

**9<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE SEECP PRESIDENTS OF PARLIAMENT**  
**Bečići, 14-15 June 2011**

**FINAL DECLARATION**

We, the Presidents of the Parliaments of the South-East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP) Participating States: Ranko KRIVOKAPIĆ, Denis BEĆIROVIĆ, Trajko VELJANOVSKI, Slavica ĐUKIĆ-DEJANOVIĆ, Vice Presidents: Georgi PIRINSKI, Željka ANTUNOVIĆ, Grigorios NIOTIS, Vlad PLAHOTNIUC, Vasja KLAVORA, Member of Parliament: Angel TILVAR and Secretaries: Petru FILIP and Sadettin KALKAN met in Bečići on 14-15 June 2011,

Together with the Special Invitees: Mariana VITANOVA, Jelica MINIĆ and Valentina RADULOVIĆ-ŠĆEPANOVIĆ,

**Reaffirming** our commitment to consistently work towards establishing better deeper and stronger inter-parliamentary relations among the SEECP Participating States in order to continue to realize our common ideas that are the essence and basis of our overall endeavours;

**Having in mind** that history of SEECP countries have been interwoven for centuries to the same geopolitical region and sharing common historical and cultural heritage;

**Conforming** the efforts towards regional reconciliation with a specific emphasis on trilateral consultation mechanisms and taking note of the crucial steps taken recently in the direction of the prosecution of war crimes;

**Emphasizing** that regional organizations, such as South-East Europe Cooperation Process, should be considered and evaluated as an inseparable part of our joint efforts to be very soon, all together, a part of common European family;

**Bearing in mind** that the European integration process is one of the key foreign policy priorities for most of the SEECP countries, which are in various stages of EU accession and that the objective of European project is mostly aimed at integrating all its regions and all its specificities;

**Highlighting** in particular the willingness of the countries participating in SEECP, which are also EU Members States, in terms of offering and providing all forms of support to countries that are in the accession process or aspiring to join the EU;

**Being fully aware** that the best way to maintain the stability of the region is to encourage and promote closer cooperation between the countries of the region, including a clear perspective of EU membership;

**Emphasizing** the need for regional cooperation initiatives, especially in areas such as economic development, the fight against organized crime and corruption;

**Having in mind** that the countries involved in the process of European integration are making progress in the overall process of EU enlargement, as indicated in last Reports of the European Commission, that are giving us objective expectation that the process of enlargement will continue to be regarded as one of key European policy;

**Especially** welcome the progress of the country that has completed the process of negotiations with the EU as well as the progress of other EU candidates, potential candidates and aspiring countries along the reform path as indicated in the last Reports of the European Commission;

**Expressing** willingness to act in compliance with the Lisbon Treaty, reinforced position of parliaments, in the direction of the continuous strengthening of their capacities, as to be fully prepared for the period after EU accession;

**Being aware** that new position of parliaments in the process of European Integration of candidate and potential candidate countries will bring new quality and legitimacy to the overall process;

**Having in mind** that the further strengthening of inter-parliamentary relations of the SEECP participating states should lead to the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly, what was one of conclusions of the previous Conference, held in Antalya;

**Have declared as follows:**

1. **We welcome** the decisions of European Union institutions in which the policy of enlargement is identified as one of the basic European Union policies, which should result in extending peace, democracy and prosperity in Europe;
2. **We value** in particular concrete steps made by all relevant European Union institutions towards the assessment of progress of candidate countries and potential candidate countries for membership in EU;
3. **We welcome** the willingness and concrete acts of the EU Member States participating in the SEECP, to provide strong support to the European perspective of the EU candidate and potential candidates countries based on the fulfilment of the Copenhagen

criteria for EU membership as well as to be the best promoters of the interests of these countries in all relevant institutions of the Union;

4. **We express** our expectation that the visa liberalization process, which affirms one of four key freedoms for the EU – free movement of persons, further be regarded as a major value for the democratic development of the region;

5. **We underline** that, in order to achieve our common European goals, it is necessary to reinforce the principle of regional ownership among the SEECP countries;

6. **We bear in mind** that one of the main objectives of our mutual cooperation in this framework must be our strong and unanimous endeavour for enlargement of EU;

7. **We note** that SEECP is one of important networks and means for achieving political and economical stability in our part of Europe.

8. **We express** our expectation that the institutional relations among countries of the SEECP shall be further intensified, referring to the positive experiences attained from the parliamentary cooperation within the region;

9. **We note** that in the framework of our overall regional cooperation specific responsibility lies on parliaments, as bearers of legislative power in which sense it is necessary to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy as an appropriate tool to realize our common goals;

10. **We emphasize** that such new position of parliaments is in line with the new institutional arrangements in the Lisbon Treaty which provide for an enhanced role of, both, the European and national parliaments, in shaping and defining the various EU policies;

11. **We underline** importance of the intention of the European Commission to include parliamentary cooperation in the framework of the Multi-Beneficiary IPA Working Group on Public Administration and Governance. We believe that opening possibility for funding the regional project on parliamentary cooperation will foster systematic cooperation among the parliaments from the region. We note with appreciation the role of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in developing and promoting of the regional parliamentary project, under the framework of Cetinje Parliamentary Forum;

12. **We affirm** the necessity of stronger proactive approach by the parliaments as regards all relevant areas, that should result in establishing various authentic regional initiatives and networks as close regional partners of the SEECP Parliamentary dimension;

13. **We point out** that the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) has a special role in the strengthening of the SEECP, including its parliamentary dimension. At the same time, we underline that the parliaments have an important encouraging and control role regarding the implementation of the government agreements and regional initiatives, such as the RCC;

14. **We point out** that the parliaments have a key role in the promotion of the values of the regional cooperation and at the same time make efforts to include the civil society

15. **We reiterate** that the Memorandum of Understanding on Interparliamentary Cooperation in SEE, ratified by the Speakers of the Parliaments in Sofia, clearly determines institutional frameworks, forms and structures of parliamentary cooperation, such as the Annual Conference of the SEECP Parliaments, the Conference of the European Integration Parliamentary Committees of the States participating in the Stabilization and Association Process (COSAP), the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum, etc. We emphasize that the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation provides logistics support and that it is an important focal point and information centre regarding the SEECP parliamentary dimension

16. **We note** that we have given new impetus to this process, in terms of deepening parliamentary and overall cooperation within this region, by proposing guidelines and modalities for further development of SEECP Parliamentary dimension leading up to setting up a Parliamentary Assembly of SEECP;

17. **We fully support** the reinforcement of the work of SEECP Troika, having in mind the complexity of the issue of the institutionalization of the SEECP parliamentary cooperation and the necessity for a complete commitment in a long period of time and invite the next Chairmanship in Office to keep the continuity in the regular gathering of the Working Group in line with its mandate;

18. **We call upon** all the representatives of the SEECP participating states to contribute to outline a clear and achievable mission and vision of the new parliamentary institutional platform of the South-East Europe Cooperation Process taking into account the regional interests and priorities, in order to have the process of institutionalizations brought to an end;

19. **We express** our appreciation to the host Parliament and its Speaker for the successful chairing of the SEECP Parliamentary Dimension, and we agree that the next Conference of the Speakers of Parliaments will be held in Belgrade in the first half of 2012.