



**TALKING POINTS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL/HEAD
OF EXPERT POOL OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL
(RCC),**

MS. JELICA MINIC

**At the Regional Meeting: Role of National Parliaments in Negotiations for the
EU Accession
RCC Secretariat, 17-18 March 2011**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Guests.

- Allow me to welcome you in Sarajevo, at the premises of the Regional Cooperation Council' Secretariat. I would like to take this opportunity and express my gratitude to the European Commission for excellent cooperation we have had in organising this important regional event. This represents another significant joint venture that will unquestionably strengthen the parliamentary dimension of regional cooperation.
- Today's presence of the representatives of national parliaments from the Western Balkans and Turkey, in this important period when the European and Euro-Atlantic endeavours highlight the need for initiating and implementing the much needed reforms, is of utmost significance.
- Allow me to pin-point some observations, which certainly are shared by all of you around the table.
- We all recognize that functioning and efficient democratic institutions are a pre-requisite for political stability, economic development, social cohesion and overall trust in democracy. The Parliaments – as legislators, play a central role in promoting and implementing reforms, notably within the

framework of the countries' European agenda, as well as increasing the efficiency and transparency of governing structures.

- Parliamentary cooperation has a key role in fostering realisation of common efforts for harmonization and alignment of legislation with the EU *acquis*, launching and nourishing public debate as well as strengthening political cooperation towards joining the EU.
- All this makes parliamentary cooperation in the region so strategically important. On its end, the RCC Secretariat's Strategy and Work Program 2011-2013 sets concrete goals and activities developed in close coordination with national and European parliaments. It was endorsed by the SEECP Summit in Istanbul last year, as an effective mean to streamline and seek synergy in parliamentary cooperation.
- Among the priorities identified within the framework of this document, two are particularly noteworthy for the parliamentary dimension, due to their goal of strengthening regional cooperation in the field and improving coordination between existing relevant initiatives.
- In this sense, efforts are invested in order to bolster the parliamentary dimension of the SEECP and develop the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum into a hub for enhanced coordination of parliamentary activities related to the EU *acquis* in the Western Balkans, through its institutionalization and establishment of a sustainable secretariat.
- Moreover, efforts of the RCC in strengthening parliamentary cooperation are encountering its concrete format through new intention of European Commission to include parliamentary cooperation, for the first time, in the framework of the Multi-Beneficiary IPA Strategy 2011-2013. Cooperation of the national parliaments of the region is among the 3 priority areas of the MB IPA Working Group on Public Administration and Governance. Henceforth, the doors are opened for financing of the regional project in the area of parliamentary cooperation, as of beginning of 2012, which is of

crutial importance for fostering systematic cooperation among the parliaments from the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I strongly believe that this two days' event will allow you, representatives of parliaments from the Western Balkans and Turkey, that, together with the assistance of our partners from European Commission, European Parliament and Regional School for Public Administration, to concretise already proclaimed will for cooperation.
- It is in this context that I hope you will make full use of gathering here at the premises of the RCC Secretariat and thus make a contribution to developing a framework for regional development project in the area of parliamentary cooperation.

Thank you for your attention!