

SUMMIT DECLARATION OF THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

(Antalya, 12-13 October 1998)

We, the Heads of Government of the countries of South Eastern Europe, Mr. Momir Bulatović, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Ivan Kostov, Mr. Costas Simitis, Mr. Radu Vasile, Mr. Mesut Yilmaz have met in Antalya on 12-13 October 1998. Present at the meeting were the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of South Eastern Europe, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mr. Blagoj Handžiski, Mr. Živadin Jovanović, Mrs. Nadezhda Mikhailova, Mr. Paskal Milo, Mr. Theodoros Pangalos, Mr. Andrei Plesu.

Mr. Ivo Sanader and Mr. Besim Spahić participated in the meeting as observers.

At this second summit meeting of the countries of South Eastern Europe, we have reviewed the world political and economic situation, the developments affecting stability and security in our region, the progress of our cooperation at various levels since our first meeting in Crete, including the implementation of the conclusions reached in the meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

As we approach the end of this century, we stress our common will to open a chapter of peace, understanding, economic welfare, prosperity and cooperation in the history of our region for the benefit of our peoples and of whole Europe. We are conscious that this can only be achieved by means of strengthening our good-neighbourly relations, promoting democratic values, the rule of law, human rights, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, solidarity and cooperation. To this end, we firmly support further development of our mutual relations in all fields on bilateral and multilateral basis.

Meetings held at various levels on good-neighbourly relations, stability, security and cooperation process in South Eastern Europe contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive framework for multilateral cooperation originating from within the region. We reiterate our full support for further development of this framework through concrete measures and schemes and welcome the decisions taken by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs on institutional aspects to increase efficiency and to streamline various projects, proposals and ideas.

We consider the meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs as significant and timely steps in the development of this process, particularly in the wake of the historic developments which ended the political and ideological divisions. Ministerial and expert meetings to conduct consultations on political and security issues and to promote cooperation in areas extending from economic development and environmental questions to human dimension, cultural exchanges, youth, reforms, combating terrorism and organized crime are all endeavours to respond to challenges to peace, stability and security in our region.

Various initiatives in the field of defence and security cooperation were noted, including the Meeting of the Ministers of Defence held in Skopje on 26 September 1998 of the countries participating in the SEDM process as well as the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of Multinational Peace Force of South Eastern Europe.

We do not ignore the existence of serious challenges to regional stability, including tensions, divergences and even crisis. Our political will and determination for cooperation, supported by our peoples, are most valuable assets to respond to such challenges. Our success in creating a more favourable political and economic environment will also facilitate the timely integration of all the countries of the region in the European and international community.

We strongly emphasize, therefore, the importance of addressing the regional issues by the countries of South Eastern Europe jointly. We appreciate the openness and frankness of the participants during the discussions, as well as their efforts and contributions to facilitate solutions.

We discussed together the serious situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

We reaffirmed our support to the UN Security Council Resolutions 1160 and 1199 and we called on all parties for their implementation in full (in order to avoid further aggravation of the crisis). We underlined the necessity of immediate cessation of violence and starting urgently a constructive dialogue without preconditions for finding negotiated political solutions based on granting large autonomy and self-government for Kosovo within the internationally recognized borders of the refugees and displaced persons to return freely and safely to their homes. We all support and on the full protection of the rights of all inhabitants, citizens, national minorities and ethnic communities on a basis of equality, in accordance with the UN Charter, Helsinki Principles and the OSCE standards.

We emphasized the need for creating all necessary conditions in Kosovo for the refugees and displaced persons to return freely and safely to their homes. We particularly underlined the importance of improving the humanitarian situation with the engagement of the international humanitarian organizations and reiterated our support for the efforts of the international community to that end.

While we were having our consultations we have been informed that a breakthrough has been achieved in the talks between the representatives of the international community and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the full and verifiable implementation of the UN Security Council

Resolution 1199 with the support and assistance of the international organizations.

