



**Zagreb Declaration
of the 10th Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the South-East
European Co-operation Process (SEECP)**

Europe's New South East

Zagreb, 11 May 2007

We, the Heads of State and Government of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States, Presidents: Mr. Stjepan Mesić, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Mr. Vladimir Voronin and Prime Ministers: Dr. Sali Berisha, Dr. Nikola Špirić, Mr. Sergei Stanishev, Dr. Ivo Sanader, Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Konstantinos Karamanlis, Mr. Željko Šturanović, Mr. Călin Popescu – Tăriceanu; Minister of Economy and EU Chief Negotiator, Mr. Ali Babacan and Minister of International Economic Relations, Mr. Milan Parivodić have met in Zagreb on 11 May 2007 at the 10th Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP, together with the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Vladimir Šeks.

In the presence of the Special Invitees of the Croatian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office: President of the European Council, Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel; President of the European Parliament, Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering; President of the European Commission, Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso; Prime Minister Janez Janša; Federal Minister for Economics and Labour, Mr. Martin Bartenstein; Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns; Member of the European Commission, Dr. Olli Rehn; Secretary General of the OSCE, Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut; Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo; Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio; Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Dr. Erhard Busek; Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Joachim Rucker; Deputy Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, Dr. Albert Rohan; Special Envoy for the Western Balkans, Mr. Antonio Tânger; National Co-ordinator for Stability Pact, Mr. Jan Amberg; Ambassador Mihail Konarovski and Ambassador Elisabeth Walaas.

In the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivailo Kalfin; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European

Integration, Mr. Andrei Stratan; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs: Mr. Lulzim Basha, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović; Deputy Foreign Ministers: Mr. Ioannis Valinakis, Mr. Zoran Petrov; Secretary General, Mr. Vladimir Radulović; State Secretary for European Affairs, Mr. Adrian Vierța and Assistant Minister, Mr. Radojko Bogojević.

At this Summit we convened and confirmed the following:

1. We reiterated our adherence to the common vision of a Europe united, free and at peace, underlining the significant and valuable role of South Eastern Europe in contemporary European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes.

2. The SEECP Participating States welcomed in particular the presence and contribution of distinguished representatives of the international community at this Summit, as we see the future of our region in an all-inclusive and cooperative European and international order.

3. We appraised progress in the SEECP area following the 2006 Thessaloniki Summit, reiterating that integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions remains a primary goal of the countries of the region. We confirmed that integration processes provide the optimal framework in order to effectively address the relevant issues in our region as well as for our co-operation and for the development of ever-closer good neighbourly relations. We greatly appreciated the contribution of the Stability Pact in promoting regional cooperation and in ensuring the sustainability of these activities in the future.

4. We confirmed our readiness to pursue the enhanced role of the SEECP as an authentic voice of the countries and peoples of South Eastern Europe, but also as the actor in and for the region. We reaffirmed our willingness to further share and advance the European values of tolerance, dialogue and cooperation within and among our countries and societies, to adopt the principles and standards of the European Union through necessary reforms and to comply with the European Union's requirements and criteria in the context of the EU enlargement process and in the context of other important forms of relationship such as the European Neighbourhood Policy. We underlined the distinctively valuable human and cultural wealth of South Eastern Europe, contributing to the diversity of our common European heritage.

Appraisal of the progress in the SEECP area since the Ninth Summit

5. In the period since the Thessaloniki Summit on May 4, 2006, important progress has been achieved within the SEECP area and in relation to the EU and Euro-Atlantic institutions in further stabilizing the region, in strengthening mutual cooperation and dialogue and in advancing toward the future accession of aspiring SEECP Participating States to the European Union and NATO.

6. During this period, democratic elections were held in several Participating States, further confirming and enhancing the maturity and achieved democratic standards in our region.

7. We confirmed full and unequivocal adherence to the values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities, international law, prosperity through economic liberty and social justice and to the principles of peaceful resolution of open issues, in order to create in South Eastern Europe lasting conditions for the prosperity of our nations in an environment of peace, stability, security, good-neighbourly cooperation, dialogue and solidarity.

8. Relations among our countries continue to develop in the spirit of good neighbourly relations, contributing to the stability in the region. Stability was further increased through properly addressing important issues, among others by the successful referendum on independence in the newly acceded SEECP Participating State.

9. NATO's Riga Summit welcomed the efforts and further institutional progress of three SEECP Participating States and invited another three to join the PFP. We expressed our hope that at the next NATO Summit, to be held in Bucharest in 2008, the Alliance will extend further invitations to those countries that meet NATO criteria and standards. The importance of the security cooperation among the Participating States, including by sharing experience in security and military reforms was underlined. The activities within the framework of the US-Adriatic Charter as well as the results of the first SEE Countries Chief of Defence Conference held on 18 April 2007 were highly evaluated. We appraised in particular the contribution of the Participating States in the peace keeping and security operations.

