



Collection of Speeches  
at the Zagreb Summit,  
11th May 2007

# **Zagreb SEECP Summit**

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**ZAGREB SEECF SUMMIT**

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## **Foreword**

Dear friends,

It is my honour and pleasure to present to you a collection of addresses delivered at the 10th meeting of Heads of State and Government of the South East European Co-operation Process held on 11 May 2007 in Zagreb under the Croatian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office.

This was a landmark event for South Eastern Europe.

As never before in its contemporary history, the countries of this part of Europe have showed commitment and dedication to seize the moment, to advance further towards the European family of nations and states, to enhance their cooperation and to move our part of Europe to the new heights.

The most senior representatives of European institutions, leading countries of the world as well as of the broadest international public came to Croatia and shared a message with the countries of the region that the time is ripe for us to invest additional efforts to move this part of Europe from its unfortunate recent past and fully join the mainstream of Europe. The citizens of South Eastern Europe want progress and a new vision of tomorrow. They want an image of a political and human landscape that will be part of the new, enlarged European space where South Eastern Europe will be modern, orderly and prosperous.

I dare say that the Zagreb Summit laid foundations for this future.

The overall result of the meeting is a strengthened SEECP, determined to come to grips with the challenges of establishing a lasting architecture of security and stability, contributing to prompt and sustainable solutions of the remaining issues, taking the region of South Eastern Europe on a journey of accelerated economic and social advancement and ensuring membership in the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

In line with the concept of regional ownership, the countries of South Eastern Europe now have an opportunity for a clear say on which projects and initiatives



they want to develop and promote. We expect the Regional Co-operation Council to build on the initiatives and projects of the Stability Pact and streamline them according to the specific needs of the countries involved. Our expectations of the new regional cooperation architecture, of the Regional Co-operation Council in particular, are high and let me add, justifiably so.

The synergy and compatibility of cooperation between the EU, NATO and other international partners with the region, as expressed and confirmed at the Zagreb Summit, remains essential. This policy must be furthered and enhanced. In the same time, it is also essential that the countries of South Eastern Europe take their affairs firmly into their hands and assume responsibility for their future.

South Eastern Europe is an area of great historical, human and cultural wealth. I think that we all recognise this potential as well as the importance of this historic moment. We can build on the achievements of the Zagreb Summit, with joint forces of all the partners and friends, from SEECP Participants to the EU, from the Stability Pact to the donor community. We can deepen this process of cooperation and accelerate our joint accession to the Euro-Atlantic community. The vitality and enthusiasm of our discussions in Zagreb can be an inspiration for the future.

Zagreb, 26 September 2007

Dr Ivo Sanader  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia

## List of Speakers at the Zagreb SEECP Summit

*Welcome note by Dr Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister*

*Addresses by:*

**Mr Vladimir Šeks**, Speaker of the Parliament  
**Mr Stjepan Mesić**, President  
**Dr Ivo Sanader**, Prime Minister  
**Dr Angela Merkel**, Federal Chancellor  
**Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering**, President of the European Parliament  
**Mr José Manuel Barroso**, President of the European Commission  
**Mr Konstantinos Karamanlis**, Prime Minister  
**Mr Sergei Stanishev**, Prime Minister  
**Mr Janez Janša**, Prime Minister  
**Mr R. Nicholas Burns**, Under Secretary of State for  
Political Affairs  
**Mr Sali Berisha**, Prime Minister  
**Dr Nikola Špirić**, Chairman of the Council of Ministers  
**Mr Branko Crvenkovski**, President  
**Mr Vladimir Voronin**, President  
**Mr Călin Popescu – Tăriceanu**, Prime Minister  
**Mr Milan Parivodić**, Minister of International Economic  
Relations  
**Mr Ali Babacan**, Minister of Economy and EU Chief Negotiator  
**Mr Martin Bartenstein**, Federal Minister for Economics  
and Labour  
**Mr Željko Šturanović**, Prime Minister  
**Mr Joachim Rücker**, Special Representative of the Secretary  
General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo  
**Mr Alessandro Minuto Rizzo**, NATO Deputy Secretary General  
**Mr Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**, OSCE Secretary General  
**Ms Maud de Boer-Buquicchio**, Deputy Secretary General  
of the Council of Europe  
**Dr Albert Rohan**, Deputy Special Envoy of the UN Secretary  
General for the Future Status Process for Kosovo

*Concluding remarks by:*

**Dr Erhard Busek**, Special Co-ordinator for the  
Stability Pact for SEE

**Mr Olli Rehn**, Member of the European Commission;

**Dr Ivo Sanader**, Prime Minister

## Welcome note by Dr Ivo SANADER

PRIME MINISTER



Honourable President of the Republic,  
Honourable Speaker of the Croatian Parliament,  
Honourable Presidents, Prime Ministers and heads of delegations of the  
Participating States of the South East European Cooperation Process,  
Honourable Chancellor Merkel, President of the European Council,  
Honourable President of the European Parliament, Mr. Pöttering,  
Honourable President of the European Commission, Mr. Barroso,  
Honourable heads of all delegations,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,

Welcome to Zagreb!

Welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the participating states of the South East European Cooperation Process.

I need not emphasize what a great honour and pleasure it is to be your host in Croatia today. Your presence and strong response to this Summit confirms that we are witnessing a remarkable and historic moment.

Today, Europe and the world came to Zagreb, so that from Zagreb we could send a message to the whole of South East Europe: continue with your efforts, improve yourselves, resolve the outstanding issues and cooperate. The European South East should take its rightful place on the map of a new united Europe.

This is what we will discuss today and, hopefully, make appropriate decisions.

Before we begin, I would like to ask first the President Stjepan Mesić to share a few words, and then the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Vladimir Šeks.



**Mr Vladimir ŠEKS**

**SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Honourable Presidents and Prime Ministers,  
Honourable Mrs Merkel,  
Honourable President of the European Parliament, Mr Pöttering,  
Honourable Mr Barroso,  
Distinguished guests,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to say how pleased I am to have the opportunity to speak to you today at the meeting of heads of states and governments of the participant countries of the South East Europe Cooperation Process.

In the last few years, the countries of South East Europe have made great progress in achieving their fundamental goals. Our part of Europe is moving in the direction of lasting stability and development. I am convinced that all the states in this part of Europe remain committed to the European path, and that their faithfulness to European values will help all of us to reach our goals.

The cooperation process and the mechanisms which will be founded at this Summit will surely be of assistance in reaching these aims, and the readiness that the EU, the NATO and other important agents of international relations have expressed confirms that all sides are prepared to fulfil their promises and commitments.

The purpose of regional cooperation is not for the states of South East Europe to merge into some kind of association for this part of Europe, but its purpose is rather the adoption and promotion of European values in the framework of regional cooperation. When speaking about the states that are not yet members of the European Union or the NATO, regional cooperation, as the foundation of long-term political stability, security and economic development, will enable them to more easily and quickly reach European and Euroatlantic goals.

Continuing negotiations on full membership of the EU, and in expectation of a new step to be taken soon towards membership in the NATO, Croatia will further implement ongoing and all-encompassing parliamentary support of priorities of the Process. This dimension of our cooperation is of particular importance. In the creation of a new picture of South East Europe, it is on the members of the



Parliament to clearly and explicitly follow the voice of their peoples and voters. And they have clearly shown their support in favour of European standards and this kind of future for South East Europe, which will be ready and able to join in full the new, wider, free and democratic Europe.

The conference of the Speakers of Parliaments of the participant countries of the Process, held in Zagreb on 16 April made a significant contribution to the strengthening of cooperation in our part of Europe. At this conference we laid some concrete guidelines for the further work of our Parliaments and, among other things, founded the Parliamentary Troika of the SEECP for stronger relations with the European institutions. I expect the new architecture of regional cooperation, in which there is also a parliamentary element in the shape of the Focal Point for Parliamentary Cooperation in Sofia, will give the Process a new quality and dynamics. The strengthening of the cooperation of the Parliaments of South East Europe confirms their political and democratic maturity, which works in favour of the assessment that we really are on the verge of a new era and that Europeanisation and modernisation are a part of our vision, as is partnership with the international community and international institutions.

I would conclude that the task of the design of a complete new role for our states in Europe is ahead of us, as well as the exploration of potential new ways of working and cooperating in the interest of strengthening political and democratic maturity, supporting the values of freedom, dialogue and tolerance and shaping a new South East Europe. I firmly believe that we are standing on the doorstep of a new era, and that Europeanisation and modernisation are two key principles which we should be guided by as we continue to solve the issues we have inherited from previous times, and particularly when we are shaping our future.



## Mr Stjepan MESIĆ

PRESIDENT

Messrs Presidents and Prime Ministers,  
Madame Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the EU,  
High-ranking officials of the European Union institutions,  
Representatives of the international community,  
Representatives of the Croatian authorities,  
Distinguished guests,  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my outstanding honour and special pleasure to welcome you today here in Zagreb at the session of heads of state or government that concludes Croatia's one year Chairmanship in the South East European Cooperation Process.

For the second time since the year 2000, Zagreb is hosting a meeting of the greatest significance for our region. Less than seven years ago, at this same venue, heads of state or government of the Stabilisation and Association Process committed themselves in the Zagreb Declaration to conclude agreements on regional cooperation providing for political dialogue, creation of a regional free trade area as well as close cooperation in justice and home affairs. We were then only beginning to institutionalise our bilateral relations with the European Union. Regional dimension became as important as bilateral within the scope of these relations. After the end of the war and in particular after the changes at the elections in the year 2000, Croatia continuously made significant efforts to re-establish co-operation with all the countries in the region. It did so on the bilateral and the regional basis simultaneously.

For this reason, it was not by chance that Croatia, although still as an observer, as early as 2002 took part in the Summit meeting of the South East European Cooperation Process that was held in Tirana. With this, we dispelled any prejudice on the side of those who considered regional co-operation to be a threat of recreation of Yugoslavia and of Croatia's return to its fold.

New time brought also new political forces and new circumstances. There were only few in this region that understood this. I have always stressed that the natural environment for Croatia is its region. This is an area that due to common past and compatibility of legal, economic and social systems is the one we can most easily co-operate with. It turned out that this was not only true but also that



this is something others expect of us. Co-operation is always a two-way process in which, while on the path towards a common goal, we both invest and gain. Croatia has decided to place at disposal all its capacities – its knowledge, experience and contacts, as well as its abilities as a mediator... but also other potential, aware that this is an investment into its own peaceful and stable future.

The stability of this area is still very questionable. For, not all the people experienced a political catharsis, not all the political leaders are resolute to turn to European values. Individualising the guilt and releasing collective bodies of responsibility did not take place to the fullest. And the price of it could be high indeed.

In our region, there are still politicians in office who in their statements clearly make known their claims against foreign territories. With such messages they undoubtedly signal that they are not ready to turn to Europe and that they are not really interested in Europe. As if they were not aware of the role and responsibility vested in them – to lead their country towards progress and citizens towards prosperity. Free elections, by themselves, are not sufficient. Their result must be commitment to democracy. When I say this, I have in mind our experience too.

For this reason, it is of utmost importance for us and the future of our region that always the same messages arrive from the European Union and Atlantic structures – that only democracy pays! Not any other process is in the interest of European and Atlantic integration because it is not in the interest of democracy and stability!

Our citizens and in particular politicians have to be aware that stable future can be built only on reconciliation, coexistence and tolerance among all ethnic groups. For, without stability in the surrounding area, there is no economic recovery and no progress and for the countries of the region which are, like Croatia, dependent on foreign investments, this is a significant prerequisite.

Help from the side invested into advancement is always welcome to us. However, we have understood that we have to turn to ourselves and this means to our neighbours too, to our common potential that will generate ideas and initiatives of its own.

Cooperation also implies harmonising views on resolution of issues of common interest... which is preceded by a discussion, respect for opinions of others – and a search for a solution that is acceptable to all.

## Mr Stjepan MESIĆ

### PRESIDENT

In this region, this is something that we still need to practice.... Cooperation with countries of the region prepares us to be able to identify common interests in a narrow circle of countries similar to us and to care for our region; to learn how to look at one another with trust as partners and not with suspicion like on competitors. Competitors' only interest is their own interest and not common interest. The interest for us here has to be our common one!

Countries of the region Southeast Europe are on a different level of their democratic achievements and on a different level of their economic development; as well as on a different level of institutionalised relations with the EU and NATO. It is possible to overcome this great disparity only by united efforts.

The motto of the South East European Cooperation Process is Building Europe Together. And this is a great challenge to all participants in this Process. I wish we would understand once and for all that we do not only share a common past. We also share a common future. This is the future that almost all of us, I am confident, see equally – as prosperous future! This is the future where all the potential will be exploited and where this potential will bring peace to countries and prosperity to citizens.

Our common projects are for example building an infrastructure network and cooperation in preventing drugs and human trafficking. However, cooperation in ensuring peace and lasting stability in the region of Southeast Europe is of priority importance.

We do not forget that the political architecture of our region has still not been finished. After Montenegro became independent, it is necessary to resolve – in a way that is acceptable in the long-term – the issue of Kosovo and make possible for Bosnia and Herzegovina to start functioning as a modern state based on the rule of law.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the European Union and all international factors on their constant and generous support – both political and financial – extended to all the countries in the region jointly and each country individually. I wish to lay special emphasis on the support rendered by the Union to individual approach and to achievements that it evaluated individually. Thanks to this very criterion, Croatia is today among candidate countries. This was an extraordinary



motivation for the progress of society just the same as for stronger cooperation in the region.

Dear participants of the Summit,

We are today witnesses of a new beginning in the cooperation among countries of Southeast Europe. The Cooperation Process is transforming and getting firmer shapes.

I am pleased that this initiative is a brainchild of the region and that in over more than 10 years of its existence took hold and developed into a framework for further cooperation – now under changed circumstances and adjusted to new time.

I am pleased that Bulgaria, the country that initiated the Process, is today taking over the Chairmanship of the Process from Croatia and that it is going to lead the Process in the next year towards its final transformation.

It is my special pleasure to welcome the admission of Montenegro to the circle of countries of the South East European Cooperation Process. It is important for us to continue on the path that we jointly started.

A question frequently posed to me is how I see the future of the region?

With many years of experience as a politician in this area, and sometimes even in spite of this experience, I can say only one thing: I am optimistic!

Who could think, ten years ago, that we all shall sit together at this table and work out a common European and Atlantic future? Then, this was inconceivable.

However, just the same as at the beginnings of European integration, political will of the until yesterday warring sides prevailed; this is the will to resist the wheel of the past and - aware of what it was and what is now behind us but also focused on that which is now before us - to turn the wheel to prosperous future.

Thank you!

**Dr Ivo SANADER**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Dear colleagues and friends,  
Distinguished guests,

I said in my opening remarks that Europe and the world came to Croatia today so that from Croatia we could send the message: it is time that this part of our continent takes its rightful place on the map of the new united Europe.

Our part of Europe is at a decisive crossroads.

The time in which we live extends the unique opportunity to leave behind an era of instability, distrust and disagreement and to find solutions to the remaining outstanding issues as soon as possible, to move closer to the European Union and the Euro-Atlantic community with even greater conviction, and to finally complete the process of democratic transformation and stability in Europe.

This is a historic opportunity.

Already evolved into an authentic and powerful voice for our countries, the South East European Cooperation Process will, with the assistance of the new Regional Cooperation Council, ensure the development of solidarity and progress in the modernisation of this part of the continent, and will play an important role in accomplishing these goals.

Following their already often stated positions and declared goals, the European Union and the NATO will continue to ensure the European and Euro-Atlantic perspective to each of our countries that have chosen to belong to the free and democratic world.

Through reciprocity and cooperation of all participants of the SEECP, who have varying degrees of relations with the EU and the NATO, I see an additional mechanism of encouragement. It is the countries of South East Europe that have the greatest interest in seeing each country equally achieve our common goals.

Before the highest representatives of European institutions, before representatives of leading countries of the world, and before the widest international public, I would like to clearly state that now is the time for us to take additional efforts towards modernising and Europeanising South East Europe.



History will not wait.

Europe and the world are changing, harmonising and advancing. If we do not step up today, we will remain outside of this all-encompassing wave of progress, and will be left behind in the future. The political elites must recognise that the peoples and citizens of South East Europe have made their decisions which are the same from the Adriatic Sea to the Black Sea, from Chişinău to Tirana. That decision was for freedom and democracy, that decision was for Europe and for living in the Euro-Atlantic family, with the standards and values of that family.

Today the citizens of this part of Europe want acceleration. They recognise that, after two decades of life in crisis and transition, now is the time to leap forward to new heights.