We express our deep satisfaction of this new development and of the understanding reached. We strongly support its full implementation so as to bring lasting peace and stability in the region.

We attach great importance to the political, economic and social stability of Albania. We have followed with great concern the recent developments which occurred in the country. We welcome the formation of a new government as a precondition for further steps for establishing public order and developing a constructive dialogue among all political forces in Albania within the framework of democratic institutions. In this context we welcome the formation of the « Friends of Albania » group within the framework of the OSCE, co-chaired by the EU, to coordinate the efforts to stimulate and assist the process of stabilization and economic recovery. We will continue, bilaterally and through this Group, our support and assistance to Albania.

We also discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina which is another test-case for Europe.

We noted with pleasure that the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12-13 September 1998 were held in a peaceful atmosphere. We express our sincere hope that its results shall be a further step towards the development of a pluralistic democracy in this country and we called on the newly elected political and constitutional bodies to cooperate in good faith to ensure the efficient functioning of the common institutions and the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

We reiterated our strong support for the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, in order to consolidate a State of two Entities and three constituent peoples.

We jointly state that the European orientation of the countries of South Eastern Europe is an integral part of their objectives for political, economic and social development.

It is our firm belief that Europe cannot be complete without the countries of South Eastern Europe, without our peoples representing civilizations and cultures which have traditionally contributed to the formation of a contemporary European identity.

On the eve of the approaching millenium, we welcome the intensified efforts for wider European integration and emphasize the importance of including the countries of the region in the process of deepening and broadening of European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

Our endeavours to promote regional cooperation are in broad congruence with the aspirations of the countries of the region to increase integration with Europe.

We consider that the existing mutual relationships with the regional cooperation schemes are complementary in nature and that they enrich the fruitful network of cooperative structures for reaching common objectives.

One of the meaningful instruments of developing good-neighbourly relations is the encouragements of cooperation between the genuine representatives of peoples

freely and democratically elected to their parliaments. We encourage the initiatives to establish a consultative forum among the parliamentarians of the countries of South Eastern Europe.

We reiterate our common opinion that enhanced economic and trade relations between our nations would best contribute to better understanding and cooperation in our region and stress our political will to strive for the removal of the existing barriers before such a cooperation.

We shall therefore intensify our efforts for the increase of economic cooperation, reforms, enhancement of communications, energy and transport infrastructure, including the realization of the Pan-European corridors, development of new technologies and environmental protection, as well as promotion of favourable conditions for investments in the region.

We express our satisfaction on the arrangements for the establishment of the 'Regional Center for the Trade Promotion in Balkans' as a concrete step to promote regional economic cooperation.

Having reviewed the recent negative trends in the world economic situation, particularly in the financial markets and stock exchanges, we acknowledge their undesirable effects on the countries of South Eastern Europe and in particular on economies in transition. We believe that there is still more to be gained from globalization and protectionist measures should be avoided.

In this vein, we welcome the bilateral free trade agreements which have already been signed and/or being negotiated among the countries of the region. We agreed to continue this process with a view to gradually creating the conditions for the establishment of a free trade zone compatible with the international commitments of our countries.

We took note of the deliberations of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Istanbul on 8-9 June 1998 for enhancing political cooperation. We welcomed their tasking of the Political Directors to initiate a study for the development of a Charter of Good-Neighbourly Relations in South Eastern Europe. We also welcomed the draft proposal submitted by Turkey to the Antalya Summit and invite the Foreign Ministers to deploy every effort with a view to finalizing work on this document before the end of 1999.

We consider that the Charter should be based on the universally recognized principles to which we are all committed, areas and modalities of cooperation in the fields elaborated in the declarations of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs as well as an appropriate institutional framework to implement cooperation in those fields.

We express our warm thanks for the hospitality of Turkey for hosting the Antalya Summit Meeting.

The next meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the countries of South Eastern Europe will take place in Romania in 1999.