



SEECP BRDO SUMMIT DECLARATION

24 April 2018

We, the Participants of the Summit of the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP), Prime Ministers: Miro Cerar, Duško Marković, Ramush Haradinaj, Denis Zvizdić, Boyko Borisov, Andrej Plenković; Deputy Prime Ministers: Hakan Çavuşoğlu, Bujar Osmani, Senida Mesli; Ministers: Jadranka Joksimović; Deputy Foreign Minister: Ioannis Amanatidis; State Secretaries: George Ciamba, Daniela Morari (hereinafter: the Participants), met at Brdo pri Kranju on 24 April 2018,

In the presence of the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and representatives of the EU:

Reaffirming our commitment to the founding principles of the SEECP Charter, the UN Charter, the EU, OSCE and Council of Europe relevant documents;

Reiterating that the participants of the SEECP remain fully committed to regional cooperation in South-East Europe and engaged within the SEECP framework as the main political forum for regional cooperation that is based on a joint commitment on the principles of 'regional ownership', all-inclusiveness, accountability and collaboration on equal terms among the participants, including close collaboration with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) as the operational arm of the SEECP;

Considering previous Declarations adopted by the Heads of States and Governments as important milestones in the development of our cooperation;

Sharing a common vision for the future of South East Europe as part of a united, free and prosperous Europe;

Reiterating our commitment to further enhance regional cooperation in South-East Europe on the basis of strengthening democratic processes and the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the implementation of international obligations and mutual understanding;

Emphasising the good neighbourly relations, stability and prosperity of the region as the main political priorities to be assured through development, economic growth, adopting and

implementing necessary reforms and through intensifying efforts to resolve remaining open issues while respecting existing agreements;

Committed to intensify regional cooperation in South-East Europe and increase exchanges in all areas – economic, social, political and cultural;

Noting contemporary challenges to global stability to which our part of Europe should react with the enhanced cooperation and sustainable development, based on firm integration with the European and Euro-Atlantic frameworks;

Reaffirming our determination to work jointly at the regional level in responding to all common challenges;

agreed the following:

Enhancing the European vision

A strong and prosperous European Union and continued European Union engagement and enlargement process remain the main political objectives of SEECP participants. Regional stakeholders should embark upon making this objective a reality, to the benefit of the citizens of the entire region, as well as an important contribution to the European stability and security.

The Participants welcome the Communication presented by the European Commission on 6 February 2018 regarding a credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans and note that this concrete perspective should be backed by strong political will and sustained reform process based on individual merits. The Participants also note the summit of the EU leaders and Turkey on 26 March 2018 in Varna that reaffirmed Turkey's accession process and agreed to continue dialogue at different levels. The Participants welcome the forthcoming EU–Western Balkans Summit in Sofia on 17 May 2018 and the number of sectorial Ministerial meetings already held under the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the EU thus enhancing the EU engagement with the Western Balkans.

A credible accession perspective remains a key driver of transformation in the region and thus enhances integration, security, prosperity and social well-being. It is essential for fostering reconciliation and stability, as well as a powerful tool to promote democracy, the rule of law, respect for fundamental rights and good economic governance.

Enhancing security

The Participants remain fully committed to strengthening their cooperation in addressing the ever changing challenges and new threats to the security and stability of Southeast Europe, which is indivisible from the security and stability in Europe; in this respect the Participants welcome the role of NATO and of OSCE.

While recognizing the various levels of cooperation between SEECP Participants and NATO, the Participants acknowledge NATO's contribution to the stability and security of the region, as well as the allied support policy for its Western Balkan partners.

The Participants acknowledge the efforts undertaken to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism in SEECP region, which remains vulnerable to various asymmetric threats. In this respect, the Participants express support for the Integrative Internal Security Governance Initiative and its 1st pillar – WBCTi and its potential to provide coordinated and sustainable solutions to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

The SEECP Participants have achieved tangible progress in legislative reforms and establishing their respective coordination mechanisms. An inter-sectoral or comprehensive approach needs to be thoroughly implemented. WBCTi should ensure further coordination among all relevant stakeholders.

The SEECP Participants took note of the main achievements within the WBCTi, especially the first regional terrorism situation and trend report, the list of common risk indicators for detecting foreign terrorist fighters, and enhanced cooperation with relevant organisations.

Enhancing the perspective of young people

The SEECP Participants agreed that it is of the utmost importance to promote a positive perspective for youth, as well as to help improve their prospects in the SEECP region by emphasising the importance of the European perspective.

The Participants highlighted the importance of educational mobility, better job opportunities, and a better social environment. A positive perspective is also an important part of promoting reconciliation in the region and is making an important contribution for the future of young generations.

Youth capacities are also crucial for building more stable and cohesive societies. Youth participation becomes a means for promoting democracy and active citizenship.

The Participants express encouragement to include youth in the process of social change at the local level, as well as in a more global society, regardless of their age, class, cultural background, gender identity and sexual orientation, lifestyle, religious and political affiliations, residence and ethnicity, particularly young Roma and their families. In this respect, the Participants welcome the contribution of Regional Youth Cooperation Office and the Western Balkan Fund as part of cooperation landscape of South East Europe.