That is why here and now, we need a brave vision for tomorrow's South East Europe. This vision will be the best path for us all.

I say this also because it was a similar brave vision that inspired and prompted wise statesmen to move on a similar path to build a new united Europe fifty years ago.

It is as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Berlin during the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, less than two months ago, "For centuries Europe was an idea, nothing more than hope for peace and understanding. However, today we, citizens of Europe, know that this hope has been accomplished. It is because the founders of Europe were far-seeing; they thought beyond the timeframe of their generation, they thought about the future, for the generations yet to come."

I say this because the almost ten year-long legacy of the Stability Pact for South East Europe has given us the incentive to continue forth.

It is within this convergence of important anniversaries that I see additional motive for the future picture of Europe's South East – a picture of a political and human landscape that will be a part of the new enlarged European space, a picture in which Balkans will no longer be a "gunpowder barrel". The countries and people of Central and South East Europe are now breaking away from their

**Dr Ivo SANADER**

**PRIME MINISTER**

inherited issues and behaviour that defined the past, to which negative Balkan connotations were often attributed. I see, therefore, a picture of tomorrow's modern, orderly and developed South East Europe, in a Europe that will also round up its own organisation and strengthen the foundations of its historic structure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The goal of which I speak is a historic mission for our generation.

This goal is achievable. I know this because we in Croatia have moved our country in that direction. We have recognised that we must not live in the past. Instead, we must learn from it and create a future, but not forgetting the past.

That is why we strengthen civil dialogue, stable democracy, the rule of law and a free market economy, a society of tolerance and respect for human and minority rights.

I say this because we in Croatia have shown that this is possible, and that it pays off.

Today we are negotiating for full membership in the European Union and we expect to become a member by the end of the decade. Today we also stand at the doorstep of the NATO, expecting that our efforts and reforms will be recognised, and confirmed with an invitation for membership already in April next year.

Thus, in a very short period of time, Croatia will become a full member of the strongest and wealthiest global democratic institutions and security systems.

I say this because Croatia has shown that it is possible to respond to the challenges of new historic chapters.

I say this also to remind all those that still face challenges, and who are perhaps still indecisive, that progress is possible and that it pays off. It is only necessary to decisively cross over the threshold.

Croatia has crossed that threshold.



This is why cooperation in South East Europe is part of our political programme and the force driving us to rapid accession to the European Union and NATO.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This historic moment demands a rapid response. Europe, its institutions and its citizens are now immersed in a debate concerning their future. I am convinced that more than half a century of peace and the ever increasing prosperity in Europe, thanks to policy of integration and the policy of continuous enlargement, will be the best guide and the solution to that debate.

This is precisely why South East Europe must not wait. It must join the rest of the continent. It must not remain a grey zone with unclear goals and an uncertain future.

In recent years, we have recognised the need of the moment and the voice of our peoples.

This is also reflected in the strengthening of the SEECP, in our diversity on the same path and in our readiness for solidarity. Both old and new members of the EU are participating in this Cooperation Process. Both old and new members of the NATO are participating in this Cooperation Process. Amongst us there are new candidates and countries in the process of negotiations. Amongst us there are countries with varying degrees of achievements in relations with the EU and the NATO.

I see this diversity as an impetus for cooperation on our common path, a path on which all countries will have their own pace and will be responsible for their achievements.

These are all signs and examples of progress in South East Europe.

The new CEFTA is another sign of progress. Along with the SEECP, as the political pillar and foundation for new relations in this part of Europe, through CEFTA we have erected a pillar of economic cooperation and development in preparation for accession to the EU.

**Dr Ivo SANADER**

**PRIME MINISTER**

The enlargement of the Process is a sign of its importance. With great pleasure, I would like to express here my full support to the Republic of Montenegro in its efforts to become a full participant in this Process.

A sign of progress is seen in a number of democratic elections in our countries, which confirm our new maturity.

A sign of progress is also our readiness to openly discuss the issues that we are still facing.

Above all, we are facing the need to establish a lasting architecture of security and stability in this part of Europe, which can only be achieved through prompt and appropriate solutions to remaining issues.

Speaking about these, I will be frank and direct.

Europe needs a stable and democratic Serbia, oriented towards European values and membership in the European Union and the NATO. Europe needs Serbia as a partner for lasting stability in this part of Europe, a Serbia that will move beyond its internal turning points and divisions and recognise that only a democratic Serbia, oriented towards a new politics, can best protect the interests of its people. Europe needs a Serbia that faces the future.

Europe needs a stable, democratic and responsible Kosovo, a Kosovo that will implement the rule of law, and where all minority communities can fully and safely participate in the political life, a Kosovo that will bring about stability and cooperation in our part of Europe. The resolution of the status of Kosovo, as a unique and now urgent issue, should strengthen security for everyone in this part of Europe. The proposed plan of the Special Envoy Mr Ahtisarii offers a framework for such a solution, which has been largely recognised and accepted by most in the international community. However, I cannot help but emphasise that we need a cohesive and unified international community.

Europe needs lasting stability and an orderly Bosnia and Herzegovina that can rely on its own forces and govern itself with full equality for its three nations. We need a Bosnia and Herzegovina in which the right degree and balance in everyone's interest will be found, based on the foundations of Dayton that stopped the



war, and on the principles of democratic representation and national pluralism, without suppression of anyone and without bitterness that could renew old fears or unsettling situations. We need a Bosnia and Herzegovina with a permanent constitutional solution, oriented towards the European Union and the NATO.

We are aware of the challenges we are yet to face in this part of Europe. But, patience, a balanced attitude and solidarity, together with a clear position that Europe and Euro-Atlantic integrations are the best incentive, the best framework and the best means for resolving these issues, will be of great importance to us all.

We are also aware that the European South East needs accelerated economic advancement. Neither in this respect may we allow this part of the continent to remain outside the economic strategy of the Union, since lagging behind always feeds instability. The region's geographical position, infrastructure, power industry and natural resources are its advantage and potential. Upon this, it is possible and necessary to give new impetus to the development of Europe's South East. Economic and social modernisation of this region must therefore be a priority both for our Process and the new Regional Cooperation Council, with constant and close ties with Brussels, so that we can build our economic potentials into broader European development policies.

I mentioned resources.

For among other reasons, the region of South East Europe is a region of great historic, human and cultural wealth.

Let this also be a leading impetus and a guiding notion in the times to come and in the changes yet to take place.

In conclusion, I call upon everyone to recognise the importance of this historical moment. Let us join forces, both in South East Europe and in the EU, and further strengthen and accelerate the processes that will finally bring us together.

Thank you.

**Dr Angela MERKEL**

FEDERAL CHANCELLOR

Prime Minister, Ivo Sanader,  
President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering,  
President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to speak to you here today, not only as the Federal Chancellor of Germany, but also as the President of the EU Council. First of all, I would like to thank Prime Minister Sanader and the Government of the Republic of Croatia most sincerely for their generous hospitality and for organizing this event.

I believe regional cooperation in South East Europe has now reached a decisive point, for the planned expansion of this cooperation is an important step towards bringing the entire region closer to the European Union. You will remember that, in the summer of 1999, the then German Presidency of the European Union proposed a Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. This region has since made significant progress. Violence has been discredited as a means of realizing political goals in the Balkans. The establishment of democratic institutions and the development of civil society are on the right track. Economic development is progressing, albeit still slowly in places. Regional cooperation is becoming stronger and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures has come a long way.

Now, it is a question of allowing what has been achieved to become more firmly rooted within the region. That is now happening as ownership of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe is transferred to the region. The way for this was paved by the decisions taken in Belgrade and Bucharest. Special Coordinator Busek also played a very significant role. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him most sincerely for the great personal contribution he has made to this process. The European Union will continue to support the phased transfer of the Stability Pact to regional ownership. We are convinced that close ties between the Regional Cooperation Council and the South East Europe Cooperation Process is the right path to take.

You, indeed most of those here today, know better than I do that the region still faces major challenges. One of these is, without a doubt, the issue of the status of Kosovo. As you know, the United Nations Secretary-General conveyed a compre-

hensive proposal to the Security Council on 26 March this year. In my view, he has thus created a solid foundation for a Security Council resolution which can, and hopefully will, promote the development and stability of the entire region. For quite some time now, the European Union has been preparing to play a leading role in Kosovo's development, once a solution to this issue has been found. I would like to mention in particular the mission planned to support the building of structures based on the rule of law, including the police force. This mission will be the EU's largest civilian project to date under the European Security and Defence Policy.

Ladies and gentlemen, one question is asked time and again: does the European Union still stand by its pledge that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the EU? I would like to give a clear response to this by reiterating: the European Union has emphasized this European prospect time and time again. At this point, I would just like to mention the conclusions of the European Council in December 2006, which once again state categorically that – and I quote – “the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union.”

The concrete form which further progress in intensifying relations with the EU can take will be negotiated by the European Union as part of what is known as the Stabilization and Association Process. In recent years, it has been demonstrated that the prospect of European integration can be translated into reality. Bulgaria and Romania became members of the European Union at the beginning of this year. Accession negotiations with Croatia are making very good progress. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been granted the status of a candidate country. The Stabilization and Association Agreement with Albania has been signed. The Agreement with Montenegro has been initialled. Negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina have also been concluded. However, the signing of this Agreement still depends on the implementation of certain reforms.

I also hope that it will soon be possible to resume negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia, which are currently on hold. This will be possible if a new Serbian government affirms its commitment to cooperation with the International Tribunal, among other things. I would like to point out that, following the elections in Serbia on 21 January, the constitutional deadline of 14 May is looming. Moreover, we are keen to stress that a Serbian government is needed

**Dr Angela MERKEL**

FEDERAL CHANCELLOR

which stands for democracy and can make the European perspective we are offering a reality. I am very hopeful that this can happen.

With regard to the countries to which it cannot offer the prospect of accession in the foreseeable future, the European Union is pursuing a reliable Neighbourhood Policy. During the German Presidency in particular, we have been working to further develop this Neighbourhood Policy. Our aim is to conceive attractive means to create lasting links between the European Union and states which themselves wish to establish such links. It is my impression that we are on the right track here.

We all know that none of this is a one-way process. On the contrary, the countries of South East Europe face major challenges in meeting the basic conditions which are absolutely essential to the functioning of the European Union. The European Union is based on common values, on the peaceful coexistence of its Member States, on intense, focused cooperation, on respect for the rights of all, including minorities. Without this, Europe cannot work, and we know this from experience. I also believe this is an experience which we share. Therefore, it is important that the countries of South East Europe demonstrate this early on – as part of the South East Europe Cooperation Process and under the future Regional Cooperation Council. I believe this conference shows a willingness to do precisely that.

When all is said and done, even if the European Union provides continued support for implementing reforms, it is still up to each country to make progress on the road towards the European Union. The Stabilization and Association Process and the reforms it involves in individual countries are, as it were, two sides of the same coin. I know it is often more difficult to make the necessary changes to domestic policy than theory would suggest. Much is being asked of these countries. And so, I believe that there is a true awareness of how much energy is being invested here, and that the current members of the European Union really do recognize this. However, I would like to mention again that these efforts are not an end in themselves, but rather they are of the utmost importance to the continued internal development of all countries. And that is why it is also very important that we proceed with each other in this way.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that today's conference can and will contribute to a future where, firstly, South East Europe Cooperation will itself become stronger

**Dr Angela MERKEL**

FEDERAL CHANCELLOR

by becoming more deeply rooted in the region and, secondly, where there is closer cooperation with the European Union. There might be a certain degree of symbolism in the fact that we have gathered here today in Croatia. Before I finish, I would like to say that our host country has made considerable efforts, and is both firmly rooted in the region and has also created strong institutional structures. And so to conclude, I would encourage Croatia once more, on behalf of everyone, to continue with these efforts and to keep demonstrating the success that is possible. I will also do that here today with all the means at my disposal. A sincere thank you to you all again for having established very close cooperation over recent years, as this has also strengthened our understanding of each other.

All the best for continuing down this road!

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**Dr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING**

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Mesić,  
Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, Mr Šeks,  
Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr Sanader,  
Heads of State and Government,  
President of the European Council, Federal Chancellor Merkel,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be with you at this important meeting of the countries of South East Europe.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to take part in this distinguished Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the countries of South East Europe. And all the more so because my attendance as President of the directly elected European Parliament is recognition of the role that parliamentary diplomacy and the democratically elected representatives themselves can play in promoting regional cooperation and integration.

Since its first direct elections in 1979, and I myself have been a Member of the European Parliament since that time, the European Parliament has made an ongoing contribution to the process of European integration. We Members of the European Parliament do not sit together by nationality in our plenary sessions, but by political affiliation, as our common work on the process of constructing a united Europe calls for a mental setting-aside of national borders.

The realisation of our aims and ideals calls for permanent dialogue between different traditions, cultures and political viewpoints.

Today I would like to share with you my experiences as President of a diverse parliament, which is a lively forum for dialogue. Of course, the European Parliament is also a place of political confrontation, but it is a confrontation that respects the views of the other.

Our work is always directed towards achieving as broad a basis as possible for our joint decisions. In your region in particular, which until very recently was still profoundly divided, I think it is important to recall this aspect of our work.



I believe that it is for all these reasons that inter-parliamentary work is so important. Over the years, with the full support and involvement of the European Parliament, the Stability Pact for South East Europe has brought forth and encouraged. And indeed, parliamentary cooperation has been declared to be one of the priorities for the work of the new Regional Cooperation Council and is to act as an overarching structure for all the activities of that body.

This brings me to the main objective of today's meeting: the transformation of the Stability Pact into a Regional Cooperation Council, which is directly linked to the South East European Cooperation Process. This is an essential and future-oriented step.

The European Union, which I am representing here together with my colleagues and friends Angela Merkel and José Manuel Barroso, was one of the initiators of the Stability Pact. The European Union set up this initiative with the awareness and conviction that we must contribute to overcoming the deep wounds inflicted by the conflicts of the nineties.

I look at the situation we have today with confidence. Much has been achieved in the spirit of cooperation: regional cooperation initiatives have arisen in a whole series of areas ranging from energy to justice and home affairs. There is regular political dialogue among you on all important issues of common interest.

And now it is time for the international community to stand aside and allow you to take the helm. The Regional Cooperation Council seeks to do exactly that. Now you are in the cockpit and we are in the passenger seat, ready to support you and point the way on your journey towards Europe.

At this point, on behalf of the European Parliament, I would like to thank Dr Erhard Busek for his contribution to peace and stability in this region. It is thanks to the successful efforts of Dr Busek that we are gathered here today and that it has been possible to move on from the Stability Pact to the South East European Cooperation Council.

Ladies and gentlemen,

All your countries are part of the work of European integration in one way or another. Some of you are already members of the European Union, some have been

**Dr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING**

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

for a long time. Others are engaged in intensive, at times undoubtedly difficult, but I believe fair, negotiations towards EU membership. Others have this prospect ahead of them, and others again are in the process of forming close neighbourly links with us.

We are all agreed that the most recent round of enlargements has been a success. Here too, I would like to remind you of the great contribution made by the European Parliament towards German reunification and, above all, to the accession of the twelve new Member States. The European Parliament set a target and a date, thus forcing a framework which had a decisive effect on the timing of the accession negotiations. We shall support you with the same conviction in your European plans! You are part of Europe and always have been, and we are all members of the European family!

We remain profoundly committed to fulfilling the promise we made four years ago in Thessaloniki. But joining a community also means accepting the rules of that community and making a full commitment to them. Otherwise we run the risk of undermining the very foundations upon which the community is built. That is why there can be no 'discounts' in this respect.

Now, though, I would like to ask you for your support: please do your part in persuading those countries that are still hesitant that they should make an active contribution towards finding an acceptable solution to the future of the European Constitution. All the members of the European Union have a duty to realise and implement the reforms to the Union already contained within the Constitution.

It is only by facilitating the decision-making process, tightening up our institutions and achieving greater coherence in our foreign-policy measures that we can ensure that the impetus of the European political project is not lost. And you are very well aware of this: agreement on a new treaty is a *sine qua non* for further enlargement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am convinced that a strong European Union is our common interest. The last fifty years have proved one thing: a dynamic, cohesion-oriented Union, a community founded on common values and aims, and a union that places people at its



heart, offers a guarantee of peace, stability and prosperity, both for the European Union and for its neighbours.

We should hold this vision in common, for you are part of this project.

