongly agreed that the importance of Yugoslavia for the European Community goes beyond the established economic and commercial links, as expressed by the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia President Siebel Emmerling:

“We are aware in this delegation that an economically strong and politically stable Federal Socialist Yugoslav Republic, which maintains its position within the non-aligned group, constitutes a guarantor of peace and security in this part of Europe.”⁵⁵

In its core, the Cooperation Agreement corresponded to the vital interests of both the EC and Yugoslavia, economic and political combined, but at the same time, it represented a model for international collaboration, security and peace at times of world turmoil.

1.4 Future prospects

Having considered the course of development of the cooperation between Yugoslavia and the EEC, and the Parliament's contributions, and having noted the commitment on both sides for an enriched and advanced stage of cooperation, while taking into account the accession of Greece to the Community, Yugoslav neighbor in the Mediterranean, the question of

⁵³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Meeting minutes of the preparatory meeting of the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Brussels, 1 Dec, 1983

⁵⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Joint press conference: Visit to the Commission by Mrs. Planinc-President of the Federal Executive Council of FRY, Brussels, 28 Apr, 1983

⁵⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary of report of working sessions of the sixth meeting between European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 16-19 Sep 1985

whether Yugoslavia was likely to follow the same path of association and accession remained wide open.

Recalling the beginnings in 1980, the year of conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement, Vincenzo Bettiza, chair of the EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, revealed a clear position that the delegation's most important task was "maintaining relations with a neighbor that was unlikely to become a member of the EEC in the near future."⁵⁶

In the consequent years, as argued previously, the relations between the two partners significantly developed, and reached enviable levels of cooperation and closeness, while the desire for further deepening of such relations increased proportionally. However, did the position of the EEC or the position of the EP for this matter, regarding the "European belonging" of Yugoslavia changed over the years?

This question was raised in an open letter to the members of the delegation for relations to Yugoslavia and other members of the European Parliament dated 30 January 1985, by the liberal Italian MEP, Marco Pannella:

"Can Yugoslavia be a candidate for association or membership in the European Community? Can it even, logically, not be? Do we want to work in this direction or at least take note of the fact that this is one of the possible poles, without any other alternative, of the development and life of this friendly republic?"⁵⁷

In addition, Pannella made a rhetoric statement addressing his colleagues as following:

"We must not and cannot refuse to discuss together the question of whether we envisage or not, whether we hope or not, whether we want or not that the Republic of Yugoslavia can one day be a full part of the Community and/ or, in the meantime, become an associate member."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen - Première législature, Delegation for relations with Yugoslavia preparatory meeting minutes, Strasbourg, 14 Feb 1980

⁵⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Notice to members: Letter of Mr. Pannella to the members of delegation, Strasbourg, 30 Jan 1985

⁵⁸ Ibid.

He considered that the lack of clear strategic and political choices of the EEC institutions left the ground for the other states like the US or the Soviet Union to make decisions and dictate the course of events to follow, including the question regarding the very existence of the Republic of Yugoslavia. He strongly criticized the attitude of the EEC towards Yugoslavia, on one hand, in its appreciation that Yugoslavia was an independent, non-aligned, European country and on the other hand its immediate dissociation when it comes to Yugoslavia joining the Community.

“The praise or acceptance by the Community of “independence”, “non-alignment”, of the “national” strategy and philosophy and of “quasi-distance” of this republic (Yugoslavia), is on our part a hypocrisy, proof of irresponsibility and political and diplomatic pseudo-realism.”⁵⁹

As a reply to the question raised in the letter, delegation chair Seibel-Emmerling, with the use of diplomatic language, skillfully detached the European Community and the EP delegation specifically, from the responsibility and authority to discuss and make decisions on the future of Yugoslavia, or the possibility to join the Community. She deemed inappropriate for the EC to decide in the name of a sovereign third country, on a matter of exclusive responsibility of that sovereign country.⁶⁰ In her mind, the decision and initiative for joining the European Community was entirely and solely within the hands of Yugoslavia and until such action was not taken by the Yugoslav side, not the EEC nor the European Parliament was in a position to consider or discuss such matters.

With respect to the same question, the Yugoslav side also expressed their position during the sixth interparliamentary meeting in Belgrade, Gorjan, Yugoslav delegation representative, in fact answered the question raised by Pannella, whether in the long term, Yugoslavia was not considering joining the European Community. In his view, the Yugoslav system of non-alignment was incompatible with any form of integration, whether the European Community

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Notice to members: Reply from delegation chairman to Mr. Pannella letter, Strasbourg, 15 Feb 1985

or other group like Comecon or EFTA.⁶¹ The Yugoslav delegation representative clearly emphasized that Yugoslavia's wish to participate more intensely in cooperation with the EC did not imply a renunciation of its strict neutrality and policy of non-alignment, however, maintaining such status was not incompatible with close cooperation. As a result, it became clear that Yugoslavia had a preference to maintain the status of a non-aligned country and its political independence, or put differently it was not willing to follow the path of its neighbor in accession and integration in the EEC, instead wished to retain the close cooperation to the best utilization of its interests.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter established the origins of the relations between the EP and Yugoslavia, dating before the EP direct elections, in the form of Presidential and delegation visits driven by economic interest, which were later formalized through the mechanism of regular and pragmatic interparliamentary meetings in Strasbourg and Belgrade, having a precise dual function, of interlocutor for resolving issues of interest or concerns and a democratic function. The Parliament as institution attached great attention to Yugoslavia and was highly invested in strengthening cooperation, which in the context of the Cold War, was motivated by the mutually shared values of independence and peace, the feature of non-alignment as driver of the Yugoslav foreign policy and the geopolitical position of Yugoslavia in the Balkans and Europe. The culmination in the gradual advancement of relations was the signature of the EEC-Yugoslavia Cooperation Agreement, which regardless of its economic nature and purpose held a solid foundation for strengthening future political relations, since it incorporated an element of political stability and security in Europe amid the Cold War turmoil. The EP's role in its rapid conclusion, ratification and political control of the implementation, made it a complementary actor in formulating EC's external relations. Lastly, the prospect of transforming the close cooperation into a fully-fledged EC membership of Yugoslavia, in the view of the Parliament, was highly unlikely since the birth

⁶¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary of report of working sessions of the sixth meeting between European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 16-19 Sep 1985

of EC-Yugoslav relations and remained prevalent over the course of rapprochement. Likewise, Yugoslavia's non-alignment policy succeeded over any form of integration, eliminating incompatibility with the maintenance of close cooperation with the EC, satisfactory to both partners' interests.

CHAPTER 2: Inter-institutional divisions within the EEC amid economic crisis in Yugoslavia and the Kosovo question (1985-1989)

The following chapter will discuss the unfolding developments related to the negotiations of the time-bound financial provisions under the Cooperation Agreement and its impact on the overall relations with Yugoslavia. The focus will be on the institutional dynamics within the EC in terms of consolidating different positions in decision-making and its implication as political outcomes in the external policy towards Yugoslavia. Additional aspect to be considered is the predictability of the adverse Yugoslav situation in the 1980s, its economic struggles with inflation, debt and unemployment, and the possibility for adopting a policy response to meet these challenges and at the same time satisfy Community's interests. Specifically, the Yugoslav expectations from the EC as a support vis-à-vis the reality of the actual policy, will be analyzed through one particular example of a policy adopted after the Chernobyl accident, in order to demonstrate the relation between a non-favorable policy and deterioration of relations. Finally, the chapter will investigate the major implication of the economic instabilities, driving social and political changes manifested in nationalistic tendencies, which undoubtedly deteriorated the situation of human rights and rule of law in a very disproportionate manner given the specific characteristics of Yugoslavia, focused on the Kosovo question as a center for nationalistic allegations. The chapter will conclude by exploring the first EP mission sent to the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, for investigating the situation of human rights and its contribution to integration of this dimension in the framework of cooperation.

2.1 The Financial protocol to the Cooperation Agreement

The conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement (1980) motivated by both economic and political incentives discussed in the previous chapter firmly linked Yugoslavia to the European Community and outlined the true virtue of the relations between the two partners - cooperation. The agreement expanded the cooperation beyond trade to all the other sectors from industry to science, environment and culture. In its format, it was of indefinite duration, yet there were some provisions attachments to the commercial agreement, which were subject

to a time limit, the commercial and financial protocols, bound to expire in 1985, marking it a year of the start of dual negotiations between Yugoslavia and the Community for a renewal of these two protocols.⁶²

The initial financial protocol introduced with the conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement in 1980, involved only a substantial loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) in the amount of two hundred million (ECU) committed to modernization of railways, roads and electricity network in Yugoslavia. This protocol was significantly different from the other Mediterranean countries, which had financial protocols accompanied with grants and special loans in addition to the EIB loan. As of the start of the negotiations, Yugoslavia expressed interest to conclude the new financial protocol, which they wished would also include grants and special loans. The reasoning behind this change of mind was connected to its long-held position of non-alignment, preventing the acceptance of loans that may have led to a break with this core policy. However, since the economic situation had significantly changed and Yugoslav concerns for its economic stability had greatly increased, so had changed the position of Yugoslavia towards being more open to financial assistance and accepting loans beyond the ones granted by the EIB.⁶³

The Yugoslav Ambassador to the EC Bora Rafajlovski, on the onset of negotiations had underlined that Yugoslavia's particular interest to the future Protocol, with regards to its overall envelope as well as the structure and destination of the funds, was to ensure broader, more varied and more favorable financial support aimed at development of the Yugoslav economy and the promotion of cooperation.⁶⁴ In his view, financial cooperation was one of the priority areas in mutual relations, given that Member States of the Community were Yugoslav's most important economic partners and its external debt was, for the most part, owned by these states. Simply put, the Yugoslavs were looking for, and expecting that the Community would consider significantly larger amounts of loans when deciding on the

⁶² HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Information note on the economic situation in Yugoslavia and relations between EC in the context of the 1980 Agreement, 5 Mar 1985

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Notice to members: Speech of the Yugoslav Ambassador to the European Community, 29 Jan 1985

financial protocol, so as to factually show their support and interest in developing the cooperation and relations.

The Commission's proposal on the second financial protocol was double the amount in credit, and additional eighty million ECU from the Community budget in grants and special loans, which as such had been forwarded to be studied by the Council.⁶⁵ According to the Commission representative Schwed, although the countries of the Community wished to establish close relations with Yugoslavia, both economic and political, there were some obstacles to the extent of generosity, such as the budgetary constraints and the principle of fair treatment, compared to other Mediterranean countries that would wish to see an increase of their financial protocols, if that was the case with Yugoslavia. At the same time, he acknowledged an existing opposition to the proposal by certain Member States in the Council, based on the argument that Yugoslavia's economy was stronger than the other Mediterranean countries, thus its protocol was not supposed to register a surplus. The Parliament considered this question on the level of its delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, whose members, on one hand, expressed their concern regarding the positions of some Member States towards Yugoslavia, and on the other hand, reaffirmed its particular political importance, stressing the need for the Community to give Yugoslavia its full support via substantial financial protocol.⁶⁶ Specifically, in terms of action, the EP delegation agreed to send a letter to the Council wherein the need for granting Yugoslavia a sufficiently substantial financial protocol was strongly stressed.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the Council's position was to make a decrease on the proposed financial protocol, and this decision was met with a great disappointment from the Yugoslav side, expressed during the periodical interparliamentary meeting of delegations in Belgrade, which was also shared by the members of the Parliament's delegation.⁶⁸ They argued that the determined financial protocol was

⁶⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary record of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia: exchange of views by the Commission representative, Brussels, 22 May, 1985

⁶⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary record of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, Brussels, 22 May, 1985

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary of report of working sessions of the sixth meeting between the European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 16-19 Sep 1985

insufficient in relation to the Yugoslav needs amid their difficult economic situation and the Community was not considerate enough when making the decision. In due time the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia met informally in Strasbourg, and its members revealed their considerable concern about the possible deterioration in relations between the European Community and Yugoslavia that could occur if the Community did not show itself sufficiently generous in the negotiations on the commercial terms of the agreement and the financial protocol.⁶⁹ Subsequent to exchange of views, the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia within its powers decided upon signing an oral question with a debate to the Council, to be introduced on the agenda for the plenary session before the conclusion of the negotiations, whereas such action was not being accepted, they decided on the alternative of submitting an urgent motion for a resolution.

Given the political importance of this matter, the Parliament's delegation for relations with Yugoslavia took further action by drafting a note addressed to the President in-office of the Council of Ministers and called on the office of the President of the EP to convey the message to the Council.⁷⁰ The note itself was written in a very strong language asserting that the formal relations of the EC with Yugoslavia were under review and could easily suffer if insufficient sensitivity was shown to the Yugoslav economic and financial difficulties. Therefore, the members of the EP delegation urged for a rapid decision within the Council for the negotiation mandate to ensure better trade terms with Yugoslavia and reduction of the interest rates on loans foreseen under the financial protocol.⁷¹ The EP delegation's particular concern was to foster and further develop the Community's relations with Yugoslavia and in their view through a rapid solution provided within the EC institutions, deterioration of the relations between the two partners could be avoided and confidence could be restored. The vice-chairman of the delegation Rossetti heavily criticized the Council of Ministers for dragging its heels on relations with Yugoslavia, and particularly on the outstanding

⁶⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Aide-memoire on the informal meeting of the EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, Strasbourg 11 Mar 1986

⁷⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Letter from Seibel Emmerling President of EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia addressed to Pierre Pflimlin, President of EP, 20 Mar, 1986

⁷¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Note from Mrs. Seibel Emmerling for the attention of Mr. Hans van den Broek- President-in-office of the Council of Ministers, 20 Mar, 1986

negotiating mandates.⁷² The state of relations between Yugoslavia and the EC were only worsening and the delay in negotiations of the financial protocol was contributing to a confidence loss even further.

The strong determination of the Parliament to influencing the Community's external policy towards meeting the Yugoslav needs was further upheld during the next periodical interparliamentary meeting of delegations in Strasbourg in 1986, when EP delegation members asserted the Yugoslav representatives that they could count on a real help from the Parliament in supporting infrastructure projects and increasing the figure of the financial envelope.⁷³ The importance of releasing more funds to Yugoslavia for infrastructure purposes, independently of EIB loans, in the view of the EP delegation was obvious given the position of Yugoslavia as a passage between the structural integration of Greece to the Community.

In the face of the conclusion of the new protocols, the Commission President, Jacques Delors made a visit to Yugoslavia in July 1987, with a purpose to bring expression of the Community's solidarity at times when Yugoslavia suffered from the acute crisis.⁷⁴ Essentially, it was a visit for restoring the trust and reviving the relations that had been greatly deteriorated. Shortly after, the Commission and Yugoslavia finalized the negotiations for the renewal of the trade provisions under the Cooperation Agreement adjusting it to the third enlargement (to Spain and Portugal), and the new financial protocol was finally signed, providing for five hundred fifty million ECU in form of EIB loans over the next five years.⁷⁵ Although the Yugoslav representatives at the periodical interparliamentary meeting appreciated the outcome of the financial protocol, they regretted the fact that no budget appropriation had been made, because almost the entire loan were to be allocated to infrastructure projects of vital interest to intra-Community communications with Greece,

⁷² HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Minutes of the preparatory meeting of EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, Brussels, 25 Sep, 1986

⁷³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Meeting summary of the first session of the 7th interparliamentary meeting of delegations, Strasbourg, 20 Oct, 1986

⁷⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Minutes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 14 Oct, 1987

⁷⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Minutes of the 8th EP/Yugoslavia interparliamentary meeting, Belgrade, 1-4 Dec, 1987

therefore, building of a “trans-Yugoslavia”. Nevertheless, in the words of Mr. Kovac, member of the Federal Executive Council, “Yugoslavia still wished to keep “the door to Europe” open.”⁷⁶

2.2 Economic crisis and the EC response

One of the main reasons why Yugoslavia attached such a great importance to the financial protocol and expected a substantial financial support from the EC within the framework of cooperation was the rapid worsening of the internal economic situation. In 1985, according to the European Commission assessment on the economic situation in Yugoslavia, it was described as the country with highest per capita debt in the world, very high rates of inflation and intolerable level of unemployment.⁷⁷ The Yugoslav economy was characterized with a series of structural weaknesses, which affected the level of development between the republics, resulting in discrepancies in terms of economic development levels and consequently leading to the emergence of social and political tensions. The core reason behind the deviations in development were the system of relations between the Federation and the constituent Republics, which were not established by the principle of single market, but each Republic had its own objective of economic development. This resulted in disparities between the Republics and provinces and relatively big gaps that the Federation was not able to close, leading to the appearance of diverging interests transformed into differing political demands. During the sixth periodical interparliamentary meeting in Belgrade 1985, the Yugoslav representatives themselves described the economic situation in Yugoslavia as difficult, characterized with galloping inflation, lower production, stagnant exports, significant debt and above all reduction in the standard of living directly related to the disparities between provinces and risk of social unrest. Accordingly, the government’s priority objective was the recovery of the economic situation, for which attainment it relied

⁷⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Report on the 8th EP/Yugoslavia interparliamentary meeting by Mr. Julian Grimaldos- President of the EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 4 Dec 1987

⁷⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Information note on the economic situation in Yugoslavia and relations between EC in the context of the 1980 Agreement, 5 Mar 1985

on IMF loans conditioned on long-term structural adjustment programs, and EC's economic and financial assistance.⁷⁸

Just as summarized by the Yugoslav vice-president of the Federal Council, the main difficulties Yugoslavia had faced in the past years were the effects of the global recession and the oil crisis, the inability to adopt the economic structures of the global market, internal structural problems, trade deficit, and the slowdown of modernization.⁷⁹ All of which have put Yugoslavia in a backward position and overall stagnation. However, Yugoslavia did not opt out of solving its own problems, instead it put efforts in halting the internal economic crisis by adopting measures under long-term stabilization plan, anti-inflationary program and rescheduling its foreign debt. To this end, the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia was determined to closely monitor the developments in this country, especially the way Yugoslavia tackled the crisis, and the way it affected the overall EC-Yugoslav relations. Specific example, which exhibited this commitment was the report drafted by Rossetti, EP delegation member, report on the EEC/Yugoslavia relations.⁸⁰ However, besides the agile role of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia in following upon the internal Yugoslav developments, giving political voice of the importance of EC involvement and support, and the overall actions of the Parliament in putting pressure on the Council, the Parliament, with its independent positions, was not really able to greatly influence policy responses, unless the other institutions were willing to adopt the same reasoning. The response by the European Community, as a whole, as previously illustrated throughout the example of the financial protocol and its negotiations process, was not seriously and properly addressing the Yugoslav problems nor did it succeed in mitigating the economic troubles. Instead, there were inter-institutional discrepancies and incompatibility of different positions towards understanding the problems in Yugoslavia, and especially in terms of providing

⁷⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary of report of working sessions of the sixth meeting between European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 16-19 Sep 1985

⁷⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary of working session of the sixth meeting between the European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 17 Sep 1985

⁸⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Minutes of the 8th EP/Yugoslavia interparliamentary meeting, Belgrade, 1-4 Dec ,1987

adequate and comprehensive solutions. In this regard, MEP Ben Visser noted in his political observations:

“The West has failed to accurately predict the possible internal problems which might arise following the death of Tito. Those, which arose, were clearly less serious than had originally been thought. In contrast, current problems arising from the serious economic and financial situation and its possible implications were probably being underestimated.”⁸¹

His personal recommendation regarding the EC understanding and action was that the economic and financial problems including their possible political implications had to be taken very seriously, and the EC would have to respond by package of measures to be taken in this regard as well as put efforts in arriving at a satisfactory give-and-take arrangement with Yugoslavia. Because it was important to maintain the friendly relations, especially closer interparliamentary links, given its special geopolitical position.

