

Croatia and Regional Integration

Vlatko Mileta

For quite a long time suggestions have been made to Croatia that it should link up with its eastern neighbours. These tendencies took on hard outlines in the proposal of the USA that there should be co-operation in south-east Europe, and in the regional Balkan approach of the European Union.

Although it does not formally seem so, both proposals are from the same source, and it is clearly a matter of an agreed-upon double-pronged approach. The regional approach of the European Union is individually conditioned, while the proposals of the USA apparently does not have this, although any analysis will show that this is not the case.

The joint source for these approaches can be found in the New Trans-Atlantic Programme (NTA), which was signed by the US and the EU in 1995. The main feature of this programme is that in many of the things contained it "a transition was made from solemn promises to joint programmes".

Concretely, there is a joint programme for the "solution of all the historical, political and ethnic problems of the Balkan region" (J. G. Kornblum, "A new Atlantic community", *Weekly Review*, Number 25, 1996), and that it is formalised in two conceptions comes from the fact that the US and the EU do not have the same "tool-box", as intervention instruments are so picturesquely referred to in the concept.

The EU, as a still primarily economic community, has economic instruments. The US does not have direct economic instruments, but political and security instruments can be found in their box (the authority of the world super-power and the NATO Partnership for Peace system), which cannot simply be ignored.

The combination of political, economic and security instruments can be so efficient that any state not accepting concepts that derive from such great powers must have valid reasons indeed for rejecting them,

It is, then, in order to ask whether Croatia does have such valid reasons when it does reject them. Let it be said at once that it has reasons with respect to both form and content. In a formal sense, Croatia is a sovereign and internation-

ally recognised state that has the right to reject various proposals that come from outside, especially those that directly or indirectly put at risk, or might put at risk, its international status. In terms of content, every state, including Croatia then, will accept those forms of international collaboration it deems useful, and reject forms that it deems harmful for itself.

The size of a state does not have an essential effect on international co-operation. We can find acceptance or rejection of international co-operation in the international area every day, especially where economic relations are concerned. Both large and small states are apt to this.

The USA, for example, at the time of the Reagan administration, proposed that a liberal farm products trade system should be established at a world level. Along with the proposal a solemn promise was made that the US would do this if others would too, and not later than 1999.

Although this message was directed to the world at large, it was primarily addressed to the European Union (for the agricultural war between the US and the EU is constantly smouldering), which did not consider the proposal worth considering, and it was never taken seriously.

It is clear that the Union considered that the acceptance of this proposal would be disadvantageous. It may be said that this case is not typical, that it is a matter of two economic giants trying to force their will upon each other. And this is indeed true. However, this also exists in the relations between Davids and Goliaths. For example, Norway twice refused to become a member of the EU. The Norwegian people on two occasions decided that their government had been hasty in initialling a treaty to join the Union, and in a referendum warned the government not to do this.

This can happen tomorrow with some other, less well developed member of the Union, for the dissatisfaction of the people (especially the farmers) is growing, as witnessed by various polls, and by the very fact that the Union has had to set aside special resources for PR.

Accordingly, there can be no hard and fast lines according to which some state or other has to accept something just because someone has had

the liberty to offer it, because it is, allegedly, good for this state. There is still the very realistic question of what the ties are that do link various states and nations, and whether that solution that puts them into a single retort, in which money and wealth are the one inviolable measure of worth, is really the best one.

If Kornblum is to be believed, it does seem to be the best. Of his own country, he says that its strength inheres in the ability to create ideas and actions in an "unpredictable way". He claims that the strength of the US derives from the fact that it has "absorbed people from all nations" and has given them the ability to "think creatively" to an enormous extent, and, as the biggest laboratory for social change in the world, inspires the people who identify with it. That is why the US, concludes Kornblum, is "in a certain sense" the connective tissue at a time of divisive movements in many European societies. Kornblum, in the good Marxist way, thinks that the quantity of a certain moment can be transformed into quality. If that were really the case, the USA would not be what it is. But there are completely different reasons for this.

New forms for a new synthesis

The quickening of the American advance into the European space on the threshold of the 21st century has deeper springs and other intentions. Now it is clear that the post-war leadership of America is being seriously shaken. Powerful, newly-created systems like that of the European Union have put a spanner into smoothly running schemes and seek the voice in many regions that belongs to them in the nature of things.