Against this background, we should devote our attention to difficult and, indeed, painful subjects such as Kosovo. In a union in which people can move about and work freely, and which is founded on tolerance, it is no longer an issue of where the borders are. The European Union has succeeded in bringing centuries-old conflicts and rivalries to an end. Believe me, it will do everything in its power to achieve the same thing for this region of South East Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen,

South East Europe is the embodiment par excellence of that diversity we experience daily in the European Union. It possesses a rich heritage of cultures, languages and religions, and could be a model of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in the European landscape. Please, do all you can to become this example of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I assure you of my solidarity with your region, with South East Europe. But now we must look beyond the immediate future and work together to resolve the existing difficulties, the remaining tensions and uncertainties. Together we can achieve more. Together we can create stability and efficient solutions to the needs of our citizens.

In this respect, I would also like to thank Doris Pack, as Chair of the South East Europe delegation, for her work in this part of the continent. I am confident that she will continue with the good work of accompanying the countries of the region along the path towards membership in the European Union.

Let us all work together towards helping South East Europe to find its rightful, legitimate place in a shared European Union and in this way to also become a peaceful, successful and dependable partner at the international level.

**Dr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING**

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In conclusion, I would like to thank Croatia, which is now handing over the Chairmanship-in-Office of the South East European Cooperation Council to Bulgaria, for its successful efforts in intensifying cooperation over the past year.

I wish Bulgaria all the best for its Chairmanship-in-Office and assure you, Prime Minister, of the support of the European Parliament and, as I believe I am entitled to say, the support of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you fruitful discussions at this Summit!

**Mr José Manuel BARROSO**

**PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**



Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank our Croatian friends for their hospitality in organising this meeting. I wish to congratulate Prime Minister Sanader and Croatia on its very successful chairmanship of the South East Europe Cooperation Process, but also on the substantial progress it has made along the road to EU membership.

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the European Union. We are proud of this achievement, which has brought peace, prosperity and solidarity to a continent wracked by war. In Berlin, we reaffirmed our shared values, like freedom, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and mutual respect. We made clear our determination to preserve these values and use them to shape our fast-changing world, by continuing to work closely together.

Those values formed the very foundations of the European Union. They remain at the core of our activities today. Successive waves of enlargement mean that millions more benefit from these values, who previously languished under the dead hand of dictatorship.

You, the countries of the Balkans, have made difficult and often courageous decisions to help those values take root here. You can rest assured that the European Union will always be at your side to assist you in this endeavour.

But the desire to continue consolidating those values must be yours. No-one can impose them from outside, and certainly not the EU.

And yet you remain Europe's 'missing limb'. When addressing your summit in Belgrade four years ago, my predecessor Romano Prodi stressed that the historic process of Europe's unification will not be complete until the countries of the Balkans join the Union.

Today, I can repeat that statement with clear evidence that the European Union is respecting its commitments to this region. In the meantime, Bulgaria and Romania have joined and all the other countries have moved closer to the Union.

**Mr José Manuel BARROSO**

**PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Relations between the EU and the countries of South East Europe have steadily intensified:

We are presently negotiating accession with Croatia and Turkey. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has obtained candidate status.

We are in the process of completing the network of Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the countries of the Western Balkans. We look forward to resuming negotiations for such an agreement with a democratic government in Serbia, as soon as the necessary conditions are fulfilled.

We are developing relations with Moldova, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Over the last few years, we have witnessed impressive progress in the area of democratic and economic reform in your region.

But we are also aware there is still a long way to go. In some cases, the pace of reforms is too slow. Strengthening the rule of law, ensuring respect of human and minority rights, combating organised crime and corruption, promoting a market-oriented economy and social inclusion, and strengthening administrative capacity are high priorities. They are also conditions for advancing towards the EU. The Commission will continue to support the reform processes, politically and financially.

Regional cooperation is an integral part of the road towards the EU. So I welcome the significant steps made recently, in particular the new Central European Free Trade Agreement, the Energy Community Treaty and regional energy projects, as well as initiatives in the area of transport.

I am also pleased that the EU is now able to increase the number of scholarships awarded to students from the region for post-graduate studies in the EU.

Today, a new phase in regional cooperation has dawned. I warmly commend the Stability Pact for the work done since 1999. Its very success allows us now to move towards a more regionally-owned cooperation structure, with the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Council.

**Mr José Manuel BARROSO**

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



More regional ownership will go hand in hand with increased EU and Commission involvement in the region. Regional cooperation brings you closer to EU accession, as good neighbourly relations and cross-border cooperation is the very essence of the European Union itself.

We are highly aware of the importance of free travel between the Western Balkans and the European Union, especially for the younger generation. We have successfully negotiated visa facilitation and readmission agreements with the countries of the region. These agreements should enter into force by the end of the year.

As a next step towards liberalisation, we will now focus on establishing road-maps which set out the way to visa-free regimes for each of the Western Balkan countries concerned.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting takes place at an important moment for the Western Balkans. A moment when the last, outstanding issue from the tragic events of the last decade must be solved. Settling the status of Kosovo is a matter of vital importance for the region and for Europe. We aim at a sustainable solution that will fully respect European values and contribute to regional stability. President Ahtisaari's plan is considered a realistic way forward by the Member States of the European Union. The Commission fully supports it.

We expect a positive outcome from the UN Security Council without undue delay. The Commission, in close coordination with the EU Member States and other international actors, will play its full part in implementing a settlement, and we are actively preparing for it.

Let me be frank. Today your region is at a crossroads. Some countries are faced with decisions that will either put them definitively on the road to normality and membership of the European Union, or lead them back to stagnation, instability, isolation, possibly even turmoil. The European Union will support you in making the right choice. But as I said earlier, the choice is ultimately yours. Yes, we can assist and will be happy to do it. But no one will replace you in the decisions you will have to take in each of your countries and in the whole region. It is at the end of the day your responsibility.

**Mr José Manuel BARROSO**

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

I want to send a special message to Serbia, a country that at this very moment is facing crucial choices for its future. It's up to the Serbian leaders and Serbian people to decide if they want to go back to their nationalist past or to the European prosperous future. We are offering Serbia a future of stability and economic and social progress in the European Union, if Serbia has the courage to take the decisions that will confirm that European orientation.

Let me conclude by wishing every success to the incoming Chairman-in-Office, Bulgaria. The Commission sees in the South-East Europe Cooperation Process and its strengthened role, a valuable actor for promoting regional cooperation and stability in South East Europe. You have my every best wish for continued success.

Thank you.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today among friends and partners at this 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the SEECP countries. Allow me, Mr President and dear friend, to express my gratitude and congratulations for a skilful handling of the SEECP Chairmanship in Office, which offered to all of us the precious results of your endeavours.

Following a succession of painful conflicts and crises, our region has already moved closer to a reality of political and social stabilization and economic development. However, our region still faces many difficult challenges and we all know that a high level of constructive symbiosis among Balkan countries can make the difference. Important developments are expected in the near future for all countries of SE Europe and we are sure that decisive progress on major regional issues will be achieved.

Having closely followed the ongoing discussions and initiatives on institutionalizing regional ownership, promoted by the outgoing Presidency and our Stability Pact colleagues, I am greatly encouraged to see that all partners in the South East European Cooperation Process are actively and convincingly taking part in this process.

I believe it is of utmost importance that Bulgaria and Romania, our neighbours and newcomers in the European Union, have declared themselves ready to remain actively involved in regional cooperation, after having joined the Union a few months ago. This involvement of EU member states in the SEECP is of particular value: for candidate and potential candidate countries, creating a precious and constructive osmosis among regional partners. Thus, the SEECP framework becomes all the more relevant for the forthcoming period.

We wish to see the current transformation process moving forward, from a consolidated framework of regional cooperation in SE Europe into a key dimension of EU policy inside the region, capable of making a decisive contribution to European integration in many areas. Greece as well as all SEECP partners, are standing ready to accompany our region into assuming its increased responsibilities for its own future.



## Mr Konstantinos KARAMANLIS

### PRIME MINISTER

No doubt, questions have been raised and concerns have been expressed about the concept of regional ownership we are applying, through the institutional upgrading of the SEECP. I do acknowledge that many complex questions had to be settled and perhaps still have to be addressed on the arduous course ahead of us. However, for us, it is a crucial indication of maturity that we all agreed to start the process of transformation and, notwithstanding our differences and often conflicting views, we eventually took some tough decisions and started implementing them.

I do not wish to go into all the details of our ongoing endeavour to establish a Regional Cooperation Council. Let me only underline the following fundamental elements:

It is clear to everyone involved that the region has reached a level of stability and prosperity where the necessity to assume responsibility of its own affairs is only natural. Thus, the ongoing transition process can only lead to the real and serious shift of responsibility to the countries of South Eastern Europe themselves.

The enhanced regional ownership will go hand-in-hand with the close relationship with the EU and other relevant international actors. In particular the link with the EU is crucial, as our regional cooperation agenda will be harmonised to all extent possible with the EU integration agenda of the Western Balkans. The new RCC will be the platform where this important interaction takes place and evolves.

At this point, let me send a warm welcome to the Republic of Montenegro, which as of today is a fully-fledged member of the SEECP. Needless to say that regional cooperation needs the experience and devotion to the common cause from our friends in Podgorica.

Finally, allow me to say a few words on an issue of great significance for the overall stability and welfare of the entire region, that is Kosovo's future status: even at this stage, following Vienna's disappointing outcome, we remain convinced that the possibilities for reaching consensus between the two sides have not been exhausted. When the new government is formed in Belgrade, it should be given adequate time to negotiate aspects of the settlement. The settlement needs to be implemented in such a way as to give both parties the necessary time to absorb

**Mr Konstantinos KARAMANLIS**

PRIME MINISTER



the new reality and to avoid creating arrogant winners and humiliated losers in the region. Furthermore, we underline the need for the settlement to be endorsed by a UN Security Council Resolution.

Before I conclude, I want to thank you all for the valuable support to the Greek Proposal for the establishment of a Regional Development Center in Thessaloniki, in order to promote and advance trade - investment activities and projects in the broader SEE area. Your outright positive response encourages us to proceed with its implementation. Our aim is to submit it for an initial endorsement and approval at next year's Regional Table of the Stability Pact in February 2008.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Mr Sergei STANISHEV**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Thank you very much, dear Prime Minister Sanader, your Excellencies, dear participants. First of all I would like to thank our Croatian hosts for the excellent organization of this meeting and for the very warm hospitality and the good atmosphere of the meeting.

I think that today's venue is very important for our region. We live in crucial crossroad times when the countries from a region which during the years has gained the unpleasant nickname 'the powder keg'. We gathered here today to discuss and decide our own future. I could hardly believe that eleven years ago, when the first meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the countries of the region took place in Sofia, anybody could imagine that such progress was likely to take place in such a short time. And this once again proves the specific role of SEECP - which is a unique format where everybody can sit at the same table and discuss all kinds of issues trying to find and eventually finding mutually acceptable solutions. The decisions we will approve today on the designation of the seat of the Secretariat of the Regional Cooperation Council and on denomination of the first Secretary General of the RCC prove that the SEECP is the genuine voice of the region. That is why in our view the process should remain the main forum for political and diplomatic dialogue in the region and in the end turn into a platform for European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The Regional Cooperation Council will support the activities of the SEECP, including its operational capabilities.

Of course, it would be not only impolite but also inaccurate not to mention that much of the credit for the progress goes to the international community, and especially to the Stability Pact and its Special Coordinator personally, Dr Busek. They have served with devotion for the last seven years as a neutral forum for dialogue, a confidence-building mechanism and a promoter of the European and Euro-Atlantic perspective for the region of South Eastern Europe.

Mentioning the European perspective, I would like to render the European Union its due. The integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures was and still is the main impetus for the democratic reforms in all the countries from the region. The active and very constructive engagement of the European Commission in the transformation process of the regional cooperation and the future participation of the EU in the Regional Cooperation Council demonstrate that the Balkans are no more Europe's back yard. In view of the recent developments in

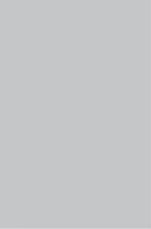
**Mr Sergei STANISHEV**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Serbia, I would like to urge the reformists and pro-European parties in Belgrade to assume their responsibilities and create a government which will be able to assure the European path of the country.

And because the Summit is supposed to provide the political guidelines of the SEECP, I would like to share here with you some of the ideas that represent cornerstones of the Bulgarians' SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office during the next year. We have prepared the program of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office, taking into consideration that we are an EU Member State since the first of January 2007, and that this will be the first Bulgarian presidency of a regional structure in South Eastern Europe. Having this in mind, I can assure you that we realize our responsibilities and we are ready to tackle the challenges that lie ahead of us. First of all, even though we have achieved a lot in the transformation process of the regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe and the implementation of the regional ownership principle, there is still a lot of work to be done in the months to come until the complete phasing-out of the Stability Pact and the full putting into operation of the RCC. The process of streamlining the numerous regional initiatives should continue as well. We should not fear to close certain initiatives if they do not contribute to the regional cooperation or if they duplicate the work of other initiatives. A better coordination and avoidance of overlapping is needed not only between the remaining initiatives in South Eastern Europe, but also with other regional initiatives like, for example, the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Central European Initiative. Simultaneously with the process of streamlining we should also concentrate our efforts to further deepen the cooperation in several fields of common interest which are still underdeveloped. I will only highlight some of them: the development of Public Private Partnerships, the interaction with civil society, building human capital and the regional network, further development of tourism and infrastructure in order to facilitate the contacts between our peoples. Especially, I would like to stress that combating organized crime and transnational crime in South Eastern Europe is one of the topical issues in our agenda because only with international and common efforts we can address this problem.

Allow me also to express our great satisfaction with the fact that Sofia was designated as the seat for the Secretariat for the Parliamentary Cooperation in South Eastern Europe. Bulgaria counts on your support to develop it as a real overarching theme in regional cooperation activities.



**Mr Sergei STANISHEV**

PRIME MINISTER



Finally, I would like to congratulate once again Croatia for its very successful Chairmanship-in-office of the SEECP and to express my hope that we will continue with our fruitful cooperation during Bulgaria's office, with the assistance not only of the Troika but also of all participating states in this meeting. I will be happy to welcome you in my country next year and I hope that we shall have even more achievements and common fruits. Thank you for your attention.



Dear Chairman, Prime Minister Mr Sanader,  
President of the European Council Madame Merkel,  
President of the European Commission Mr Barroso,  
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,  
Excellencies,

Let me start with expression of my gratitude to our host, Prime Minister Sanader for inviting me to Zagreb. The Croatian capital once again excelled itself in its warm hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fifty-five years ago Alcide De Gasperi, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, urged critics of the then infant European project to let go of the past resentments and to turn to the common future: 'Forget your fantasies about Charlemagne and the Middle Ages! This is a coalition of democracies founded on the principle of freedom. That is our bastion, that is our platform, that is our struggle!'

This region, too, had its fantasies and its Middle Ages. In fact, the origins of most of its outstanding issues can be traced back to the past. This is why it is ever more important that the countries of the South Eastern Europe share a platform for the common future.

A clear promise was made some four years ago in Thessaloniki that EU enlargement would not stop with Bulgaria and Romania. At the same time, a draft of what was to become the EU Constitution was presented to the European Council. While still trying to build its new foundations, the European Union has since moved closer to South Eastern Europe.

The countries of the region, too, have made significant steps towards the EU. For however preoccupied with its own problems the European project might seem, it abounds with opportunities for members, candidates and aspirant countries alike. The countries of the SEECP recognised this by making European adaptation a conscious choice rather than a mere obligation, as last year's Declaration reads.

Regional cooperation lies at the very core of this adaptation. Its essence is captured in two mottos from Thessaloniki: 'Neighbourhood in Cooperation' and

**Mr Janez JANŠA**

**PRIME MINISTER**

‘Together in Europe’. As the region increases ownership of the process, reform of its cooperation scheme comes natural. With the continuity provided by the South East European Cooperation Process, the new Regional Cooperation Council will step in for the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

The legacy of the Stability Pact is rich. It has come up with the right challenges demanding timely answers to take the best of what pre-accession period offers. CEFTA 2006 should enter into force as early as possible. The same goes for the implementation of the Treaty on Energy Community. It will allow countries of the SEE, including candidates and aspirant countries, to become part of the EU’s internal market in a key strategic sector. Pan-European transport corridors also link the region closely to the rest of Europe. The work to cut other links – those of criminal activities and illegal migration, should be strengthened.