2.3 The Chernobyl crisis

Particular instance where the European Community may not have predicted and considered fully the possible political interpretation and economic implications of their policy towards Yugoslavia was the crisis response that they had adopted in the face of the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster. Following the Chernobyl accident in April 1986, the EC introduced trade protectionist measures, which among other provisions, included suspension of imports from Yugoslavia for certain agricultural products. In turn, Yugoslavia strongly protested against such measures and view the ban as unjustified, unilateral, not based on objective facts and against the Cooperation Agreement between EC and Yugoslavia providing for prior consultation by either side in similar circumstances.⁸²

⁸¹HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Note: Conclusion of the 6th European Parliament/Yugoslav Federal Assembly meeting by Ben Visser MEP, 19 Sep 1985

⁸² HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Meeting minutes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 22 May 1986

The Chernobyl crisis was politically very significant, and the damage associated with it was enormous, because Yugoslavia had always insisted on its “sui generis” position and had been heavily criticizing its association with the Eastern European countries. Whereas the treatment in the EC crisis response of Yugoslavia was no different from these countries, and thus, Yugoslavia view the EC actions as extremely negative.⁸³ The Community actions for limiting of food and agricultural products from Yugoslavia into the EC due to the Chernobyl disaster were also heavily criticized by members of the European Parliament delegation for relations to Yugoslavia. The inclusion of Yugoslavia with Eastern European CMEA countries in the import ban, and exclusion of certain European countries more heavily affected by the nuclear fallout, according to the EP delegation members had resulted in adverse political repercussions.⁸⁴ To this end, the President of the EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, Seibel Emmerling, sent a letter to the President of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Yugoslav Assembly, stating that the negative opinion and feelings of Yugoslavia towards the EC actions was shared by the members of the European Parliament, all of whom were being aware of the negative political effects.⁸⁵ She expressed urgent need for making contacts with the members of the Yugoslav parliamentary delegation, in the framework of interparliamentary dialog, to discuss political and economic concerns of both institutions as well as any possible solutions.

The lack of proper understanding and awareness about the principles of cooperation with Yugoslavia, accompanied with poorly considerate policies, demonstrated in the example of the Chernobyl response, contributed to the rise of negative sentiments among the Yugoslavs and their great disappointment and mistrust towards their long-standing partner the European Community. The relations between the EC and Yugoslavia were deteriorated, on one hand, by the delay and difficulties in negotiations for the conclusion of a favorable financial protocol, and on the other hand, the manner in which the Community responded to the

⁸³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Exchange of views on the relations between the EC and Yugoslavia by Commission representative Mr. Schwed during preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia of 22 May 1986

⁸⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, European Parliament press statement, Brussels, 22 May 1986

⁸⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Letter from Mrs. Seibel Emmerling to Dr. Sukovic, 20 June 1986

Chernobyl crisis, both of which produced adverse political effects with a spill-over effect over other areas of the Yugoslav social and political realm.

2.4 Human rights

The social and political implications driven by the economic downturn in Yugoslavia, as a question of human rights concern has emerged as early as 1985, and continued to grow in importance as to become an indispensable imperative in the bilateral relations with the Community.

At first, it appeared as a subject for discussion during the preparatory meetings of the EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, whose members suggested to be also discussed with their Yugoslav counterparts at times of their periodically scheduled interparliamentary meetings.⁸⁶ The initial approach of the EP delegation to deal with the questions concerning human rights was that it was not necessary to institutionalize a structure within the delegation that would deal specifically with these matters. Rather, the EP delegation considered that it was best if such topics were dealt unofficially and more personally, contrary to putting these questions on the agenda.⁸⁷ However, within a few months, a letter alarmed the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia that the chair Siebel Emmerling received from Ms. Van den Heuvel, chair of the Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, where she shared the committee's concerns on human rights situation in Yugoslavia.⁸⁸ Consequently, the subject of human rights decidedly became part of the agenda and an important point for discussion at the upcoming scheduled interparliamentary meeting with the Yugoslav Assembly representatives.

In the introductory remarks of the discussion between the parliamentary delegations in Belgrade in September 1985, President of EP delegation Siebel Emmerling underlined the

⁸⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary record of the meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, Brussels, 21 Mar, 1985

⁸⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Chairman notes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 23 Apr 1985

⁸⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Chairman notes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 11 Sep 1985

particular attention that the European Parliament attached to respect of human rights and freedoms in all countries including Yugoslavia. Whereas, other EP delegation members posed questions to their Yugoslav partners regarding several issues of interest including freedom of worship, reform of the penal code, political prisoners, detention for crimes of opinion, all of which referenced to Amnesty International cases put forward to the Parliament's attention and request for intervention.⁸⁹ In their response, the Yugoslav representatives indicated that the question of human rights often led to different interpretations and practices. They argued that the Yugoslav Assembly was committed to safeguarding human rights and freedoms in their country and expressed their beliefs that the system regardless of its lack of political pluralism allowed for different opinions and guaranteed large number of freedoms to its citizens despite some errors. In the view of the Yugoslavs, the issue of human rights in Europe was being politicized far too much, and such approach could only result in increased tensions. In reference to the particular cases presented by the EP delegation, the Yugoslav side stated that all cases were related to operations against the State, such as the acts of rebels Albanians or Croats, which in line with the law were facing the consequences of their actions. In terms of the source of the documentation itself, Yugoslavs perceived Amnesty International as an organization being one-sided, looking specifically for the errors and disregarding the positive instances and the progress in the sector of human rights. Finally, the Yugoslavs argued that there existed interventions of foreign enemy powers trying to destabilize Yugoslavia and they targeted sensitive points like the Kosovo region in attempt to provoke unrest.

The EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, was not only engaged in discussing the problems of human rights with their Yugoslav partners in the interparliamentary dialog, but it was also involved in circulating communication from different Parliament's committees, closely following research and documentation on topics related to human rights in Yugoslavia, documenting letters sent to the Parliament by interest groups, drafting motions for discussions and other activities within their scope of work. One notable instance was the

⁸⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Summary of report of working sessions of the sixth meeting between European Parliament and the Yugoslav Assembly, Belgrade, 16-19 Sep 1985

letter sent to the EP delegation chair Seibel Emmerling, from Mr. Formigoni, chair of Parliament's political affairs committee, proposing that the document on human rights in Yugoslavia obtained from the research and documentation of the Human rights department, be forwarded by the delegation to the Yugoslav ambassador, so that he could give his comments on the issues raised.⁹⁰ On a different occasion, the EP delegation was drawn attention, by Amnesty International, as an interest group, towards three cases of Yugoslav citizens being prisoners of conscience, whose detention constituted a violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Yugoslavia was a signatory state. They asked the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia to discuss these cases with the Yugoslav delegation and advocate for the respect of the international provisions regarding human rights.⁹¹ Finally, the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia put forward motions for resolutions in the Parliament, on the situation of Albanians in Kosovo and a motion for a resolution on freedom of expression in Yugoslavia.⁹²

Beyond the work and activities of the EP delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, human rights issues raised in the European Parliament due to MEPs concerns with the human rights situation in Yugoslavia were mainly regarding the rights of and relations between ethnic groups, periodic nationalist outbreaks and state repression of groups or individuals that represented divisive or challenging forces in Yugoslavia. In particular, great number of motions for resolutions expressing Parliament's concerns, were tabled by MEPs on the human rights situation in Yugoslavia, and the situation of the Albanians in the Kosovo region, as well as specific case related motions such as trials of Yugoslav intellectuals, imprisonments of persons on the grounds of their beliefs, political detentions, and trials of dissidents in Yugoslavia.⁹³

⁹⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Chairman notes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 27 Feb, 1986

⁹¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Documentation from interest groups: Letter from Amnesty International to Mrs. Seibel Emmerling, 12 May 1986

⁹² HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Chairman notes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 25 Sep, 1986

⁹³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Working document: The human rights situation in Yugoslavia, 13 Aug 1985

2.5 The Kosovo question

The issues of political trials of dissidents and the detention and prison sentences of persons accused of activities hostile to the State was tightly connected to nationalistic activities of the ethnic groups living in Yugoslavia. The most worrying center of nationalist agitation was the province of Kosovo with several thousands of Albanian nationalist agitators and members of nationalistic organizations taken before the courts. Whereas, at the same time, the Serbian minority was complaining about ill-treatment and violence in the province, which resulted in exodus of the Serbs to other parts of Yugoslavia.⁹⁴ The ongoing economic crisis in Yugoslavia negatively intensified the situation since it disproportionately affected the province of Kosovo, with population of majority ethnic Albanians, and incomes less than a third of the national average, with unemployment of thirty percent of the working population and highest birth rates in Europe at the time.⁹⁵ Accordingly, the disadvantaged Albanians were resorting to nationalism as a solution for their struggles. The situation in the Kosovo province remained explosive, while the tensions in Republic of Serbia over the Kosovo question forced the Yugoslav leadership to consider measures against the Albanian separatism and nationalism.⁹⁶

During the scheduled interparliamentary meeting of delegations in Belgrade 1987, Yugoslav representatives stressed that Yugoslavia was capable of dealing with the Kosovo question without recourse to external assistance. They hoped to solve the problem not by force, but through dialog. In their view, regardless of the Albanian nationalists' calls for an independent Kosovo Republic, history had revealed the impossibility of such future.⁹⁷ Yugoslavs also pointed out to the fact that national separatism could not be tolerated, especially the Albanian nationalism, which they described as savage and brutal, against the Serbs who were living in the Kosovo province. On a more positive note, the federal government had also prepared a

⁹⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Working document: Political situation in Yugoslavia, 3 Oct 1986

⁹⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Working document: Political situation in Yugoslavia, 23 Oct 1987

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Minutes of the 8th EP/Yugoslavia interparliamentary meeting, Belgrade, 1-4 Dec ,1987

special development program for the particularly under-developed region of Kosovo, comprising of social, economic and cultural aspects, based on the principle of equal rights for the extremely large number of different nationals living in the province.⁹⁸ As of early 1989, the political situation in Kosovo was deteriorated and there was a high threat to the safety of the population, which led to the introduction of exceptional emergency measures by the Yugoslav government. The interventions were based on the real danger of armed conflict and the necessity for the prevention of bloodshed.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the danger of escalation of the situation remained and internal stability was compromised, because the Kosovo problem was essentially political and could not be solved without any political remedies, even though there were ongoing economic and constitutional reforms.

Taking into account all the concerns regarding the uncertain and destabilized situation in Kosovo, in its resolution of 13 April 1989 on the situation in Kosovo, the EP accepted the invitation of the Yugoslav Assembly President to send a delegation to examine the situation on the ground, and decided for the constitution of such mission by members of the Parliament.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia was seen as naturally competent to undertake this responsibility and was authorized to perform the mission in Kosovo with a reduced number of representatives, who drafted the work program in agreement with the Yugoslav Federal Assembly.¹⁰¹ The specific nature of the mission was fact-finding and the goal was investigation of the situation in Kosovo throughout meetings and interviews with the Yugoslav officials as well as the President of the Kosovo province, President of the Kosovo's Assembly, Albanian intelligentsia, students, and prisoners.¹⁰² However, notably, the Yugoslav side regarded this specific mission as part of the long-

⁹⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Report on the 8th EP/Yugoslavia interparliamentary meeting by Mr. Julian Grimaldos- President of the EP delegation, 4 Dec 1987

⁹⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Report on the 9th EP/Yugoslavia delegation meeting, Strasbourg, 13-16 Mar, 1989

¹⁰⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Letter on the organization of the EP mission, Strasbourg, 25 May 1989

¹⁰¹ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Chairman notes of the preparatory meeting of delegation for relations to Yugoslavia, 23 May 1989

¹⁰² HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Report on the parliamentary delegation's mission to Kosovo, 22 June, 1989

existing parliamentary framework activities of good relations between the EP and the Federal Assembly.

The topics of inquiry of the EP mission to Kosovo encompassed the events leading to the adoption of the emergency measures in Kosovo, the constitutional reform of Serbia and its impact on Kosovo's autonomy, the isolation procedure and its compatibility with the rule of law, accusations against prisoners and the solutions envisaged for the future of Kosovo. The EP delegation throughout the conducted interviews obtained answers about the questions raised, which could be grouped into two different perspectives, on one hand, the official positions of the Yugoslav and Serbian authorities, and on the other hand, contrasting positions of the Albanians and other Yugoslav Republics. In particular, the emergency measures from the official point of view were seen as a necessary mechanism aimed to put a stop to counter-revolutionary activities threatening the territorial unity of Yugoslavia, while the Albanian representatives contested the constitutional basis for such measures and their particular focus on the Kosovo province. Moreover, the Slovenian delegation held different view on the Kosovo problem, which they considered as completely politicized and presented as an ideological and political problem, whereas as of their view it was purely economic and historical. Similar dichotomy applied to the rest of the points discussed and considered, pointing out to the different understanding of the Kosovo problem between the ethnic groups as well as between the separate Yugoslav Republics, making it almost impossible to consolidate one all-round perspective of the key events and facts.

The members of the EP visiting delegation regarded the mission as a failure, since it did not achieve its goal and failed to obtain satisfactory answers to the questions raised, mainly due to the incompetent organization by the Yugoslav authorities, thus the anxieties expressed in the EP resolution on the situation in Kosovo were only repeated.¹⁰³ Regardless, the lack of success, the mission did provide the delegation members with insights into the existing situation in Kosovo, but also the separation and confrontation between the federal authorities and the Republics and provinces. Therefore, it opened a broader perspective regarding human

¹⁰³ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Note to members: Press release drawn up in Belgrade by the members of the delegation who undertook the mission to Kosovo, Belgrade, 1 June, 1989

rights in the specific context of Kosovo and Yugoslavia more generally. This observation could be confirmed by the concluding remarks of the mission report:

“It would be undoubtedly short-sighted if we were to focus entirely on the problems in Kosovo, for while it is a fact that human rights violations must be denounced where and whenever they appear, it is also a fact that by proposing closer economic cooperation with Yugoslavia, and specifically with Kosovo, we can restore a healthier state of affairs. The concern about the situation in Kosovo voiced by the European Parliament must not be merely a passing concern, instead continue until such time as the rule of law has been restored.”¹⁰⁴

The visit of the EP delegation to Yugoslavia in a different format from the previous framework of cooperation and interparliamentary dialog was a completely new experience, which was very important in the sense that it attached a new dimension to the relation between the EP and Yugoslavia. It clearly showed that the Parliament’s involvement with the question of human rights was a priority of concern and they were prepared to act upon this concern in their future interaction with Yugoslavia, including direct encounters. Overall, the delegation experienced discontent with their visit to Yugoslavia, since their concerns was reaffirmed and even extended beyond the issues related to the Kosovo province, in fact, other structural problems in the Yugoslav social and political life.

The mission was not perceived positively in Yugoslavia either and opened different dilemmas, about the preparedness of Yugoslavia to receive the EP delegation, the special nature of the visit and its relation to interference in Yugoslav’s sovereignty and internal affairs.