10. We confirmed our readiness to continue to contribute to the global fight against terrorism. We also strongly condemned all forms of violence and extremism, be it on political, ethnic, racial, religious, criminal or any other ground. In our firm dedication to South Eastern Europe as a zone of open democratic societies, based on the rule of law and universal human rights, we reaffirmed the need to enhance the judiciary, and inject renewed urgency into the process of judiciary reform where necessary and vigorously to combat all criminal phenomena, in particular the corruption and all forms of organized crime.

11. Many important social and humanitarian issues, including the return of refugees and internally displaced persons were addressed. We confirmed that important results were achieved, in particular through the activities of the Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), by the UNHCR and other international contributors in this area. We also recognised the important work undertaken through the Sarajevo Declaration implementation process and stressed the need to work further to reach fair and sustainable solutions to outstanding issues relating to refugees and displaced persons. We stressed the importance of continued commitments in addressing the right of every individual to choose the place of permanent residence. We also thanked the international community for support and assistance.

12. We also confirmed our readiness to best use the potentials and opportunities for enhancing mutually advantageous economic and development cooperation as a contribution to the integration of South Eastern Europe into the European and world economy, to the benefit of our citizens.

13. Growing progress in economic cooperation in South Eastern Europe is highlighted by the new CEFTA, signed in Bucharest in 2006 and the creation of the SEE Investment Committee. These are important achievements, as trade and investment are important tools in moving the region as a whole forward. The new CEFTA, along with the SAA process provides a spur to further reducing national obstacles to trade and investment and opening up markets to competition and growth. The new CEFTA also implies larger responsibility of the countries in the region for fostering trade and implementation of relevant economic policies. Timely ratification by all the signatories will enable full effectiveness of the new CEFTA.

14. We welcomed the proposal of one Participating State to create a Regional Development Centre in Thessaloniki with a genuine regional profile for promoting business, trade and private investment in South Eastern Europe, contributing as a hub to the regional priorities established by the Regional Cooperation Council.

15. Cooperation in the sector of energy and transportation has been recognized as a cornerstone for the regional infrastructure development. The entry into force of the Energy Community Treaty (1 July 2006) established a legal framework for stepping up security of supply both in South Eastern Europe and the EU. Its implementation will contribute to the importance of South Eastern Europe in the European energy networks.

16. We attach very special significance to the development of the South Eastern Europe transport infrastructure and consider it a key element of sustainable economic growth, including foreign investments. Relevant Pan-European corridors constitute the framework for the development of the transport network in South Eastern Europe.

17. Apart from the road transport network, a modern and efficient railway transport system is essential for South Eastern Europe's economic and social vitality. The Agreement on the Establishment of a High Performance Railway Network signed by the SEECF Ministers of Transport (4 May 2006) is a major step forward in establishing a faster, reliable and competitive railway transport in South Eastern Europe.

18. We attach great importance to strengthening of co-operation in environmental protection, in particular through systematic exchange of information, implementation of concrete projects and conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements. It is in our best interest to coordinate our work on environmental matters among ourselves and with the EU in order to achieve the EU environmental standards throughout the region.

19. Regional efforts to develop the Information Society as the foundation for a knowledge-based economy in the region are promising, both with regard to e-Governance programs and improving Regional telecommunication infrastructure.

20. We underlined in particular the overall geo-economic potential of South Eastern Europe in the context of a wider economic cooperation in Europe, among the major European economic partners and along the lines of the European Union economic and development strategies.

21. We reiterated our view that culture is vital for the promotion of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect of human rights. We appraised the fact that intercultural dialogue and cooperation are being currently developed. In this respect we recognize the importance of the Cultural Corridors Initiative of SEE. Having this in mind we highly evaluate the successful cooperation established in the framework of the Council of Ministers of Culture of the SEE countries, and we called on the Council to further develop its activities.

22. We paid special attention to the free movement of persons in our region and with the European Union Member States, supporting initiatives and efforts to the visa facilitation regime for those Participating States still under the visa requirements with the EU, as a first step towards full liberalisation of visa regime. We welcomed the initialling of visa facilitation and readmission agreements with a number of these Participating States and we expect the European Union to deploy all measures necessary to ensure that these agreements enter into force by the end of 2007.

The European Perspective of South Eastern Europe

23. We paid special attention to the realization of the fundamental goal of integrating our countries into the European Union and thus reinforcing and extending the European values within our region and into our societies. In this light, we expressed our satisfaction with the progress made and the results achieved.

24. In this respect, we welcomed that two of the SEECP Participating States recently became EU Member States. We commended the accession negotiations of the EU candidates and expressed hope that criteria and requirements will be fulfilled for the accession negotiations with the remaining EU candidate to commence. We welcomed the signing of one and initialling of another Stabilisation and Association Agreement and believe that the overall progress in the reforms and cooperation with international institutions will pave the way for the resumption and conclusion of other Stabilisation and Association Agreements. We also reaffirmed that each country's progress towards the EU continues to depend on their individual merits.

25. We underlined the importance of enhancing European Neighborhood Policy as an instrument assisting consolidation of a broader area of prosperity, stability and security, based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law and welcomed considerable progress in the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan by one Participating State.