Distinguished Heads of Delegations,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Slovenia remains vitally interested in the stabilisation and prosperity of South Eastern Europe. It is my personal intention and the objective of the Slovenian Government to upgrade all these efforts as Slovenia takes over the EU Presidency in the first half of 2008. This region will be on the top of the list of our priorities. We count on cooperation with all of you: with the SEECP and its upcoming Bulgarian Presidency, Stability Pact and its Special Coordinator and the new RCC with its first Secretary General. With high expectations for the Bucharest NATO Summit taken into account, I am sure that 2008 will be a memorable year for South Eastern Europe.

Thank you.

**Mr R. Nicholas BURNS**

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS



Prime Minister, thank you very much for that warm welcome and thank you for your expert organization of this conference. Your country is a great friend of my own country and President Bush has asked me to come here today to represent our Government and to salute you and to salute the countries around the table for all the progress that you have made.

We believe that this is an important moment for South East Europe. It is also a positive moment because your future is in cooperation with NATO and, of course, with the European Union. The last three American Presidents who have held office, President Bush and President Clinton and now President George W. Bush, have all articulated the same strategic objective for Europe - that it be whole and free and at peace. And we all know that it is the countries of South East Europe that need the completeness and recognition for the continent and for the world. After the wars of the 1990's, now is the time for peace, especially in South Eastern Europe. So we congratulate all of you who have led the Stability Pact and all of the countries who have led this organization, especially the Greek Government that did so much last year under Prime Minister Karamanlis's leadership. We congratulate Dr Busek for his expert leadership. Now you are making the transition to a Regional Cooperation Council, and this is very positive.

My country supports integration and cooperation. We will continue to support the enlargement of NATO. President Bush has said that he would very strongly support Croatia for membership in NATO in 2008 and we very much also want to support the other candidate countries if they can complete the reform process and merit the support of all the NATO countries.

Of course, we are also mindful of the dangers to peace in this region, and that is why we are watching the situation today in Belgrade very carefully. The recent election of the new Speaker of the Serbian Parliament from the country's Milošević era has clarified a sobering truth: one set of political parties in Serbia promotes a return to an ugly and destructive past for that great country. And the parties who oppose this dark vision are listening to the mandate of the majority of the Serbian people, good people who have voted for peace and who have voted decisively for a future in Europe and a good partnership with my country, the United States. But regrettably, such opposing visions are incompatible in a joint government. The United States denounces the Radical Party as the party of the past that produced the wars and the war criminals of the 1990's. And should the



## Mr R. Nicholas BURNS

### UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Radicals return to power, it will do grievous damage to Serbia's reputation in the United States. Of course, we want to hope for a more positive outcome. We are friends to the Serbian people. We support democracy in Serbia and we hope very much to continue to have a good and constructive relationship with the Serbian Government. Of course, all States in the region must comply with the obligations of the International War Crimes Tribunal and all States have a responsibility for the past. So we call upon the Serbian Government to honour its commitments to arrest Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić and to return them to the War Crimes Tribunal for justice. That is an important obligation that the people of Serbia have for the future.

There is one other issue that remains, perhaps the most important and complex of all, one that most of the speakers have discussed, and that is the final status of Kosovo. We join many around this table in our strong support for the plan that President Ahtisaari has presented to the United Nations Security Council. It is a fair, equitable settlement and it is based on more than 18 months of negotiations. We welcome Prime Minister Ceku here to this table. He is a good friend of the United States and we support him and support President Sejdiu and the Unity Government in Priština. The United States strongly supports independence for Kosovo. Independence is going to help protect all the communities and all the minority communities of Kosovo itself. The United States and Europe intend to circulate a Resolution to support President Ahtisaari's plan in the next several hours at the Security Council in New York. The people of Kosovo, in our judgment, deserve independence. Kosovo has been under United Nations rule for eight years and it is now time for all of us to act. Europe and the United States have borne the major share of responsibility for Kosovo in the international community since 1999. We are the countries whose soldiers have kept the peace and we are the countries that will remain after independence to ensure a peaceful future. Therefore, the United States will not understand if others try to derail a process for which we have major responsibility, we and Europe and Kosovo itself. We in my country are committed to working with our European allies to resolve this issue this month. The people of Kosovo and the entire region deserve, Mr Prime Minister, nothing less.

In conclusion, Mr Prime Minister, I would say that we remember that regional cooperation is not just a slogan. It is a sum of the daily activities that are carried out in every country of this region, and this means hard work in a whole range of areas. It means work in strengthening the democratic institutions, in encoun-

**Mr R. Nicholas BURNS**

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tering trans-border crime, in improving border security, improving law enforcement and judicial institutions. It is promoting trade, creating jobs and raising the standard of living for the people. In short, it is addressing the issues of real life for the people of this region. I promise you that the United States of America will continue to stand with you and all the countries around this table to ensure stability and peace and your full cooperation with my country and with the countries of Europe.

Thank you very much.

**Mr Sali BERISHA**

**PRIME MINISTER**



Mr Chairman, dear Ivo,  
Dear colleagues - Prime Ministers,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by extending my most sincere and cordial appreciation to our host, the Croatian Government, and my friend, Ivo Sanader, for the warm hospitality that we have received today in this wonderful city of Zagreb, and to commend the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office for the quality of their arrangement of activities in the priority areas of cooperation.

Today we are honoured and privileged to have in our meeting the President-in-Office of the European Council, German Chancellor, Dr Angela Merkel, EU Commission President, Mr Jose Manuel Barroso, US Under Secretary of State, Mr Nicholas Burns, and other high personalities and representatives from friendly countries and important international institutions. Their participation in this meeting is a clear sign of their support and commitment, and that of their countries, towards our countries in our efforts to foster cooperation, integration and prosperity. We are always grateful to them.

Honourable colleagues,

The Albanian Government believes, and we hope that all of us are of the same opinion, that this has become a very important forum. On this occasion I would like to pay tribute to Erhard Busek, the man who led this project, the Stability Pact, and managed with his efforts and skills to leave us a successful project, which is continuing and has a new dimension, and also thank the Croatian chairmanship. During this Chairmanship our region has gone through tremendous change, and is making progress in fostering political, economic and cultural, but also confidence-building, security and military cooperation with each passing day.

The driving power, but also the major challenge behind this transformation process remains the Euro-Atlantic prospect of the region. It is extremely positive that during this period all our countries have marked tangible progress in their regional integration as well as on the Euroatlantic path. In one year, Romania and Bulgaria have become members of the European Union. Croatia will hopefully soon be a full member. Macedonia was given the status of EU candidate. Albania signed the



Stabilisation and Association Agreement and has just initialled an agreement on visa facilitation with the EU. All other countries of the region have signed or are working on open negotiations for the Stabilisation Association Agreement. The Republic of Montenegro proclaimed its independence, and I salute the presence of the Prime Minister here. With its independence, the region becomes freer. Kosovo is moving towards finalisation of its status as a free, democratic, independent European country.

In this regard it is worth mentioning that Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, while working together in the framework of the US Adriatic Charter and Partnership for Peace programmes received from the Riga summit of NATO a renewed confirmation that, based on their individual performance, an invitation to join NATO is at the doorstep. Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro have become members of the Partnership for Peace programme. In this context, we are looking forward with great pleasure to another landmark event: the visit and the meeting with President Bush in Tirana scheduled for the tenth of June, 2007.

Albania will never forget what the United States have done for her from the very foundation of the modern state of Albania to the fall of the worst dictatorship in Europe as well as the US help and support for the consolidation of democracy in the country and its Euroatlantic integration. But we are also convinced that this is a historic visit not only for Albania and our A3 partners, Croatia and Macedonia, but also an event of great significance for the whole region, and encouragement to move forward with democratic reforms and a renewed assurance of US commitment in South East Europe as well as of the European-Atlantic perspective of the entire region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The region has entered the crucial moment of the final solution of the Balkan crisis. The final status of Kosovo will end a chapter and put an end to a model which was implemented at the beginning of the last century, in Europe, but which provoked for our region dramas, wars and tragedies.

The Albanian Government has fully supported President Ahtisaari's agreement package, and we do believe that this package is a very serious and strong basis for an agreement for peace and stability in Kosovo and in the region. We are

**Mr Sali BERISHA**

**PRIME MINISTER**



very grateful to the United States, the European Union and countries that have supported President Ahtisaari's package. I fully understand the request for meetings, dialogue and negotiations, and in my humble judgement, one of the greatest merits of President Ahtisaari was that he managed to bring both parts together in Vienna. But in Vienna, and elsewhere, two concepts have been confronted, the concept of Greater Serbia, which is still vivid, a concept based on the supposed predominance of one nation, and on the other side, the concept of the Albanians, and the whole international community, which see peace and stability in the region as the product of cooperation, integration. Let's be sincere, Albanians and Serbs both are regional nations, and as a matter of fact for very different and opposite reasons, but they have no other alternative than looking forward to European and Euroatlantic integration. And this is what their nations voted for. This is what their nations want. This is what their nations see as the best project for their future. That's why we believe that the UN Security Council has to finalise the resolution based on President Ahtisaari's proposals. We pledge to fully support it, to foster with Kosovo excellent relations, excellent cooperation, and not only with Kosovo but also with all our neighbours.

I do believe that Serbs and Albanians, and the very essence of problems in the Balkans is between them, should take the courage to turn the page. To turn the page, to leave behind all the baggage which is not at all helpful for the future, and follow the models on which nations build prosperity, freedom, democracy.

In my ending remarks, I would like to assure Mr Stanishev's Bulgarian Presidency that we will do our best to contribute to a very good year and great progress. As well I would like to congratulate the newly-elected Secretary General of this forum Mr Bišćević. I know him, he is really a skilful diplomat and all of us will profit from his skills.

Thank you very much.



Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Dear guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First please allow me to thank you for the opportunity to address this respected gathering. I would also like to congratulate our host of the SEECP Summit, the Croatian chairmanship, on the very successful fulfilment of joint objectives during this last year when on the road towards stability, peace and cooperation in the region we made a new, significant step forward.

I would venture to say that South Eastern Europe is at a historical point, and the SEECP Summit in Zagreb will be remembered for its courageous decisions to head towards an even greater regional responsibility in further cooperation, that is, that the seat of the future Regional Cooperation Council is in the region, and that the first General Secretary, Secretary of the RCC, has also been appointed from the region. We owe gratitude for the creation and maturing of these decisions to the Stability Pact for South East Europe. With this decision we are sending a new message to the world, that we want to be not only a voice of the region but also a decisive actor of all-round cooperation who must bring all the countries of the SEECP into European and Euroatlantic integration. Of course, on this path we expect most assistance and advice from our friends in Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania who are already in the club of the 27 states of the European Union. I would like to take this opportunity to offer congratulations to new Members of the European Union from our region, with the emphasis that we too, encouraged by their success, will fight even harder to fulfil the conditions essential for membership.

Political and economic stabilisation of countries, as a way of strengthening regional cooperation and dialogue on the path to moving towards a unified Europe, are priority goals for Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why you will often hear me repeating that the goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be part of the regional solution and not part of the regional problem. To fulfil our final goal, and this is accession to the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina has travelled successfully down the first section of this path. As you probably know, Bosnia and Herzegovina has successfully completed technical negotiations for signing the Stabilisation and Accession Agreement. That is why with pride I can say that Bosnia and Herzegovina has risen above the so called Dayton era, and stepped forward into the Brussels phase. You have to agree that this, taking into account our unfortunate and not so long-ago past, is a great step forward. However, I do agree with the fact that more could have been achieved and that on the path to our final goal

**Dr Nikola ŠPIRIĆ**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

we have come across obstacles of a political nature. This is why we are paying the price of lack of constant dialogue.

However, I am an optimist because I believe in the place in which I am now, I do not have the right to be pessimistic. That is why I will repeat here, that which I persistently repeat to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and political elite, and this is that the only thing that must not stop in a country like mine is dialogue. Recently we celebrated 50 years of the signing of the Treaties of Rome and I took advantage of this opportunity to point out the fact how much Europe, precisely on the basis of dialogue and compromise, achieved in this period, and hence I also appealed to our leaders to move in the same direction and to leave behind the unfortunate period of nationalism and radicalism. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are completely aware of what accession to the European Union and economic connectivity of the region means to us. In this sense the Council of Ministers, which I head, will support all regional projects which have as their purpose liberalisation of economic cooperation, cooperation in the area of energy, transport infrastructure and other similar forms of cooperation.

Dear friends, for me this Summit has a special significance as I would like to express my thanks on the great trust which you have shown Bosnia and Herzegovina with the decision that the seat of the Secretariat of the future Regional Cooperation Council is to be in Sarajevo. Your trust is at the same time for us a great responsibility which we gladly accept. As you know, the functional area of the Secretariat, which was granted by a Decision of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is located in the parliamentary complex in the heart of Sarajevo, and the first General Secretary of RCC Mr Bišćević and his associates will be our closest neighbours because in the Building of Friendship Between Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Secretariat will be located, they will meet daily with the highest representative of the Bosnia and Herzegovina government. Please believe me when I tell you that this symbolic gesture means a lot to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina as it is then more important that we are ready to offer not only them, but also regional leaders and European partners all the logistical assistance in organising meetings at which we will agree upon joint realisation of current and future cooperation projects. At the same time we believe that the commencement of the work of the Secretariat in Sarajevo will be further proof that the international stabilisation and democratisation project in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been successful.

Thank you for your attention.



Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly honoured and pleased to address this eminent forum of South-East European countries, which embarking upon its second decade continues to yield success in accomplishing the original idea to serve as an autochthonous form of regional cooperation to contribute to creating a climate of trust and good-neighbourly relations.

The SEEC values and its profiling into an authentic voice of the Region have evidently helped consolidate our political cooperation and intensify economic relations. This on its part has expanded the basis for the democratic transformation of our countries, by which the SEEC has rightfully been designated as entirely complementary to the Euro-Atlantic integration processes and transformation that all our countries have undergone. Yet, the most valuable contribution of this form of cooperation is that in the last ten years it has significantly helped change the perception of our Region as a Region at the outskirts of Europe. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union at the beginning of this year best proves that the efforts to create a new reality in the Balkans indeed produce results.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After years of being focused on existential problems such as security, protection of sovereignty and establishment at the international stage, finally issues of economic development and prosperity of our citizens have assumed priority at our respective national policy agendas.

The favourable trends and changes taking place in the Region in the last several years have brought about enhanced regional economic cooperation, infrastructure and energy connectivity and specific regional activities in the fight against organised crime and corruption. In April this year, the Republic of Macedonia hosted the South-East European Summit on the topic of long-term energy stability – a prerequisite for economic development. The Summit discussions and the adopted Ohrid declaration have reaffirmed that current European challenges are becoming part of the national and regional agendas. Even more importantly, this is the best indicator that this European region is slowly, but certainly leaving behind the issues and perceptions that for years have been its traditional hallmark.

**Mr Branko CRVENKOVSKI**

PRESIDENT

The last decade has corroborated the understanding that quality regional cooperation is a precondition for accomplishing sustainable national and regional economic development. In this respect, the recent remodelling and enlargement of CEFTA, creating a free trade area, is expected to produce two values the least. First, this arrangement will enable small countries and economies become more investment attractive, being part of a larger regional market. Secondly, this arrangement serves as an excellent preparation for national economies and business communities for their future entry at global markets and wider integration processes.

Yet the greatest benefit is that by undertaking these activities the regional countries have acquired the growing sense that regional cooperation is the best promoter of our aspirations for European Union integration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Continuously pursuing the European agenda, which is based on wide political and inter-ethnic consensus that we have been fostering for years in the Republic of Macedonia, we expect that the enlargement fatigue evident in some European countries will be overcome through the awareness about the values of the united Europe project. The current internal European dilemmas and challenges, which certainly are not to be underestimated, would be more promptly and easily resolved if the present member-states are better aware of and appreciate that formal and potential EU membership candidate countries respect the common European values, apply the common standards and possess a marked European capacity.

This year that marks the first fifty years of the establishment of the community of European nations is the right time to design the modalities for further development of this shared project. We are strongly convinced that all European countries that consider themselves part of European culture and civilization traditions should have their chance of offering their support and contribution to this joint undertaking.

In the Balkans, thus far, the European Union has had the role of a catalyst of political, economic and overall societal changes. We consider that the EU should continue such role and influence remaining thus the driving force of reforms, progress and democracy. In this context it is greatly important that the European



reforms in Macedonia and Croatia be consistently supported, serving as an example for the other countries that are at a different stage of their integration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I should like to welcome Montenegro joining the SEECP, and to express our support for the proposed Summit documents and decisions, which greatly strengthen the structure and content of the SEECP activities.

I should like to present my appreciation to our Summit host – the Republic of Croatia that has invested great efforts in the excellent organisation of the Summit, and that in chairing the SEECP in the last year has introduced new dynamics and contributed to the wider promotion of a more prominent SEECP image.