The Committee for foreign policy in the Yugoslav Assembly, while recognizing the insufficient preparedness of Yugoslavia for the visit and the intended dialog, which they perceived as lacking facts and precise information, as well as the fact that many questions

¹⁰⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Report on the parliamentary delegation’s mission to Kosovo, 28 May- 02 June, 1989

had remained open, concluded that the EP delegation had conducted itself as a research commission, making their conduct different from the level of parliamentary delegation meetings, therefore, detrimental for the sovereignty of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁵

Another prominent commentary was made by Voislav Mićović, president of the Socialist Alliance of the Working people of Serbia, who regarded the visit of the EP delegation as a negative historical and political precedent, with serious political consequences for the sovereignty and security of Yugoslavia. He described the visit in the following words:

“Their arrival (EP delegation) and the way in which their mission took place in Kosovo, directly concerns our sovereignty and represents a form of political pressure and interference in our internal affairs. The mere fact that this had been the first mission of this kind in our history that had come to Yugoslavia raises the question why and in the name of what principles has this been allowed. Certain West European countries, having greater problems have never accepted requests of the EP to receive fact-finding missions.”¹⁰⁶

In his view the mission was biased, with one-sided questions and not interested in the whole problem of Kosovo and its essence, rather on collecting information from people who acted against a sovereign country and promoted secession and nationalism. While taking with doubt the violations of rights of Serbs and Montenegrins living in Kosovo. Likewise, other Yugoslav newspapers maintained the negative attitude of the involvement of the EP in the Yugoslav affairs by designating the visit to have provoked upset and discontent among the people in Yugoslavia and represented a form of political pressure.¹⁰⁷

Regardless of the mission being regarded as a failure by the EP delegation members themselves and as a negative historical precedent, provocation or discontent among the Yugoslav officials and public, it was important because it established a new practice in the

¹⁰⁵ (HAEU), Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Yugoslav press release: Borba newspaper article: “To reach the truth with facts”, 14 June, 1989

¹⁰⁶ (HAEU), Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Yugoslav press release: Borba newspaper article “Negative historical precedent” 9 June 1989

¹⁰⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen - Deuxième législature, Yugoslav press release: Weekly NIN “We could, but we didn’t” 11 June 1989

way of involvement of the EP in questions related to Yugoslavia and human rights. In addition, it was important in terms of providing a new special dimension integrated to the relations between the two partners, becoming an inseparable segment of the external policy in the framework of promoting cooperation. It illustrated that the EP was highly concerned with this question and was willing to act upon its concerns, for ensuring the respect of fundamental rights and freedoms.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored in what direction the cooperation between Yugoslavia and the EEC evolved by looking at the renewal of the time bound provisions of the Cooperation Agreement, primarily the financial protocol. It demonstrated that the disunity and inter-Community disagreements significantly deteriorated the relations and created mistrust among the Yugoslav authorities. The EP was very aware of the political implications of the Community's decisions and indeed voiced its concerns accompanied with strong actions for restoring the good relation and trust among the Yugoslav partners, yet with very limited success. The overall relations between the Community and Yugoslavia were marked with deep unease, because Yugoslavia received with great bitterness the measures that the Community adopted after the Chernobyl accident, which accompanied with the forestallments of the financial protocol were not satisfactory to Yugoslavia given its severe economic difficulties. The economic situation had disproportionately affected the constituent Yugoslav units, contributing to social and political unrest manifested in the form of nationalistic tendencies and actions, giving a rise to concerns for human rights and freedoms. The most sensitive center for human rights violations was the province of Kosovo given its disadvantaged position compared to the other Republics. Even though the Yugoslav authorities wished to deal with the Kosovo question without any external assistance, the great threat of deterioration and the real possibility of an armed conflict resulted in the EP's decision to send a mission to Kosovo for investigating the situation on the ground. Regardless of the fact that the mission did not live up to the expectations and failed to fulfill its purpose, it did provide a different understanding of the problems in Yugoslavia, established a new

modus operandi in EP's involvement in Yugoslavia and introduced the dimension of human rights and freedoms as indivisible part of the EEC external policy towards Yugoslavia.

CHAPTER 3: The EP between human rights and federal unity (1990-91)

The severity of the economic crisis in Yugoslavia had repercussions of political nature and not only did it rise concern to the question of human rights and freedoms discussed in the previous chapter, it did provoke the national and inter-republican tensions. The question of Kosovo being the powder gag at the center of the unveiling broader Yugoslav conflict, eventually called into question the unity and very existence of the Federal Socialist Republic. The following chapter will construct the pathway of how the EC/EP relations developed in the rapidly changing political developments in Yugoslavia during 1990-1991, especially in the context of war and violent political disintegration. Specifically, it will deal with the predicament between the commitment to safeguarding the territorial integrity and unity of Yugoslavia driven by political and security interests, and the acknowledgment of the fragmentation of the Yugoslav nation and legitimate independence of its Republics driven by the adherence to protection of human rights and democracy. Finally, the particular role of the Parliament in formulation of the foreign and security policy towards Yugoslavia will be considered.

3.1 The Yugoslav question after 1989

The European Parliament's Resolution of 13 April 1989, which expressed great concern on the Kosovo question and sent the first fact-finding mission to examine the situation, was further confirmed and reinforced in 1990, with a new Resolution on the situation in Kosovo and respect for human rights.¹⁰⁸ However, as of 1990 the Yugoslav problem went beyond the Kosovo question and the perspective of human rights, since it was bound to affect relations among the Republics and ignite an internal conflict. At the beginning of the year, Yugoslavia was amid the most serious crisis after the Second World War, simultaneously political, economic and social, accompanied and entangled in nationalist tensions and rivalries between the republics, which were creating an existential crisis and threat of a break-up of

¹⁰⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Annex to chairman notes of the meeting of delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Brussels, 22 Feb 1990

the federation.¹⁰⁹ In an attempt to maintain the unity and consensus in the economic and political development of the Republics, the Federal government introduced economic and political reforms, among which, the most important in terms of democratic development, was the organization of elections in the constituent Republics.

To this end, in expectation of positive outcomes, MEP James Elles, submitted an oral question to the Commission in quest of an opinion concerning the role of the Community regarding the reforms in Yugoslavia, whereas he questioned whether the EC should have acted as an observer while the successful reforms happen by themselves, or it should have had an active role by withholding economic aid, if the Yugoslavs tried to resolve constitutional questions by force rather than through the ballot box.¹¹⁰ In their response, the Commission expressed that the upgrading of the cooperation between the two was contingent upon the introduction of pluralist democratic system in Yugoslavia based on the outcome of free elections and respect for human rights, and the ongoing elections in the Republics demonstrated that the democratization was already underway and the Commission hoped for positive results.¹¹¹ According to the Commission, the presence of the Community in Yugoslavia during the political changes was important, because the institutions could listen to the Yugoslav population, but would have to avoid any direct intervention in the political processes.¹¹²

The process of democratization of Yugoslavia in fact, began with the transition of Slovenia and Croatia from mono to multiparty system through free elections, therefore the establishment of a newly ordered democratic society in parts of Yugoslavia started to unfold. However, the future constitution of Yugoslavia was to be determined by means of referendum on the content of the “new Yugoslavian consensus “, with two options being

¹⁰⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note on the political situation in Yugoslavia drawn by the Directorate General for Research, Strasbourg, 13 Mar 1990

¹¹⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Oral question no. 113(H-1191/90) from Mr. Elles to the Commission: Yugoslavia, 8 Nov 1990

¹¹¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Reply to oral question H-1191/90 by Mr. Elles

¹¹² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of the meeting of delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 22 Jan 1991

envisaged a federation or a confederation.¹¹³ Admittedly, the political democratization of Yugoslavia as a whole, despite the partial democratic changes in the north, was significantly overshadowed by the quarrels between different nations living in the country, while the Kosovo problem remained open and yet to be solved, possibly by democratic means.

3.2 Elections in the Republics and Democratization question

Slovenia and Croatia were the first to organize their free elections in more than forty years, where the winning center-right parties, defeated the communists, and were in favor of sovereignty within a confederation in the case of Croatia, and a complete independence with secession from Yugoslavia, in the case of Slovenia.¹¹⁴ The election results prompted these two republics to take the position towards independence and separation from the rest of the federation. On the contrary, the situation in Serbia and Montenegro, its historical ally, was completely different, in the sense that the elections were won by the former communist parties, a nationalist, populist party- Serbian Socialist Party in Serbia, supportive of keeping all the Serbians in one country, while in Montenegro the victors were the League of Communists who favored a strong federal government. The elections in Serbia were boycotted by the ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo province as a protest against the Serbian control of their province. Finally, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, the communist parties were defeated and the newly elected ruling parties were nationalist, in the Bosnian case with a Muslim majority.

The Results of the elections organized across all the Republics undoubtedly raised the concerns about the future of Yugoslavia and the relations between its constituent units, given the ideological, national and religious divisions, making it almost impossible to envisage any kind of agreement that could meet the ambitions of the different groups. The future of Yugoslavia was dependent on the federal elections, which were postponed indefinitely due

¹¹³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Notice to members: Note from the Yugoslav Ambassador to the European Communities, Mihajlo Crnobrnja, on the political and economic situation in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 18 October 1990

¹¹⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note on the political situation in Yugoslavia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, Strasbourg, 16 Jan 1991

to the difficulties of the federal authorities to organize the elections in a democratic manner. In view of this development, EPP Group of the Parliament, raised an oral question to the Commission regarding steps to be taken to support the efforts of the Federal Government to organize the free elections, which in their view was of fundamental importance for the establishment of a multi-party parliamentary democracy and essential for the signature of the financial protocol and eventual start of negotiations for an association agreement.¹¹⁵

As of the beginning of 1991, the Yugoslav state model was under threat, since the process of disintegration was moving swiftly, mainly due to the inability of the federal authorities to organize the elections and the irreconcilable positions of the six republics on the form of their future state.¹¹⁶ Although Yugoslavia was the first country to detach itself from the Eastern bloc, the progress in terms of introducing democratic changes was moving with a very slow pace.

In February 1991, the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia conducted a dual mission to Yugoslavia, on one hand a visit to Belgrade as part of the framework of interparliamentary meetings with the Yugoslav Federal Assembly, and on the other hand, a visit to Kosovo as per the EP Resolution of 11 October 1990.¹¹⁷ Regarding the internal institutional developments the EP delegation acknowledged that despite of the efforts made, no agreement was reached, nor any progress was made in drafting a new constitution of Yugoslavia, since the positions of Slovenia and Croatia vis-a-vis Serbia were drastically different, the former not supporting a confederal model, while the latter preferred to see Yugoslavia as a federation. They concluded that the disagreements between the federal authorities and the Republics also impeded the organization of the federal elections.

The calls by the Parliament to the Yugoslav authorities and the authorities in the Republics for the organization of free and democratic federal elections in all parts of Yugoslavia as soon

¹¹⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Oral question no. (O-0040/91) from Mr. Sarlis and others on behalf of the EPP Group to the Commission: Situation in Yugoslavia, 20 Feb 1991

¹¹⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note on the political situation in Yugoslavia drawn-up by the Directorate-General for Research, 16 Jan 1991

¹¹⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report on the tenth interparliamentary meeting between the delegations from the European Parliament and the Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 11- 15 Feb, 1991

as possible were numerous and repetitive. The Parliament considered that the building of pluralist democracy in Yugoslavia had to be a condition for any future relations with the EC, in particular, the third financial protocol and association agreement. In a joint motion for a resolution, the EP, noted the deterioration of institutional, political and economic crisis, which was shaking the foundations of the Yugoslav Federation and was holding the risk of it becoming ungovernable leading to a dissolution; therefore, hoped that the negotiations between the Republics would produce a constitution which, by respecting the rights of all the peoples of Yugoslavia, would enable Yugoslavia to continue existing. It reaffirmed the mutual position of the EP and the Council in favor of “the unity and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia”. It called on the peoples of Yugoslavia not to advance incompatible ethnic and nationalist claims, which were irreconcilable with the prospects for a united Europe, while accepting the notion that the constituent republics and provinces must have the right to freely determine their own political future in a peaceful and democratic manner.¹¹⁸

In particular, the Rainbow Group, a regionalist political group, perceived the situation in Yugoslavia as on the brink of outright civil war due to the growing tensions between the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav authorities, thus, it demanded for normal conditions to be restored and genuinely free elections to be held and be observed by EP delegation and other international organizations. It called for the Commission to link the financial protocol negotiations with guarantees by the Yugoslav authorities of moves towards democracy and elimination of all obstacles to democracy.¹¹⁹ The Green Group asserted that the Parliament intended to contribute as far as it was able to the “Europeanization of the Balkans, rather than “the Balkanization of Europe”, which they saw as a desire of the Yugoslav peoples. Considering that the organization of federal elections was a guarantee of representative democracy, which could also forestall the uncontrollable break-up of Yugoslavia, they insisted that rapid steps should have been taken in arranging them.¹²⁰ The Socialists recalled

¹¹⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a Resolution by the Socialists, EPP, LDR, Greens, GUE and RDE Groups on the situation in Yugoslavia, 13 Mar 1991

¹¹⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request of inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance tabled by Vandemeulebroucke and Ewing on behalf of the Rainbow Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 18 Feb 1991

¹²⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote by Langer, and others on behalf of the Green Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 7 Mar 1991

the strategic position and crucial importance of Yugoslavia to the EC and its member states, called on the Federal government to seek to resolve the existing differences by peaceful negotiations, and insisted that in concluding the financial protocol and all other dealings with Yugoslavia the EC to make sure that human rights were fully respected in all parts of Yugoslavia and the abuses in Kosovo were halted.¹²¹ Even more assertively, the LDR Group, liberal, democrat and reform party, recognizing the great danger to peace and stability in the Balkans, stressed the need for federal elections in Yugoslavia and called on the Commission to make clear that the third financial protocol could not be signed until these elections were held and the persecution of the Albanian majority in Kosovo stopped.¹²²

Above all, the Parliament had continuously insisted on a peaceful resolution of the deep-stated multidimensional crisis in Yugoslavia, since they could anticipate the detrimental effect on the EEC-Yugoslavia relations, and more broadly the Balkan region, which was tightly connected to the peace and security in Europe, if the solution was to be reached by force or military means. Accordingly, the prime focus was put on the security dimension of the Yugoslav problem, which could have been resolved by the democratization process, which evidently had begun, while its perseverance was severely challenged, and thus, the Parliament had acted by putting pressure on Yugoslavia to achieve democracy, based on consensus and respect for human rights, which could guarantee peace and security.

The EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia during the interparliamentary meeting in Belgrade, emphasized the importance of Yugoslavia in maintaining peace and security in the Balkans, yet in terms of its institutional form, they asserted the following:

“ The choice Yugoslavia and its Republics make on an institutional model was strictly an internal matter, our delegation (the EP), in its talks with the Federal Assembly, conform with the Community’s view that until further notice, Yugoslavia was regarded as an integral whole and that it was essential that the

¹²¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote by Avgerinos and others on behalf of the Socialist Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 7 Mar 1991

¹²² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote by Von Alemann on behalf of the LDR Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 7 Mar 1991

EC be able to deal with a single negotiating partner, representative (and acknowledged as such) of the different constituent elements of the country.”¹²³

To understand the Yugoslav internal problem sufficiently, the EP delegation met with representatives of the parliaments of the Republics and reported on the positions and understanding of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, regarding the Yugoslav problem. According to the Croatian representatives, the confrontations in Yugoslavia were due to the opposition between two tendencies: democracy and a multiparty system in Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia, and an attachment to traditional communism in Serbia and Montenegro. In particular, they questioned the power and ability of the federal authorities to govern the country of “Yugoslavia of the past” which could no longer meet the expectations and demands of the populations, which had elected them. Croatia wished to be a democratic and sovereign state within a confederal structure, and this ambition was shared by Slovenia, since they could accept a system in which their republic would be part of a confederation, but could not follow the federal system envisaged by Serbia. Moreover, as of a future stage Slovenia expressed intentions to obtain its full independence and become a member of the Community, integrating into Europe. In the view of Serbia, the separatist tendencies of the ethnic Albanian population were precisely the reason why Serbian authorities had suppressed the institutions that had been “awarded” to the Kosovar Albanians, which in turn had produced negative reactions by the Albanians and boycotting the national elections, therefore, rejecting democracy in the country.

Ante Marković, the president of the Federal Executive Council, i.e. the Yugoslav executive government, gave the most describing interpretation of the situation in Yugoslavia, who considered the transition from a state knowing only one party into a parliamentary democracy as an extremely difficult project, made more difficult by the economic problems, and summed up the problems in Yugoslavia with the following quotation:

¹²³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report on the tenth interparliamentary meeting between the delegations from the European Parliament and the Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 11- 15 Feb, 1991

“Yugoslavia has two alphabets, three religions, four languages, five national groups, six Republics, seven neighbors, thirty three million individuals”, therefore in his view the internal struggles of Yugoslavia was the price that would have to be paid for achieving democracy.”¹²⁴

The concluding impression of the EP delegation members after their visit to Yugoslavia was that the situation was extremely fragile, tensions between the Republics were extremely heightened, aggravated by ethnic tensions between the different groups “whose geographic location corresponded only to a very limited extent to the demarcations which represented the borders between the republics.”

3.3 The Kosovo question and its essence

After concluding the talks in Belgrade, the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia conducted a fact-finding mission to Pristina where it held meetings with representatives and leaders of the Albanian community.¹²⁵ The mandate of the delegation was to collect information and report back to the Parliament and its political groups, which would then make evaluations and judgements themselves. The discussions were centered on the legal status of the autonomous province and the actual effectiveness of the self-government, after the changes of the Serbian constitution in 1990. The province desired to be a separate sovereign within the Yugoslav federation; however, this political wish was suppressed by the Serbian state, through denial of basic human rights, especially the right to self-determination, suppression of political expression, right to speech, assembly and boycott. The EP delegation concluded that the observations and documentation on human rights made available by the representatives of the Albanian community coincided with the reports of human rights abuses by external bodies and interest groups. Although the delegation was satisfied that it had accomplished the program with greater outcomes compared to the previous visit for similar purpose in 1989, it was still not a comprehensive evaluation of the situation since it was

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième legislature, Report by the delegation on the mission of inquiry to Pristina to examine the situation with regard to respect for human rights in Kosovo, 13-14 Feb 1991

lacking access and information from wide range of individuals and organizations. However, the delegation was fully aware that the situation in the province had to be seen not separately, but in the context of the very significant political changes being undergone by the federation as a whole.

Indeed, the question of Kosovo has to be situated in the context of the problems facing Yugoslavia generally, which were the political disequilibrium created by the strengthening of power of the governments of the Republics after their elections, which in turn weakened the authority of the Federal government. The problem of Kosovo precisely exemplifies such situation, since its autonomous status was suspended by the new constitution of Serbia, which has been previously guaranteed by the Federal government and constitution. It further contributed to differences and attitudes among the rest of the Republics regarding the future of Yugoslavia. This was the reason why the agreement for the new federal constitutional arrangements was very essential and the only step forward to balancing the tensions between the Republics and the federal authority, by which the integrity of Yugoslavia as a unified state could be maintained.

The report of the EP delegation visit to Yugoslavia was very important in making available insightful information and documentation that the delegation obtained about the situation in Yugoslavia, and it certainly depicted the highly complex political situation in the country. To this end, MEP Avgerinos, the President of the delegation, requested answers from the Commission regarding the role of the Parliament in formulating an opinion on the subject of Yugoslavia, and on the way in which the Commission envisaged the future relations between the Community and Yugoslavia, especially with reference to the agreements.¹²⁶

3.4 The European Parliament's predicaments and the future of Yugoslavia

As discussed above, the problem of Yugoslavia was perceived mainly through the security perspective and democratization was thought to not only solve the internal problems, but also contribute to peace and stability of the Balkan region. Against such understanding, the

¹²⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Oral question no.(O-0068/91) from Avgerinos on behalf of the Socialist Group to the Commission: Situation in Yugoslavia, 11 Mar 1991

position towards Yugoslavia as a unitary state, despite its uncertain future, seemed as a reasonable choice for the EC in terms of its foreign policy. The attested role of the Parliament in Foreign and Security Policy of the Community was somewhat limited, in spite of which, and in the particular context of Yugoslavia, the Parliament had an active part in extending its role and powers in this area by the work of the delegation, its missions and above all its discussions and opinions regarding the subject.

