



**Statement by Amer Kapetanovic on the occasion of taking the office of the
Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)
3 January 2025**

As we move into 2025 first and foremost let me wish you a healthy, peaceful and prosperous New Year. **I am honoured to step into the role of the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council for the next three years.** I begin this journey having in mind a motto of architects of the EU single market and champions of regional cooperation: *“Diversity must be preserved, so that it can bear fruit for the common good”*. This captures the essence of our endeavour to create lasting benefits for all while cherishing the rich diversity of our region.

I look forward to building on the incredible work already underway across the South-East Europe and Western Balkans. To that end, I would like to thank **Majlinda Bregu, Goran Svilanovic and Hido Biscevic**, my predecessors, for all their energy, knowledge and experience invested in guiding RCC towards success.

But, no single leader can walk the change alone! My heartfelt thanks goes also to RCC staff, those who worked or are still working on our projects. Without them it would have never been possible to even think of our regional paradigm, let alone of all what we have achieved so far.

Opening a new chapter in life is always exciting, yet seldom easy. Even when you know the story and characters well, the road ahead always brings new problems and temptations. But I am equally certain that, with the support of our participants and donors, we can, in the next three years, be the real change our citizens across the region want to see. According to all surveys so far, our citizens have a simple and achievable dream - they want economic betterment, as safe and prosperous life as their fellow EU citizens have. And, indeed, they insist on being a part of the EU as soon as it is possible.

This new chapter offers a unique opportunity for RCC to be part of orchestrated regional effort aimed at fulfilling the dream of our citizens. Thanks to the financial support from the EU and our participants, we shall embark on amplifying people-oriented results —whether **through advancing the Common Regional Market, upgrading the South East Europe 2030 (SEE2030 Strategy), driving the Green and Digital Agendas, enabling youth to participate in decision making, improving employment opportunities, or enhancing security cooperation.**

In an era of global polycrisis our region has chosen to remain on the track of EU standards, multilateralism and cooperation based on mutual trust, interest and respect. All governments in

our framework committed themselves to supporting RCC's actions streamlined towards this strategic direction.

I am therefore eager to embark on such a purposeful journey, and deeply grateful to all those who will be part of it. In the spirit of my surname, I wish us all smooth sailing and calm seas.