My general impression would be that by our joint efforts we have succeeded in qualitatively transforming the SEECP, enhancing its political profile, and its operative potentials, in the regional and in the wider European context. This is a guarantee that the SEECP will remain the leading political format of regional cooperation – cooperation that we all understand and pursue in a Europe becoming manner.

Thank you for your attention.

## Mr Vladimir VORONIN

### PRESIDENT

Respected gathering!

It is my great pleasure to offer warm greetings to all present at this Summit, which is particularly important for all countries participating in the South East Europe Co-operation Process. The importance of this gathering is for the most part explained not only by the efforts which our countries invest to turn this structure of regional cooperation into one body with the vocation of becoming the voice of the region, but also by the impressive activities of Croatia while it chaired this organisation.

I offer sincere congratulations to Croatia for successfully fulfilling its mandate. I would like to point out that the Republic of Moldova is especially interested in co-operation with South East Europe. Our active participation in the processes and initiatives in this zone are defined by the fact that they represent, for my country, additional instruments and mechanisms for achieving a clearly established goal: progress on the path to integration into the European Union.

Respected gathering, I would like to point out that the processes taking place in South East Europe are becoming increasingly dynamic, and progress which has already been noted in our countries shows our desire and political ambition to embrace European values and principles. The inclusion of the European Union and European institutions into these processes presents an important opportunity to transform South East Europe into a region of democracy, safety, stability, prosperity and cooperation, and for the advancement of the interests of participating countries in respect to their integration into European political structure of safety and economy.

All of us have established very ambitious agenda for implementation of changes we have decided to adopt and for achieving our goals. At the same time, as a consequence of our successful cooperation and atmosphere of cooperation which dominates in the region, we have succeeded in adopting a decision on the founding of the Regional Cooperation Council at the beginning of 2008, for which we can offer each other mutual congratulations.

I am certain that this regional organisation will become an effective and useful tool in managing intergovernmental relations in the region and its transforma-



tion into an area of safety, stability and mutual cooperation for achieving our joint goal: accession into the European Union.

This desire to act in solidarity is also confirmed by the decision of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in relation to the appointment of the first General Secretary of the Regional Cooperation Council, a function which will be performed by a representative of Croatia, and determining that the seat of the Secretariat of the Council is to be in the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the participants of the Stability Pact, especially Erhard Busek for the support that he offered the entire region in the development processes and political and regional cooperation.

There is not doubt that we must preserve and continue to develop all the achievements in this area for the good of our countries and nations. Last year, in Thessaloniki, the Republic of Moldova attained full membership into the SEECP, which confirms not only the geographical affiliation of my country to this region, but also its political commitment to the goals and values of the region. During last year, my country became even more active in the achievement of goals and priorities of the South East Europe Cooperation Process, which shows direct and constant interest of the Republic of Moldova to contribute to the joint resolution of problems faced by the nations of countries from the region and functional harmonisation of activities of SEECP structures towards activities within European Union structures.

Respected gathering,

I would like to sincerely thank all our partners for the support they have offered the Republic of Moldova upon assuming the chairmanship of the SEECP in the period 2008 -2009, after Bulgaria. Similarly I would like to congratulate the government and entire nation of Montenegro upon the accession of their country into the South East Cooperation Process and welcome them into the SEECP family.

Finally, I once again offer my congratulations to the Croatian government in the achieving a successful and efficient chairmanship, and wish Bulgaria much success in executing their future chairmanship of the SEECP. I am sure it will contribute to the strengthening of the role of this organisation, as a catalyst of processes

**Mr Vladimir VORONIN**

PRESIDENT

of European integration of countries in South East Europe by passing on their experiences as a country which has advanced through more integration processes than its partners in the region of South East Europe, and through consolidation of existing and newly created mechanisms and instruments for achieving vocation in South East Europe.

Thank you.

**Mr Călin POPESCU-TĂRICEANU**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Chairman,  
Excellencies/Dear Colleagues,  
Distinguished invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address this audience and to join the previous speakers in commending our host, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, and the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office, for organising this meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to us.

Welcoming a new participant to the Process, represents for us today's special moment. I express our full support for the Republic of Montenegro in joining the SEECP. As the depository of the SEECP Charter, Romania will organise, in Bucharest, the signing ceremony of the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe by our new partner.

Dear Colleagues,

Today's meeting is a moment for counting our achievements and for planning ahead. A brief look at the political situation in our region shows that although accomplishments are significant, what still has to be resolved is not an easy task. Fulfilling the commitments for getting closer to the EU or finding a compromise and a mutually acceptable solution in the Kosovo file are just two examples.

South-East European (SEE) countries are moving ahead at different paces towards their European and Euro-Atlantic integration goals. Achieving Copenhagen criteria and individual performance are of utmost in reaching these aims. If the progress achieved by every country is doubled by a growing sense of regional solidarity, integration could be attained sooner.

The remodelling of CEFTA, signed last year in Bucharest, is a good example in this respect. Enhanced free trade will contribute to develop competitiveness and attract foreign direct investment, thus increasing economic development.

For getting closer to the EU and reaching the integration objective, we have to clearly advance towards meeting the requirements for a more structured relation-

**Mr Călin POPESCU-TĂRICEANU**

**PRIME MINISTER**

ship with the Union. The signature of the visa agreement with most of the Western Balkans countries is an important step of the European institutions in approaching the region as a whole. The new document practically enables the connection of this area with the EU Member States. These are just a few elements regarding the relationship South East European countries seek to build with the EU. Before going into what lies ahead, I want to highlight the fact that our successes, not only those mentioned in leading stories, eventually tuned into reality a situation that only 8 years ago would have seemed 'wishful thinking'.

The transformation of the Stability Pact, initially created to support the reconstruction of the Balkans, offers SEECP the unique opportunity to become a more effective contributor to the common European policies and backing the European and Euro-Atlantic aspiration. The SEECP-RCC relationship needs to be efficient and the bond between the political and executive levels will prove the superior stage reached by the regional ownership. The Protocol we shall sign today, updating the Bucharest Charter, expresses our desire to echo the significant developments in the architecture of regional cooperation into the founding act of the SEECP. Together with the Declaration of the Summit and the Zagreb Final Act, we have a consistent package of important documents guiding our actions over the next period of time.

Dear friends,

Economic development and long-term security in the region are closely linked to the development of transport corridors and energy networks, together with their correlation with the rest of Europe. In this respect, feasible projects and mechanisms of co-ordination for financing and implementation should be initiated. Public-private partnership in key areas such as roads and highways projects, railways, telecommunications and energy are needed. We need to look into what unites us and we have to meet the expectations of our Western partners by further developing projects such as the Pan-European Oil Pipeline (PEOP), by providing political support for projects such as European Transport Corridors. The Political Statement signed in April is a good step ahead, which needs to be followed by resolute action, for making these plans a reality. Romania has been actively supporting the PEOP in the dialogue with the European institutions and the EU Member States, as well as with countries in the Caspian region and with other potential investors.

Now, in order to accelerate this project, we should focus on the following:

- obtain a clear commitment of the transit states;
- secure the necessary funding.

Dear colleagues,

Since 1999 we have developed quite an impressive array of structure, initiatives and format of cooperation in our region. Their main characteristic was flexibility and orientation for the growth of South-East Europe. Through them we have tried to come up and meet effectively everybody's interest. Although, they may have seemed too many, clearly it has been worth having them, especially given the success stories we have experienced in our region. That is why Romania is supporting so much a more dynamic and flexible cooperation in the Black Sea region, as a part of the developments that the European Union is envisaging for its Eastern neighbourhood. We may present our success stories as true sources of inspiration in domains like combating organized crime, energy, free trades, military personnel reconversion, cross-border cooperation, etc. As the same time, Romania is interested to promote the Danube as one of the connecting axes between South-East Europe and the Black Sea region. Clearly, we have to make use of it in fields such is trade and transportation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The decisions we shall take today open a new chapter in the complex landscape of regional cooperation mechanisms.

The work of the Croatian Chairmanship of the SEECP, the efforts of the participating states, of the Stability Pact, of the European Commission and of the donors, enable us to agree with the designation of Sarajevo as the seat of the Secretariat of the RCC and with the appointment of Hido Bišćević as the first Secretary General of the Council.

Mr Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's meeting lays a solid foundation for what needs to be accomplished in the time to come. I look forward to see tangible progress this year and in 2008, concerning a closer connection to the EU.



**Mr Călin POPESCU-TĂRICEANU**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Next year, Romania will host the NATO Summit. We hope this will be a turning point for enhancing the relationship of the countries in the region with the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

For concluding, while acknowledging and appreciating the work that the Stability Pact has done for us, let me express my appreciation for the excellent organization of this meeting and allow me to wish the incoming Bulgarian Chairmanship success in accomplishing its objectives.

Thank you for your attention!



Mr Chairman, Mr Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Serbia strongly welcomes the achieved level of European integration of all the countries in our region. We are very happy that Bulgaria and Rumania have become members of the European Union and this is a strong impetus to the other countries of the region to accede quickly into the European Union and to induce, introduce those necessary reforms for their fast accession.

I want to emphasize the fact that more than 70% of all citizens of Serbia are eager to join the European Union. The other aspect is that more than 70% (again that critical number) of our university students cannot travel freely to the European Union and therefore we strongly praise the words of Mr Barroso for the road map for improving access of the young people, of the democratic people, the people of the future, to see the lights of Europe.

Regional co-operation for us is a top priority clearly and we have done everything to foster regional co-operation because we need it due to the bad 90's which all of us went through and this is also a preparation for our integration into the European Union. The South East European Cooperation Process remains the most important political framework intended to direct the regional co-operation process and is particularly useful for holding the annual summit meetings where the regional countries define the political content and priorities of regional cooperation.

The Republic of Serbia supports the strengthening of the SEECP as the voice of the region and as the political platform for its dialog with the European Union. I want, Ladies and Gentlemen, to take this opportunity also to sincerely congratulate Croatia on its excellent chairmanship and the excellent organisation of this very useful event. Economic co-operation in the South East Europe region advanced best of all aspects of progress of this part of the world. We support the integration of infrastructure, energy, free trade of course and the promotion of investment throughout the region. We pride ourselves on the new multilateral regional free trade agreements: the CEFTA 2006 that shall come into force soon in Serbia as well as in the other countries of the region.

Although we can be proud of the successes which we have achieved up to now, we cannot ignore the fact that there are certain outstanding problems in the region,



## Mr Milan PARIVODIĆ

### MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

such as the refugee problem still which has always burdened the bilateral relations in the region. In this context we consider particularly important and significant the Sarajevo process or the implementation of the Sarajevo Declaration. It is extremely important that we address these problems in a constructive and co-operative fashion.

One question has been raised today many times and this is of course the Kosovo question, it is the hot question in this region, and I can only give support to the wise words of Prime Minister Karamanlis. The spirit of the time in which we live, is not the spirit of the arrogant winner and of the humiliated loser. History has taught us that such solutions create new conflicts and new losers and new arrogant winners. This is a principle well known in history and should be respected by all those who contribute to the solution of the biggest crisis which we are facing as a country and region as well. Kosovo, therefore, the negotiations, we believe should be continued. Time should be taken and an agreed solution must be reached by all the parties included. A solution which clearly is based on reality, on what is truly happening in this part of Serbia, on the human rights situation which prevails there, on that fact that 17 March has occurred in 2004 and we all know what that meant. For us it was like the 11 September for the United States. It was an attack on our people, on women, on children, on the churches, and this is continuing and therefore I must strongly denounce the words of Prime Minister Berisha when talking about a Greater Serbia. The territory of which we are speaking is part of Serbia under international law, under the Helsinki Final Act and we cannot talk of an aspiration to a Greater Serbia when Kosovo is actually a part of Serbia. And I must ask a question of all of us here, and the question is the following: How many Albanian states are we going to have in Europe? One, two, three or four in the coming times? Or if that is not going to be two or three countries, is it to be a Greater Albania, and are we to return to that rhetoric of Greater Serbia, Albania, Bulgaria, whatever in this region. This is not the rhetoric of the times. International law is the prevailing rhetoric of the times. Compromise is the prevailing rhetoric of the time and therefore I urge you all jump gentlemen, and particularly our American friends, and we want to be friends of the United States clearly, that we should abide by principles of modern civilisation.

On the other hand, the economic situation in Serbia is good. It is stable. We have 5.5 billion dollars foreign direct investment into Serbia. In 2005 and 2006 we were the fastest changing economy in the world, said the World Bank. I want to reas-

**Mr Milan PARIVODIĆ**

MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS



sure you dear friends that Serbia is surely on a democratic path. The isolated voice of one person which was heard in the last two days is isolated and irrelevant for defining of Serbian policies.

As I said regional cooperation to us is of greatest importance and I want to give you two pieces of information. As we speak now Ladies and Gentlemen, Serbia is taking over the chairmanship of the Council of Europe, and we take pride to congratulate Montenegro for the accession to this organisation, as well as to the SEECP today. And the good news seems to be that the democratic forces in Serbia have reached an agreement and that we shall have a government. Thank you very much.

**Mr Ali BABACAN**

**MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND EU CHIEF NEGOTIATOR**

Thank you Mr Chairman, Excellencies, dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a particular honour and pleasure for me to address this distinguished gathering at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SEECP Heads of State and Government Summit. Our host and chairman, His Excellency Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of Croatia deserves a heartfelt congratulations for his warm hospitality and excellent organisation. The SEECP continues to prove itself as an excellent forum which enables bilateral and multilateral contacts among the leaders of the region. Unfortunately my Prime Minister Erdoğan was unable to join this meeting because of his heavy domestic political calendar and I wish to relay his best wishes to all of you and for the success of this gathering to which he attaches great importance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this year's summit merits particular attention. Not only because it marks the beginning of a new phase in the architecture of our regional mechanisms for cooperation and coordination but also for its ability to initiate a whole new trend of transformations in line with the changing needs of our region. At the outset I would like to submit to your kind attention the immense progress our region has achieved in the last decade, and I'm not saying this is sufficient, since this should be an ongoing development that requires our continued commitment. This commitment is absolutely necessary for prevailing democracy, security, stability and prosperity in our region.

We consider the Balkans, in which we take part, more than a political geography. It's a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural mosaic with which we share close historical and cultural affinities. Therein lies a great accumulation of wealth of knowledge that spreads beyond frontiers. The rapid transformation of our region is going through calls for swift changes in regional cooperation mechanisms, to echo that need we have acted with determination. The phased evolution of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe into the Regional Cooperation Council which will provide the SEECP with operational capabilities is a promising step. The SEECP will also have the opportunity to act as the unique voice of the region, while allowing the involvement of members of the international donor community.

Distinguished participants, the completion of integration of South East European countries with the European and Transatlantic structures deserves particular attention. In that way Turkey as a seasoned member of NATO has given impetus to its integration process with the European Union as well. Following comprehensive



political reforms and a year long successful screening process we began the accession negotiations with the European Union. Croatia is also making important steps in the accession negotiations and Macedonia is next in line. The accession of Bulgaria and Rumania to the EU, as of 1 January 2007, has been a very positive development. Both countries have made enormous efforts to achieve that result and have gone through a comprehensive process of transformation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when we look at the region we are blessed with a series of areas to build upon our cooperation. Here I would like to specify three of them which I consider particularly important. Namely, energy, transportation and tourism. With its close proximity to energy sources in Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East, we see the energy sector as a key area to cooperate. The Balkans being the opening gates of Europe to the above mentioned regions carries a great responsibility for energy source diversification and energy supply security for Europe overall.

Additionally, the development of transportation corridors calls for early action. No doubt this will translate into intensified trade and economic relations, addressing areas ranging from employment to social developments. Our inter-regional trade still remains below its true potential. Finally, tourism is a remarkable tool when it comes to bringing people together, fostering dialogue among them and enabling intercultural exchanges. We see tourism as an area that necessitates our serious engagement.

Distinguished participants, here I would like to underline the importance of regional ownership and the necessity to preserve and to enhance this principle in the future. What has made the SEECP so particular was this very fact. It stemmed from the countries of the region thus becoming a tuned voice of the region. While signing the protocol to the Charter of the SEECP and adapting the Statute of the RCC we need to keep in mind the importance of regional ownership. In this regard the Zagreb Declaration confirms the future course of our regional cooperation and underlines, among others, the need to further support European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes. Therefore I am a firm believer that in this region, regional problems have to be first addressed at a regional level and preferably the solution has to emerge from within.