Even though the Parliament has been in favor of maintaining the integrity of Yugoslavia, the common foreign policy decision, when considering the right for the peoples of Yugoslavia to self-determination and democratic decision about their political future, the Parliament attempted to anticipate and prepare the EC response, if the federal structure become no longer a sustainable option. Despite the adherence to the unity of Yugoslavia, the Parliament has welcomed the democratically expressed political wishes of independence of Slovenia and Croatia, including the former's intention of joining the Community. In particular, the DR Group, party of the European far-Right, submitted an oral question to the Commission in view of the democratically expressed desire for independence of Slovenia and its consequent aspirations to join the EEC, questioning the response of the Commission in case of future request by Slovenia to join the Community, and whether they considered that it would be preferable to sign financial protocols with Slovene and Croat governments instead of the Yugoslav Federal Government.¹²⁷ The Parliament was aware that the threat to security and peaceful coexistence of the Republics, might contribute to an irreversible crisis for the Balkan region, the neighboring countries and the process of democratization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, was calling for the talks of the Yugoslavs to culminate in a "new institutional arrangement", which respected the principles of liberty, self-determination and autonomy of each republic.¹²⁸

According to the Parliament the problem of Yugoslavia could not be prejudged either in favor of or against the existing structure, being the reason why the Community was unable to

¹²⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Oral question no. (O-0067/91) from Blot on behalf of the DR Group to the Commission: Situation in Yugoslavia, 11 Mar 1991

¹²⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote by Rossetti and others on behalf of the GUE Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 12 Mar 1991

formulate policy on the changing situation in Yugoslavia, and the Parliament was willing to get involved in offering mediation.¹²⁹ The future relation of Yugoslavia, or its successor states, with the EC, according to the Parliament would had to depend on the rule of law, respect for human rights, free and fair elections, and transformation towards market economy and multi-party system.

The opinion of the Commission regarding the same question, expressed during EP delegation meeting, was that it would continue to deal solely with the Federal government, which was considered to be the sole negotiating party, and that in connection to the ratification of the third financial protocol, the possibility of converting the Cooperation Agreement into an Association Agreement or any other aspect of bilateral relations, the Community would certainly consider the respect for human rights and the search for a solution to the crisis.¹³⁰

Similarly, the Yugoslav ambassador to the EC, when reporting on the political and economic situation in Yugoslavia, described that the problems in Yugoslavia were stemming from the revival of nationalism and ethnic conflict in the country. In his view the visit of the Commission President Jacques Delors and the Parliament's resolutions had played a useful role in that the "friendly pressure" exerted by the Community to help find a solution to Yugoslavia's problems had had a positive effect.¹³¹ In his opinion, even though the Federal government has been challenged by some of the Republics, it was still the core of the country and could act as a principal speaker in international negotiations and relations, yet he recognized the necessity for reaching a common solution and compromise in determining its future.

Nevertheless, in the context of maintaining the unity of Yugoslavia, the Parliament considered that it was of greater importance to safeguard the rights of minorities in different republics and extend democratic freedoms, as a condition to overcoming the problems, and

¹²⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by McMillian-Scott on behalf of the European Democratic Group on Yugoslavia, 13 May 1991

¹³⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of the delegation meeting: Report by a Commission representative on the situation in Yugoslavia, Brussels 20 June 1991

¹³¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of the delegation meeting: Report by Mihajlo Crnobrnja, Yugoslav Ambassador to the Communities on the situation in Yugoslavia, Brussels, 20 June 1991

building a society based on respect for human rights. However, disturbed by the factual deteriorating political situation, widespread violence and human rights violations within Yugoslavia, the Parliament expressed the following opinion:

“While reiterating the preference of the European Community and the international community more generally for the maintenance of one Yugoslavia, (the EP) insisted that this could not and must not be seen as a willingness to countenance the suppression of democracy and human rights.”¹³²

The Parliament was convinced that the future of Yugoslavia did not lie in unequivocal division between the various ethnic groups and nationalities living in the country and even less in violence, and was determined to make contribution to ensure that the new structure of Yugoslavia and its Republics, whether united or separate, was brought through democratic means and in a European context, with full respect for human rights, especially rights of ethnic and religious minorities.¹³³ Therefore, it was urging the Community to play an active role in encouraging democratic dialog between the various sides in Yugoslavia, all of which were essential for the country’s European future. Accordingly, the Parliament has expanded the viewpoint towards the Yugoslav problem to incorporate the dimension of human rights and democracy, which were considered to be of detrimental importance for any possible future of Yugoslavia.

In the summer of 1991, the situation in Yugoslavia had significantly deteriorated due to the use of force by the federal Yugoslav army. The Parliament called for ceasefire and return to the negotiations and peaceful settlement of dispute, expecting that the EC would continue to play a sustained role as mediator in the resolution of the situation.¹³⁴ Consequently, in line with the peace efforts by the European Community a peace agreement was reached on 7 July

¹³² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Avgerinos and others on behalf of the Socialist Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 13 May 1991

¹³³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Langer on behalf of the Green Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 13 May 1991

¹³⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with a request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the Council Statement by Jackson and McMillian-Scott on behalf of the European Democratic Group on Yugoslavia, 4 July 1991

1991 in Brioni, which foresaw a ceasefire and a temporary suspension of the unilateral declarations for independence of Croatia and Slovenia, thus allowed time for concluding the negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia. It was welcomed by the EP, which believed that if respected by all parties, could provide time for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.¹³⁵ The Parliament expressed its position in favor of search for a political solution, mediated by the international community, especially the EC, which would be based on the respect for human rights, the right of self-determination and the inviolability of frontiers. Therefore, it approved and supported the efforts made by international actors such as the European Ministerial Troika, CSCE and the EC institutions.¹³⁶

Nevertheless, the Parliament noted that according to the Federal Yugoslav constitution, the federation consisted of sovereign nations, which possessed the right to self-determination, including the right to secession. In this regard, the Green Group argued that the aspirations expressed by the declarations of independence already made or yet to be made had to be fulfilled, which was possible only when the peoples of Yugoslavia reached a stable agreement over common economic and political interests, followed by the EC opening for them an accessible and serious outlook for European integration.¹³⁷ The only way forward for Yugoslavia, at the time, was the negotiation process to be concluded successfully with a consensus of all the groups within Yugoslavia, which would enable the establishment of a new institutional structure, taking into account the rights of all peoples and return to normalcy of the relations between the EC and Yugoslavia, which could develop into the envisioned Association Agreement and European integration.

The EC as a mediator played a crucial role in preventing the ongoing violence to escalate in a full-scale war, but at the same time, it provided hope for a peaceful solution to the problems of the Yugoslav peoples. In particular, the role of the Troika and the International Conference

¹³⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint Motion for a Resolution on behalf of the Socialist Group, PPE group, LDR, ED, V, GUE and CG groups on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 July 1991

¹³⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with a request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the Council Statement by De La Malene on behalf of the RDE Group on the political situation in Yugoslavia, 9 July 1991

¹³⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with a request for an early vote to wind up the debate by Langer on behalf of the Green Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 July 1991

on Yugoslavia in Hague along with the CSCE peace process and the Paris Charter commitments were able to achieve formal declarations on ceasefire and peaceful solutions to the problems of Yugoslavia, while not recognizing any change brought by force.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the actual results over the next months, were not an immediate halt of hostilities, but the crisis was further degenerated into continuous fighting, which was strongly condemned by the EP accompanied with calls upon the respect for ceasefire, renouncing of military force and respect for the peace commitments, minority rights and no change in borders.

At the same time, the Parliament recognized the real possibility of break-up of the Yugoslav state, which in its view, had to be met with unified proposals for reintegrating the Republics into a new regional and possibly institutional grouping. Specifically, the EP considered the following:

“The Yugoslav crisis represents a crucial test for the Community foreign policy and security cooperation; therefore, it is of vital importance that any position in respect of Yugoslavia and its peoples should be defined at Community level and not by individual Member States.”¹³⁹

In this regard, the Parliament anticipated that in case of unfortunate event of failure of the negotiations and the revival of armed conflict, it would be necessary that the Community give a formal recognition to those republics that have already proclaimed their independence and activate international mechanisms for putting an end to the war. In view of the continuing bloodshed and turmoil in Yugoslavia and the violation of the peace agreements the Parliament discussed possibilities to secure peace in Yugoslavia and considered that no lasting solution could be found in maintenance of the Yugoslav federation as such and denial of the right of self-determination of the republics including the right to secession. The

¹³⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with a request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council of Ministers by Prag and Jackson on behalf of the ED Group on Yugoslavia, 5 Sep 1991

¹³⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by De Piccoli and others on behalf of the Group of the European United Left on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 Sep 1991

Parliament believed that the right to self-determination of the Republics and autonomous provinces was inalienable and had to be exercised within the internal frontiers as established by the constitution, however this process should be complemented by a new process of cooperation between the Republics with a view that population of the same origin should not believe to be separated by new borders.¹⁴⁰ Unreservedly reiterating again the maintenance of all human rights, especially minority rights, and democracy was the main prerogative for the sovereign legitimacy of the republics. Noting the democratic wish for self-determination in favor of independence of the people of Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia, the Rainbow Group, led by the ideology of regionalism, called the Member States of the EC to formally recognize the rights of these Republics to complete independence.¹⁴¹ The Greens perceived the EC action as “too hesitant, restraint and incapable of giving expression to a common foreign policy”; therefore, unable to deal with the growing conflict and promote a European solution. They also called for recognition of the republics, which had decided to detach themselves from Yugoslavia, providing that they guarantee the respect for ethnic, cultural and religious minorities.¹⁴² Whereas, the EPP Group expressed its belief that the EC should not yet recognize the republics that have declared independence until the picture of the political relations between the two was clearer, yet considered that the recognition was possible if it was a necessary measure to counter Serbia’s hegemony.¹⁴³

3.5 The EP’s turn towards recognition of independence of the Republics

The efforts by the international community and the EC for search of political solution for Yugoslavia in accordance with the principles of respect of human rights, the rights of

¹⁴⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission by Woltjer and Avgerinos on behalf of the Socialist Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 Sep 1991

¹⁴¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission by Vandemeulebroucke, and others on behalf of the Rainbow Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 Sep 1991

¹⁴² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate by Langer and Monnier-Besombes on behalf of the Greens on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 Sep 1991

¹⁴³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission by Oostlander and others on behalf of the EPP Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 9 Sep 1991

minorities, and the inviolability of frontiers , with the lead of the Parliament, continued in a direction to meet the legitimate political aspirations of the Yugoslav peoples. To this end, the Parliament started challenging the continued international recognition of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, which they considered ceased to function economically, in terms of transport, trade and telecommunications, and began urging the governments of member states to move towards recognition of the Republic of Slovenia and formal acknowledgement of the plebiscites held in Croatia and Macedonia. ¹⁴⁴ Even more so, in the view of the EPP Group, the Council was failing to take effective action to protect democracy and the right of nations to self-determination, thus was damaging the reputation of Europe, and was called to stop announcing ceasefire agreements which were not respected and take an effective action in acknowledging that Yugoslavia no longer existed, and therefore, recognize the Republics, which had democratically expressed their wish to be sovereign states. ¹⁴⁵ The Socialists also shared the opinion that Yugoslavia, as it was no longer existed and supported the approach towards recognition of the Republics, provided that the respect for minority rights was ensured. ¹⁴⁶ Similarly, the LDR Group liberals called on the Community and the member states to recognize that there was no authority that could speak or act on behalf of Yugoslavia, therefore, called for the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia and any other republic of former Yugoslavia which democratically voted for its independence and was prepared to respect the human and minority rights of all its citizens. ¹⁴⁷ Likewise, the other EP political groups, participants in the discussion, shared similar opinion about the necessity of recognition of the Republics, which have proclaimed independence by democratic and constitutional

¹⁴⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Spencer and McMillan-Scott on behalf of the European Democratic Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 7 Oct 1991

¹⁴⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Habsburg and others on behalf of the EPP Group on the situation in Yugoslavia, 7 Oct 1991

¹⁴⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Sakellariou and others on behalf of the Socialist Group on events in Yugoslavia, 7 Oct 1991

¹⁴⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Von Wechmar and others on behalf of the LDR Group on the war in Yugoslavia, 7 Oct 1991

procedures and continuance of negotiations for finding a political solution regarding the future of Yugoslavia.

The calls for the Member State governments to grant immediate international recognition to those Republics, which wished to become sovereign and independent, continued, as Serbia refused to accept the Community peace plan and continued the aggression, especially against Croatia. Accompanied with calls for the Community assistance in terms of economic, diplomatic and humanitarian aid to the affected regions and rigorous sanctions to the parties i.e. Republics not willing to comply with the peace agreements.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, the Parliament has been very critical and dissatisfied by the Council due to its indecisive attitude, which in their view encouraged the aggressors to continue their activities, while the EC was not able to provide a response to commensurate with the seriousness of the situation in former Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁹ The Parliament maintained its position for the foreign policy to change direction and progress towards dealing with Yugoslavia not as a unitary country, but its constituent independent Republics, which by establishing their multi-party systems and democracy accompanied with respect for human rights, could restore the peace in the region.

Eventually, peace was brokered by the United Nations together with Lord Carrington on behalf of the Community, which was applauded and welcomed by the Parliament, as was the readiness of the Member States to give diplomatic recognition of the Republics which had declared independence, and the readiness of the Commission to provide proposals on the future relations with these Republics and the Community.¹⁵⁰ In addition, the Parliament welcomed the decision of the Council to recognize Slovenia and Croatia based on their legitimate self-determination and guarantees for respect for human rights, minorities and

¹⁴⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Lamassoure on behalf of the LDR Group on the war in Croatia, 19 Nov 1991

¹⁴⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a Resolution by LDR, Green and Rainbow groups on Yugoslavia, 20 Nov 1991

¹⁵⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a Resolution with request for an early vote to wind up the debate on the Council statement by the Socialist and EUL Groups on the situation in Yugoslavia, 14 Jan 1992

respect for internal borders.¹⁵¹ Following the formal recognitions, the EC Foreign and Security Policy was finally in line with the positions of the Parliament and was about to shift from dealing with Yugoslavia as a single entity in dissolution to the recognition and establishment of bilateral relations with each newly independent Republic.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the European Parliament views on Yugoslavia's problem of the early 1990s, concerning the intersection of economic, political, social and nationalist dimensions, in the context of transitional period of reforms and democratization. The elections, being an imperative for democracy, succeeded in bringing up all of the existing differences, between the constituent Republics, especially the ethnic groups who did not correspond with the divisions of the internal borders, thus raised the inter-ethnic and inter-Republican tensions, which led to compromising the future of Yugoslavia. The way forward was seen in constituting a new institutional arrangement based on the consensus between the constituent units, which held irreconcilable positions on the form of their future state. The failure to reach any agreement resulted in break-out of hostilities, fighting and an immediate security threat to the Balkan region. The approach towards responding to these developments of the EC was precisely the security perspective, situating the crisis as an internal matter, and Yugoslavia, despite its future uncertainty and great possibility for disintegration, as a single unitary country. In particular, the EC foreign and security policy was in favor of maintaining the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, accompanied with offering mediation for a peaceful political solution of the conflict aimed at averting the threat to civil war. The Parliament's external policy was in line with this approach, but could not consent to its perseverance if it was the cost for the violation of human rights, especially the rights of minorities, and self-determination. Accordingly, as the situation in Yugoslavia deteriorated into an open conflict and aggression, and the international community put efforts in mediating peace agreements, which were continuously not respected, while and the EC was not able to provide a response

¹⁵¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a Resolution by the Socialist, EPP, LDR, ED, Green, EUL, EDA, and Rainbow groups of the EP on the decision by the Council to recognize Croatia and Slovenia, 16 Jan 1992

sufficient to end the war and re-establish democracy; the Parliament started challenging the EC foreign policy. It urged for changing the course of action and progress towards dealing with Yugoslavia not as a unitary country, which was facing fragmentation, but its constituent independent Republics, which by establishing their multi-party systems and democracy accompanied with respect for human rights, could restore the peace in the region. The initial attitude of the other EC institutions was hesitant and indecisive, but in the face of the eventual brokered ceasefire, it did align with the position of the Parliament. To sum up, this chapter demonstrated how the Parliament was able to bring a new perspective of human rights and democracy to the security dimension of the Yugoslav problem, and at the same time challenge and influence the EC foreign and security policy towards Yugoslavia.

CHAPTER 4: Slovenia and Croatia faced with the EC: diverging paths of European integration (1992-1993)

This chapter will move from the formal recognition of the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia by the European Community and zoom on the consequent developments of relations in the view of European integration. It will make a parallel comparison between the Slovenian and Croatian case and therefore, distinguish on the differences, especially the reasons behind the two diverging pathways, one of uninterrupted progress and the other of stagnation. In particular, the chapter will look at the factors facilitating the integration process through the instrument of Cooperation/Association agreements, as well as the ones that impede and forestall the establishment of close relations with the EC. Furthermore, it will analyze the peculiar role of the European Parliament, at the forefront of the political decision-making within the EC, and its lack of internal agreement and preparedness for political action. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the future prospects for Slovenia and Croatia in terms of their relations with the European Community.

