

**SUMMIT DECLARATION
OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH-EAST
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

- Skopje, 23 February, 2001 -

We, the Heads of State and Government of the participating and the observer countries in the South-East European Cooperation Process, Boris Trajkovski, Ion Iliescu, Vojislav Kostunica, Zivko Radisic, Petar Stoyanov, Bulent Ecevit, Ljubco Georgievski, Ilir Meta, Costas Simitis and the Deputy Prime Minister, Goran Granic, met in Skopje on February 23, 2001, at the Fourth Summit in the framework of the SEECP. Present at the meeting were the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of these countries, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mr. Mircea Geoana, who is also the Chairman in Office of the OSCE, Mr. Srgjan Kerim, Mrs. Nadezhda Mihaylova, Mr. Paskal Milo, Mr. George Papandreou, Mr. Jadranko Prlic and Mr. Goran Svilanovic, as well as Deputy Foreign Minister Mrs. Vesna Cvjetkovic - Kurelec. Mr. Christopher Patten, External Relations Commissioner in the European Commission, Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary General of the Council of EU/High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and Mr. Bodo Hombach, Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact also participated at the Summit as special guests of the Chairman-in-Office.

The Summit represented yet another opportunity to contribute to the realization of our common commitments to building peace, stability and progress of our countries and in South Eastern Europe as a whole. We have discussed the prospects for further strengthening of good neighborly relations, stability, security and democracy in this part of the European continent and we have exchanged views with regard to the current developments. Furthermore, we have assessed the cooperation within the SEECP and the future prospects for its enhancement in view of our countries faster integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

We have reaffirmed the commitments contained in the SEECP Summit and Ministerial Declarations and the Charter on Good-Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe, based on the principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, including all ten principles referred therein, namely, sovereign equality, respect for rights inherent to sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, inviolability of frontiers,

territorial integrity of the States, peaceful settlement of disputes, non - intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, equal rights and self - determination of peoples, cooperation among States, fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law. We have emphasized the importance of the regional cooperation as a means for enhancement of the good neighborly relations, stability and economic development of our countries. SEECP is an important regional framework for promoting regional cooperation, thus bringing our countries and peoples closer to each other, enhancing regional stability and European integration. In this context, we have welcomed the accession of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the SEECP Charter, that formally reflecting the re-joining of FRY, as well as the gaining of full SEECP participating status by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After one decade of wars and conflicts that affected the region, our countries have now a new opportunity to contribute with their resources to the common task of bringing enhanced economic and social progress in the entire South East European region. Convinced that promotion of the regional economic cooperation will also contribute the SEECP countries to develop faster and to accelerate their integration processes into the EU, we have adopted today an Action Plan for Regional Economic Cooperation. This document outlines priority areas for regional cooperation where immediate progress is possible, addressing both reforms that our countries are undertaking and the faster economic development of the region.

We have welcomed the results of the SEE Economic Forum held in Skopje on 22nd February 2001, where the Ministers, high ranking government representatives and businessmen from the region have met and discussed the possibilities for further promotion of the economic cooperation within the SEECP.

Convinced that the future of the countries in the region lies in their integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, we have welcomed the fact that now all SEECP countries have been included in the European integration processes. While at different stages, they all strive to achieve the necessary progress, assisted by the European Union. Acting in solidarity, we believe that regional cooperation in SEE will promote these processes.

Enhanced cooperation in overcoming and resolution of the remaining issues and problems, in the spirit of equality and mutual understanding, contributes to the strengthening of good-neighborly relations, security and stability in the region. In this context, we have noted with satisfaction the signing of the Agreement on Delineation of the Border between the two countries by the Presidents Trajkovski and Kostunica.

We have stressed the importance of the Stability Pact, as a means of strengthening peace, democracy, cooperation and economic development thus enhancing the European and Euro-Atlantic processes. The inclusion of the FRY in the Stability Pact will make it possible for the Pact to reach its full potential. Expressing our high appreciation for the efforts of the Stability Pact Special Coordinator, Mr. Bodo Hombach, as well as our expectations with respect to the prompt implementation of the already selected projects from the Quick Start package within the three Stability Pact Working Tables, we have underlined the need for convening a Second

Regional Funding Conference, to take place in the first half of 2001, preferably in Bucharest as proposed by the Romanian Government.