In Europe today really nothing can happen without the EU, or in the Pacific without Japan. The monoangular world has become triangular, and there is accordingly a new apportionment of roles. This is how it is in economics, and it will be that way tomorrow in politics.

Accordingly, when the Americans are seeking new forms for new syntheses, this is an attempt at preserving their leadership in a new way. Concretely, for Europe the creation of the New Trans-Atlantic Community is proposed, which should have, in addition to its security (NATO) aspects, economic and political substance as well. For the area of the economy, this would be the establishment of a free trade area (the Trans-Atlantic Free Market), and in the area of politics, the joint responsibility of the EU for political processes in Europe and an agreed approach to crisis areas in Europe and the world. In the Pacific this would

be put into practice via some future Pacific Free Market, while Latin America is already accounted for by NAFTA.

Changes in the American approach to global world problems were already apparent in Clinton's first term in office. Then, in Seattle in 1993, the heads of state or prime ministers of 18 Pacific states were presented with the American view of international co-operation. With the Europeans this was done at the end of 1995, when the NTA programme was signed, while NAFTA was gradually percolating down through Mexico to the other regions of Latin America.

In each of these projections a key local partner was sought. Within Europe, this is the EU, and if the NTA programme is borne in mind, then it can be stated that the approach of both the partners to the concrete south east region was agreed in principle, although there were important differences between them.

The difference in scope is particularly visible. The American proposal takes in a greater number of states, while the EU programme relates to the states that have come into being in what used to be Yugoslavia. The American programme takes in certain countries that already have a special treaty status with the EU (Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria, which have associate status, while Turkey has a customs union). There is also a difference in substance. Apparently the SECI programme is non-obligatory and based on the principle of interest, while the European Union programme is binding. Accepting it or rejecting it will affect the economic relations of each of these states in the regional programme with the European Union.

Regional approaches and programmes are nothing new in the activities of the EU towards given areas in the world. It has this kind of programme for more or less every region in the world. There is the Central European programme, the Mediterranean programme, the Latin American programme, a programme particularly for Russia and one for the ASEAN countries.

In fact, for its many relations with various states, the EU has worked out a whole network of treaties and strategies. And as far as we know, none of them have built into them any of those terms of reference that we find in the regional approach. To date what has been sought has been mainly the fulfilment of certain standard matters in the area of human rights, freedom of the media, market freedoms, stability of the national economy, and there was also insistence on the adjustment of the instruments of politics and eco-

nomics to the demands of the modern market of the western world. There were no conditional solutions according to which the EU would enter into treaty relations with a certain state only under the condition that such a state set up special connections with some one or all of the states surrounding it.

On the contrary, quite the reverse was true. After the application of Schengen, for example, Austria had to rescind any advantages its neighbours might have had, because according to Schengen the Austrian border control was actually the EU border control, and not just that of the state of Austria. Similarly, the European Union has not made a reconciliation between Turkey and Greece, particularly about the Cyprus dispute, a condition for the signing of a customs union with Turkey. True, the customs union between Turkey and the EU was put off for a certain time, not because of Greece (a member of the EU) but because of the Kurdish problem and human rights.

Accordingly, everything is relative, and behind both the proceedings of the EU and its regional approach are obviously other intentions, irrespective of what the leaders and spokesmen of the EU say after the Croatian protest. This can be seen in the interview with the Dutch ambassador in which, among other things, it is said that the Croatia is a viral region, from which the Union has no wish to import viruses. In other words, it has first of all to be decontaminated, and only when it has been cleaned up can there be any talk of any possible co-operation.

In very undiplomatic language then, he said what cannot be read in the documents, and as it is hard to believe this is just an accidental mistake it can logically be concluded that in some way it serves and follows in the footsteps of the global strategy.

The EU stand-point about the regional approach

The European Union stated its viewpoint about the regional approach in a special document called *Future treaty relations with certain countries in south-east Europe*. This document was prepared by the European Commission and accepted by the Council of Ministers on February 28, 1996.

Because of the importance of this document, it is worth while laying out its basic terms of reference. Here it should first be said that it is a collection of principles on the basis of which future relations between the countries mentioned

in the document can be developed. However, it should at once be noticed that Albania and Macedonia are separated out, although they are mentioned in the introduction, the reason being that these states have already established certain relationships with the Union, as is particularly mentioned in the document.