4.1 Background

The European Parliament was the first institution, which recognized the break-up of Yugoslavia as irreversible due to historic, religious, cultural and political reasons that were opposed to the diminishing idea of unified nationalities, against the democratically expressed will of Slovenia and Croatia to establish their independent republics. At the same time, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Parliament took the lead to challenge the EC foreign policy towards Yugoslavia as a unitary state and repetitively called for immediate recognition of these Republics in accordance to the principles of self-determination and respect for human rights. More importantly, it called on the Council for a decisive action towards preventing the spread of the conflict to the other republics, due to the aggressive reaction by the Yugoslav Federal Army, against the proclamations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia, resulting in tremendous loss of human life and extensive damage of

cultural heritage.¹⁵² Having regard the tragic developments in Croatia and the massive destruction of towns like Vukovar and Dubrovnik, and greatly distressed by the large-scale deaths of Croats including children, while being aware of the EC responsibility to react, the EP condemned the aggression against Croatia by the Communist regime in Belgrade, demanded intervention by peace-keeping forces, and called the Member States for their support.¹⁵³

With the improvement of the situation and the apparent success of the ceasefire, the Parliament welcomed the obtained peace in the region, as well as the decision by the Council to recognize the Republics of Croatia and Slovenia, which fulfilled the conditions described in the guidelines for the recognition of new states from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and demanded a withdrawal of the federal army from Croatia.¹⁵⁴ In addition, the Parliament called for the Commission to be mandated to negotiate new Association Agreements with the Republics, which were recognized diplomatically on 15 January 1992 and for the PHARE program and Community assistance measures to be applied to these states.¹⁵⁵

The Association Agreement was seen as a natural development in the context of forthcoming agreements with Central European countries, to which end, MEP Spencer submitted an oral question to the Commission, asking how the Commission envisaged the future development of the Community relations with Slovenia, considering the forthcoming Association Agreements with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.¹⁵⁶ Notwithstanding, reality did not meet the expectations, and the developments, concerning the future of relations between the

¹⁵² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by LDR Group, Green Group and the Rainbow Group on Yugoslavia, 20 Nov 1991

¹⁵³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with a request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Antony and Lehideux on behalf of the DR Group on Croatia, 19 Nov 1991

¹⁵⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by the Socialists, EPP, LDR, ED, Greens, European Unitarian Left, European Democratic Alliance and the Rainbow Groups on the decision by the Council to recognize Croatia and Slovenia, 16 Jan 1992

¹⁵⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with a request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the Council statement by Jackson and others on behalf of the ED Group on relations between the Community and the peoples of former Yugoslavia, 15 Jan 1992

¹⁵⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Oral question no. 42 (H-1161/91) from MEP Spencer to the Commission: Association Agreement with Slovenia, 19 Nov 1991

EC and the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia respectively, were different than initially thought or hoped, and followed a different course of action and trajectory.

4.2 Slovenia on the road to European integration

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Slovenia took the lead and moved towards political pluralism and democratization well before the other Republics of former Yugoslavia. As early as June 1990, the Slovene Parliament began examining constitutional changes that would provide precedence of the laws of the Republic over the Federal laws, thus enable for the distancing from the federal structures and autonomous decision-making. In fact, the Slovene Parliament adopted the declaration of sovereignty on 2 July 1990, followed by a referendum on independence held on 23 December 1990 with 94.6% of the vote in favor of secession from Yugoslavia. Consequently, on 25 June 1991, the National Assembly declared Slovenia as an independent and sovereign Republic.¹⁵⁷ It was the democratically expressed wish for independence including the right to succession, and the right to self-determination, that the European Parliament acknowledged immediately after the declaration, and consequently called on the Community to recognize the independence, which did not happen until 15 January 1992, after the unilateral recognition by Germany on 19 December 1991.

Following the international diplomatic recognition on the part of the European Community and its Member States, the President of the Republic of Slovenia sent a letter to the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors, expressing the political aspirations of Slovenia to cooperate and be fully included and integrated in the Community. In particular, the letter read the following:

“The priority and vital interest of the Republic of Slovenia, as a Central European State, is the establishment, in the near future, of direct cooperation with the European Community. This standpoint has been adopted by the Assembly of the

¹⁵⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the political situation in Slovenia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, Brussels 16 Oct 1992

Republic of Slovenia in the context of defining the foreign policy position of Slovenia achieving associate membership.”¹⁵⁸

Accordingly, Slovenia expressed its interest to begin negotiations for an Association Agreement, therefore, settlement of contractual relations with the EC, in view of the European integration as their future strategic and geopolitical perspective as well as an intensive process to be completed, so Slovenia could prosper as a European country. Notably, as a Central European state, instead of a former Yugoslav state, alongside Hungary and Poland, which at the time were also turning to Europe from their Soviet past.

In addition to the contacts made with the EC and the expressed interest for the establishment of institutional relations with the Community, Slovenia also wished to have its direct links with the European Parliament, in which regard, the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, was seen to play a useful role and was invited by the External Relations Committee of the Parliament of Slovenia to visit their country.¹⁵⁹

On its constitutive meeting the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia discussed how relations between the Parliament and the Republics, which made up Yugoslavia, should be organized and the content and nature of the delegation’s work.¹⁶⁰ In addition, the President of the delegation noted the decision of the Enlarged Bureau that the delegation was allowed to make all the necessary adaptation to respond to the political developments within the Republics in Yugoslavia and to guarantee a fruitful dialog with them.¹⁶¹ Whereas, on the next meeting, highlighting the invitation extended to the delegation by Republic of Slovenia, the delegation as part of their activities decided to carry out visits to Slovenia and Croatia in

¹⁵⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from President of Republic of Slovenia Lojze Peterle to the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors, 7 Feb 1992

¹⁵⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from the chairman of the External Relations Committee of the Parliament of Republic of Slovenia to Paraskevas Avgerinos, President of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, 11 Mar 1992

¹⁶⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of the constitutive meeting of the delegation for relations with the Republics of Yugoslavia, 11 Feb 1992

¹⁶¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: to the attention of Avgerinos, President of the delegation for relations with the Republics of Yugoslavia, 11 Feb 1992

the autumn aimed at maintaining the interparliamentary dialog and relations as a long established practice.¹⁶²

In a memorandum on relations with the EC, the government of Slovenia acknowledged their internal democratic system as well as their orientation towards Europe, and at the same time, its commitment to productively cooperate in the process of European peace aimed at solving the crisis in former Yugoslavia. However, considering its status as a sovereign and internationally recognized state, the government stated that they “did not wish to link the initiation of negotiations on the inclusion of the Republic of Slovenia into the European integration process with the final, comprehensive solution of the Yugoslav crisis, since this could take quite a long time.”¹⁶³ Therefore, Slovenia clearly reiterated its position of distancing itself from the Balkan question and the persistent crisis, and instead turned towards Europe by following the broad process of economic and political integration independently and separately from the other former Yugoslav Republics.

In light of intentions of Slovenia to conclude Association Agreement with the EC, MEP Simpson asked the Commission how long it would be until the European Community was ready to conclude an Association Agreement with Republic of Slovenia.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, in terms of the political grounds on which the relations between the EC and Slovenia were to be organized, the Commission, wished to favor the conclusion of Cooperation Agreement, instead of an Association Agreements, as requested by Slovenia, which would include presumption to concluding a subsequent Association Agreement.¹⁶⁵ To this end, in June 1992 the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for a Cooperation Agreement, containing the main features of the former EC-Yugoslavia agreement including a financial protocol. While the Council adopted a resolution providing for Slovenia as from 11 August

¹⁶² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of meeting of the delegation for relations with the Republics of Yugoslavia

¹⁶³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Notice to members: Memorandum on relations between the Republic of Slovenia and the European Community addressed by the government of Slovenia to the EC, 27 April 1992

¹⁶⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Oral question no. 49 (H-1159/93) from Simpson to the Commission: Association Agreement between the Community and the Republic of Slovenia, 9 Nov 1993

¹⁶⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes: on the meeting of the delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, Strasbourg 12 Mar 1992

1992, to become eligible for assistance under the PHARE program as an independent state, therefore, gain access and benefit from funds aimed at economic restructuring and privatization and improving of infrastructure.¹⁶⁶ In an exchange of views on the relations between Slovenia and the EC, during the preparatory meeting before the scheduled visit, the President of the EP delegation noted that the possible transformation of the Cooperation Agreement into an Association Agreement could only take place in the years to come.¹⁶⁷

In the face of organizing general and presidential elections in Slovenia scheduled for early December 1992, the Slovene Assembly President sent an invitation for an EP delegation to visit the country in the capacity of observer.¹⁶⁸ However, the visit of the delegation as part of the interparliamentary framework happened two weeks before the elections between 22 - 24 November 1992.¹⁶⁹ The first impression of the EP delegation amid the campaigns of the various political parties with different ideologies, was that there existed a national consensus regarding the vital issues of maintaining the republic's independence and newly established democratic system at all costs, efforts to secure transition towards market economy, and strengthening ties with the countries of Western Europe, in particular the EC.

In terms of bilateral relations with the EC, the Cooperation Agreement was expected to be finalized by the end of the year, accompanied with a financial protocol and a transit agreement, all of which constituted the foundations of the contractual relations with the Community. In this regards, Slovenian authorities expressed disappointment at the Community's decision to negotiate a Cooperation Agreement, whereas, the Republic would have preferred an Association Agreement. In its response the EP delegation pointed out that the "progressive approach" that had been chosen in no sense precluded the subsequent and rapid conclusion of an Association Agreement, the principle of which was stipulated in the Cooperation Agreement itself. Moreover, diplomatic relations were also established and a

¹⁶⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the political situation in Slovenia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, Brussels 16 Oct 1992

¹⁶⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes: on the meeting of the delegation for relations with the Republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg 28 Oct 1992

¹⁶⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from France Bucar President of the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia to Egon Klepsch President of the European Parliament, 6 Nov 1992

¹⁶⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report on the first EP-Slovenia interparliamentary meeting, Ljubljana, 22-24 Nov 1992

Commission delegation in Slovenia was planned to be open in 1993, while Slovenia was already a beneficiary of the PHARE program as an instrument of EC support. In conclusion, the EP delegation was favorably impressed by the quality of contacts made at the first interparliamentary meeting, and appreciated the open and calm atmosphere of the upcoming elections, as well as the efforts made by Slovenia to ensure harmonious transition and rapid progress of the country. Therefore, the delegation assessed that favorable conditions for intensifying the relations with the Community were evidently present, and the prospects for opening negotiations on the EC-Slovenia Association Agreement were highly probable.

EP press statement regarding the first interparliamentary meeting with Slovenia, read the following:

“The EP delegation formed a very positive impression of the major economic changes underway in Slovenia, and the democratic nature of the run-up to the elections in December; therefore, the delegation believed that mutual relations between the EC and Slovenia should be enhanced. Serious consideration should be given as to whether the conditions for the negotiation of an Association Agreements with Slovenia have been met.”¹⁷⁰

Following the visit of EP delegation to Slovenia, European Commission representative gave a presentation on the political and economic situation in the country, noting the main developments: the strong position of the Slovenes to be considered outside the former Yugoslav state and with its own political and economic characteristics, the improved economic situation, and the wish of the Slovenes for “exploratory talks” for negotiations and conclusion of an Association Agreement, which was supported by the majority of Member States.¹⁷¹ Slovenia did not hesitate in distancing itself from the Yugoslav history and the other former Yugoslav Republics. Along with Macedonia, it was the only country, which was not involved in the war in Bosnia both directly or indirectly. Its sole priority of external

¹⁷⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, EP press statement on the first EP/Slovenia interparliamentary meeting in Ljubljana 22-24 Nov, Brussels 30 Nov 1992

¹⁷¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes on the meeting of delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia regarding Commission representative presentation, Strasbourg, 14 Sep 1993

policy was to seek closer relations with Western Europe, and acted accordingly by becoming a member of the Council of Europe in May 1993, and by insisting on its aspirations and efforts to join EFTA (European Free Trade Association) and the EC.¹⁷²

Considering the positive developments, mutual intentions for intensifying the relations between the EC-Slovenia, and the reciprocity in view of maintaining the interparliamentary dialog, the Republic of Slovenia was invited to the offices of the European Parliament in Strasbourg for a second interparliamentary meeting. The EP delegation between 27 - 28 October 1993 received a delegation from the Slovenian Parliament to discuss about the institutional evolution of the European Union and questions related to its external relations and to Slovenia specifically.¹⁷³

The political situation in Slovenia after the elections, as discussed by the delegations, was a certain consolidated democracy put into practice with modern institutions and full respect for human rights and rights of minorities, whereas its foreign policy was dominated by efforts to integrate within the European system, primarily the Community. In view of Slovenian representatives, it was a county isolated in the north of the Balkan region, which would be less vulnerable if integrated in the European Union with its specific identity and features. The entry into force, on 1 September 1993, the Cooperation Agreement was a solid framework for the development of future relations and further integration. Exploratory talks for an Association Agreement had already begun and Slovenia expected a negotiating mandate at the beginning of 1994.

Overall, the second EP-Slovenia interparliamentary meeting confirmed the excellent relations established within the first visit in 1992. Slovenia was certainly embarked on the road to EU integration and was advancing swiftly, even though the Slovenian representatives felt isolated believing that the EU judged them as a former Yugoslav Republic, not on its merit and progress made after the independence, especially in terms of foreign policy.

¹⁷² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the political situation in Slovenia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, 6 Oct 1993

¹⁷³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report on the 2nd EP/Slovenia interparliamentary meeting in Strasbourg, 27-28 October 1993

In this regard, the President of the EP delegation Avgerinos noted that the relations between the EU and Slovenia were “perfectly normalized” and were developing rapidly, even more so, with the conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement, therefore the fear of the Slovenians being isolated should disappear. In particular, to convince his Slovenian counterparts of the genuine and sincere intentions, he stated the following:

“Even if the impression that the European Community sometimes tends to consider Slovenia as a former Yugoslav Republic, Slovenian parliamentarians should be assured that the European Parliament considers their country on its own merits.”¹⁷⁴

Despite some fears on the part of Slovenia, the relations between EC and Slovenia were established and advanced in an untroubled and straightforward manner, and were based on reciprocity and bona fides on both sides, with the Cooperation Agreement as a first stage of the Slovenian European integration, soon to be followed with the Association Agreement and eventual fully-fledged membership. The future prospect of Slovenia was European, with gradual development of institutional relations with the EC through alignment and full economic and political integration, fostered by the Slovenian strategic goal of European orientation, well received within the EC circles and further embraced.

4.3 Croatia: difficult path to democracy and European integration

The Croatian vision of confederal Yugoslavia was dead before it was even born, and Croatia had to escape the Balkan quarrels, even at the risk of an armed conflict, and make its return to democracy and reproach Europe. Such future for the Croats was the only way forward, since they were firmly oriented towards democracy, which after a long time of turmoil and adversaries was finally established after its first democratic elections.¹⁷⁵ In the words of Dobrinović, head of the mission of Croatia to the EC:

¹⁷⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes on the 2nd EP/Slovenia interparliamentary meeting, 27-28 Oct 1993

¹⁷⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Adress by Janko Dobrinovic, Head of the Mission of Croatia to the European Communities on the political and economic situation in Croatia and relations with the EC, Brussels, 24 Sep 1992

“When Croatia proclaimed independence after seventy years, it was seeking an exit from a stifling, exploitative and outdated system, and return to the path towards Europe, democracy, free economy, finally enjoying the fruits of their labor; There were those who understood and supported their right to self-determination, but also voices who condemned this desire for independence , considering it as separatist, the result of a disturbing nationalism, generator of problems and conflicts...”

Similar to Slovenia, Croatia began its political pluralism with organizing its first free elections on 22 April 1990, after which they started disassociating from Belgrade, and adopted the new constitution in December 1990, setting-up a semi-presidential system. On 19 May 1991, a referendum on independence was organized, resulting in a 93% vote in favor of succession from the Yugoslav Federation. Accordingly, on 26 June, Croatia declared its independence, but it was temporarily suspended due to the Brioni ceasefire agreements and the three months moratorium requested by the EC, and finally with the Council decision on 15 January 1992 it was recognized by the EC.¹⁷⁶ Following the official recognition, Republic of Croatia with purpose of achieving full inclusion in the European integration process and intensifying the cooperation with the EC, including its relations with the Parliament, the newly elected Croat president sent a letter to the EP President inviting the EP delegation for relations with the Yugoslav Republics to visit Croatia and exchange views with the Croatian parliament.¹⁷⁷

Although Croatia attempted to align its foreign policy with the West, and consolidate a democratic system within, by disappearance from the historical scenes of Yugoslavia to positioning itself on the path to Europe, the outcome was not as bright. One major aspect, which affected the reserved attitude of the EC and the EP towards Croatia, was its involvement in the war in Bosnia, given its Bosnian Croat population as a minority living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, the two countries did sign a friendship and

¹⁷⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the political situation in Croatia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, Brussels, 16 Oct 1992

¹⁷⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from Zarko Domljan President of the Republic of Croatia to Egon Klepsch President of the European Parliament, 24 Mar 1992

cooperation agreement, including their military cooperation, but it was perceived by the EC as very ambiguous and led to their mistrust, due to the radical separatist positions and actions of the Bosnian Croats, despite the principle of inviolability of the Bosnian frontiers.¹⁷⁸

In spite the general negative attitude of the EC and lack of initiating any cooperation framework with Croatia, one specific instance when the relations between the two went in a very negative direction was owing to the decision of the European Parliament on 7 July 1992, to exclude Croatia from benefiting from the PHARE program.¹⁷⁹ The reasons for the exclusion were mainly the doubts regarding Croatia's active involvement in the conflict in Bosnia accompanied with reservations about the democratic character of the country. In particular, the European Parliament voted against the Commission's proposal to extend economic aid to Croatia suspending its implementation until Croatia could assure to meet the underlying conditions for aid to be granted under the PHARE program, encompassing pluralist democracy, freedom of expression, economic reforms and most importantly the respect of human rights of the population it controls in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁸⁰

Regardless of the fact that the EC was not interested in establishing contractual relations with Republic of Croatia, it did wish to maintain contacts, whereas the Parliament decided to include Croatia in the work of its delegation for relations with republics of former Yugoslavia, which resulted in their first visit to Zagreb between 24-26 November 1992 for the first interparliamentary meeting.¹⁸¹ According to the discussions of the parliamentary counterparts, the political situation in Croatia was very complex, characterized by a strong presidential regime of President Franjo Tudjman and ongoing process of integration of the different ethnic groups, impeded by the occupied zones, since it was still bordering a war zone and accepting refugees. Similar to the case in Slovenia, there was a national consensus on territorial integrity, maintaining independence and the principle of transition to a market

¹⁷⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the political situation in Croatia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, Brussels, 16 Oct 1992

¹⁷⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes from the meeting of delegation for relations with Republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 17 Nov 1992

¹⁸⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the economic situation in Croatia and its relations with the European Community drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, 2 Sep 1992

¹⁸¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report on the first EP-Croatia interparliamentary meeting, Zagreb, 24-26 Nov 1992

economy, shared by all the political parties. However, overall, the country was going through a difficult period of economic and political transition, given that it lost substantial part of its territories, which remained under UN protected areas, and it was facing difficulties in managing the enormous numbers of refugees and displaced persons.

