



2nd South Eastern European Government Communication Conference (SEECOM)

Budva, 27-29 September 2013

**Welcome notes by Jovan Tegovski, Chief of Staff,
Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat**

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

- I am happy to be able to greet you in Budva today on behalf of Mr Goran Svilanovic, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretary General, at the opening of the second edition of the South Eastern European Government Communication Conference (SEECOM).
- It makes us proud to be a co-organizer of this very important event and support its main goal: the establishment of a regional, not-profit, professional association of public sector communicators (SEECOM Forum).
- I wish to welcome top government communicators from all over South East Europe, communication experts from the EU and the US, as well as PR managers from the region, who are with us today.
- I also want to thank our partners: the Public Relations Bureau of the Government of Montenegro, the US Embassy in Podgorica, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Montenegro, for co-organizing the event.
- The economic crisis that has hit South East Europe (SEE) has made communication ever more important, making it imperative for governments

to be in constant communication with their citizens to explain what is it that they are doing to help them overcome the present difficulties.

- A deepening of the dialogue between state actors and media and non-governmental community is the niche the RCC considers of a paramount importance for securing the well-being of a society, its economic prosperity and development, in line with goals of the SEE 2020 strategy the countries of the region are currently preparing under RCC coordination.
- We are therefore glad that the conference itself will address topics such as government communication in the service of citizens, optimization of resources in public communication, usage of modern technology for improvement of two-way communication, social media, communicating of EU integration and regional cooperation.
- We are also happy that the SEECOM forum aims to advance professional development and networking; stimulate partnerships with non-governmental actors, first and foremost media and civil society organizations; promote citizen engagement and good governance through transparency, accountability and free and easy access to information in public sector; advocate for higher professional standards, values and ethics of public sector communication, as well as use of innovation and new technologies.

Dear colleagues,

- Over the last five years of the RCC's existence, we saw important steps forward in connecting the region: joint infrastructural projects, constant increase of the level of cultural exchange, cooperation in the fields of justice, home affairs, security, education, science, healthcare, media. And we all know that communication is essential for the improvement of cooperation, of economic and cultural bonds, which in turn leads to economic growth.
- The RCC has played an important role in this process, and will continue to do so. We will continue to work on creating an environment where, with respect to mutual differences, we will be able to adjust our own interests to those of our neighbours, and profit from that synergy. We are proud to have ensured all-inclusiveness in our activities, to show that the region is able to take responsibility for its own future and create conditions for overall progress in the spirit of tolerance, communication and cooperation. We find it important to foster regional stability for the sake of citizens in our region

and the quality of their lives. We believe that by advancing European and Euro-Atlantic integration we will reach that goal faster.

- Finally, allow me to say a few words about the SEE 2020 strategy, as the establishment of SEECOM forum is in line with the RCC goal to back activities which deepen dialogue between state and media actors in the region, to impact a societal change in line with good governance aspects of SEE 2020.
- For several years now, the RCC has paved the road for the SEE 2020 growth and development strategy. We have been actively working on it since November last year, when ministers of economy from the region adopted the strategy's main targets. Our basic goal is to improve living conditions in our region and bring back in the region's focus competitiveness and development of each country and the entire region. In that sense, this document draws inspiration from the EU strategy *Europe 2020*.
- Let me mention the most important goals of the strategy to be reached by 2020: employment growth from 39% to 44%, boost of total SEE trade in goods and services from 94 to 210 billion euro, the rise of the region's GDP from 36% to 44% of the EU average. We also want to see the increase of overall annual FDI inflows to the region by at least 160% and additional 300,000 highly educated people on the job market, with a realistic perspective to get decent jobs. To make this happen, production, trade, investments and education must be improved, and our national governments must be far more efficient than they are nowadays.
- We want to create a harmonised framework in the regional cooperation process, where all participants have clear roles and responsibilities in achieving the agreed goals. This is why all relevant regional organisations participate in the strategy development under RCC auspices. Of course, national institutions have a key role: ministries of economy, education, employment, healthcare, justice, culture, environment, relevant agencies. International organisations, such as the EU and the OECD, will also provide support. The ministers of economy are expected to adopt the SEE 2020 strategy in November 2013.
- The RCC will continue to act as a facilitator, bringing together best resources of our region around the same, common goal, to maximize

knowledge and impact, at the same time serving as a link to the European Union and other interested partners of the region.

- We look forward to continuing to work with all of you on this and future editions of the South Eastern European Government Communication Conference, as well as with the regional public sector communicators' forum.

- Thank you.