

Five years of Regional Cooperation Council

After 1989 we were confronted with this immense diversity the European continent has to offer. It is a new time which makes the European continent and any solutions to the conflicts it is facing ever more complex. Any simplification into good and bad will not help us and will only serve as political instruments. We are witnessing the birth of more and more diversity since the fall of the Berlin Wall. New states emerge through disintegration and long forgotten ethnic minorities start to be active again on various levels.

The attempts to simplify these developments and to create unitary standpoints cannot be a solution for our continent. All the different cultures and their histories are too diverse for that.

Here is the point, where I want to evaluate the contribution of OSCE in cooperation with other international organisations like the United Nations Network, OECD, NATO and others. The field missions of OSCE are really a great contribution. The cooperation between these and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was really outstanding. That is also true for other institutions like the European Agency for Reconstruction but also NGOs and contributions of the Civil Society. In any case I want to say, it is necessary also to have an exit strategy. This is sometimes missing and is leading to a situation where the population in the different countries have no more understanding for the international intervention. To make it short: it is necessary to go in but it

is also necessary to consider when to go out. The Stability Pact has decided to do so and hopefully we have chosen the right moment.

The Regional Cooperation Council arose from the Stability Pact in the best moment and has done an excellent work until now. For sure, not everything is done. There is even more to do under the auspices of the tremendous changes, in which we are living. It is a kind of an other crisis as it has happened after 1991 and the downfall of Yugoslavia and the changes in South East Europe, but let us look in a positive way, because we are able to manage it.

The crisis of crisis management is a chance. Since the beginning of the integration process Europe has been able to take advantage of its crisis. The important part is that we keep a broad perspective and learn the lessons our history has taught us. Europe is complicated but that is precisely why understanding it can be so rewarding, and can sometimes develop into a permanent love affair. We cannot afford failures in the sense of humanity and peace and that's why crisis management is a rewarding task for the future. All the best for RCC, South East Europe and our beloved continent!