Highly controversial topic and subject of bitter criticism by the Croatian authorities was the presence of UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) in the territory of Croatia as part of the peacekeeping mission, which according to the Croats did not fulfill their mandate. The UNPROFOR troops did not enjoy high reputation among the population, since the nature of their duties as mediators was frustrating and repelling to the Croats. That was the case, due to the ambiguous nature of their mandate, which restricted any action of military nature or intervention, to mere presence. In contrast, the presence of the European observers (ECMM-European Community Monitoring Mission), the first operation under common foreign policy, was unanimously well received. The mandate of the observers was to monitor the ceasefire and help to stabilize the established zones. Moreover, they helped with humanitarian activities and in general keeping an open dialog, thus preventing incidents. The EP delegation was commendable towards the extremely favorable impact that the presence of European observers had on the ground, and hoped that their work would be more appreciated by different Community bodies.

In light of such discovery, the EP delegation chair, Avgerinos, at his own initiative, sent a letter to the President of the EP, to express his appreciation for the European observers, and his opinion that it was paradoxical that the work of the observers was somewhat unknown within the European bodies. Therefore, he suggested that they are invited to share their experience and testimony with the Parliament and its Foreign Affairs Committee.¹⁸²

The role of Croatia in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its direct and indirect implications on the politically fragile situation, was another point of discussion, between the EP delegation and the Croatian authorities. Against the background of the presence of

¹⁸² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Meeting follow-up letter from Paraskevas Avgerinos Chairman of the delegation for relations with Republics of former Yugoslavia to Enrique Baron Crespo Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP, 14 Dec 1992

Croatian population in Bosnia and the ongoing secessionist trends, the Republic of Croatia rejected these claims and considered that the inviolability of frontiers was non-negotiable, and the Croat authorities were making contacts aimed at peaceful settlement of the conflict, favoring confederal type of solution with territorial divisions with autonomous administration. However, considering the Serbian aggression, the Croatian authorities revealed that their government was providing assistance and support to the Croats in Bosnia.

In its conclusion, the EP delegation expressed its opinion that the considerations, which led the EP to exclude Croatia from the PHARE program, being Croatia's implication on the war in Bosnia and the criticism of insufficient democratic system, could not be confirmed by the EP delegation that visited the Republic in November 1992. The delegation further attested that:

” ...in complex situation doubts would always persist, but it was unfair to penalize the Croats and ignore their demands, which could turn out to be completely counterproductive for the Community both economically and politically. “

Moreover, considering that, the amounts involved are relatively minor and their usage could be monitored, for the EP delegation, was not unreasonable to admit Croatia to the PHARE program. They considered that general reassessment was a necessity, because it could provide opportunity for considering the opening of negotiations and conclusion of Cooperation Agreement, desired by the Croatian authorities, while if necessary specific precautions could be taken to ensure that the agreement can be frozen if such action was proven to be necessary.

The EP press statement regarding the first interparliamentary meeting with Republic of Croatia read the following:

“The EP delegation, after a full exchange of views with all concerned, considered that Croatia has made some progress towards democratization, the reform of its economic structure and the respect of minority rights and press-freedom. The exclusion of Croatia from the PHARE program could therefore be reconsidered

and the decision to delay negotiations on a Cooperation Agreement could be reviewed.”¹⁸³

In view of some positive impressions of the EP delegation members from their interviews with the Croatian representatives, as well as examination of the overall political situation, the conclusion reached was that the problems of EC-Croatia relations had to be re-examined.

Accordingly, in the face of restraining political factors the issue of relations between the EC and Croatia was subject of scrutiny and reassessment, first of which was a follow-up meeting of the EP delegation in Strasbourg, whose members discussed their reflections after the first contacts and formulated some conclusions. Specifically, in regard with the nature and extent of possible Croatian involvement in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, delegation members agreed that doubts still persisted, yet the general opinion was that the grounds for such doubts were insufficient to block closer relations between Croatia and the EEC.¹⁸⁴ However, not all members agreed with this view. In opposition, MEP Langer, spoke on behalf of EPP Group, and said that the ““national homogeneity” process undertaken within Croatia, and its involvement in the fighting in Bosnia should rule out any closer relations between the Community and Croatia.” Yet, the overall conclusion was that the EC-Croatia relations should be reviewed, with a view to strengthen them, and that the European Parliament would reassess the advisability of granting Croatia the benefit of PHARE program and the concluding of Cooperation Agreement.¹⁸⁵

As a result of the meeting discussion and conclusions reached, the EP delegation chair sent a letter to the President of the EP REX Committee (Committee on External Economic Relations), suggesting the enhancement of the relations with Republic of Croatia and, in particular, recommended that the Commission should take the initiative of proposing to the Council the opening of negotiations with Croatia, in view of concluding economic and

¹⁸³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, EP press statement on the first EP/Croatia interparliamentary meeting in Zagreb 24-26 Nov, Brussels 30 Nov 1992

¹⁸⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of meeting of the delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 20 Jan 1993

¹⁸⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes of the meeting of delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, 20 Jan 1993

commercial Cooperation Agreement, including a financial protocol.¹⁸⁶ This was a positive recommendation from the EP delegation to the REX committee regarding the relations between the EC and Croatia. To this end, the delegation chair was invited by the committee to present the delegation's conclusions, so that the committee could make their own reassessment. Nevertheless, despite the positive presentation, REX committee members expressed very serious reservations about the possibility of the EC to establish contractual relations with Croatia, and decided to send back the problem for further consideration of the EP political groups.¹⁸⁷

During the next EP delegation meeting, the same questions regarding the state of relations with Croatia were raised, while the situation remained in a stalemate. As previously expressed, the EP delegation members were broadly in favor of establishing more formal relations between the Community and Croatia; however, it was not a unanimous opinion. The representative from the EPP political group had reservations, stating that “to grant Croatia the advantages of the PHARE program or of a Cooperation Agreement would be too direct and too positive political signal”, however, he still maintained that it was essential “not to close the door on Croatia” and to maintain humanitarian aid.¹⁸⁸

In addition, the majority of delegation members agreed that PHARE program would only amount to “low-key political signal” and the utilization of the funds allocated to Croatia could be closely monitored and continuously accessed. Moreover, some members recalled that it was not possible for a democracy to function perfectly in a country that was involved in war, since it had not had the time to consolidate the new structure. To this end, the chairperson suggested for the discussion to continue within the political groups of the Parliament, so as, an agreement to be reached and appropriate signal to be defined.

¹⁸⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from Paraskevas Avgerinos President of the EP delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia to Willy De Clercq Chairman of the Committee on External Economic Relations of the EP, 21 Jan 1993

¹⁸⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes of the meeting of delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg 9 Mar 1993

¹⁸⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of meeting of the delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 9 Mar 1993

As the discussions continued, procedural vicious circle was set in on the question of Croatia's inclusion in the PHARE program, since the Parliament considered that it should await a Commission proposal before endorsing Croatian membership, while the Commission was waiting for the Parliament to vote on the matter before submitting a proposal to the Foreign Affairs Council.¹⁸⁹ At the time, the Parliament was not ready to reach any agreement and take a second vote on granting Croatia the benefit of the PHARE program, nor any other initiative for reproaching the EC to Croatia. Sir Jack Steward-Clark, vice-President of the European Parliament made a visit to Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular, his trip to Croatia was for the purpose of examining the general problems of the EC-Croatia relations, regarding which he reached positive impressions and conclusions.¹⁹⁰ Notwithstanding, some positive signals, coming from individuals or Parliament bodies, the situation remained in a stagnant stage, with lack of any institutional action towards strengthening relations.

As part of the interparliamentary dialog framework, the delegation for relations with republics of former Yugoslavia, received a delegation from the Parliament of Republic of Croatia in Strasbourg on 17 and 18 November 1993, to participate in the work of the second interparliamentary meeting.¹⁹¹ From the onset of the meeting, the MEPs pointed out to their Croatian counterparts that it was extremely difficult to obtain correct understanding about the situation in Croatia, especially its role in the war in Bosnia, being increasingly contradictory to the understanding of the EP members. Thus, they requested clarifications so that constructive thought could be given on the matter of possible future developments. In this regard, the Croatian MPs stressed that Croatia was in a period of political and economic transition made difficult by the war and territory losses. For this reason, the maintaining of democracy and rule of law was hard, given the surrounding fragile environment. Additionally, the Croatian representatives in relation to the war in Bosnia laid the blame on

¹⁸⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: on the political situation in Croatia drawn up by the Directorate-General for Research, 6 Oct 1993

¹⁹⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of meeting of the delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 25 May 1993

¹⁹¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report on the 2nd EP/Croatia interparliamentary meeting in Strasbourg, 17-18 November 1993

Serbia describing its aggressive conquering attitude, as opposed to the Croats who were in favor of peaceful solution by preservation of the territorial integrity and the three ethnic groups with their autonomy, which would ensure the minimum stability of the region. Yet, the EP delegation conveyed their message that there was a lack of clarification of the political positions of the Republic of Croatia on the actions of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina along with the official positions on the general situation, which was vital in understanding the ambiguities.

The future perspective for EC/Croatia relations were highly dependent on one hand, on the internal situation in Croatia and on the other hand, on its external actions, including distancing itself from any partition plans in Bosnia. In order to extend economic aid or conclude a Cooperation Agreement, Commission proposal was supposed to be referred to the Parliament, so that it could provide an opinion, however, for its part the Commission considered that it needed a political signal from the Parliament and the Council, before submitting the proposal, neither of which were prepared to give this signal. As for the Parliament, it was not ready to define and give any signal in the face of too many ambiguities and disagreements between the political groups, regardless of their consideration of the efforts of Croatia to support the peace plan and restore stability in Bosnia. The Parliament was too hesitant to act in view of promoting Community relations with Republic of Croatia, because it was too risky to anticipate the future developments and resolution of the war in Bosnia, and even riskier and more difficult to obtain any guarantees of clear positions on the role of Croatia in any possible future scenario. As a result, the integration of Croatia in the structures of the Community was highly unlikely until the final solution on the Yugoslav crisis was achieved.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter compared the developments related to the beginning and advancement of relations between the EC and Republics of Slovenia and Croatia, demonstrating two different trajectories of European integration. Slovenia was ahead of the game, with clear strategic goal of joining the EC following its independence, for which achievement distanced itself

from the Yugoslav past and the attachments to the Balkans, and oriented towards Western Europe. The merits of its efforts were met with appreciation and were welcomed by the Community, resulting in the conclusion of a Cooperation Agreement, followed by association for membership. In contrast, regardless of the similar start, Croatia was faced with high scrutiny and lack of any initiative on the part of the Community and the EP for establishing any contractual relation, including its exclusion from the PHARE program. The main reasons for the negative and reserved approach was on one hand, the internal situation of limited democratization due to its geopolitical situation of bordering war zone, and on the other hand, its role and involvement in the ongoing war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, given its minority Croat Bosnian population. Thus, Croatia was in a vicious circle in terms of developing closer cooperation with the EC, and was a subject of reassessment within the EC institutions and the bodies of the Parliament with wide internal disagreements. Consequently, Croatia was found in a stagnant stage in the process of developing closer relations with the EC and unlike Slovenia, which noted swift progress independent and detached from the Yugoslav past, Croatia's future prospect remained inevitably tied and dependent on the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis, including its possibility of European integration.

CHAPTER 5: Bosnia-Herzegovina: humanitarian vs. security concern, and the prospects for a political solution (1993-1995)

This chapter will turn to the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, republic of former Yugoslavia with a distinctive multi-ethnic character, faced with a devastating conflict between the three communities of Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, with tremendous humanitarian implications and great security repercussions. It will look at the role of the European Parliament in terms of seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict, and its positions throughout the most prominent developments of the war. Moreover, it will illustrate the critical voice of the Parliament regarding, on one hand, the responsibility of the international community, including the EU, to protect the Bosnian people, and on the other hand, the concrete actions and contributions towards peace and security in the Balkan region. Finally, it will reflect on the lessons learned through the weakness and inability to stop the fighting, and the prospect for using the strengths, the EU's prominent role in reconstruction and development, to contribute to the economic and civic rebuilding of Bosnia-Herzegovina, after the war, and overall reinstating of stability in the Balkans.

5.1 The EP and the Independence Referendum

On 26 February 1992, the EP Enlarged Bureau examined the request inviting the European Parliament as an observer to the referendum to be organized in Bosnia-Herzegovina, responded favorably to this invitation and instructed for a delegation of five members to be constituted; As a result, an ad hoc EP delegation visited Bosnia and Herzegovina to monitor the referendum organized between 29 February and 1 March 1992.¹⁹² The referendum was organized in accordance to the guidelines of the European Community, the Badinter report in particular, and was supposed to give the citizens the opportunity to express their views on independence. The question asked in the referendum was the following:

¹⁹² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note: Organization of the ad hoc mission, Brussels, 26 Feb 1992

“Are you in favor of an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state in which the citizens and ethnic groups of Bosnia-Herzegovina have equal rights regardless of whether they are Muslims, Serbs, Croats or members of other groups?”¹⁹³

Prior to organization of the referendum, the main three political parties divided by ethnic lines, had clear positions regarding the Republic’s independence. The Democratic Action party representing the Muslim community favored complete independence and sovereignty within the existing frontiers, fostering peaceful co-existence between the communities; The Croatian Democratic Community also supported independence, but reserved the right to make some readjustment in the view that the Croatian citizen be eligible for a dual nationality (Bosnian and Croatian). Lastly, the position of the Serbian Democratic Party questioned the legality of the referendum and totally rejected independence for Bosnia-Herzegovina, instead favored “cantonization” or the cutting up the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina in such a way as to give the Serbs the land territory, which they inhabited at the time. Accordingly, the Serbian Democratic Party had instructed the Serbian community in Bosnia to boycott the referendum by not taking part in voting, which was followed in the countryside and to some extent in the cities, and posed major organizational problems in the Serbian dominated communes and regions. In addition, there were also some technical irregularities, yet according to the international observers, the overall assessment was that the referendum was organized under acceptable conditions and was described as fair and honest, which was endorsed by the EP ad hoc delegation as well.

The outcome of the referendum noted 63.7 percent voter turnout of which 99.8 percent of voters voted in favor of independence, thus while it demonstrated that the positions of various communities have become entrenched, also contributed to a rise in tensions, which resulted in incidents following the referendum, as a spark of violence between the Serbian and Muslim communities.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Report of the European Parliament ad hoc delegation monitoring the referendum organized in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 29 February and 1 March 1992

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

Finally, in the face of declarations by the Serbian party that the Serbian community would never accept independence for Bosnia-Herzegovina and that any recognition would bring war to Bosnia and the Balkans, the Bosnian presidency suspended any declaration of independence until satisfactory solution for the three communities was to be found; Consequently, even after the referendum the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina came back to the start of irreconcilable differences between the communities. The EP ad hoc delegation concluded that any EC initiative to recognize the independence of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina would undoubtedly have to take into account the desire expressed formally by the inhabitants of this republic in the referendum, and informally the behavior of large number of citizens during crisis or their calls to live in peace and harmony. Nevertheless, the situation was extremely tense and it was too early to predict the political situation, which might have developed in the near future.

Following the referendum and considering the EP ad hoc visit report, the Parliament acknowledged the result of the referendum, which revealed a sizeable majority in favor of independence, and expressed its belief that Bosnia-Herzegovina met the Community's requirements concerning recognition of independence, however, also concerned at the implications which destabilization in the region has on the Community, asked the Council and the Commission to offer their assistance in the process of continuing the conference on the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which all population groups must participate.¹⁹⁵ In particular gave its support for the continuation of the peace conference on Yugoslavia, chaired by Lord Carrington, the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces and the work of EC monitors.

5.2 The deterioration of the situation and beginning of war

In the face of violence exerted by the Bosnian Serbs, against the independent Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Parliament called on immediate halt to the fighting and on the

¹⁹⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution on behalf of the Socialists, EPP, LDR, EDG, EUL, Greens, EDA and Rainbow Groups on the situation on the territory of former Yugoslavia, 11 Mar 1992

Council to take, or cause to be taken by the Security Council, all effective measures to terminate the aggression. Additionally, noting on the intentions of the Republic of Serbia to create a new state, underlined that any solution should take account of the interests of all its citizens, excluding and considering unacceptable any support from outside for attempts to divide the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina took a turn towards deterioration due to the expansionist policy of the Serbian regime with the objective of *fait accompli* by occupying territories, which they were emptying of their Bosnian population.¹⁹⁷ In addition, the Serb forces were blocking and besieging cities with majority of Bosnian population, among which the capital city of Sarajevo. Noting on the increase of the intensity of the fighting, the Serbian invasion of territory and deportation of large number of Bosnians and Croats from their territories, the Parliament expressed fears that the humanitarian interventions on the part of the UN and the EC, were far from providing a solution, but aggravating the Bosnian tragedy.¹⁹⁸

Moreover, the Green Group was horrified at the general trend towards “ethnic cleansing” practiced by the Serbs and Croats, providing to be potentially contagious practice, which might spread further, and regarded the failure of Community’s efforts at mediation and achieving peaceful settlement, to the contradictory attitude within the Community towards Yugoslavia. They called for an immediate relaunching of mediation efforts in the light of the siege of Sarajevo.¹⁹⁹ In their view, the fate of Sarajevo, a “mixed” city, was awaiting the danger of genocide and annihilation, due to the forcible alliances, which go against the traditions of the Muslim population, either to the Serbs or to the Croats.

¹⁹⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution on behalf of Socialists, EPP, LDR, EUL, EDA and Rainbow Groups on Bosnia-Herzegovina, 13 May 1992

¹⁹⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution by with request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Anthony on behalf of the DR Group on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 12 May 1992

¹⁹⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Lehideux and others on behalf of the Group of the European Right on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 14 Sep 1992

¹⁹⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution by with request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and Commission by Langer and others on behalf of the Green Group on the situation in the former Yugoslavia, 14 Sep 1992

In spite of brutal aggression by the Yugoslav army and the Bosnian Serb Army, vast destruction, death tools and large number of refugees, the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina ceased to function properly, and sent a letter to the EP president in request for cooperation and a visit of a Bosnian parliamentary delegation to the EP offices.²⁰⁰ Specifically, the motivation for such visit, in the view of the Bosnian parliament, was the necessity for the EP to be duly informed about what was going on in Bosnia, the possibility for gaining EP's support, moral, political economic or humanitarian, and the possibility to learn democratic practices and develop modern society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the EP was not ready to respond to this invitation, nor to organize any visits at the time.

