



6th CONFERENCE OF THE SEECP SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT
The New South Eastern Europe: Role of the Parliaments

Zagreb, 16-17 April 2007

FINAL DECLARATION

We, the Speakers of the National Parliaments of the Participating States to the South East European Co-operation Process (SEECP): Vladimir ŠEKS, Beriz BELKIĆ, Ilija FILIPOVIĆ, Georgi PIRINSKI, Ljubiša GEORGIEVSKI, Marian LUPU, Deputy Speakers: Sotirios HATZIGAKIS, Eugen NICOLICEA, Sadik YAKUT, the Secretary of the Standing Bureau of the Senate, Ilie SARBU and the Chargé d'affaires Xhelal FEJZA, gathered in Zagreb on 16-17 April 2007,

Together with the Special invitees: Ranko KRIVOKAPIĆ, Miguel Angel MARTÍNEZ, Klaus-Peter WILLSCH, Wolfgang GROSSRUCK, Gerd HÖFER, Michael C. MOZUR and Romana VLAHUTIN,

Reaffirming our commitment to the principals and provisions enshrined in the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Co-operation in South-Eastern Europe as well as the conclusions of the previous Conferences of the Speakers of the National Parliaments of the Participating States to the SEECP;

Adhering to the common European vision and reiterating our strong support for the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council held in Thessaloniki in 2003;

Convinced that the membership of all South East European states in the European Union is the best impetus and framework for lasting peace, stability and cooperation in the region;

Welcoming with satisfaction the progress made in South Eastern Europe in consolidating democracy, stability, prosperity, good neighbourly relations, regional co-operation and integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions;

Noting that 6th Conference of the SEECP Speakers of Parliament in Zagreb marks ten years since the first such Conference was held in October 1997 in Athens, one year after the launching of the SEECP in Sofia in July 1996;

Emphasising that at present the new historical openings in South Eastern Europe towards European standards of dialogue, tolerance and co-operation in political and public life require that regional parliamentary cooperation enters a new stage in order to fulfil its overarching role in the implementation of the regional ownership principle;

Fully aware of the important role and responsibility of the National Parliaments in the process of enhancing regional co-operation, especially in the field of promoting democracy, political and social dialogue and tolerance as well as promoting and protecting human and minority rights and enhancing economic growth;

Have declared as follows:

1. We encourage the strengthening of the leadership role of the SEECP in the future of regional co-operation in South Eastern Europe and the establishment of the Regional Co-operation Council as a step that will ensure continued effective co-ordination of common efforts of the SEECP Participating States, the EU and the international partners;
2. We appreciate the results of the Stability Pact efforts to encourage parliamentary co-operation as one of the most prominent contributions to regional co-operation;
3. We welcome the role of the National Parliaments in the future regional co-operation architecture and we call upon all the parliamentarians of the SEECP Participating States to enhance public awareness of the new historical openings in South Eastern Europe towards the European standards of dialogue, tolerance and cooperation in political and public life;
4. We emphasise the need of enhanced co-operation among our Parliaments and with the European Parliament aimed at building closer relations between the parliamentarians and parliamentary bodies.
5. We underline the importance of the EU enlargement to South Eastern Europe as a key motivation to stability, security, prosperity and further enhancement of regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations and we welcome the fact that two of the SEECP Participating States recently became EU Member States. We commend the accession negotiations of the EU candidates and express hope that the criteria and requirements for the opening of accession negotiations with the remaining EU candidate will be fulfilled. We welcome the signing of one Stabilisation and Association Agreement and believe that the overall progress in the reforms and co-operation with international institutions will pave the way for the resumption and conclusion of other Stabilisation and Association Agreements;
6. We welcome the intention expressed at the NATO Riga Summit to extend invitations at the forthcoming 2008 Summit to those SEECP countries that meet NATO's performance based standards and are able to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security and stability. We also welcome the expansion of the Partnership-for-Peace Programme in South Eastern Europe;

7. We strongly emphasise the importance of Kosovo being a democratic, multi-ethnic society based on the rule of law. We continue to advocate the need for a measured, balanced and realistic approach as we agreed upon the value of a compromise solution, in the interest of both sides and the region as a whole. We also continue to call for dialogue, responsibility, solidarity and co-operation, reiterating that the EU and Euro-Atlantic perspective is the best motivation and framework for a solution;
8. We welcome the participation of the Republic of Moldova as the new fully-fledged member of the SEECP and express our confidence that the SEECP membership will contribute to Moldova's endeavours to integrate into the European mainstream.
9. We stress the importance of the Annual Conferences of Speakers of SEECP Parliaments in guiding and coordinating regional parliamentary co-operation. Wishing to enhance successive SEECP Chairmanships' continuity, we agree to use a Troika Format of the Speakers of Parliament to explore the possibilities of closer cooperation with the Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments.
10. We acknowledge with satisfaction the establishment of the Conference of the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary European Affairs Committees of the Stabilisation and Association Process Countries (COSAP) and consider it to be a successful contribution to upgrading the parliamentary dimension of the European integration processes in the region. We encourage the widening of this model of parliamentary co-operation to other areas of common interest;
11. We encourage further development of productive ties between the National Parliaments of South Eastern Europe and the European Parliament, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the WEU Parliamentary Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
12. We congratulate the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria for hosting the Focal Point for parliamentary co-operation in SEE and express our full support for its future activities.

Adopted in Zagreb, on 16 April 2007