

PREFACE

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The 2001 NATO Economics Colloquium - a main economic event of the 2001 Action Plan of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) - took place in Bucharest from 2-4 May 2001. The conference, chaired by NATO's Director of Economic Affairs, Mr. Patrick Hardouin, dealt with the interrelationship between regional economic cooperation, security and stability. The regions identified as being of particular security concern were South Eastern Europe and South Caucasus/Central Asia, where economic factors play an important rôle.

Around 120 participants from 30 EAPC countries and several international organisations took part. In the introductory session, high level speeches were given by Ambassador Klaus-Peter Klaiber, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs; Mr. Mircea Dan Geoana, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, Romanian Minister of Defence; and Mr. Jos van Gennip, Chairman of the Economics and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. During the subsequent plenary session, some of the wider issues related to regional cooperation were raised. The meeting was then divided into two discussion groups dealing with South Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus/Central Asia. The final plenary session was devoted to reports from the discussion groups, assessments and prospects. The concluding speech was given by Mr. Bodo Hombach, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

The exchanges were very lively and stimulating. A wide scale of pertinent questions were addressed, such as:

- the necessity of regional economic cooperation despite low trade connections;
- the risk of regional economic cooperation being hampered by political tensions and conflicts;

- the potential of bilateral versus multilateral regional cooperation;
- the potential and constraints of existing regional cooperation schemes;
- regional economic cooperation as a step towards wider Euro-Atlantic integration;
- the link between economic and environmental regional security;
- energy development and regional cooperation;
- the rôle of international institutions in promoting regional cooperation;
- the extant and future threats to regional security and stability.

A more detailed overview of the presentations and discussions can be found in the Chairman's summary.

This book contains all the papers submitted at the Colloquium, some of them in shortened versions. In main, they represent the state of information at the time of the meeting. Clearly, important events occurred after the date of the conference. Firstly, the signature of the Framework Agreement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, signed by political leaders on 13 August 2001, offered a way out of the conflict which had deeply affected the economic situation of the region. Secondly, the events of 11 September 2001, leading to a global fight against terrorism, have had a seminal effect upon geopolitics throughout the regions covered by this book. But to ask authors to revise their papers in the light of recent events would have delayed the publication of this book for an unacceptable period of time. No doubt, both developments have highlighted the close link between economy and security, a core topic of the conference.

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* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.