26. Since our last Summit, we have actively followed and participated in the ongoing debate on the European future and on related political, constitutional and financial issues of the European Union. We remain confident that an inclusive and open EU will enrich its political, economic and cultural diversity and will further continue to assist in stabilizing the region. We called upon the EU to move forward with the debate on the European constitution and in particular on the institutional reform in order to be able to continue with its enhancement and enlargement as we will remain dedicated to addressing our individual commitments and fulfilling the necessary requirements. We reaffirmed the importance of the Thessaloniki Agenda from 2003 as an indispensable overall framework for the European integration of relevant aspiring countries.

UNMIK /Kosovo

27. In view of the importance of preserving and strengthening stability and security, as well as cooperation and solidarity in South Eastern Europe, we paid particular attention to the issue of Kosovo's status and to the activities of the international community, in particular in the UN Security Council. We expressed the need for dialogue, responsibility and cohesiveness as a way to reach measured, balanced and sustainable solution, respecting the principles and norms of the international law, in the interest of both sides and the region as a whole. We reiterated also that the EU and Euro-Atlantic perspective is the best motivation and framework for the solution. We underlined the importance of reaching a comprehensive solution for the Kosovo status having in mind the interest of the parties concerned and we expressed our particular interest that the status related process in all aspects serves to the durable stability, security and cooperation in South Eastern Europe. We strongly emphasized the importance of Kosovo being a democratic, multi-ethnic society based on the rule of law. We praised the continuous involvement of the SEECP, its contribution and confirmed readiness to continue to be constructively engaged.¹

Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office

28. We recognized the dynamic efforts of the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office in successfully tackling the tasks of leading the region in the process of the transformation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe into the Regional Cooperation Council and strengthening the SEECP. We commended it for leading our common process of defining the future structures of regional architecture and coordinating it with the EC and the international community, thus enabling the SEECP to continue its active role in shaping regional cooperation and strengthening its political profile. We appreciated the valuable role of the Stability Pact led by Special Coordinator Dr. Erhard Busek in this process.

29. We took note of the Conference, *The Energy Security, Potentials and Investment SEECP Forum: South Eastern Europe an Energy Bridge between Russia, Mediterranean, Caspian and Middle-East regions and European Union*, held in Zagreb on 2 and 3 April 2007, that brought together the ministers for energy of the SEECP Participating States as well as the leaders of the countries and the energy sector from across Europe, Asia, and elsewhere who assessed and debated on the vital issues that concern both SEE and the EU in the energy field. We acknowledged that on the margins of the Conference the Ministerial Declaration on the Pan European Oil Pipeline and the Ministerial Declaration on the Development of the Hydrocarbons Dimension of the Energy Community was signed.

30. We also took note that the *Meeting of Ministers of Justice and Ministers of the Interior of the SEECP*, was held in Zagreb on 12 and 13 April 2007, that paid particular attention to the process of implementation of the EU standards in the JHA area in SEE, through strengthening of the rule of law, judiciary reform processes and fight against

¹ One Participating State expressed its reservation because Martti Ahtisaari's Comprehensive Proposal for Kosovo Status Settlement and his Report are not mentioned.

corruption. We supported the idea of organising a SEECP conference on EU Justice and Home Affairs Strategy for South Eastern Europe in order to define long term goals and policies and to address other related issues and to brief the EU JHA Council on the conclusions of the Meeting. We welcomed the initialling of visa facilitation and readmission agreements as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation in fighting corruption through the Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative (SPAI).

31. We stressed the importance of parliamentary cooperation as an indispensable segment of regional cooperation. We commended the conclusions of *the 6th Conference of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the SEECP Participating States 'New South Eastern Europe: the Role of Parliaments'*, which took place in Zagreb on 16th April 2007 and supported their decision to use a Troika Format of the Speakers of Parliament to explore the possibilities of closer co-operation with the Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments. We welcomed the establishment of a Focal Point for Parliamentary Co-operation in South Eastern Europe in Sofia.

New SEECP Participating State

32. We welcomed with satisfaction the Republic of Montenegro's full fledged participation to the SEECP.

Institutional enhancement of the SEECP

33. By adopting the Zagreb Final Act on the Enhancement of the South East European Cooperation Process, by endorsing the establishment of the RCC, by appointing Mr. Hido Bišćević as the first Secretary General and by designating Sarajevo as the Seat of the RCC Secretariat as well as by solemnly signing the Protocol to the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South Eastern Europe today, we have enhanced our commitment to building Europe's South East as an area of peace, stability, prosperity, cooperation and mutual understanding, fully and unreservedly embracing European values and standards.

Incoming SEECP Chairmanship-in Office

34. We expressed our highest appreciation for the effectiveness of the present Chairmanship-in-Office and the utmost gratitude for the excellent organization of this 10th Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECP in Zagreb.

35. We also welcomed the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office as well as its presented Priorities and Programme and decided that the next SEECP Summit will be held in Sofia in 2008. At the same time we gladly accepted Mr. Vladimir Voronin's proposal to take over the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office in 2008/2009.

Adopted in Zagreb on 11 May 2007