The international peace efforts with the London conference of 1992 where all the parties involved in the conflict participated, ruled out military intervention and adopted principles for achieving a political solution to the conflict, yet in reality, it produced poor results, because the civil war continued and the danger of generalization of the conflict in the Balkan region remained. Bosnia-Herzegovina was faced with an imminent disaster, due to the great humanitarian catastrophe of nearly three million people being refugees or displaced persons, thus depended on external aid, the deployment of which through the relief convoys was going very slow. To this end the Parliament recalled the statement of Cyrus Vance, Chief UN mediator in the peace negotiations, that "a catastrophe of untold dimensions would take place unless the distribution of relief supplies was accelerated," and demanded that the Community and Member States match their words with deeds.²⁰¹ Outraged at the siege of Bosnian cities along Sarajevo, in which the population suffered starvation or were forced to escape death by fleeing, the Parliament called on the Council to take political initiatives needed to speed up the possibility for intervention aimed at putting an end to the sieges and aggression, to

²⁰⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from Secretary General of the Parliament of Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the President of the European Parliament, 15 Sep 1992

²⁰¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Amaral and others on behalf of LDR Group on the approaching catastrophe in Bosnia, 23 Oct 1992

enable non-occupied areas of Bosnia to defend themselves, and to support severe economic measures, all of which could put an end to the overall aggression.²⁰²

While the seizure of territorial possessions by Serbian forces has continued along with atrocities and humanitarian crisis, so have the UN-EC peace efforts, and the proposed Vance-Owen plan was seen as the only prospect for ending the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The EP endorsed the plan, believing that it was the only possibility for a peaceful outcome, insisted that all parties involved should respect it, and demanded stronger measures to be considered to force the parties involved, the Bosnian Serbs in particular, to accept the plan.²⁰³

5.3 The EP ad hoc mission to Sarajevo

In December 1992, the Enlarged Bureau decided to send an EP ad hoc delegation to Bosnia-Herzegovina to investigate the political situation and the situation of Muslim women and human rights violations in general.²⁰⁴ However, before such delegation was constituted, in January 1993, the Bureau decided to resurrect its earlier decision and instead replace it with the organization of public hearing by the Parliament's committee of Women's Rights regarding these issues. Whereas, on 18 February, the Bureau decided to send an ad hoc EP delegation exclusively to Bosnia-Herzegovina to study the implications for the European Community of the Geneva Agreements, in accordance to the mandate given by the Parliament resolution of 11 February 1993.²⁰⁵ The mandate included possible meeting with the special representative of the EC to the Peace Conference, meeting with participants in the working groups set up by the Peace Conference, and possible visits to Sarajevo and other cities, villages in Bosnia, especially city of Tuzla mentioned in the resolution.²⁰⁶ However,

²⁰² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Oostlander and others on behalf of the EPP Group on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 15 Dec 1992

²⁰³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the statement by the European Political Cooperation by Woltjer on behalf of the Socialist Group on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 19 Apr 1993

²⁰⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of meeting of the delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 20 Jan 1993

²⁰⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Chairman notes of the meeting of delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, 9 Mar 1993

²⁰⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Draft agenda of the meeting of EP ad hoc delegation Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brussels, 23 Mar 1993

the organization of this mission was very problematic given the geographic divisions between the communities thus unsecured travel routes and overall security risks, the delegation of MEPs suggested that the realization of the mission could be only possible with the support and protection of UNPROFOR and UNHCR.²⁰⁷ In spite of the fact that it was physically almost impossible to reach Sarajevo, without resorting to the support from the UN agencies operating on the territory of Bosnia.

The Mandate remained yet to be made more specific, and support to be secured for the realization of the visit, since there were numerous difficulties involved in organizing the mission and circumstances which had made the visit possible not until the beginning of May. To this end, the president of the European Parliament requested help through the offices of UNPROFOR and UNHCR in facilitating a safe passage of the EP delegation members and members of the Bosnian parliament for the realization of plenary session in May 1993 aimed at ratification of the Vance/Owen peace plan.²⁰⁸ The EP backed the Peace plan and was willing to provide the opportunity for the Bosnian parliament to debate and ratify it. In accordance to the decision of the Enlarged Bureau to constitute ad hoc delegation in response to the Parliament's recommendation adopted in plenary and the earlier invitation by the Bosnian Parliament, ad hoc delegation for relations with Bosnia-Herzegovina, visited Sarajevo between 9 and 11 May 1993.²⁰⁹

Despite the efforts and intervention by the UN agencies, UNPROFOR and UNHCR, no safe passage was guaranteed for the Bosnian MPs to meet for a plenary session scheduled in Zenica, and instead met in four different cities, and considered the different meetings as an extraordinary war time session. In addition to the role of observers of the plenary session intended for ratification of the Peace plan, during the three-day visit, the delegation members also held talks with the President of the Republic Alija Izetbegovic, Bosnian government

²⁰⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Note on the organization of the ad hoc mission, 15 Feb 1993

²⁰⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Letter from Egon Klepesch, President of the European Parliament to Cyrus Vance, UN co-chairman, and Lord David Owen, co-chairman Bosnia-Herzegovina peace conference, 3 May 1993

²⁰⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Notice to members: Letter from members of the EP ad hoc delegation to Bosnia-Herzegovina to the EP President, Sarajevo, 10-11 May 1993

authorities, head of missions of the UN agencies, visited hospitals and the daily newspaper *Oslobodenje*.

The EP delegation did not attempt to make any assessments nor formulate any opinion, since in their view and in light of the rapidly changing situation, any thoughts committed to paper might become obsolete, however, they decided to make proposals for practical measures, which might alleviate the tragic situation in Bosnia. Specifically, they provided practical measures in terms of improving the efficiency of humanitarian aid and measures to support the Bosnian press, namely, newspaper *Oslobodenje*, but more importantly, they provided certain number of measures with regard to the political aspects of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Primarily, in terms of political recognition of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, all EP delegation members agreed that the Bosnian Parliament and Government were indeed legitimate institutions, however the authorities were “prisoners in the city”, since they were not able to travel and participate in meetings. Therefore, the proposed measure was that the Commission could send a mission to Sarajevo that would deal with the economic and political future of the country, rather than simply dealing with the issue of humanitarian aid. Whereas, suggested measures for the Parliament actions included: invitation of a delegation from Bosnia to participate in an interparliamentary meeting in Strasbourg, utilization of the personal authority of the EP president for putting pressure on UNPROFOR and UNHCR for making the travels of Bosnian officials easier, setting up of committee on reconstruction of Bosnia, and establishment of a center to document war crimes, by the EP political groups.

In conclusion, the delegation regarded that it was important that their visit be followed up quickly and in the most practical way possible, stating the following:

...Quite apart from the clear humanitarian nature of some of the proposed measures, the Bosnian people and their authorities were greatly disillusioned by the attitude of the European Community. If no practical measures were taken to build on the positive impact of the visit by the European Parliament’s ad hoc

delegation, the feeling of abandonment, which was very strong in Sarajevo, might be exacerbated.”²¹⁰

In addition, the EP ad hoc delegation hoped that its presence would be seen as a mark of the European Parliament’s solidarity with the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.²¹¹ Green MEP Alexander Langer , spokesmen of the ad hoc delegation, expressed EP’s support for the legitimate Bosnian parliament during the war time session in Sarajevo, and told parliamentarians “we are sadly aware that Europe has left you alone”, while in an interview on Bosnian television Langer expressed the following:

“No peace in the Balkans could be based on the massacre of the very people most willing and able to live together in inter-ethnic democracy: the Bosnian people, and in particular the Bosnian Muslims.”²¹²

Overall the ad hoc delegation described the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina as extremely fluid in nature and extremely serious and dramatic, adding that although the delegation was not able to meet all the parties of the conflict, specifically the Serbs, the submitted report set out practical measures which might be taken by the Parliament, while the political aspects should be discussed within the various political groups.²¹³

The role of the EP in demonstrating substantial support to the Bosnian people and drafting policy proposals towards concrete actions was indeed invaluable, however, the experience of the ad hoc delegation showed that the actual situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was beyond mere conflict, but an enormous security problem, which required much more efforts and action on the part of the EC and the international community in achieving peace and stability.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, EP press release: Ad hoc delegation “Bosnia-Herzegovina”, MEPs visit to Sarajevo, Brussels, 11 May 1993

²¹² HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, EP press release: Info-Group under the responsibility of the Green Group, 11 May 1993

²¹³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Minutes of meeting of the delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, Strasbourg, 25 May 1993

5.4 The escalation of war against the failure of peace plans

The Serbian attempts to deprive the Bosnian population of the besieged capital city, Sarajevo, from water and energy supplies and the shortages of food and medical aid, threatening the lives of thousands of people, including children, and imposition of their suffering, made for the most serious violation of human rights in Europe since the Second World War. The Parliament was appalled that such disasters were the result of the failure of enforcement of respect for the UN Security Council resolutions, for which Member States of the EC must also bear heavy responsibility.²¹⁴ In essence, the EC and its Member States did not honor their commitments and undertakings in providing more funds for the UN agencies and their relief operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly the UNHCR. In regards to the appeals by the UNHCR for the terrible conditions in Sarajevo and other besieged towns, the Parliament called on its Member States to reaffirm their support for humanitarian aid to the victims of the conflict and consider all the available options for temporally accepting the numerous refugees.²¹⁵

Humanitarian response was the main mechanism of involvement of the international community, including the EC, in dealing with Bosnia-Herzegovina, accompanied with economic sanctions aimed at exerting political pressure for negotiating a peace agreement and putting a stop to the conflict through political resolution. Whereas the Vance-Owen plan failed, since it was strongly rejected by the Bosnian Serbs in a referendum, Western plans for partitioning the territory of Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, started emerging. This was the case of the Owen-Stoltenberg plan. As a result, the war dynamic shifted with outbreak of clashes and fighting between the Croats and Muslims, unfolding the Croat-Bosnian war, which further contributed to escalation of the situation, amid the Serbian aggression and war conquest. The EP condemned the attitude and failure of the Western governments to counter the Serbian aggression and aggravation of hostilities between the other two communities,

²¹⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by EPP, PES, LDR, Greens, and Rainbow Groups on the human rights situation in ex-Yugoslavia, 14 Jul 1993

²¹⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Langer and others on behalf of the Green Group on the urgent need for further humanitarian aid in the former Yugoslavia, 12 Jul 1993

called these governments to consider supply of arms to the Bosnian and Croatian army, as the only force against the communist regime in Belgrade.²¹⁶

Having regard the desperate situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, isolation in the besieged towns, the weakness of the UNPROFOR mandate, and the lack of strength needed for the implementation of the UN resolutions, as well as the continued attacks on civilians and the interruptions of humanitarian aid, the EP demanded more troops to ensure the safety of the “safe-areas” under UN protection, elimination of arms from positions of ceasefire and rigorous maintenance of sanctions against Belgrade, until the aggression ended.²¹⁷ Moreover, the Parliament was determined to enforce peace, and put efforts in active diplomacy and pressure on Croatia, to end their attacks on Bosnia-Herzegovina and to restore good relations between these two countries. Furthermore, the Parliament was disappointed in the fact that Member States were reluctant to provide extra troops despite their promises, and the lack of results achieved by the UN and EC negotiators, who consistently attempted to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina along ethnic lines, even though it was a member of the UN and large population was still maintaining multi-ethnic society. To this end, the Parliament demanded that the aims of the EC policy in Bosnia should be the achievement of negotiated settlement and prevention of the spread of the war in the Balkans, and thus demanded nomination of new EU negotiator with a proper mandate and new strategy for exercising it.²¹⁸

5.5 The NATO involvement: military intervention vs. humanitarian protection

Following the NATO summit decisions in January 1994, to halt the strangulation of Sarajevo and in accordance to UN Security Council resolutions, to facilitate this by air strikes on Serbian targets, the Parliament, supported only an appropriate NATO action by means of military intervention to protect the “safe-areas”, to guarantee humanitarian aid and to lift the

²¹⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for an early vote, to wind up the debate on the statement by EPC and the Commission by Lehindeux on behalf of the DR Group on Bosnia-Herzegovina, 14 Sep 1993

²¹⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by EPP, LDR and Green Groups on the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the declarations of NATO, 13 Jan 1994

²¹⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by EPP, LDR, Greens, EDA, and Rainbow Groups on the continuing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 19 Jan 1994

siege of Sarajevo, and considered that more efforts should be made towards a peaceful solution to the war.²¹⁹ In this regard, called for redefinition of the UN mandate and active involvement of the US in the negotiations.

NATO declarations and imposition of a deadline for a withdrawal of heavy weapons from around Sarajevo by the Bosnian Serbs, produced positive outcome in terms of some progress towards a ceasefire, however, in other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina the fighting continued. The Parliament considered that the reductions in military activity should be immediately accompanied by appropriate political and humanitarian measures, therefore, called on the Council and the Commission to provide support and assistance to offset the damages of the war and rebuilding of democracy.²²⁰

While the offensive against Sarajevo was halted, the Bosnian Serbs were not deterred from continuing their aggression in other towns and parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including declared “safe-areas”, contributing to NATO’s reaction with air strikes. The Parliament was concerned that the military interventions could accelerate the spread of the conflict and bring a total conflagration of former Yugoslavia, and considered that the Bosnian tragedy could be resolved by negotiations, dialog and political agreement, and warned about the extension of NATO military intervention under the cover of UN.²²¹ Accordingly, the Parliament supported military intervention inasmuch to guarantee humanitarian protection of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, rather than bringing about resolution to the conflict, and strongly held its commitment to peaceful resolution of the Bosnian crisis by political means, achieved through negotiations facilitated by the international community.

Before, Bosnia-Herzegovina entered the third wartime winter, the “ethnic cleansing” renewed in the parts of Bosnia controlled by the Serb forces, and the military attacks resumed,

²¹⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Oostlander on behalf of the EPP Group on Bosnia-Herzegovina, 8 Feb 1994

²²⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Langer and others on behalf of the Green Group on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 7 Mar 1994

²²¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Troisième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Piquet on behalf of the Left Unity Group on the situation in Bosnia, 18 Apr 1994

while the international community did not reach any peaceful solution and several ceasefire agreements continued to be violated. The newly elected forth legislature of the Parliament, reiterated the same positions of the previous mandate, and requested for the UN, NATO and the EU to take all the necessary steps for securing the “safe-areas”, the EU and Member States to promote cooperation between Croats and Bosnians through political and diplomatic means and the EU to assist the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to maintain contacts with the international community.²²² In addition, having regard that any military escalation would increase the risk of the conflict spreading to other parts of the region on the EU borders, the Parliament, reiterated its long-held complete opposition to all forms of ethnic cleansing, military attacks, and reiterated that the Bosnian tragedy could only be solved by means of negotiations, therefore, called on the international community including the EU, to offer, for as long as required, a neutral framework for negotiations on the problem of borders and minorities.²²³ Furthermore, the Parliament was well aware of the persistence of multi-ethnic society structures in Bosnia, and that the success of peace initiatives would depend largely on the strengthening of the elements of the multicultural society, such as independent media, civil society groups, human rights groups, and called on the EU to provide full support for these forces and initiatives.²²⁴

With the continuation of war and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the failure of any proposed peace plan, notably, the Owen-Stoltenberg plan and the Contact Group plan, divisions between the policy of the US and the EU Member States began and culminated with the US unilateral decision in November 1994 to withdraw the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina with the view of their right to defend themselves against the aggression. In this regard, some groups in the European Parliament began calling on the EU and its Member

²²² HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Ostlander and others on behalf of the EPP Group on Bosnia-Herzegovina, 26 Sep 1994

²²³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Piquet and others on behalf of the European United Left on Bosnia, 26 Sep 1994

²²⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Langer and others on behalf of the Green Group on the situation in Bosnia-herzegovina, 26 Sep 1994

States to affirm the right to self-defense under the UN Charter, and to make efforts in achieving agreement within the Atlantic Alliance on how to defeat aggression in Bosnia with respect of the principles of the UN and Paris Charters. The Liberal Democratic group recognized that any effective NATO and WEU policy would be costly, both in human and financial terms, but without it, “the EU would find itself isolated from their principle ally and seeking to defend a position which is ethically, politically and military indefinable.”²²⁵ However, other groups held opposing views, for instance the Left group, which rejected this decision, considering that it would contribute to military escalation, weaken transatlantic cooperation, constitute violation of the UN resolutions and was fundamentally opposed to the EU’s peace policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina.²²⁶ Similarly, the Greens, took the view that despite all the disappointments over the scandalous ineffectiveness of the UN, the decisions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly must be respected and cannot be disregarded or viewed as no longer valid by any Member State, called for new proposals for peace, which could not under any circumstances be based on ethnic division, which would set an extremely dangerous precedent.²²⁷ Lastly, the EPP Group called on the EU and the US to find a common solution to the conflict and expressed its view:

“The Council should, once and for all, establish a policy and have the courage to select between two mutually incompatible options: full use of military might in an attempt to bring to an end the war in former Yugoslavia, or else the exercise of humanitarian protection in the service of the suffering civilian population without the addition of any real military involvement.”²²⁸

²²⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and Commission by La Malfa on behalf of the ELDR Group on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 15 Nov 1994

²²⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by Puerta on behalf of the GUE Group on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 15 Nov 1994

²²⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and Commission by Langer and others on behalf of the Green Group, 15 Nov 1994

²²⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by von Habsburg and others on behalf of the EPP Group on the US decision to withdraw from the operation to enforce the embargo on arms for Bosnia-Herzegovina, 15 Nov 1994

5.6 The path to the Dayton Agreement (1995)

The onset of fourth year of war, since the first act of aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and fear of partition of the city of Sarajevo, which repeatedly emerged in peace negotiations, triggered an initiative by its citizens in the form of written declaration called “Declaration for a free and united Sarajevo” to firmly reject the idea of ethnic divisions and reaffirm Sarajevo’s identity as united, democratic, multi-ethnic city. Through the declaration, the citizens of Sarajevo called on the international community for solidarity in their struggle through joining the declaration.

