

# Stability Pact for S.E.Europe: Characteristics

**Problem:** During the Kosovo crisis, decision-makers realised that there had never been a coherent, long-term policy of conflict prevention in S.E.Europe. Rather, the international approach to the Balkans had been piecemeal and country-oriented, following the geographical direction Milosevic's policies chose to take. The transnational character of many regional problems was hardly admitted; a predominantly reactive, „fire-brigade“ policy concentrated on managing crisis after crisis, from Slovenia to the Kosovo.

*„The previous policy of the international community vis-a-vis former Yugoslavia had two severe deficits: It concentrated on the consequences instead of on the sources of conflict, and it tackled the problems of the region individually and separately from the ones in other parts of Europe.“*

*Joschka Fischer, Cologne, June 10, 1999*

## **Precursors:**

- a) EU Regional Approach adopted on February 27, 1996, as part of the Royaumont process following the Dayton Agreement
  - cooperation agreements with Albania & Macedonia
  - trade preferences for Bosnia/Hercegovina & Croatia
  - more than €7 bn. expenditure since 1991 on strict, regularly monitored conditions
- b) EU Common Strategy for the Western Balkans, commissioned by the Vienna European Council in December 1998

## **Problems:**

- Main focus on bilateral relations
- Not enough attention paid to the Eastern Balkans, i.e. neglecting the stabilisation potential for the region of Romania and Bulgaria
- No coordination of competing numerous initiatives
- Main actors lacked political will and resolve to make a real difference
- From today's point of view, all Balkan initiatives prior to the Stability Pact are perceived as ill-conceived and insufficient