Dear colleagues, I cannot withdraw myself from making a comment on Kosova. It is perhaps the most critical issue that necessitates our close attention. We sincerely

**Mr Ali BABACAN**

**MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND EU CHIEF NEGOTIATOR**



hope that the United Nations Security Council will be able to reach an agreement on the Kosova status issue and pave the way for a lasting, comprehensive and timely solution. We firmly believe that the current phase in Kosova is irreversible and that the sustainability of the present situation is not possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before concluding I would like to extend my congratulations to Sarajevo for its designation as the seat of the RCC Secretariat, as well as to Ambassador Bišćević for his appointment as the first Secretary General of the RCC. I would also like to express my warm welcome to our newcomer, the Republic of Montenegro, which I'm sure will bring forth worthwhile contributions to the SEECP. It goes without saying the Croatian chairmanship has done a successful job for leading the SEECP during this challenging period. Finally all my best wishes go to Bulgaria for their upcoming chairmanship. Thank you for your kind attention.

**Mr Martin BARTENSTEIN**

FEDERAL MINISTER FOR ECONOMICS AND LABOUR

Thank you very much, Mr Vice-President, Dear Damir Polančec, Dear Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Let me congratulate our Croatian hosts,

This 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the heads of State and Governments of the South East European Cooperation Process Initiative is the peak of a successful Croatian chairmanship, and therefore, I would like to especially congratulate Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, thanks to Croatia's efforts and the significant will of all participants for cooperation, due to which it has been possible to achieve this revolutionary success in two fields in the last year.

First of all, the conclusion of negotiations for a new CEFTA-Agreement, which was referred to today and secondly the consensus achieved yesterday at the core decisions for a transition from the Stability Pact to the Regional Cooperation Pact. In this regard, I would also like to cordially congratulate the freshly appointed Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, Hido Bišćević, and Sarajevo becoming the seat of this Regional Cooperation Council.

On behalf of Austria, I would like to congratulate all SEECP-participants for the fact that they have achieved a consensus which was not self-evident, in a sensible and delicate issue. This is an optimistic proof for us, the fact that the real reason that has moved this transformation process will be valid and further developing the regional integration. I am convinced that contemporary understanding of countries in this region has achieved a level at which true regional ownership is possible, and which will last.

This positive spirit is even more important, as with the decisions to be made on the future status of Kosovo, we are facing a difficult chapter, with great difficulties before us and of the many reports referring to it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please let me also personally thank my friend, Erhard Busek, former Austrian Vice-Chancellor and Special Coordinator of Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, for his tireless efforts of Stability Coordinator. Today, his efforts have rightfully received recognition.

As it is well known, his efforts were directed to providing assistance to the countries of this region, having achieved such a level of cooperation, and it may seem extraordinary, at least for a native Austrian, that someone puts his position so much on the line in a manner to work so hard and persistently.

**Mr Martin BARTENSTEIN**

**FEDERAL MINISTER FOR ECONOMICS AND LABOUR**

My dear Ladies and Gentlemen! The countries of Southern and Eastern Europe have achieved significant results in their common goal to achieve full integration into European structures. The positive steps have to be consolidated now, so that new progress may proceed in the integration process. The European Union must and will keep its word to the region, and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel as well as the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, have left no doubt. Both of them have ascertained a clear perspective. This perspective has already proven itself to date as a unifying element for political powers aimed forward with the courage for reform. Austria supports such perspectives further and without reserve.

The European Union should undertake all efforts to create contractual relationships with all the countries of the region by the end of this year. This should certainly contribute to overcoming the existing conflicts in the region. Austria has also every interest that Southern and Eastern European countries take their fate into their hands. This process is proof of this.

For Austria, it was clear that we would take part in this transformation process, in a way as to accept our part of the financing of the RCC Secretariat in Sarajevo.

Ladies and Gentlemen, regional cooperation is no surrogate, but an exact prerequisite for this process. And the documents that will be adopted at this summit will show that this is already a piece of news and announcement that has been received. Explanations of the progress in the direction of Euro-Atlantic integration on one hand, and good regional neighbourhood relations on the other - these are the right signals.

Please let me, finally, at this point, also offer congratulations for the significantly improved investment climate in the region. We have heard impressive numbers from Serbia, but it is also true for the whole region. We hope that this foreign direct investment process will – hand in hand with regional trade – be part of the Regional Cooperation Council. The Investment Compacts is an essential framework element for future reforms. I am convinced that Bulgaria, now taking the chairmanship will use this basis in the best possible way so that we can take another big step towards our common goals.

Thank you!



Dear Chairman, Respected Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to say how glad I am to be taking part in this very important meeting on behalf of Montenegro, and also to express my thanks to the Republic of Croatia and its Chairmanship-in-Office of the South East European Cooperation Process, for the great hospitality which has been shown to us, and also for the exceptional efforts made in organising this year's Summit, which represents the final act and the crowning moment of a year of excellent chairmanship.

Please allow me to express my thanks to all Participating States of the SEECP for their firm and unanimous support to the candidature of Montenegro in this highly significant organisation for regional cooperation. Montenegro is more than aware of the fact that peace, security, stability, cooperation, economic development and progress for the region confirm our authentic European orientation in the best and quickest way. This is why the Government of the Republic of Montenegro is ready and waiting for participation in the SEECP, an initiative which represents perhaps the best framework for exchange of ideas we have today, for open dialogue, for freedom, tolerance and cooperation. The active participation of Montenegro in the process will undoubtedly quicken and strengthen the internal transformation of Montenegrin society in order to concentrate our efforts to reach strategic foreign policy goals by means of the principles and standards on which the European Union is founded.

The cooperation process in South East Europe, ever since its beginnings in June 1996, has proven to be a real forum for dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Today, one decade later, we can conclude with confidence that South East Europe is a region of peace which is on the road to lasting security, stability and significant economic development. In addition, and with your help, dear friends, over the past ten years a deciding battle has been won for democracy and the resilience and power of its institutions. I also believe that the way in which the Kosovo question will be solved can only confirm this statement and create the conditions for a secure, prosperous and European future for the region.

With last year's referendum, its results and the manner in which they were implemented, Montenegro has made a contribution to the new architecture and stability of the region, and of this we are proud. We would like to continue along this road. Please allow me to highlight one moment which was particularly sig-

**Mr Željko ŠTURANOVIĆ**

**PRIME MINISTER**



nificant for Montenegro. Today is a special day for us not only in Zagreb, but also in Strasbourg, where Montenegro will become a full member of the Council of Europe. Also important for us as stages on the road to European integration are membership of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and the initialling of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union, the signing of which is soon to follow. I wish to underline Montenegro's readiness to help fulfil the goals of the shared regional project. Continuous dialogue, exchange of opinions and ideas are of benefit to all countries of the region for the development of institutional potential and the overall reform of society according to European, and therefore common values. Greater understanding and cooperation create a firm foundation for more dynamic progress on the road to integration in European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The strategic aim of state policy is that Montenegrin society becomes a European and equal member of the community of European states and nations. Montenegro, as a Mediterranean and European state, is aware of the need for close cooperation and strongly supports the transformation of the Stability Pact and the concept of regional ownership. The Regional Cooperation Council is a new reality and the expected goals demand a new approach and new mechanisms. This is why we highlight the importance of the decisions adopted at today's Summit on the formation of the instruments of the Regional Council, with its Secretariat headquartered in Sarajevo and its first General Secretary Mr Biščević, who can count on our full support and cooperation, as can our Bulgarian friends who, we are sure, will take over the Chairmanship of the SEECF successfully and effectively. We are convinced that defining the political guidelines and making concrete the organisational structures for the work of the Regional Cooperation Council will enhance the role of the SEECF in attaining lasting peace, security and progress in the region founded on its European perspectives. Montenegro is determined to be a reliable partner in these efforts.

Thank you for your attention.

**Mr Joachim RÜCKER**

**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL  
AND HEAD OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN KOSOVO**



Thank you Mr Chairman, Madame Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We share the gratitude to the Croatian chairmanship of the SEECP for the invitation and the warm hospitality here once more in Zagreb. I am very pleased to be here today again with Prime Minister Cheku who has been invited and who is present at this table. This historic gathering in Zagreb the last three days is an important turn in the process that began over a year ago when it was decided to move regional cooperation to a promising future embedded in Europe and European-Atlantic structures. Allow me as I join others in commending the Croatian chairmanship for a job well done in overseeing and managing the transformation process of turning the Stability Pact into a regionally owned Regional Cooperation Council.

In the past we appealed to the countries of the region to embrace the fact that Kosovo is an integral part of the SEE region, irrespective, but also in anticipation, of status. Kosovo has indeed become irreversibly part of the regional cooperation underpinned by the fact that UNMIK Kosovo is signatory to the two most important instruments in this framework, the CEFTA Agreement and the Energy Community Treaty and other initiatives. In this context let me convey my gratitude to the donor countries of the Stability Pact and in particular to the Special Coordinator Dr Busek for the support they have given to Kosovo in particular and to the integration of Kosovo.

We are now witnessing a success story where the Pact goes down in history as one of the rare institutions that not only prepared but also are executing their own departure from the scene with the future fully secured. This is very commendable indeed and UNMIK is about to do the same. I have explained this to the Security Council Mission that has been in Kosovo just a few days ago. I have made clear, together with the partners from the PISG, that we will continue to reach out to all the communities in Kosovo, to explain the ongoing status process, to work in partnership as far as UNMIK goes with the local authorities and to work in partnership with the planning teams of the International Civilian Office and the European Union to prepare for the 120 day transition that will immediately follow the adoption of a new Resolution on Kosovo. I have also explained to the Security Council Mission, that was I think received with great interest, that UNMIK has set up the institutions of self-government which it was tasked to create and support under Security Council Resolution No 1244. It has transferred to them all the

**Mr Joachim RÜCKER**

**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL  
AND HEAD OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN KOSOVO**



responsibilities that it legally can without a definition of status. Those institutions have demonstrated commitment and ability through the standards process and many other routes to the principle of a democratic and certainly multi-ethnic society. They have been laying the bases for a peaceful and normal life for all of Kosovo citizens and communities. In short, and I have explained that, UNMIK together with the PISG has achieved what is achievable under 1244 implementation and with regards to the standard process. Further progress clearly depends on status since the obstacles are status related.

As for the status we are confident that the UN led process, multilateral process, will lead to a timely and good conclusion in the Security Council. The Ahtissari Plan has been supported around the table by the EU, by the US and others all around the table. But what is of course of particular importance is also that on 26 March 2007 and ever since it has received the full support of the UN Secretary General who stated that it has all the right elements for a fair and sustainable solution. From our perspective on the ground, I can only say, and I'm sure the Prime Minister would agree with me, Kosovo is ready. Thank you very much for your attention.

## Mr Alessandro MINUTO RIZZO

### NATO DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL



Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to start saying that NATO has invested heavily in helping to bring security and stability to South Eastern Europe for well over a decade. From the very outset when NATO led an Implementation and then Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, deploying up to 60,000 soldiers, we realised that bringing lasting security and stability to the region could not be achieved by focusing purely on military issues, but also by successfully working together to ensure that civilian reconstruction supported the basic confidence-building that NATO's presence made possible.

If we take a step back for a second, I think we would all agree that South East Europe looks anyway dramatically different from the time when the Stability Pact was successfully launched and I would like to congratulate Mr Busek for his leadership. All across Southern Europe, countries have pulled away from radicalism and nationalism and are opting for regional cooperation and for Euro-Atlantic integration. NATO has played a very relevant role in promoting this positive momentum and is committed to continue to do so.

Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia have turned from active partners of the Alliance into valued members, all three making major contributions to security and stability on this continent and well beyond.

Albania, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aspire to join NATO and are undertaking the necessary reforms through NATO's membership action plan in key areas, and they know that at the next NATO Summit in 2008, the North Atlantic Alliance will consider whether to issue invitations to join to those countries who meet NATO's performance based standards and are able to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security and stability. So NATO membership is no longer a distant possibility but a real prospect but for those who can meet these conditions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia have now joined the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The number of contacts and the scope for practical cooperation between the Alliance and the three countries have greatly expanded thanks to their inclusion in the PfP framework. So these three countries are already on the Euro-Atlantic integration path. And of course NATO remains committed to the future of Kosovo as we have stated repeatedly in the past. We stand ready to play our full part, continuing the KFOR presence in Kosovo to support the implementation of a status settlement.

**Mr Alessandro MINUTO RIZZO**

NATO DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

Today in a world of globalised security, the 26 NATO Allies are defending the security and their common values in new ways and in new places. NATO is involved in peacekeeping operations of high importance in places as far away as Afghanistan. We are training Iraqi security forces and we support the African Union in its efforts to bring an end to violence and suffering in Darfur. But let me assure that none of these activities will divert us from our commitment to help the countries of this region in realising their Euro-Atlantic ambitions and bringing long-lasting security and stability to this area. We look forward to working with the Regional Cooperation Council and I thank you for your attention.

**Mr Marc Perrin DE BRICHAMBAUT**

OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL



Mr Chairman, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today's meeting marks a new stage of regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe, a region of crucial importance for the future security, stability and prosperity of the European continent.

The Croatian chairmanship of the SEECP should be praised for making this progress possible, along with all members of the process and its new member Montenegro. The founding of a new regional organisation, RCC, is a reflection of your strong political will to deepen regional cooperation, as well as of the tremendous progress achieved by the countries of South Eastern Europe in building a stable and prosperous region. In the course of a single decade, a region torn apart by violent conflict and mistrust has turned into one where countries increasingly cooperate in addressing the common challenges and are firmly set on the road to European and Euroatlantic integration. It will remain so.

The new RCC will enhance regional ownership and make the SEECP not just a regional voice but also a regional actor, an interlocutor on the international scene. This marks a very important development. The countries of South Eastern Europe are assuming both leadership and responsibility for their own future. In this way they are also taking on a deserved and increasing role in building an undivided and prosperous Europe within the OSCE.

The OSCE has worked hard to help the countries of the region overcome past tensions and fulfil their aspirations in building democracy, prosperity and stability. It will continue to do so whenever requested, including in Kosovo under the guidance of its Chairman-in-Office, Minister Moratinos of Spain. I am confident that we will be building on past achievements and achieve great successes together with SEECP chaired by Bulgaria and the RCC. For my part I look forward to start working with the Secretary General Mr Bišćević in Sarajevo and elsewhere. The OSCE and the Regional Cooperation Council will be natural partners in accomplishing the tasks that remain and in addressing the challenges that South Eastern Europe shares with its partners in OSCE.

In conclusion Mr Chairman, allow me to thank and to congratulate Dr Busek and his team for the work and for the achievements of the Stability Pact. Mr Chairman, thank you for your invitation and thank you for your hospitality.

## Ms Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO

### DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Mr Chairman  
Presidents  
Prime Ministers  
Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

While we are celebrating this solemn moment for the history of South-East Europe in Zagreb, Montenegro's flag is being hoisted on the forecourt of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg marking the country's accession to our Organisation as its 47<sup>th</sup> Member State which explains the Secretary General's absence at today's Summit.

Belonging to the Council of Europe means respecting and implementing the values of democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, on which our democracies rest. The same fundamental principles underpin EU membership and are at the very heart of the idea of Europe.

Since its creation, the Stability Pact has contributed to a climate of reforms, has fostered cooperation in and with the region, yielding some significant results.

The Council of Europe has actively contributed to this process by being a long-standing partner of the Stability Pact and by working together with the countries of the region.

Countries of the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEEC) have made remarkable progress, both individually and collectively: their voices, originally spoken *sotto voce*, are now resounding more clearly and loudly in the Council of Europe. This is a welcome development!

All these countries are members of the Council of Europe, thus sharing the same values enshrined in the Statute of our Organisation and in the European Convention on Human Rights. This common set of values has played a crucial role in shaping the reinforced regional cooperation in South-East Europe which has led to the creation of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). This will be mutually beneficial for the countries concerned and for the Council of Europe as a whole. I would like to extend on this occasion an open invitation to the new Secretary General of the RCC, Mr Bišćević to discuss our co-operation.

**Ms Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO**  
**DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL**  
**OF EUROPE**



At the Council of Europe we strongly believe in regional cooperation as a crucial part of a wider pan-European cooperation project within the Council of Europe.

As of today, Serbia will take its turn in presiding for six months the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. This is a very solemn and important responsibility that Serbia assumes in difficult internal circumstances with the full awareness of the importance of living up to the expectations and the requirements of membership, that include the fulfilment of key commitments undertaken at the time of accession. There cannot be a Council of Europe *à la carte*! I want to warmly welcome the statement just made by Minister Parivodić about the imminent creation of a democratic government in Serbia.