Reaffirming our support to the democratic processes in FRY, as expressed at the SEECP Informal Summit held in October 2000 in Skopje, we welcomed the commitment of FRY to pursue further the policy of democratic reforms, reconciliation and readiness for cooperation with the International Community, European institutions, as well as within the region and with its neighbors. We support the authorities and people of FRY in continuing their efforts towards the achievement of full democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, respect for and protection of minorities rights, market economy reforms, regional cooperation, and compliance with obligations under the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, including cooperation with ICTY. The progress in implementation will open new prospects for peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe.

We have confirmed our support for the full and consistent implementation of the UNSCR 1244, as well as for the continued action jointly carried out by UNMIK and KFOR to that end. We underline our full support to the efforts of the UN Secretary General Special Representative for Kosovo for accomplishment of his mission including the preparation of all necessary conditions for elections in Kosovo, FRY, in order to create a body composed of democratically elected representatives of all communities. We welcome the commitment of the Yugoslav authorities to respect the provisions of UNSCR 1244 and the Kumanovo Military Technical Agreement. We have strongly condemned the use of violence, terrorism and extremism and any act which makes the co-existence of communities more difficult and which prevents the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. In this context, we have expressed grave concern over the recent waves of ethnically motivated violence and extremism in Kosovska Mitrovica. Furthermore, we welcome the efforts of the International Community and Yugoslav initiative for the start of a positive and constructive political dialogue. We expect that the issues such as release of the political prisoners and missing persons be addressed without delay.

We have strongly condemned the violent and illegal terrorist actions, by the ethnically motivated extremist armed groups in South Serbia, FRY, which could have the effect of destabilizing the situation in the region and we call for an immediate and complete cessation of violence in this area. We welcomed the adoption of the plan by FRY and Serbian Governments with regard to the solution for the situation in the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in South Serbia. We have considered that international assistance for the economic and social development of this area will constitute a valuable contribution for its stabilization as well as for the overall regional development and for the realization of infrastructure projects.

Reaffirming our conviction that any renegotiation of the federal relationship must be consistent with internal stability of FRY and regional stability of South - Eastern Europe, we have encouraged the Federal and both Republican authorities in their efforts to reach an mutually acceptable agreement through an open and democratic process, avoiding any unilateral action which can jeopardize it.

We considered that the current Romanian Chairmanship in Office of the OSCE reflects SEE's commitment to contribute to the enhancement of the overall security in Europe.

We have expressed our strong political will to continue and enhance the cooperation in combating terrorism, organized crime, corruption, trafficking in people, illicit drugs and arms trafficking, which constitute a threat to the overall security, democratic processes and economic development in South-East Europe.

We have expressed our firm belief that the continuation of the process of NATO enlargement with qualified applicant states in South Eastern Europe will further strengthen regional and Euro-Atlantic security and stability. We have also stressed NATO's security building role in the region through its Southeast Europe Initiative and we expressed our readiness to continue to coordinate efforts in the field of regional defense and security cooperation. We have recognized continued NATO's and other countries' input through KFOR and SFOR for ensuring of peace and security in the region.

We have welcomed the positive development of the Southeast Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM) process which continues as a valuable framework for regional cooperation in the field of defense and security and for fostering the partnership links with Euro-Atlantic security and defense structures and operations. We encourage early operational readiness of the Multinational Peace Force South Eastern Europe.

We expect a positive input from the results of the forthcoming regular and parallel meetings within the SEECP to be held in March 2001 in Skopje, such as the Conference of the Speakers of Parliaments of South-East Europe, Meeting of Ministers, i.e. Directors of the agencies for youth and sports, then meeting of NGO's from SEE, Meeting of Journalists in SEE and Meeting of the Ministers of Health in SEE.

We have expressed our high appreciation for the activities carried on by our Ministers of Foreign Affairs since the last SEECP Summit in Bucharest, which contributed to a great extent to the promotion of this regional initiative in the international framework. In this context, we have taken note with satisfaction of the further international recognition it received during the years 2000/2001, with the participation in the last OSCE Ministerial Council and other regional and international fora. Furthermore, we have also commended the productive work of the Political Directors and we are looking forward for the continuation of their work in parallel with the further development of the Process.

We have expressed our warm thanks for the hospitality of President Boris Trajkovski in hosting the Skopje Summit Meeting of the South-East European Cooperation Process.

We have decided that the next meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP participating countries will take place in Tirana at the beginning of year 2002.