For all practical purposes, this document relates to Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FR Yugoslavia. According to this document, for the EU to set up treaty relations with these states, the future agreements have to contain elements of a "clear political and economic linkage, including in particular respect for human rights, minority rights, the rights of displaced persons and refugees, democratic institutions, political and economic reforms, a readiness for there to be open and co-operative relations between these countries, and total adherence to the provisions of the Peace Agreement" (EU document about a "regional approach").

In other words, the EU makes the following the conditions for any form of future treaty based collaboration:

- respect for human rights in general and the minority rights of various groups of the population in the territory of a given state;
- respect for democratic institutions;
- respect for political and economic reforms;
- willingness for there to be open and co-operative relations among these states and
- total adherence to the provisions of the Peace Agreement, which is in connection with the preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

FR Yugoslavia has an additional condition imposed on it, the granting of a high degree of autonomy to Kosovo.

The European Union's regional approach and the Republic of Croatia

Croatia has long since fulfilled these conditions. It respects human rights in general as well as the minority rights of various groups of the population. It has from this point of view passed all the necessary laws, from the Constitution to the special law about minorities that gives them minority rights beyond European standards, which was confirmed by Croatia's being accepted into the Council of Europe. Croatia also respects the rights of the displaced and refugees, and insists that others do the same.

Croatia also respects democratic institutions. It has a legally elected government, a constitutional court that is a check on government,

there is freedom of party activity, there are no defined political crimes, and freedom of speech and writing is in no way restricted. According to the objective evaluations of foreign institutions, Croatia is at the top of the list of states in transition with respect to economic reforms and economic recovery.

Croatia is adhering to the Dayton (Paris) Agreement, and is trying to make sure that it is carried out consistently. Because of Croatian insistence on the legitimacy of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, guilt is transferred to the state of Croatia, which is kept in a kind of captivity because of a completely false conviction that all three states are equally responsible for war having broken out in the former Yugoslavia. It is still more ridiculous to ignore the fact that Croatia was dragged into a war, that it was waged on Croatian territory, even at the time when there was no war in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all, its leadership providing logistic support for the aggression against Croatia.

This is a historical fact. It cannot be rebutted by claims that this was a matter of civil war.

These facts are not unknown to the European Union, and they were the basis for the recognition of Croatia as an independent state. It may be asked why the Union is now willing to accept another point of departure, and what its intentions are in setting up blanket conditions for future relations with Croatia that are so unspecified that they can every day be interpreted in whatever way is most convenient to the Union.

If the European Union really has no other intentions, apart from that there should be stability and good relations between the states in the area, why then are the conditions not made more precise, as they were by the Council of Europe, and then it would be clear what things were all about.

What does the stand-point of the "European document about a regional approach" that any treaties that the countries of the "regional approach" make with the EU will have to express their individual willingness to enter into "open and co-operative relations" actually mean? It would mean that any treaty Croatia might conclude with the EU would have to have built into it provisions about Croatian openness and co-operativeness with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, not according to its own evaluation but according to the European Union's way of thinking.

The problem of the regional approach lies in the fact that it steps outside the framework of treaty relations between states and imposes un-

usual approaches for international communications. That is why the Croatian government is right to look askance at such an approach, and not to accept the *sui generis* treaty that the European Union is offering.

Croatia is a small country that is vitally interested in having good relations with other states, especially with neighbouring countries, and that includes Serbia, for several reasons, particularly economic. However, Croatia cannot be interested in relations of co-operativeness that tend towards syntheses that recall past times.

During its 45 years as part of Socialist Yugoslavia, Croatia paid 102 billion dollars of its own GNP to help support the army and other federal institutions, including economic aid to the less well developed areas of the former state. For the upkeep of the former state, more than two billion dollars left Croatia every year.

This is a large sum of money, and if there had been no such allocations Croatia would today have been on a par economically with developed European states.

The EU regional approach document, as can be seen, is exceptionally rigid, informed by unacceptable and illogical points of view and obviously drawn up with covert and ulterior motives. How otherwise are we to understand the various demands being made on Croatia that have no political and economic logic?

In the practice of the treaty relationships that the EU makes with third countries, it is impossible to find an example of the Union conditioning its relations with some other state on that state's establishing identical treaties with some other state that the Union determines. Concretely, in the document, the Union requires that all the three states that are mentioned set up co-operative relations in various areas. In the matter of trade, it is required that each state give the other various privileges, and if they do not, the Union will not be expected to offer them the various kinds of relief in the treaty that it will make with each of them separately.