The Council of Europe understands that contributing to finding an adequate solution to the Kosovo question is essential to the region and to its development. We are doing our best to ensure that the highest European standards in the areas of Human Rights, decentralisation, preservation and restoration of cultural and religious heritage are applied in Kosovo, irrespective of its status. Our main concern is and remains the well being of the people living in Kosovo. In this vein, I would like to welcome the agreement concluded with NATO enabling the Council of Europe Anti-torture Committee to visit all places of detention in Kosovo, including KFOR-led detention facilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Europe – the Europe of multiple and sometimes concentric circles - must be based on values. The values enshrined by our founding fathers in the European Convention on Human Rights must guide, inspire and secure peace, prosperity and democracy in Europe.

I wish all the best to the newly established Regional Cooperation Council. We trust we will be good partners for the common goal of consolidating democratic stability in the region.

Thank you for your attention.

**Dr Albert ROHAN**

DEPUTY SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL  
FOR THE FUTURE STATUS PROCESS FOR KOSOVO



Thank you Mr Chairman and my thanks to the Croatian Government for their generous hospitality.

As you know, the Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo has submitted his proposal to the Security Council at the end of March and its being discussed in the Council right know. What Mr Ahtisaari has proposed, is an internationally supervised independence, combined with extensive provisions for the Kosovo Serbian community. This proposal is based on 17 rounds of direct negotiations between the parties, two of them at the highest political level. It takes into account the nature and the history of the conflict, the situation on the ground and the guidance we received from the Contact Group.

The fundamental question of the status was discussed at every meeting in Vienna and in all the contacts we had with the leaderships in Belgrade and Priština, and both sides confirmed their rigid positions and concepts: the request for independence from the Kosovo side and the request for preserving Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo from the Serbian side. It has become abundantly clear that no amount of negotiations would change this fact. An agreed solution, as desirable as it would be, is simply not achievable, unless one side would give up its position. But this, I am afraid, is not going to happen and we have to face this reality. A compromise between two mutually exclusive concepts is by nature impossible. A country can be independent or not independent, it cannot be both. Therefore, if one wants to solve the problem of Kosovo, it is unavoidable to take a decision in favour of one concept or the other.

Why did Mr Ahtisaari come to the conclusion that independence must be the basis for a solution? There is first the historic context: the abolition of the Kosovo autonomy in 1989, the break-up of Yugoslavia, the systematic oppression of the Kosovars in the nineties, the international humanitarian intervention in 1999 to stop a massive effort of expulsion of the Kosovars and, finally, eight years of UN administration. It is impossible to ignore what has happened in the last almost twenty years and simply return to the autonomy of 1989, as if nothing had occurred, as if nothing had changed. Independence is the request of almost 95 % of the Kosovo population; any other solution would be opposed by practically the totality of Kosovars. It would not be sustainable; it could not be implemented, not even by force. To try to do so would destabilise Kosovo and it would destabilise the region. This is also the reason why the Contact Group, in a Ministerial Statement of 31 January 2006

DEPUTY SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL  
FOR THE FUTURE STATUS PROCESS FOR KOSOVO



in London, declared that ‘the solution must be acceptable to the people of Kosovo.’ That leaves no other option than independence. I would also like to remind you that the Security Council, when speaking of the determination of the future status of Kosovo, did not introduce any limitations, it left all options open.

Having said this, Mr Ahtisaari’s proposals contain strong elements of compromise, trying to meet some of Serbia’s concerns. There are limitations to the exercise of sovereignty by Kosovo, the prohibition of a union with another country or parts of another country, a ceiling to the personnel of the future Kosovo security force, of its armament and, above all, international supervision for a period of time through a military and a civilian presence. There are also strong provisions for the Serbian community which should create conditions that would allow Serbs to remain in Kosovo and those who have left to come back. A system of administrative decentralisation, whereby Serbs could run their own affairs, massive community rights which would allow them to preserve their identity and secure their participation in public life, and the protection of the religious heritage of the Serb Orthodox Church through special rights and privileges and special protective measures for the most important religious sites. These proposals are genuine compromises. They are fairly in the middle between the starting positions of the two sides. The provisions in favour of the Serbian community and the other smaller minorities are far-reaching, very far-reaching. They reflect the special circumstances pertaining in Kosovo.

For Kosovo they present a heavy burden, which the Kosovo leadership is ready to accept as price for independence. The proposals therefore are a package. They must be implemented together. Any thought that the so-called practical provisions could be implemented without implementation of the status is erroneous and should be discarded. Equally, there will be no changes to Mr Ahtisaari’s package. These proposals are finely balanced. They have been worked out with the assistance of a wide range of experts from the Council of Europe, UNESCO, IMF, the World Bank, the European Union, OSCE, NATO and individual countries. They have the wide support, in particular by the UN Secretary General, the United States and the European Union.

The Security Council is now in the process of preparing a resolution, a draft will be circulated today and after the usual consultations on the text, the Presidency of the Council intends to bring the matter to a vote before the end of May. We are

**Dr Albert ROHAN**

DEPUTY SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL  
FOR THE FUTURE STATUS PROCESS FOR KOSOVO

confident that the Security Council will come to a positive decision. We believe that everybody realises now that the present status cannot be sustained, that the proposal is the maximum that can be achieved under the circumstances, that it is fair, that it is implementable and also that there is no alternative. It is the only way to achieve the unavoidable independence of Kosovo in an orderly process, within the framework of the United Nations, with the necessary international assistance. This is in the interest of all, of Kosovo, I believe of Serbia, of the region, the European Union, the United Nations and the international community.

Thank you very much.

## Concluding remarks, Dr Erhard BUSEK

SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE STABILITY PACT FOR SEE



Dear Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday the Regional Table endorsed the proposal to appoint Hido Bišćević as the first Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), and to designate Sarajevo as the seat of the RCC Secretariat.

The Regional Table of the Stability Pact also adopted the Statute of the RCC, as an annex to the Chairman's conclusion.

These endorsements put a historical seal on the final phase of the transition from the Stability Pact to the RCC, and will set the stage for a new era of cooperation in South Eastern Europe, one of real regional ownership.

The main message from the Regional Table is that the ambitious agenda that we set almost two years ago, at the Sofia and Belgrade Regional Tables, has been today almost accomplished.

Now the reins of regional cooperation are firmly in your hands.

When you are approving today the decisions taken by your Foreign Ministers yesterday on the establishment of the RCC, you can do so knowing that you have the backing of the broad Stability Pact community.

These decisions are a clear demonstration of a new constructive and responsible atmosphere in the region.

Let me congratulate you, and in particular the Croatian SEECPCiO – Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, Hido Bišćević, Boris Grigić and their team – who led you through this process, for both the results achieved and the way through which we arrived here.

Such a high degree of cooperation between the countries of the region was not thinkable only a few years ago, when regional initiatives were mainly designed, proposed and pushed by the Stability Pact, under the leadership of the international community.

The new set-up implies a change of paradigm in regional cooperation, and will change deeply the way your countries interact with each other.

## Concluding remarks, Dr Erhard BUSEK

### SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE STABILITY PACT FOR SEE

You will now have a dedicated Secretariat to enhance the political relevance and the efficiency of regional cooperation, and to ensure that regional cooperation is linked with the process of European integration.

It is up to you now to make the best out of this new tool. I call you to commit, starting from today, to the full operational set-up of the RCC Secretariat, focusing on functionality and efficiency rather than on political prestige, especially when it will come to staffing the new institution.

The next important step in implementing our joint efforts will be the negotiation of a seat agreement for the RCC Secretariat.

Ownership means responsibility, and from next year on *you* will be in charge of many concrete initiatives on the ground, which are currently operating under the framework of the Stability Pact.

We as Stability Pact are committed to give the necessary support to the new Secretary General to ensure a smooth handover to the RCC, in February 2008.

We hope that by handing over to the RCC the functions that the Pact performed so far we also transmit the spirit of the Pact, and its legacy as a unique forum for cooperation in the region and between the region and the international community.

International support will still be available, but it is up to your countries to fill this RCC with life, to make it a success story and thereby show that South Eastern Europe is a different region today than it was in the 1990s. This will require the commitment of all South East European parties and any divisions will not only damage the process but the image of the region as a whole.

The RCC will only be effective if it will enjoy the support of all its members, and if all the members will work together to achieve the common goal of a strong and sustainable regional cooperation in support of EU and Euro Atlantic integration.

It is in this strategic goal that the future of SEE lies, and it is our common interest for this to become a reality soon.

## Concluding remarks, Mr Olli REHN

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by commending Croatia for a highly successful chairmanship of the South East Europe Cooperation Process and thanking it for its hospitality here in Zagreb.

Let me also congratulate Montenegro for becoming today the 11<sup>th</sup> participating state of the SEECP.

Earlier this morning, President Barroso delivered a strong message in support to the European perspective of this region. I second it and will not repeat what he said. Allow me to focus only on a couple of points:

I am particularly happy over the decisions you are taking today, following those of the Stability Pact yesterday, to assume more responsibility over regional cooperation in this part of Europe. This is a natural, but also a necessary step. It reflects the maturity of a region that is moving away from the tragedies of the 90s, increasingly pursues cooperation among its countries, and follows a European course.

Regional cooperation is a key element of EU policy in the region. It will help bring the region closer to the EU. Recent agreements and initiatives testify that the agendas of regional cooperation and European integration are increasingly intertwined. I am thinking of the new CEFTA, the Energy Community Treaty, the European Common Aviation Area Agreement, as well as transport, energy and environmental infrastructure projects and cooperation in the area of justice, freedom and security.

The Commission attributes great importance to these initiatives. We encourage the countries of the region to ensure their timely and full implementation, including where relevant by prompt ratification of agreements. On our side, we will continue to support them politically and financially.

The European perspective for the Western Balkans is a goal that can be attained through hard work. It is not an abstract promise. Bulgaria and Romania are here to testify to this. Our friends from Bulgaria and Romania can also confirm that the European perspective is an everyday process by which a country is progressively coming closer to the Union. The pace in this path is set by the countries themselves.

## Concluding remarks, Mr Olli REHN

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Commission, for its part, has been adopting measures to render the EU and its benefits more tangible to the citizen of the Western Balkans, to familiarise the states and the societies with our institutions. We are exploring possibilities for further such measures.

We know the importance of the visa issue. The agreements we recently initialled will substantially facilitate travel. Furthermore, President Barroso has just announced we will now move to the next step towards a visa-free regime by drawing up road-maps for each country. I am fully committed to this and shall work with Franco Frattini to achieve this objective.

We are increasing the number of scholarships awarded to students from the region for *post-graduate* studies in the EU. We are now also working on a scheme that will enable additional exchanges of up to 500 *undergraduate* students annually and we will also promote further mobility for students, teachers and researchers.

Strengthening administrative capacity and acquainting administrations with the EU is a key challenge for the whole region. A large part of our assistance is earmarked for this purpose, including twinning and TAIEX. We are presently supporting a project establishing a Regional School for Public Administration for the Western Balkans. The School has already started its training activities as a network and will eventually grow into a full-scale School based in the region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cooperation in South East Europe is an imperative stemming from history, geography and economics. It is underpinned by the fundamental values which this region shares today with the EU. I am confident that in this critical period, adherence to these European values will provide the basis for addressing the major challenges ahead, for resolutely pursuing the road of reform, and for enhancing stability and good-neighbourly relations throughout your region.

The Commission and the EU are convinced that the reinforced regional cooperation, with regional ownership of course, has a key role to play in these efforts. You can count on our continued support.

Thank you!

## Concluding remarks, Dr Ivo SANADER

PRIME MINISTER



Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to briefly summarise what we have discussed today.

We have confirmed that since the last summit in Thessaloniki in May 2006, South East Europe has taken a great step forward by enhancing the environment of peace, stability, cooperation and good neighbourly relations on the path towards Euro-Atlantic structures.

We have confirmed that integration in European and Euro-Atlantic structures remains the primary goal of our countries. The cooperation, mutual assistance and solidarity among those already in the EU and the NATO, candidate countries in negotiations and all others provide a valuable impetus. In addition, Euro-Atlantic integration remains the best incentive and framework for addressing all issues in our part of Europe, including the resolution of the remaining outstanding issues which are key factors of stability. This is our firm conviction and shared opinion.

We have reiterated today our commitment to building a Europe that is free and united, incorporating the underlying humanistic and cultural wealth of South East Europe. This includes its contribution to the history of European social and cultural development, and European spiritual and human heritage.

I am confident that our achievements today mark the first step towards building Europe's Southern Dimension and thus affirming the potentials of South East Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The result of our meeting is a strengthened SEECP. From this meeting forth, through the Regional Cooperation Council, our Process will influence and shape future development and cooperation in this part of Europe. We are very satisfied that all the main players –the SEECP countries, the European Commission, the Stability Pact and the international donor community – have concordant views on regional cooperation and its future role.

The support and contribution of the European Commission and the Stability Pact in the process of adjusting the SEECP to the new realities of regional coopera-

## Concluding remarks, Dr Ivo SANADER

PRIME MINISTER

tion have been invaluable. The very presence of the highest EU officials, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Jose Manuel Barroso, as well US Under Secretary Nicholas Burns, high-ranking officials of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the NATO, as well as esteemed representatives from other countries and institutions, all here in Zagreb today, says more than a thousand words. I am equally pleased that we will benefit from the support of and cooperation with Dr. Busek and his team until the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and its Secretariat can commence its full operations at the start of next year.

By nominating the first Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, and by designating the Seat of its Secretariat, we have kept our commitments and deadlines. More importantly, the SEECP countries have articulated their common stance and have taken the first steps in shaping future cooperation.

Allow me also to express my satisfaction that the appointed Secretary General is Croatia's candidate, Mr. Hido Bišćević. The Secretary General and the RCC will have the full support of the Republic of Croatia in their efforts. Croatia also fully supports the designation of Sarajevo as the Seat of the RCC Secretariat and appreciates the symbolic nature of the fact that the Seat of the RCC will be located at the same place where its predecessor, the Stability Pact, was launched a decade ago.

It is also my particular pleasure to declare that the Republic of Montenegro became the 11<sup>th</sup> full-fledged participating state of the SEECP. I congratulate the Prime Minister Mr. Vlado Šturanović and welcome him to the SEECP.

It is also my pleasure to hand over the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office to the Republic of Bulgaria. During Croatia's Chairmanship, we have set many important processes into motion. I am sure that my friend Prime Minister Mr. Sergei Stanišev will be an excellent Chairman. It will be Bulgaria's task to continue, implement and consolidate this work. Needless to say, our Bulgarian friends will have Croatia's full support for their programme and efforts, both in the Troika as well as in all other SEECP meetings.

Thank you.



*Mr Stjepan Mesić, President; Dr Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister and Dr Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor, with other participants at the Summit*



*The Troika of the South East European Cooperation Process: Mr Konstantinos Karamanlis, Prime Minister; Dr Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister and Mr Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister*



*Mr Stjepan Mesić,  
President and Mr  
José Manuel Barroso,  
President of the  
European Commission*



*The Summit Session*



*Parliamentary dimension of the SEECP Summit: Mr Vladimir Šeks, Speaker of the Parliament and Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament*



*Dr Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister and previous Chair-in-Office of the SEECP  
Mr Konstantinos Karamanlis, Prime Minister*



*Dr Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister and next Chair-in-Office of the SEECP, Mr Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister*



*Support of the international community: Mr Olli Rehn, Member of the European Commission; Mr R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission*



*Special Invitees to the SEECP Summit*



## **10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP)**

### **Zagreb Final Act on the enhancement of the South East European Cooperation Process**

We, the Heads of State and Government of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States, Presidents: Mr. Stjepan Mesić, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Vladimir Voronin and Prime Ministers: Dr. Sali Berisha, Dr. Nikola Špirić, Mr. Sergei Stanishev, Dr. Ivo Sanader, Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Konstantinos Karamanlis, Mr. Željko Šturanović, Mr. Călin Popescu – Tăriceanu; Minister of Economy and EU Chief Negotiator, Mr. Ali Babacan and Minister of International Economic Relations, Mr. Milan Parivodić have met in Zagreb on 11 May 2007 at the 10th Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP, together with the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Vladimir Šeks.

*In the presence* of the Special Invitees of the Croatian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office: President of the European Council, Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel; President of the European Parliament, Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering; President of the European Commission, Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso; Prime Minister Janez Janša; Federal Minister for Economics and Labour, Mr. Martin Bartenstein; Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns; Member of the European Commission, Dr. Olli Rehn; Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut; Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo; Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio; Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern

Europe, Dr. Erhard Busek; Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Joachim Rucker; Deputy Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, Dr. Albert Rohan; Special Envoy for the Western Balkans, Mr. Antonio Tãnger; National Co-ordinator for Stability Pact, Mr. Jan Amberg; Ambassador Mihail Konarovski and Ambassador Elisabeth Walaas.