In this regard, Green MEP Langer, acknowledged the profound moral value of the declaration, which gained support by large number of Europeans and constituted a statement of political ideals, which could not be ignored, and invited the EP to subscribe to the declaration in solidarity. In addition, Langer critically pointed out the weakness of the EU, stating the following:

“Noted with shame the ongoing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the fact the Europe showed itself to be divided, powerless and effectively an accessory to the savage process of division and ethnic cleansing.”²²⁹

However, his declaration was not supported by other members of the EP, and received lower number of signatures than the minimum required, and thus in accordance to the EP rules of procedures became obsolete.²³⁰

In the spring of 1995, the conflict spread in new areas with a new outbreak of war in Krajina and in turn, shielding of Zagreb and Sarajevo, about which the Parliament was extremely alarmed. It insisted that there must be no recognition of territorial gains and any political solution must recognize the borders of former Yugoslavia, calling on the Member States to

²²⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Written Declaration for entry in the register by Alexander Langer on the Declaration for a free and united Sarajevo, 11 Apr 1995

²³⁰ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Notice form Guillen Zanon, head of division of the statute of deputies to Alexander Langer MEP Green, 30 June 1995

re-examine the advisability of going beyond the diplomatic configuration.²³¹ The Socialist Group, considered the worsening situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the importance of the international community to put a stop to the war in the EU's border, urged all the European and national institutions to examine self-critically the limited role of their contribution towards the cessation of hostilities and to take account of the resultant international discredit.²³² Liberal Democrats recognized that the continued attacks on the "safe-areas" and the blockade of Sarajevo mark the failure of the UN, the EU and NATO to achieve their aims in Bosnia-Herzegovina with very grave consequences for the peace of Europe, specifically, in their view, the failure of EU to establish a common foreign and security policy had greatly contributed to the crisis.²³³

Deeply concerned at the fact that ethnic cleansing and partitioning on ethnic lines, continued to overshadow the future of democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the whole region of former Yugoslavia, and concerned by the huge risk of spreading of war throughout the region, the Parliament considered that the only solution to be reached was by holding international conference to promote security, reconstruction and development of all the republics of former Yugoslavia while respecting minority rights.²³⁴ Therefore, called on the EU to use all the available means of exerting political, diplomatic and economic pressure to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table and to work for an international conference. The Parliament was rigorously in opposition to any partition plans for the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina, since it held the risk of unpredictable consequences for stability and peace in

²³¹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Langer and others on behalf of the Green Group, 15 May 1995

²³² HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution by Oostlander and others on behalf of the EPP Group on the declaration of the preparation of the meeting of the Council and the latest situation in ex-Yugoslavia, 8 Jun 1995

²³³ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statement by the Council by La Malfa and others on behalf of the ELDR Group on the crisis in Bosnia, 8 Jun 1995

²³⁴ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance by Carnero and others on behalf of the Group of European United Left on the situation in Bosnia and Croatia, 3 Apr 1995

Europe, and strongly supported the multi-ethnic character of the country as a basis for the future democracy.

The UN mandate proved to be unreliable since it was not able to guarantee safety of areas designated as “safe-areas”, and the population in these enclaves was exposed to a great danger including the UNPROFOR troops. The risk for a widespread war to other regions significantly increased with the Bosnian Serb’s seizure of the town of Srebrenica, one of the safe-areas, making a precedent for similar outcomes awaiting the remaining safe-areas. The Parliament, recognized that if the disaster was not rectified and aggression continued to be successful especially in the safe-areas, the consequences for Bosnia and for the stability in the Balkans and the prospects for security in Europe would be extremely grave. For this reason, the international community in no way could look passively at the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina without being considered an accomplice to the ongoing murder. Therefore, called on the UN to strengthen the mandate to protect the free circulation of humanitarian aid and stop the shelling of safe-areas, and demanded that the UN put an end to its ambiguous policy, which on one hand, prevented Bosnia from providing itself with the means of self-defense, and on the other hand, was not capable of guaranteeing protection of the Bosnian population.²³⁵ The EP fully recognized the right of Bosnia-Herzegovina to self-defense and acknowledged that the Bosnian people were defending the values, on which the European Union was founded.

Following the Geneva conference in July 1995, US led peace initiative, which was attended by all of the warring sides, the Bosnian Serb military was weakened with the following military action in the late summer, by NATO by Operation Deliberate Force and the action of Rapid Reaction Force, the long desired more vigorous action by the international community was finally achieved. In the aftermath, settlement negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, were initiated by the world powers gathered in the Contact Group, aimed at reaching a peace agreement. The Parliament, noted that the US peace initiative dominated the negotiations for peace in Europe, in the face of EU’s inability and weakness, and called for the need of

²³⁵ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by PSE, EPP, ELDR, GUE/NGL, Green and ARE Groups on closing the debate on Srebrenica, 12 Jul 1995

recognition of internationally recognized frontiers of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and provision for a reconstruction plan, once the Peace Agreement was signed.²³⁶

The European Parliament considered that the offer for assistance in reconstruction of the region with economic recovery and development program, once peace had been established, could be crucial incentive for the warring parties to stop fighting and take part in the peace process. In the view of the Parliament, the economic recovery and civic construction were fundamental for the establishment of lasting peace and just international order in the region, and recognized that the EU had the necessary legal, political and technical instruments to take a leading role in the formulation and execution of the reconstruction plan.²³⁷ To this end, called on the Council and the Commission to cooperate with the UN and other international organizations in convening of international donor conference for establishing a framework for economic and civic recovery in the war stricken areas of former Yugoslavia.

In the words of Socialist Group MEPs as a lesson learned from the war in Bosnia:

“The EP welcomed the Peace Agreement reached in Dayton after four years of long and painful conflict in Bosnia, and hoped that lasting peace will be won immediately, with respect to minorities. Recalled its numerous resolutions on the different phases of the conflict and regretted that the Union did not play a more decisive role from the start of the war. Therefore, asked the Council to take action, with the knowledge of the past four years, so that never again the weakness of the Union can allow such situations.”²³⁸

The EP welcomed the Dayton Peace Agreement as a starting point for the reconstruction and development of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, whereas considered that strong long-term

²³⁶ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and Commission by Lalumiere on behalf of the ARE Group on the situation in former Yugoslavia, 19 Sep 1995

²³⁷ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by Socialists, EPP, LDR, Union for Europe, European United Left, Greens, European Radical alliance on the former Yugoslavia, 25 Oct 1995

²³⁸ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Oral question no. (O-0277/95) from Bernard Kouchner and others on behalf of the Socialist Group to the Council: Lessons learned from the conflict in Bosnia, 27 Nov 1995

commitment and a concrete program of assistance primarily by the EU and the rest of the international community was needed to implement the peace plan and make it effective in order to achieve stability.²³⁹ The EP emphasized that all efforts to guarantee peace and for the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina should be aimed at building up a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural society, which are the same as those on which the EU was based, and thus preservation of unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina could be ensured. In the view of the Parliament, the Dayton Agreement provided opportunity and imposed duty on the EU and its Member States to seek to ensure promotion of human rights, stability and rebuilding the region, among the resolution of the other consequences of the war such as return of refugees, release of political prisoners, trials of war crimes.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter depicted the tragic case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a former Yugoslav republic with a very peculiar multi-ethnic composition, affected by war, ethnic cleansing and imminent disaster, due to the great humanitarian catastrophe. Besides the limited results of humanitarian relief efforts by the international community and the EC, their political efforts in negotiations for a peaceful settlement throughout the different stages of the conflict, did not result in any solution either, but aggravation of the war. Regardless of the nonsuccess and given the great security importance, the European Parliament considered that the only prospect for ending the war was through peaceful negotiations, not by military means, and it was for the international community to offer, for as long as required, a neutral framework for negotiations, accompanied with decisive, concrete actions, which would contribute to halt the fighting and protect the Bosnian population. In the view of the Parliament, the latter was evidently missing, due to the weakness of foreign and security policy of the EC/EU and the unreliability of the UN mandate. The final peace settlement achieved with the Dayton Agreement, was US dominated, teaching a decisive lesson for the EU in terms of their indecisive action. Learning from experience, while regretting the mistakes, the Parliament

²³⁹ HAEU, Parlement européen, Quatrième législature, Joint motion for a resolution by PSE, EPP, UPE, ELDR, GUE, Green, ARE and EN Groups to close the debate on the Council and Commission statements on former Yugoslavia, 12 Dec 1995

considered that EU's strength, in terms of capacities for the role in reconstruction and development would ensure future peace and stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Balkans, thus retrieving the political importance of the EU in the region.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the relations between the European Parliament and Yugoslavia from the 1970s to the mid-1990s, focusing on the positions and actions of the EP in relation to the major historical developments in Yugoslavia and the Balkan region over the last decades of the Cold War the beginning of the post-Cold War era.

The origin of relations between the European Parliament and Yugoslavia, discussed in Chapter 1, in the form of direct contacts began in the 1970s as part of official diplomatic visits by EP presidents and delegations. Indeed, the Parliament was active in international relations and building parliamentary links prior its direct elections in 1979. The contacts were formalized through the framework of interparliamentary dialog and the work of the EP delegation for relations with Yugoslavia, which included periodically planned meetings in Strasbourg and Belgrade with representatives of the Federal Yugoslav Assembly. The EP's purpose was maintaining communication and resolving issues of interest and concerns, in view of strengthening overall cooperation and creation of impetus for advancement in the long-term. Considering the broader context of the Cold War, the motivations behind Parliament's investment in close cooperation with Yugoslavia were the mutual efforts in promoting peace and détente in Europe and internationally, Yugoslav foreign policy of non-alignment and the geopolitical position of Yugoslavia in the Balkans, in the context of security threats on the EC borders. Following its direct election in 1979, the Parliament's attachment to Yugoslavia did not diminished, rather, increased through its role in building the foundations of formal cooperation through the signature of the Cooperation Agreement of 1980.

The development of cooperation was immediately challenged by the adverse internal economic situation in Yugoslavia in the 1980s. As argued in Chapter 2, the non-unified positions and inter-institutional disagreements – exemplified through the forestallment of negotiations for the financial protocol to the Cooperation Agreement and the restrictive EC policy in the face of Chernobyl accident – contributed to deterioration of EC-Yugoslav relations. The EP recognized the negative implications of the non-favorable policies towards

Yugoslavia and undertook actions to influence and shape the EC policy towards a more positive direction, through voicing its concerns, putting political pressure on the Council and maintaining open dialog with the Yugoslav partner, yet with very limited success, given its confined decision-making powers.

Nevertheless, beyond the economic aspects of EC foreign policy, spillover effect from the Yugoslav economic downturn was the human rights situation in Yugoslavia, where the Parliament's involvement rose to a greater level. In parallel to the parliamentary activities concerning action against human rights violations, the Parliament directly challenged Yugoslavia, by sending a fact-finding investigative mission to Kosovo in 1989 as part of its initiative in promoting human rights and democracy. The Parliament was successful in challenging EC foreign policy to Yugoslavia and shaping it, by incorporating the human rights dimension as an integral part of the cooperation framework.

Moreover, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, the Parliament's role in promotion of human rights and democracy as part of EC foreign policy became even more notable during the Yugoslav crisis in the 1990s. The predominant Community perspective of dealing with the Yugoslav question was the concern of security and peace, considering the specific geo-political position of Yugoslavia. Therefore, the maintenance of unity and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia – against the internal instabilities resulted from democratization over-troubled by nationalism and inter-republican power dynamics - was the prerogative in external relations. The Parliament was the first institution to acknowledge that the Yugoslav crisis could not be prejudged either in favor or against the existing structure, being the reason why it was extremely difficult to formulate a proper foreign policy. Despite its adherence to the unity of Yugoslavia, it welcomed the right to self-determination and democratic decision of the Republics for their independence, anticipating the inability of Yugoslavia to sustain itself as an integral state.

In the view of the European Parliament, retaining the unity of Yugoslavia could not be sustained by suppression of democracy and human rights. It put greater value on the respect for human rights and democracy, than on the political future of Yugoslavia, be it united or separate. To this end, it insisted on the inclusion of the dimension of human rights and

democracy as detrimental for any future of Yugoslavia, achieved through democratic and peaceful means. The EP recognized that no lasting solution could be found in maintenance of Yugoslavia and denial of the right to self-determination of its Republics, whose main prerogative for sovereign legitimacy had to be democracy and human rights protection, calling on their recognition on the part of the Community.

Accordingly, the Parliament's active role in extending its powers in shaping EC foreign and security policy in the area of safeguarding human rights and democracy was certainly valuable in terms of providing an additional perspective complementary to the security dimension, which proved to be detrimental in dealing with the Yugoslav political struggles and future.

Another policy sphere, in which the Parliament has been active in terms of its relations with Yugoslavia, was European integration. As shown in Chapter 4, the EP was the first institution to call for a diplomatic recognition of the independent Republics of Slovenia and Croatia, and called on the Council for a decisive action on the perspective of these newly democratic countries towards European integration, through the mechanism of Association Agreement and PHARE program.

Both Slovenia and Croatia were determined to follow the path of democracy and to Europe as their geopolitical orientation, along with other Central European states; however, they were faced with differing integration trajectories. Slovenia decided upon distancing itself from former-Yugoslavia, by detaching from its Yugoslav and 'Balkan' past. It considered itself as a Central European democratic state, seeking for close relations to the West and the EC, accompanied with economic and democratic changes. On its road to the EC/EU Slovenia was advancing swiftly, with the EP fully considering its merits and supporting its progress in developing and strengthening EU-Slovenia relations – which was well received among the EU decision-makers – with a view of future EU membership.

Croatia, on the contrary, was confronted with reservations, doubts and mistrust on the side of the EC and particularly by the Parliament, primarily due to its limited democratization internally, and its involvement in the Bosnian conflict, given the Serbian minority living on

its territory, impeding any separation of Croatia from the final solution to the Yugoslav crisis. The Parliament had particularly negative attitude towards Croatia, which resulted in its decision of exclusion from the PHARE program, and overall hesitation in initiating any contractual relations with the EC, which were subject to constant scrutiny and reassessment by the Parliament committees, delegation for relations with the republics of former Yugoslavia, and above all the political groups. Despite some positive indications, unanimous position within the Parliament could not be reached, nor could a proper signal be defined among the EU institutions, resulting in the creation of an institutional vicious cycle and stagnation of relations between EU and Croatia.

Hence, the case of Croatia revealed the role of the Parliament in decision-making in the context of European integration, its pivotal role in preventing the benefit of the PHARE program to Croatia and its troubles in the overall relations with the EC, making it a relevant actor in this specific policy area.

Finally, Chapter 5 uncovered the role of the Parliament in management of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by being extremely cautious since the escalation of the conflict was a highly destabilizing factor in the Balkan region. Therefore, the Parliament was vocal in terms of calls for stopping the fighting and seeking peaceful political solution mediated by the international community about the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were producing poor results.

The Parliament was horrified at the tremendous humanitarian atrocities, siege of towns and vast destruction, therefore, was committed to supporting the distribution of relief supplies and humanitarian aid, by pressuring the Council and Member States to contribute to and support international aid, economic sanctions and enforcement of peace plans and resolutions aimed at ending the aggression. Besides, it was directly present through its ad hoc visits and missions to Bosnia-Herzegovina, which served to show Parliament's solidarity and support for the Bosnian people, access to information and documentation, and providing of practical measures for alleviating the tragic situation and building a positive impact against the idea of abandonment by the EC among the Bosnian people.

Yet, beyond the consensus on humanitarian response and search for a peaceful solution to the conflict, the political and security aspects were widely under discussion in the circles of the Parliament's political groups and EC institutions, resulting in non-substantial efforts and actions in stopping the war. The involvement of NATO was welcomed by the Parliament inasmuch it was aimed at humanitarian protection, otherwise the Parliament was strongly against military intervention, favoring negotiations for peaceful settlement. Divisions among Parliament's political groups emerged also in terms of US policy and involvement in the conflict, however, all of them recognized the failure and weakness of the EU to establish a common foreign and security policy, and the EU's subordination to US initiative for peace in Europe.

Self-reflective, the Parliament acknowledged its weakness in conflict management and indecisiveness of foreign and security policy in the case of the Bosnian conflict, recognized the responsibility of EU and its institutions to use their capacities for long-term reconstruction and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to retrieve the political importance and role in security and stability of EU in the region.

This work has developed within the framework of four historiographical branches of studies, which have created the context in which the relations between the Parliament and Yugoslavia have formed. Primarily, studies on the relations between the EEC and Yugoslavia during the Cold War, focusing on their economic links, and the role of the European diplomacy in the break-up of Yugoslavia, concentrated on the Yugoslav crisis of the 1990s and its dissolution. In addition, studies related to the Parliament as an international actor, encompassing the studies related to the role and actions of the Parliament in external relations due to its increase in competences especially in the sphere of human rights and democracy, and shaping European integration. Finally, studies related to the interactions between Yugoslavia and the Parliament, none of which systemically studies the origin and evolution of the relations.

Overall, this thesis has shown that the Parliament had a very specific role in EC/EU-Yugoslavia foreign policy formulation and policy actions, which shaped the relations between the two partners and certainly contributed to strengthening and deepening of cooperation. In particular, the Parliament was involved in interparliamentary dialog with

Yugoslavia, representing an added value to the intergovernmental interactions, initiatives in the form of parliamentary missions aimed at promoting human rights and democracy, active and direct contributions to European integration, as well as democratic and critical voice in conflict management. In addition, the Parliament's actions exerted political pressure and influence on the Council and were able to challenge and shape the European foreign and security policy in the context of its relation to Yugoslavia. All of the parliamentary activities played a role in maintaining and strengthening relations especially at times of crisis and instabilities that characterized the history of Yugoslavia following the death of Tito.

This thesis, as a first systemic historical study on relations between the European Parliament and Yugoslavia, has offered a new perspective on the evolution of the Parliament's role in international relations and interactions with third countries, in promoting human rights, democracy and integration, as well as its input in EC/EU foreign and security policy.

Overall, the thesis revolved around the concepts of: *Human rights*, due to EP's role in enhancing its institutional powers by promoting human rights in international relations and particularly in relation to Yugoslavia given its immense troubles with respect for human rights and freedoms; *Democracy*, given the Parliament's strong commitment to democratization of Central and Eastern Europe including Yugoslavia, especially after the elections in Slovenia and Croatia; And, *European integration*, because of the Parliament's proactive role in shaping the EC/EU external action and identity.

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