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## European Parliament

Brussels (Belgium), 09.10.2012

***Towards EU 28:  
The perspectives of Croatian Accession to the EU  
for the future of EU integration process and regional co-operation***

Sarajevo Canton has had a Representation in Brussels since 1996.

With Dino Elezović, Head of Office, they choose for a young and dynamic representation.

The Round-Table Meeting of 09.10.2012 in the European Parliament could rely on an interested group of speakers and participants.



In the first part, an analysis was made of the European Enlargement Process after Croatia's Accession to the EU. Mr. Eduard Kukan, MEP, President of the EU Parliament Delegation for South-Eastern Europe, talked about a snowball effect for the countries surrounding Croatia.

Mr. Eduard Kukan, well-known as an optimist, appealed to the countries for taking initiatives. If two thirds of the borders of BiH become an outer border of the EU, measures have to be taken. Measures that will not cut off local civilians from countries and regions.

Mr Normundus Popens, Deputy Director-General of the EU Commission for Regional Policy, mentioned the territorial collaboration and cross-border programmes. There are criteria, but more work is necessary concerning strategies and the juridical basis.

The rich experience in the DG Enlargement of Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Head of Unit for Bosnia and Herzegovina within the EU Commission, learned us that negotiations towards EU accession should not begin with Articles 23/24, which was also confirmed by Eduard Kukan.

Important items are: agriculture, organised crime, refugees.

The adoption of the Acquis must take place at local and national level.

As regards the way this should be done in decentralised countries such as BIH, Belgium could be taken as an example.

The theme was further developed by speakers from the Committee of the Regions, Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, the President of Carinthia County.

The second theme “Strengthening economic growth through stronger regional co-operation” joined speakers of Varaždin County, Sarajevo Canton, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Stiria, Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Adriatic Macro-Region, Istria County, Veneto Region.

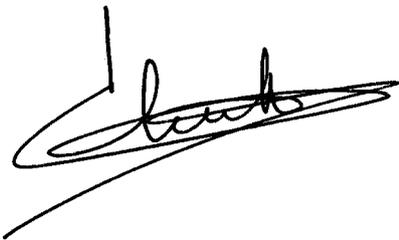
A remarkable intervention was heard from Prof. Dr. Dobrica Milovanović of the City of Kragujevac (Serbia). He noted that there was still a need for more decentralisation towards the local authorities. These have to be given more responsibilities. For a brief moment, they also talked about the issue of Kosovo, the speaker suggested that a solution was necessary.

The presence of Mr. Hermann Pirker (EPP, AUS), citizen of Carinthia County, made me understand that MEPs follow actively the issues concerning their Region. (see photo: Bert Van Caelenberg, Mr. Hermann Pirker).



In view of our actions as Eurofedop in the Western Balkans, this was an extremely interesting meeting. I made some new contacts, which are indispensable if we want to bring colleagues of our member countries closer to Europe.

Sarajevo Canton, Carinthia County, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Region Istria are located in the same building in Brussels: Rue du Commerce 49, 1000 Brussels.



Bert Van Caelenberg  
Secretary General Eurofedop