*In the presence* of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Ivailo Kalfin; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Mr. Andrei Stratan; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs: Mr. Lulzim Basha, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović; Deputy Foreign Ministers: Mr. Ioannis Valinakis, Mr. Zoran Petrov; Secretary General, Mr. Vladimir Radulović; State Secretary for European Affairs, Mr. Adrian Vierița and Assistant Minister, Mr. Radojko Bogojević.

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*Reaffirming* the principles and objectives of the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe (Bucharest, 2000) and subsequent SEECP Summit Declarations and documents;

*Reiterating* our commitment to the continuous development of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe;

*Recognizing* the historical opportunity and crucial importance of the European integration processes for building the South Eastern Europe as a region of democracy, security, stability, prosperity and cooperation, respecting human rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities and integrated into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures;

*Underlining* the importance of the leading role of the SEECP in furthering cooperation in our part of Europe, in line with the enhancement of the regional ownership principle;

*Dedicating* our efforts to continued, strong and effective coordination of our cooperation through the common endeavours of the SEECP, the European Union and other international partners;

*Appreciating* the valuable role and contribution of the Stability Pact for the South Eastern Europe in fostering stability, development and cooperation in our region;

*Praising* the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office for successfully leading the region in the process of the transformation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and strengthening the leadership role of the SEECP in regional cooperation;

*Welcoming* the Republic of Montenegro as the 11<sup>th</sup> Participating State of the SEECP;

*Approving* the decisions of the SEECP Foreign Ministers Meeting of 2 March 2007 in Zagreb;

*Welcoming* the decisions taken at the Meeting of the Regional Table of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe on 10 May 2007 in Zagreb to continue its transition process;

HAVE DECIDED TO

*Sign* the Protocol to the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe;

*Endorse* the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Council by February 2008 on the basis of its agreed Statute, thus providing the SEECP with operational capabilities as well as with a forum for the continued involvement of the members of the international donor community engaged in South East Europe;

*Approve* the decisions of the SEECP Foreign Ministers Meeting of 10 May 2007 in Zagreb on the following:

1. The Designation of Sarajevo as the Seat of the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat;
2. The Appointment of Mr. Hido Bišćević as the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council.

*Adopted in Zagreb on 11 May 2007*



**Zagreb Declaration  
of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the South-East  
European Co-operation Process (SEECP)**

*Europe's New South East*

Zagreb, 11 May 2007

We, the Heads of State and Government of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States, Presidents: Mr. Stjepan Mesić, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Vladimir Voronin and Prime Ministers: Dr. Sali Berisha, Dr. Nikola Špirić, Mr. Sergej Stanishev, Dr. Ivo Sanader, Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Konstantinos Karamanlis, Mr. Željko Šturanović, Mr. Călin Popescu – Tăriceanu; Minister of Economy and EU Chief Negotiator, Mr. Ali Babacan and Minister of International Economic Relations, Mr. Milan Parivodić have met in Zagreb on 11 May 2007 at the 10th Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP, together with the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Vladimir Šeks.

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In the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivailo Kalfin; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European

Integration, Mr. Andrei Stratan; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs: Mr. Lulzim Basha, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović; Deputy Foreign Ministers: Mr. Ioannis Valinakis, Mr. Zoran Petrov; Secretary General, Mr. Vladimir Radulović; State Secretary for European Affairs, Mr. Adrian Vierța and Assistant Minister, Mr. Radojko Bogojević.

At this Summit we convened and confirmed the following:

1. We reiterated our adherence to the common vision of a Europe united, free and at peace, underlining the significant and valuable role of South Eastern Europe in contemporary European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes.

2. The SEECP Participating States welcomed in particular the presence and contribution of distinguished representatives of the international community at this Summit, as we see the future of our region in an all-inclusive and cooperative European and international order.

3. We appraised progress in the SEECP area following the 2006 Thessaloniki Summit, reiterating that integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions remains a primary goal of the countries of the region. We confirmed that integration processes provide the optimal framework in order to effectively address the relevant issues in our region as well as for our co-operation and for the development of ever-closer good neighbourly relations. We greatly appreciated the contribution of the Stability Pact in promoting regional cooperation and in ensuring the sustainability of these activities in the future.

4. We confirmed our readiness to pursue the enhanced role of the SEECP as an authentic voice of the countries and peoples of South Eastern Europe, but also as the actor in and for the region. We reaffirmed our willingness to further share and advance the European values of tolerance, dialogue and cooperation within and among our countries and societies, to adopt the principles and standards of the European Union through necessary reforms and to comply with the European Union's requirements and criteria in the context of the EU enlargement process and in the context of other important forms of relationship such as the European Neighbourhood Policy. We underlined the distinctively valuable human and cultural wealth of South Eastern Europe, contributing to the diversity of our common European heritage.

#### Appraisal of the progress in the SEECP area since the Ninth Summit

5. In the period since the Thessaloniki Summit on May 4, 2006, important progress has been achieved within the SEECP area and in relation to the EU and Euro-Atlantic institutions in further stabilizing the region, in strengthening mutual cooperation and dialogue and in advancing toward the future accession of aspiring SEECP Participating States to the European Union and NATO.

6. During this period, democratic elections were held in several Participating States, further confirming and enhancing the maturity and achieved democratic standards in our region.

7. We confirmed full and unequivocal adherence to the values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities, international law, prosperity through economic liberty and social justice and to the principles of peaceful resolution of open issues, in order to create in South Eastern Europe lasting conditions for the prosperity of our nations in an environment of peace, stability, security, good-neighbourly cooperation, dialogue and solidarity.

8. Relations among our countries continue to develop in the spirit of good neighbourly relations, contributing to the stability in the region. Stability was further increased through properly addressing important issues, among others by the successful referendum on independence in the newly acceded SEECP Participating State.

9. NATO's Riga Summit welcomed the efforts and further institutional progress of three SEECP Participating States and invited another three to join the PfP. We expressed our hope that at the next NATO Summit, to be held in Bucharest in 2008, the Alliance will extend further invitations to those countries that meet NATO criteria and standards. The importance of the security cooperation among the Participating States, including by sharing experience in security and military reforms was underlined. The activities within the framework of the US-Adriatic Charter as well as the results of the first SEE Countries Chief of Defence Conference held on 18 April 2007 were highly evaluated. We appraised in particular the contribution of the Participating States in the peace keeping and security operations.

10. We confirmed our readiness to continue to contribute to the global fight against terrorism. We also strongly condemned all forms of violence and extremism, be it on political, ethnic, racial, religious, criminal or any other ground. In our firm dedication to South Eastern Europe as a zone of open democratic societies, based on the rule of law and universal human rights, we reaffirmed the need to enhance the judiciary, and inject renewed urgency into the process of judiciary reform where necessary and vigorously to combat all criminal phenomena, in particular the corruption and all forms of organized crime.

11. Many important social and humanitarian issues, including the return of refugees and internally displaced persons were addressed. We confirmed that important results were achieved, in particular through the activities of the Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), by the UNHCR and other international contributors in this area. We also recognised the important work undertaken through the Sarajevo Declaration implementation process and stressed the need to work further to reach fair and sustainable solutions to outstanding issues relating to refugees and displaced persons. We stressed the importance of continued commitments in addressing the right of every individual to choose the place of permanent residence. We also thanked the international community for support and assistance.

12. We also confirmed our readiness to best use the potentials and opportunities for enhancing mutually advantageous economic and development cooperation as a contribution to the integration of South Eastern Europe into the European and world economy, to the benefit of our citizens.

13. Growing progress in economic cooperation in South Eastern Europe is highlighted by the new CEFTA, signed in Bucharest in 2006 and the creation of the SEE Investment Committee. These are important achievements, as trade and investment are important tools in moving the region as a whole forward. The new CEFTA, along with the SAA process provides a spur to further reducing national obstacles to trade and investment and opening up markets to competition and growth. The new CEFTA also implies larger responsibility of the countries in the region for fostering trade and implementation of relevant economic policies. Timely ratification by all the signatories will enable full effectiveness of the new CEFTA.

14. We welcomed the proposal of one Participating State to create a Regional Development Centre in Thessaloniki with a genuine regional profile for promoting business, trade and private investment in South Eastern Europe, contributing as a hub to the regional priorities established by the Regional Cooperation Council.

15. Cooperation in the sector of energy and transportation has been recognized as a cornerstone for the regional infrastructure development. The entry into force of the Energy Community Treaty (1 July 2006) established a legal framework for stepping up security of supply both in South Eastern Europe and the EU. Its implementation will contribute to the importance of South Eastern Europe in the European energy networks.

16. We attach very special significance to the development of the South Eastern Europe transport infrastructure and consider it a key element of sustainable economic growth, including foreign investments. Relevant Pan-European corridors constitute the framework for the development of the transport network in South Eastern Europe.

17. Apart from the road transport network, a modern and efficient railway transport system is essential for South Eastern Europe's economic and social vitality. The Agreement on the Establishment of a High Performance Railway Network signed by the SEECP Ministers of Transport (4 May 2006) is a major step forward in establishing a faster, reliable and competitive railway transport in South Eastern Europe.

18. We attach great importance to strengthening of co-operation in environmental protection, in particular through systematic exchange of information, implementation of concrete projects and conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements. It is in our best interest to coordinate our work on environmental matters among ourselves and with the EU in order to achieve the EU environmental standards throughout the region.

19. Regional efforts to develop the Information Society as the foundation for a knowledge-based economy in the region are promising, both with regard to e-Governance programs and improving Regional telecommunication infrastructure.

20. We underlined in particular the overall geo-economic potential of South Eastern Europe in the context of a wider economic cooperation in Europe, among the major European economic partners and along the lines of the European Union economic and development strategies.

21. We reiterated our view that culture is vital for the promotion of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect of human rights. We appraised the fact that intercultural dialogue and cooperation are being currently developed. In this respect we recognize the importance of the Cultural Corridors Initiative of SEE. Having this in mind we highly evaluate the successful cooperation established in the framework of the Council of Ministers of Culture of the SEE countries, and we called on the Council to further develop its activities.

22. We paid special attention to the free movement of persons in our region and with the European Union Member States, supporting initiatives and efforts to the visa facilitation regime for those Participating States still under the visa requirements with the EU, as a first step towards full liberalisation of visa regime. We welcomed the initialling of visa facilitation and readmission agreements with a number of these Participating States and we expect the European Union to deploy all measures necessary to ensure that these agreements enter into force by the end of 2007.

### The European Perspective of South Eastern Europe

23. We paid special attention to the realization of the fundamental goal of integrating our countries into the European Union and thus reinforcing and extending the European values within our region and into our societies. In this light, we expressed our satisfaction with the progress made and the results achieved.

24. In this respect, we welcomed that two of the SEECP Participating States recently became EU Member States. We commended the accession negotiations of the EU candidates and expressed hope that criteria and requirements will be fulfilled for the accession negotiations with the remaining EU candidate to commence. We welcomed the signing of one and initialling of another Stabilisation and Association Agreement and believe that the overall progress in the reforms and cooperation with international institutions will pave the way for the resumption and conclusion of other Stabilisation and Association Agreements. We also reaffirmed that each country's progress towards the EU continues to depend on their individual merits.

25. We underlined the importance of enhancing European Neighborhood Policy as an instrument assisting consolidation of a broader area of prosperity, stability and security, based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law and welcomed considerable progress in the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan by one Participating State.

26. Since our last Summit, we have actively followed and participated in the ongoing debate on the European future and on related political, constitutional and financial issues of the European Union. We remain confident that an inclusive and open EU will enrich its political, economic and cultural diversity and will further continue to assist in stabilizing the region. We called upon the EU to move forward with the debate on the European constitution and in particular on the institutional reform in order to be able to continue with its enhancement and enlargement as we will remain dedicated to addressing our individual commitments and fulfilling the necessary requirements. We reaffirmed the importance of the Thessaloniki Agenda from 2003 as an indispensable overall framework for the European integration of relevant aspiring countries.

## UNMIK /Kosovo

27. In view of the importance of preserving and strengthening stability and security, as well as cooperation and solidarity in South Eastern Europe, we paid particular attention to the issue of Kosovo's status and to the activities of the international community, in particular in the UN Security Council. We expressed the need for dialogue, responsibility and cohesiveness as a way to reach measured, balanced and sustainable solution, respecting the principles and norms of the international law, in the interest of both sides and the region as a whole. We reiterated also that the EU and Euro-Atlantic perspective is the best motivation and framework for the solution. We underlined the importance of reaching a comprehensive solution for the Kosovo status having in mind the interest of the parties concerned and we expressed our particular interest that the status related process in all aspects serves to the durable stability, security and cooperation in South Eastern Europe. We strongly emphasized the importance of Kosovo being a democratic, multi-ethnic society based on the rule of law. We praised the continuous involvement of the SEECP, its contribution and confirmed readiness to continue to be constructively engaged.<sup>1</sup>

## Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office

28. We recognized the dynamic efforts of the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office in successfully tackling the tasks of leading the region in the process of the transformation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe into the Regional Cooperation Council and strengthening the SEECP. We commended it for leading our common process of defining the future structures of regional architecture and coordinating it with the EC and the international community, thus enabling the SEECP to continue its active role in shaping regional cooperation and strengthening its political profile. We appreciated the valuable role of the Stability Pact led by Special Coordinator Dr. Erhard Busek in this process.

29. We took note of the Conference, *The Energy Security, Potentials and Investment SEECP Forum: South Eastern Europe an Energy Bridge between Russia, Mediterranean, Caspian and Middle-East regions and European Union*, held in Zagreb on 2 and 3 April 2007, that brought together the ministers for energy of the SEECP Participating States as well as the leaders of the countries and the energy sector from across Europe, Asia, and elsewhere who assessed and debated on the vital issues that concern both SEE and the EU in the energy field. We acknowledged that on the margins of the Conference the Ministerial Declaration on the Pan European Oil Pipeline and the Ministerial Declaration on the Development of the Hydrocarbons Dimension of the Energy Community was signed.

30. We also took note that the *Meeting of Ministers of Justice and Ministers of the Interior of the SEECP*, was held in Zagreb on 12 and 13 April 2007, that paid particular attention to the process of implementation of the EU standards in the JHA area in SEE, through strengthening of the rule of law, judiciary reform processes and fight against

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<sup>1</sup> One Participating State expressed its reservation because Martti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement and his Report are not mentioned.

corruption. We supported the idea of organising a SEECP conference on EU Justice and Home Affairs Strategy for South Eastern Europe in order to define long term goals and policies and to address other related issues and to brief the EU JHA Council on the conclusions of the Meeting. We welcomed the initialling of visa facilitation and readmission agreements as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation in fighting corruption through the Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative (SPAI).

31. We stressed the importance of parliamentary cooperation as an indispensable segment of regional cooperation. We commended the conclusions of the *6th Conference of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the SEECP Participating States 'New South Eastern Europe: the Role of Parliaments'*, which took place in Zagreb on 16th April 2007 and supported their decision to use a Troika Format of the Speakers of Parliament to explore the possibilities of closer co-operation with the Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments. We welcomed the establishment of a Focal Point for Parliamentary Co-operation in South Eastern Europe in Sofia.

#### New SEECP Participating State

32. We welcomed with satisfaction the Republic of Montenegro's full fledged participation to the SEECP.

#### Institutional enhancement of the SEECP

33. By adopting the Zagreb Final Act on the Enhancement of the South East European Cooperation Process, by endorsing the establishment of the RCC, by appointing Mr. Hido Bišćević as the first Secretary General and by designating Sarajevo as the Seat of the RCC Secretariat as well as by solemnly signing the Protocol to the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe today, we have enhanced our commitment to building Europe's South East as an area of peace, stability, prosperity, cooperation and mutual understanding, fully and unreservedly embracing European values and standards.

#### Incoming SEECP Chairmanship-in Office

34. We expressed our highest appreciation for the effectiveness of the present Chairmanship-in-Office and the utmost gratitude for the excellent organization of this 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP in Zagreb.

35. We also welcomed the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office as well as its presented Priorities and Programme and decided that the next SEECP Summit will be held in Sofia in 2008. At the same time we gladly accepted Mr. Vladimir Voronin's proposal to take over the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office in 2008/2009.

*Adopted in Zagreb on 11 May 2007*