This is an absolutely new departure in the treaty relations of the EU with third states. In its international communications practice the Union has developed special types of treaty. They range from the standard commercial treaty to commercial treaties of the customs union and free trade zone type. And as far as we know, there is no kind of linkage in any of them. Poland, for example, has the status of associated member. In this treaty there is no mention of its having to have such and such a relation with the Czech Republic, also an

associated member. That these two countries have a free trade system in their relations with each other has nothing to do with their relations with the Union. This is the result of another agreement, on which the collaboration of the central European states rests. Accordingly, the European Union has initiated a special regime for those states that it treats in its regional approach, and has begun to create a new type of treaty relation, which will perhaps be applied to some other regions as well.

And at the end, all these *sui generis* endeavours of the Union peak in the insistence on political dialogue. The terms of reference of this political dialogue will be determined in the form of a joint declaration. The document does not specify everything understood by political dialogue. All that is underlined is that one important element within any future agreement with any of the states mentioned would be that negotiations have to go in parallel with consideration of the regional aspect of co-operation.

In the concrete implementation of the Regional Approach Document there is no anticipation of making a single treaty with all the three states mentioned. The European Union will make a treaty about mutual relations with each one of them separately, which might lead to the conclusion that it does recognise the fact that it is a matter of different states. Objectively speaking, no other form at this moment can possibly be applied. These are now independent states, but the situation at present is not at issue, rather what is the intention for the future.

That the European Union has something different in mind can be gathered from the following fragment: "future treaty relations - between the Union and individual states - should be established on a case by case basis, although a certain degree of similarity among them could be taken into consideration. The first agreements with these countries should remain co-operation agreements, even if in certain aspects they may go beyond the economic contents of traditional first generation trade and co-operation agreements".

In other words, Croatia has stopped on the first rung, even if in certain areas of relations with the Union it has more fully developed forms of co-operation. It has stopped at a trade and co-operation treaty, everything else being unattainable for Croatia, as long as it does not satisfy certain defined and undefined criteria that the Union has set up.

For Croatia this kind of approach is absolutely unacceptable. The member states of the European Union, and accordingly the Union as a whole, are the main trade partner. All other economic transactions are, both ways, with the European Union. Economically speaking, it has always been more integrated with this region than with any other region in Europe, more integrated even than with states with which it at one time lived in a common state. If Slovenia is excluded, only two tenths of Croatia's foreign trade was with the other parts of ex-Yugoslavia. And even then, this was mainly constrained trade, for it was forced by economic instruments to buy from this region, although it could have obtained things cheaper and better abroad. The fact is that Croatia was never very strongly integrated in this Yugoslav space and it is rather questionable why it is now being forced to get more deeply integrated with this area.

From the point of the EU too it is illogical. By forcing Croatia into this economic area it loses a serious trade partner, not one that is crucial to the Union, but important for some of the members, for Croatia imports goods of various kinds to the value of two billion dollars a year from the Union.

The overall impression is that the Union has put into the Regional Approach Document numbers of unknowns and things that can be interpreted in various ways. Croatian policy has a very cautious interpretation of them and rejects every idea that might lead to some new political community. Croatia does not want any kind of regional approach and draws attention to the evolutionary provision of the document, according to which the European Union can set up bilateral relations with Croatia, irrespective of the fact that it is presently "impossible to foretell when the necessary conditions for this might be created".

Croatian rejection of a regional approach and discussion about trade and co-operation with the EU in a package with some other states is the subject of subsequent interpretations about how this has all been wrongly understood, that there is no question of bringing into being any new political community, and that indeed the Document pays full attention to the specificities of each of the said three countries, that there are simply certain criteria that obligate all three countries (Statement of the Council of Ministers of the EU, Luxembourg, October 28, 1996).

However, this statement has not been confirmed by practice. Ten days after the statement, the Council of Ministers called representatives of the states concerned in the regional approach to

a meeting in Paris at the same time and the same place, for the purpose of preparatory talks about the beginning of negotiations in connection with signing trade and co-operation treaties. The only differences were in the timetable of the talks with the individual delegations.

Later statements from individual officials of the Union and statements of individual representatives of member states made in order to tone down the forcefulness of the Document actually clarified nothing but only added to the confusion.

