



## **SEECP SARAJEVO - JAHORINA SUMMIT DECLARATION**

**09 July 2019**

We, the participants at the Summit meeting of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) Mr. Milorad Dodik, Mr. Željko Komšić, Mr. Šefik Džaferović, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Mr. Milo Đukanović, Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, Mr. Ilir Meta, Ms. Ana Brnabić, Mr. Boyko Borissov, Mr. Nicolae Hurduc, Ms. Zdravka Bušić, Mr. Gergios Iliopoulos, Mr. Oleg Tulea and Ms. Zorica Bukinac

In the presence of the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Ms. Majlinda Bregu and the Representative of the European External Action Service

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

Reconfirming our full dedication to the inclusive regional cooperation and collaboration among SEECP participants as a milestone for developing the stability and prosperity throughout the Region, on the basis of bolstering democracy,

human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, mutual understanding and interconnectivity;

Bearing in mind previous declarations adopted by the Heads of States and Governments as an important cornerstone for further strengthening of our mutual cooperation;

Reaffirming the full commitment of SEECP participants for the common future of the region within a unified, democratic and prosperous Europe;

Emphasizing the importance of supporting diversified and sustainable economic growth based on modern technologies, digitalization and structural reforms,

Stressing that good neighborly relations, mutual respect and sincere political dialogue in resolving issues have no alternative;

Reaffirming our determination to work jointly at the regional level in all areas in order to find effective responses to all contemporary challenges,

Agreed the following:

## **EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE OF THE REGION**

We firmly believe in the common European future. The project of the European Union has proved to be the most successful and effective guarantee of peace, stability and prosperity in the history of the Continent.

The EU Membership perspective has proved to be the most powerful incentive to encourage the necessary reforms as well as the best guarantee for the long-term peace, stability and security in the region. It is also the strongest provider of impetus for the full transformation of the region and the promotion of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, mutual understanding, interconnectivity and good economic governance.

We are deeply convinced that only full integration of the whole region into the European Union serves the best interest of the Continent; it is essential to maintain the momentum of enlargement and continuous commitment to reforms for the credibility of enlargement policy, based on strict and fair conditionality, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations and the principle of own merit. Furthermore, SEECP participants that are already members of the EU will continue to support the EU perspective of the aspiring SEECP participants

We are of the opinion that better coordination among different regional initiatives, streamlining of their efforts, avoiding duplications, and working together and with European institutions could speed up positive changes on the ground in our region, as well as the European path for those who are aspiring to become members of the EU. In this regard, we commend the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council and Sarajevo's SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office for co-organizing the Informal Meeting on Streamlining Regional Cooperation in South East Europe held on 22 March 2019 in Sarajevo, which

brought together EU Western Balkans Directors, SEECP Political Directors as well as the representatives of the EEAS and the European Commission. We encourage the future Chairmanships-in-Office to continue this dialogue.

## **STRENGTHENING SECURITY**

The Participants are fully committed to working together in order to effectively face all security threats to the region. The security of South East Europe is a major precondition for the security and stability of the entire Continent.

The Participants underline the necessity of coordinated efforts in order to fight violent extremism and terrorism, organized crime with the focus on modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, illicit trafficking of firearms and ammunition, money laundering and corruption. In this sense, the participants welcome the launch of the implementation of the Integrative Internal Security Governance Initiative and its first pillar Western Balkans Counter-Terrorism Initiative (WBCTi).

The Participants also welcome the results of the Sofia EU-Western Balkans Summit held in May 2018 and the London Summit on the Western Balkans within the framework of the Berlin Process held in July 2018 in the field of security and the launch of the implementation of the Sofia Priority Agenda and the Berlin Process security commitments. The Participants are convinced that the challenge of irregular migration could only be overcome by the joint cooperation of all SEECP participants

and appeal to the European Union for continued concrete support to our region in this regard. The Participants also recognize the significant role of the Migration Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI) as well as of the South East European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC) and their contribution in the area of management of irregular migration and fighting human trafficking.

## **ECONOMIC COOPERATION, CONNECTIVITY AND PROSPERITY OF THE REGION**

The Participants consider that enhancing economic cooperation among SEECP Participants as well as between the SEECP economies and the EU is of utmost importance for the economic growth, sustainable development and prosperity of the citizens of South East Europe.

In this sense, the Participants are fully aware of the urgent need to broaden connectivity within the region as well between the region and the European Union. Connectivity is understood in a much broader sense beyond simply an infrastructural one. That includes business connectivity, digital connectivity, cultural exchange, youth ties etc. By increasing connectivity, the region's ability to compete at the global market increases as well as the overall well-being of its citizens.

The Participants emphasize the great potential that digitalization has for the transformation of their economies and



transboundary ties, and thus propose widening the cooperation in this field.

The Participants welcome the Second Western Balkans Digital Summit held in Belgrade on 4-5 April 2019. The Participants especially welcome the signing, by the Western Balkan 6 Participants, of the Agreement on the Price Reduction of the Roaming Services in Public Mobile Communication Networks in the Western Balkan Region, as an important step in strengthening connectivity among the citizens of the region.

