THE BALKANS

I visited every State in the region in the course of several days, spoke in every parliament in plenary sessions, met every president and prime minister, met the media and brought a message of engagement, but not an uncritical message because in different places different things needed to be said. Out of that, I invited some of the presidents of the region to come to the European Parliament to address the Parliament and, arising from that, I arranged at the meetings of the parliamentary speakers of accession states to invite the speakers of the Western Balkan former Yugoslav states, who were non-Members, to attend as observers and in this way to anticipate what is now happening – many years, almost a decade, later – to try to engage, through association agreements or candidate state status, with the states of the region.