It was the Dutch Ambassador who went the furthest in this, revealing the background to the whole of the Document with his statements that Croatia was still "one of the problems in the region", whence, presumably, the current approach to Croatia. In addition, the Dutch Ambassador permits the whole of the Document to be interpreted as a form of pressure on Croatia to save Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from collapse (Jozef. W. Scheffers, "We don't want to import your problems into Europe as viruses", Novi list, January 24, 1997).

The same stand-point is to be found in written evaluations of some of the members of the EU, for example Great Britain, the second report of whose Parliamentary Committee for European Legislation seeks a approach to Croatia "tougher" than that adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Thus in any objective analysis we are forced to the conclusion that the whole of the conception of the future relations with the Union has been established so that the Union will "open its doors" to individual states in the region to the extent that they open their doors to each other. Here is that linkage that is believed to be capable of growing into something else tomorrow.

The US Initiative for co-operation in south east Europe

A month after the publication of the EU regional approach programme, the US came out with a conception of a South East European Co-operation Initiative. It was presented to representatives of 11 states invited for the purpose to Geneva (December 5 and 6, 1996). At the end of the meeting, the initiative was signed by nine states, while Slovenia and Croatia had serious objections. An invitation sent to FR Yugoslavia was withdrawn because of political events in that country but is certain to be renewed.

The initiative counts on the co-operation of 12 states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova,

Romania, Turkey, Slovenia, Croatia and FR Yugoslavia. The very list of the states included in the Initiative clearly shows the many illogicalities of the whole conception.

Here are states that are members of the European Union or that have associated status. The European Union has its own conception of different infrastructure networks, and the question arises as to how this conception can be brought into phase with any conception that might perhaps be arrived at in the context of the Initiative.

What interest, for example, do Slovenia and Croatia have in developing transportation routes towards Romania, when they are interested in a different route entirely?

And at the end, how can the Initiative further the interests of these countries in European integration, when the main promoter of the idea, the US, is not a member of any European economic association?

There is obviously something else at stake, something connected with the security systems of NATO and Partnership for Peace, and the creation of a security zone around Russia, for it is probably estimated that a danger to Europe might arise from that area. In this context all the illogicalities of the whole initiative are irrelevant, for it is important to achieve the global aim, and it is beside the point whether any of the states covered by the initiative really have no interest in it. However, there is another side to this, and it is hard to believe that Russia will put up with attempts to have the NATO system on its very borders.

The Initiative is constructed as a forum at which representatives of the members will discuss and decide about common regional economic and ecological problems, action about which will have to be co-ordinated to be solved at a regional level.

Things accepted will be worked out by ad hoc working groups that would meet immediately after the discussion. These would be meetings of experts who would be responsible for the elaboration of concrete proposals.

The Initiative is not aimed at obviating other proposals for co-operation in south east Europe (the concept of the EU, the Sophia Declaration about good neighbourly relations, the Central European Initiative and Black Sea Economic Co-operation are being thought of). It will attempt to "complement" them (a) by close co-operation of the governments in the region; (b) by planning at a regional level; (c) the making of programmes and connections that are missing; (d)

by assistance in the creation of a regional climate that will encourage the participation of the private sector.

The initiative would have an executive director (the words "a person at a high level" are used) for the implementation of decisions accepted by the members and for the facilitation of the implementation of projects. This person would be chosen by the CSCE at the request of the member states of the Initiative, which is quite unprecedented in the practice of international relations. We have no knowledge of the executive director of any organisation, even of a forum, being a person appointed by some other organisation, which speaks volumes for what the Americans think about these states. The Initiative foresees the foundation of a Programme Committee. This Committee will accept programmes, determine priorities and undertake reviews. Every state can appoint a member to the Committee. The technical matters would be done for the Initiative by the Economic Commission of the UN for Europe, while the HQ of the Initiative would be in Vienna, in the Institute for Central Europe and the Danube Region.

The Initiative also uses the term "supporting states". Here other states that might be invited to join in consultations in the Initiative "whenever suitable" are being thought of.

As can be observed, the tasks of the Initiative are sketched in very fluidly. Nothing concrete is said, but precisely because the concrete is avoided the Initiative can be used to start off anything at all. It is noticeable also that the movers of the Initiative reserve for themselves the "right" to complement other programmes. In accord with this, they might complement the regional approach of the EU, though we are not sure that the Union would tolerate this.