The Participants realize the potential threat to the stability of our economic advancement and sustainable development caused by the exodus of a large number of educated and skilled young people to more prosperous economies. This phenomenon is not perceived as only temporary, and it has to be addressed jointly by all relevant stakeholders in the Region. In this regard, the Participants welcome the round table with the topic “From the brain drain to the brain gain” organized by the Sarajevo Chairmanship-in-Office in April 2019.

The SEECP Participants agree that it is of utmost importance to promote a positive perspective for youth as well as to help the improvement of their prospects in the SEECP Region by enhancing the economic cooperation and emphasizing the European perspective. Youth capacities are also crucial for building more stable and coherent societies. In this respect, the participants welcome the contribution of Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) and the Western Balkan Fund (WBF) as parts of the cooperation landscape of South East Europe.

Participants also welcome the Conference “How to better respond to the European aspirations of the Youth in the Western Balkans”, organized by the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council with the support of the European Commission and Norway through EEA and Norwegian grants. The event was organised in close cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council, and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. The Conference, held on 28-29 May 2019 in Bucharest, represented an important step towards a sustainable dialogue among the youth in the EU and in the Western Balkans, fostering mutual understanding, reconciliation and a broader attachment to European values.

The Participants fully support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 as an opportunity to completely transform our Region in numerous economic, social and environmental aspects. Recognizing the significance of this Agenda, the Sarajevo Chairmanship-in-Office organized a special event and a Round Table meeting on this topic in April this year.

### **PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE SEECP**

The participants strongly support the work of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, recognizing the crucial importance of mutual cooperation of legislative bodies in our region,

especially by sharing best practices and lessons learned in all fields. It is seen as an appropriate framework for implementing European standards and harmonizing legislative work with the European Union

The Participants acknowledge Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly for having successfully steered the parliamentary dimension of the Sarajevo SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office.

The Participants took note that the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly 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**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Stability Pact for the South East Europe, which was a paradigmatic idea launched in 1999 in Sarajevo and aimed at bringing about positive change along the security-stability-development nexus in the region, the participants particularly praise the role of the RCC for its relentless work for the sustainability of regional progress.

The effective and result oriented cooperation between SEECP participants, the European Union and the RCC has brought about a regional cooperation framework which has achieved concrete results in digital connectivity, mobility of workforce, social inclusion and cohesion, gender mainstreaming, parliamentary and security cooperation.



The RCC has proved to be a relevant catalyst of a plethora of regional initiatives, and the overarching regional organization that is playing a pivotal role in connecting the region with the EU and global economy. Regional cooperation continues to be a powerful driving force of the EU integration of the aspiring SEECP participants.

RCC's operational growth corresponds to the growing demand among SEECP participants for a more interconnected region, where stability fosters prosperity, and economic growth leads to more economic convergence with the EU and other advanced economies in the world.

SEECP participants entrust the RCC with the mandate to continue pursuing a policy of regional connectivity in all possible ways. As the SEE 2020 Strategy is coming to an end, SEECP participants expect from the RCC to prepare a vision of a post-SEE 2020 Strategy in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030.

Eleven years of constructive and forward-looking synergy between the RCC and the SEECP framework has brought about enormous change and has provided important lessons for the future. As the world is changing and the regional challenges are growing, thus the necessity to strengthen the role of the RCC is evermore present, on the basis of the effective synergy between SEECP and the RCC.

## **SARAJEVO SEECP CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE**

The Participants express their appreciation to the Sarajevo Chairmanship-in-Office 2018/19 and its achievements under the motto “Better Connectivity for Better Life”. The Participants welcome the priorities set by the Sarajevo Chairmanship-in-Office, with emphasis on European strategic approach taking into account many contemporary challenges and opportunities in the region.

The events and activities organized during the Sarajevo Chairmanship-in-Office have strengthened the role of the SEECP and enriched the interaction between its Participants.

The Sarajevo Chairmanship-in-Office organized the following meetings and events:

- Informal Meeting of the SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs held on 5 September 2019 in Banja Luka
- Standing Committee of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly held on 1 December 2018 in Sarajevo
- Third SEECP Seminar for Junior Diplomats co-organized with RCC, held on 28 February 2019 in Sarajevo
- Romanian Presidency of the EU Council and Sarajevo’s SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office co-organised the Informal Meeting on Streamlining Regional Cooperation in South East Europe held on 22 March 2019 in Sarajevo
- SEECP Business Forum held 17-19 April in Sarajevo on the margins of the Sarajevo Business Forum

- Round table on the topic: Challenges for the SEE Region “Turning Brain drain into Brain Gain” organized on 17 April 2019 in Sarajevo on the margins of the Sarajevo Business Forum
- Round table on the topic “Exchange of views on the implementation of the SDG UN Agenda 2030 within the SEECP Region” organized on 17 April 2019 on the margins of the Sarajevo Business Forum;
- Standing Committee of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly held on the 21 June 2019
- Plenary Session of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly held on 22 June in Sarajevo
- SEECP Political Directors meeting in Brussels held on 24 June 2019
- Meeting of SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Sarajevo on 8 July 2019

## **FUTURE CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE**

The Participants welcome the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office of Pristina for the period 2019/20.

The Participants agree that Pristina will assume the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office without prejudice to the Participants’ respective positions on status and as a political solution.

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

The Participants agree that Ankara will assume the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office for 2020/21 and that Athens will assume the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office for 2021/22.