Slovenia is a front runner in this field, a position that was confirmed with the adoption of the Positive Agenda for the Youth in the Western Balkans.

Enhancing digital connectivity

The Participants stress the importance of deepening cooperation in the field of digitalisation and digital transformation.

The significant development and use of digital technologies in recent decades have made their ways into everyday life, and digitalisation is now a global trend providing numerous benefits and opportunities, since it can bring together all the important actors in the society – administration, business and citizens.

The Participants recognise the cross-border nature of digital transformation processes and digital technologies and acknowledge that South East Europe has all the resources needed for a successful digital transformation of society. The Participants welcome the first Western Balkans Digital Summit held in Skopje, 18 to 19 April 2018.

The Participants believe that in order to accelerate development, it is crucial that they cooperate in political, economic, developmental, and other fields. Digitalisation is an area where such cooperation could be fostered, since it requires data flow that facilitates communication and data compatibility, and offers new business opportunities and an improved quality of life to citizens.

The Participants acknowledge the importance of open data and their use in administrations.

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE SEECP

The Participants appreciate and strongly support the work of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly. Inter-parliamentary cooperation is pivotal in fostering political dialogue, implementing democratic standards, and strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The Participants acknowledge the Slovenian National Assembly for having successfully chaired the Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, during which efforts were made towards the further formal institutionalisation of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly. The Participants take note that the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly has agreed to keep the debate and work on establishing a fully functioning permanent Secretariat high on agenda in order to raise its effectiveness.

SEECP-RCC SYNERGY

Upon the tenth anniversary of the RCC, which was launched on 27 February 2008 in Sofia, the Participants commend and congratulate the RCC serving the Region as a sui generis organisation promoting inclusive regional cooperation in South East Europe.

The Participants fully support and encourage further efficient result-oriented project cooperation between the SEECP and the RCC.

The RCC has proved to be a relevant and complementary tool for enhancing cooperation, boosting overall development in the region and feeding the aspirations of the region towards good-neighbourly relations, mutual trust and prosperity.

Recognising the excellent qualities of the candidates for the position of the Secretary General of the RCC, namely Mrs. Majlinda Bregu of Tirana and Mr. Igor Lukšić of Podgorica, upon the joint proposal from Tirana and Podgorica, the Committee of Political Directors has agreed, in the spirit of cooperation, to recommend consecutive mandates on the position of the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council for Mrs. Majlinda Bregu as the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council for the term 2019-2021 and for Mr. Igor Lukšić as the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council for the term 2022-2024.

The Participants approve the appointment by the SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Mrs. Majlinda Bregu as Secretary General of the RCC, starting on 1 January 2019 and of Mr. Igor Lukšić as Secretary General of the RCC, starting on 1 January 2022.

LJUBLJANA SEECP CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

The Participants express their appreciation to the Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office (2017-2018) and its achievements under the motto “SEE4FUTURE”.

The Participants welcome the priorities set by the Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office, which have provided a vision for the development of the South-East Europe.

The events and activities organised during the Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office have strengthened the role of SEECP regional forum and enhanced the interaction between its participants.

The Slovenian Chairmanship-in-Office organised the following meetings and events:

- Informal meeting of SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held on 5 September 2017 at Bled;
- Standing Committee of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, held on 16 December 2017 in Ljubljana;
- Meeting of the SEECP Committee of Political Directors, held on 31 January 2018 in Ljubljana;
- Meeting of the SEECP Committee of Political Directors, held on 14 March 2018 in Sarajevo;
- Standing Committee of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, held on 17 March 2018 in Bled;
- 2nd SEECP Seminar for Junior Diplomats, held on 25-29 March 2018 in Ljubljana (co-organized by RCC);
- Plenary session of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, held on 13-14 April 2018 in Ljubljana.

FUTURE CHAIRMANSHIPS-IN-OFFICE

The Participants welcome the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office of Sarajevo for the period 2018-2019.

The Participants agreed that Pristina will assume the SEECF Chairmanship-in-Office for the period 2019-2020 without prejudice to the Participants' respective positions on status and as a political solution.

The Chairmanships-in-Office will be exercised in accordance with current SEECF practices and in a neutral manner regarding documents, procedures, premises and symbols.

Interpretative Statement of Bucharest

Romania, as a founding participating State of the Process, and depositary of its Charter, strongly disagrees with any attempts which are not in line with the SEECP Charter and its Annex, that damage the constructive cooperation based on inclusiveness and effectiveness of SEECP as an instrument for meaningful regional cooperation.

We agreed to the 2018 SEECP Summit declaration, which includes the bid of Pristina to take over the Chairmanship in Office for the period 2019-2020 as a solution that does not and cannot be construed to constitute any kind of precedent, and with the firm understanding that this Chairmanship will take place under the following provisions

- The exercise by Pristina of the Chairmanship in Office is without prejudice to the Participants' positions on the issue of Kosovo's statehood, as well as to the positions on the Kosovo's status within SEECP;
- The meetings, irrespective of their level, will be held in neutral premises;
- All documents, including invitations, will have a neutral format and will be managed through the SEECP troika;
- Keeping with the actual practice, no State symbols will be used during the meetings.