



Summary of presentations, discussions and conclusions of the

## VII. Bled Forum on Europe

“Around the world the general impression is that imbalances are not decreasing but increasing. The most important imbalances we can speak about are the issues of poverty and the differences between the developed and undeveloped worlds. If we speak about world governance from that point of view, we must conclude that it is not efficient” Dr. Janez Drnovšek, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

### **Global challenges and the role of the EU**

Global challenges as defined in the 8 *UN Millennium Development Goals* and the 15 *Global Challenges of the Millennium Project* of the AC United Nations University demand immediate action by all partners. The EU as one of the main players is falling below its potential in responding to the abovementioned challenges. The principle of power, which mainly dominated the past and yet also dominates present relations, must be replaced by the effective co-operation of *transinstitutional* organisations.

It was recognised that the world is inefficient in dealing with the Millennium Development Goals and, as a result, we support the idea of creating a new type of institution that can act and be shaped by governments, corporations, universities, NGOs and international organisations. These *transinstitutions* could be established for each of the Millennium Development Goals and be composed of self-selected governments, corporations, NGOs, universities and international organisations.

It was recognised that there is a need for:

- the United Nations and each of its member states to respond to the global challenges set out, for example, in the *UN Millennium Declaration*;
- multinational corporations to shoulder their share of the responsibility in changing the system of social relations. Merely behaving on the basis of profit and the economy leads to the exploitation of both humans and nature;
- non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace to play an active role in anticipating the future and they must therefore be included in a new form of global governance based on transparency, participation and openness; and
- the use of EU projects such as *GlobalGoals*, which could be one way to link the desired future (political goals) with the reality on the ground.

Measures were discussed to address the challenges outlined above. It was suggested that:

- Foresight exercises, involving relevant stakeholders around the globe should be launched for each global goal to develop visions and support a transition enabling their realisation;
- Foresight should be adopted as a policy tool in order to foster a more participatory and transparent mode of governance on one hand and the future orientation of actors and policy on the other;
- open co-ordination involves the co-ordination of visions – there is a need for Foresight exercises that extend beyond the borders of nations on one hand and institutional and policy realms on the other;



- to address the global challenges we need to initiate breakthrough innovation with both social and technological elements. Innovation and technology policy should be accompanied by Foresight and other future-oriented vision-building tools to foster technological development that meets societal needs. Governments should follow visions of technology in society; and
- insights from foresight processes and prospective analyses (e.g. futures studies) should systematically be taken into account in policy decisions.

### **EU challenges**

The EU decided to become a knowledge-based society through the development of a knowledge-based economy and with that aim in mind it adopted the Lisbon strategy. Economic integration was a successful tool for achieving the stability of the continent yet moving towards the convergence of actions instead of the mere co-ordination of national interests and politics is also important.

It was recognised that:

- unification of the European continent in 1950 was based on economic integration, while adoption of the Treaty on the EU has fostered political integration. But the success of further developments lies in the integration of knowledge;
- there is a need to support and encourage EU institutions in developing a European Research Area. Joint research activities also mean the merging of research resources and potential along with the actual results of research;
- institutions of the EU (European Commission, Council of the EU, European Parliament) should foster implementation of a *win-win-win paradigm*, where the economic and societal component of development is ‘upgraded with sustainability’ which improves the quality of life and happiness of individuals;
- competitiveness is not an aim in itself but should serve as a facilitator of the enhanced quality of lives of European citizens. Europe needs to link its development goals to the improved quality of life as outlined in the Lisbon and Barcelona goals. To achieve this, we need visions regarding integrated social and technological innovation – Foresight can be used to develop such visions and to orient relevant actors towards them. Citizens will make efforts to support the Lisbon goals when the link to the quality of life becomes clear; and
- social cohesion is a central element of the EU policy agenda. Old and new member states need to be supported to develop new welfare concepts preventing the loss of social security and growing inequality. Foresight can help to support solutions that are adapted to the context and which also support the transition process;
- the last EU enlargement in 2004 made a great impact on policy making and institution building in the new EU member states. According to the analysis of various EU projects (prospective/futures/foresight) such as the Enlargement Futures project was, the knowledge and experiences (good and bad) derived from those projects could be used in the future development (enlargement) of the European Union.

### **Regional Challenges**

Regional interconnectedness in order to improve the quality of life is an important element of debates on the future. Regional co-operation on the basis of common interest must be the goal for the future because it maximises benefits for all and reduces tensions. A principle of mutual interdependence, based on shared knowledge efforts, is a tool for eliminating potential and actual tensions.



It was recognised that:

- the countries of SEE should define the priorities of their economic and social development and connect them with their regional partners; Foresight could be an effective way to develop visions for these regions that are supported by the relevant stakeholders and which can thus gain the momentum to foster the required transitions. These countries should therefore be supported in their efforts regarding Foresight capacity-building and the launching of Foresight activities;
- countries in the region should follow examples of successful regional co-operation (for example, Nordic states) and use their experiences and good practices (such as NORFACE, FORSOCIETY, SEE-ERA era-nets);
- the principle of power should be replaced with interest-based interdependence, with the aim of developing the region as a whole; and
- since the economic integration in the 1950s was a driving force in stabilising the European continent, the principle of knowledge integration should be used as a tool for overcoming regional tensions in the SEE region.

With the aim of achieving these goals we encourage global, EU and national players to strengthen the broad dialogue with actors in societies with the goal of ensuring a consensus on as well as the legitimacy and transparency of procedures related to long-term developments.

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