If we link the Initiative with the regional programme of the EU, and bearing in mind that no important financial resources back the Initiative (such as the European Investment Bank), it is very questionable how the infrastructure of the project might come into being. The creators of the initiative must be completely aware that there are no funds to put the programme into practice, and since they themselves have not released any of their own funds, it is a question whether the initiative has the backing of any economic substance or whether it is just politics pure and simple that are involved.

This fact must cause both caution and examination of what is really going on. It is necessary to return again to the New Trans-Atlantic

Programme and its terms of reference to extend to the whole of Europe those methods that have been so successful in the western part of it.

This means that the Initiative is the beginning of a wider conception, in which the states in the group would arrive at economic relations via the infrastructure projects, at free trade zones for example, and via this at political co-operation and various associations that are without a doubt unacceptable to Croatia.

It should be recalled that the European Union grew out of the European Coal and Steel Community, that is, from simple components it developed into a complex system covering the areas of economics, and social and political life. However, those were other circumstances and different assumptions. There are none such in the area covered by the Initiative. Here it is a matter of foreign bodies, that cannot come together without many problems being caused. That is why the "Croatian" government analysts are right when they look with dubiety at the Initiative and its intentions to draw Croatia away from its natural surroundings.

Croatia truly has no economic, and still fewer political, interests in linking up with states and areas with which it has never had any very close contacts. It has been for centuries within an entirely different environment, and its dominant interests and intentions lie in this direction.

That is why it is counter-productive to assure us that the Initiative does not lead to any kind of political associations, as has been done by the Initiative's Co-ordinator (Dr Erhard Busek, President of the Institute for Central Europe and the Danube Region). He claims that the Initiative has no aims whatsoever except to link twelve countries in "an economic and ecological area" and to "help to set up routes".

On the contrary, Busek's statement shows that the initiative has various covert intentions. The mere statement that someone needs to have something forced upon him because someone else thinks it good for him is highly questionable. Secondly, economic links are not a question of good will, because economics has a logic of its own. In the recent past there were wonderful examples of economic will being forced upon certain states via well thought-up plans. Thus the states that were once part of COMECON created an enormous network of co-operative links and numerous institutions with the aim of linking the COMECON countries tightly together. However, all of this was quite in vain. The moment when discipline was relaxed slightly, all the European members of

COMECON turned to the west and the directions of trade changed overnight, which, along with other things, brought about the collapse of the whole system. And this is the best of proofs that economic activities will not tolerate violence.

Thus the Initiative cannot expect to be successful. It is attempting to join incompatible things together. And is expecting the countries that are to be joined to pay the costs of the joining, or, in other words, to get into debt to build something that is not in their interest. It would be quite different had the Americans, via their representative Richard Schifter, offered free assistance to the tune of 50 billion dollars, the approximate costs of the first six projects selected (raising the efficiency of electrical distribution, removing the bottle-necks in the traffic arteries, linking up gas pipelines, advancing small and medium sized companies, a recovery programme for the Danube area, and the facilitation of local border traffic). However, even then the Initiative would have to be rejected if in its political demands it were to link Croatia permanently with milieux foreign to its interests.

Instead of a conclusion

The regional approach of the European Union and the Initiative of the United States of America are full of unknowns and descriptions in broad outlines, and can thus at any moment turn

off in unpredictable directions. A literally understood regional approach could lead to institutional forms of co-operation with the states of ex-Yugoslavia, even with the state that went to war with Croatia, which is at the present time quite unacceptable. On the other hand, the Initiative obviously aims at some kind of free trade zone for south east Europe, one which is not quite obviously very useful. All the states of this area want integration with the EU, some of them are already in it, others are seeking this or have associate status, while others would like to have associate status. Accordingly, no interest has been shown for any deepening of economic and, especially, political collaboration in this region. When the Americans insist on this, then, they are clearly wanting on one hand to create a counter-balance to the EU, and on the other to gather together states via which in this area of Europe too they can get close up to the borders of Russia.

The statement that the Initiative is being connived at by the EU is not at odds with this conclusion. The Union does not oppose the Initiative at this time, although it includes some states that are members or associate members. The Initiative makes it easier to exert pressure on potential members, which suits the Union at this moment because it is in the process of making serious re-evaluations of its own systems. Tomorrow, however, this might not be the case. ■

DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF CROATIA!



CROATIA AIRLINES

Information and Reservations: ZAGREB(++385-1) 45-51-244, FRANKFURT (069) 92-00-520,
LONDON (0171) 306-31-38, ZÜRICH (01) 261-08-40.