



SEECP ALBANIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
REGIONAL OWNERSHIP IN ACTION

SEECP TIRANA SUMMIT DECLARATION

We, the Participants to the Summit of the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP), Presidents: Mr. Bujar Nishani, Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, Mr. Nicolae Timofti, Mrs. Ahtifete Jahjaga; Prime Minister: Mr. Victor Ponta; Deputy Prime Ministers: Mr. Ali Babacan, Mr. Igor Lukšić; Minister: Mr. Siniša Hajdaš Dončić; Alternate Foreign Minister: Mr. Nikolaus Chountis; Deputy Foreign Ministers: Mr. Josip Brkic, Mrs. Dragana Kiprijanovska; Ambassadors: Mr. Miroljub Zarić, Mr. Bojan Bertoneclj; have met in Tirana on 26 May 2015, at the Summit of the SEECP;

In the presence of the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Mr. Goran Svilanović and of the Special Invitees of the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office 2014–2015: Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of OSCE and Ms. Romana Vlahutin, Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Tirana;

- Reaffirming our commitment to abide to the founding principles of the SEECP Charter,
- Underlining that democracy, rule of law, free market economy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, represent the basic values of our societies, which also create the prerequisites for deepening our cooperation,
- Promoting the good-neighbourliness principle through intensification of regional cooperation in political, security, economic, trade, cultural and educational areas,
- Reiterating the importance of SEECP as the main political forum for regional cooperation in South East Europe,
- Emphasizing our joint commitment to the principles of regional ownership and all-inclusiveness, as essential concepts for the successful and substantial implementation of regional cooperation in SEE,
- Stressing the importance of the UN, the EU, OSCE, Council of Europe founding and relevant documents,

- Highlighting our common commitment to the European perspective as the best way to achieve lasting peace and stability, as well as social and economic development in our region,
- Reaffirming our common vision for a peaceful, stable and prosperous SEE region,
- Acknowledging the role of SEECP and RCC in guiding and supporting regional cooperation in SEE and their contribution to the European and Euro-Atlantic integration process of SEE,
- Working closely and cooperating with other European fora and formats of regional cooperation.

At this Summit we convened and confirmed the following:

THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE OF SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

1. We reaffirm our conviction that the EU enlargement policy and the accession of South East Europe to the EU serve the strategic interest of both the entire SEE region and the European Union.

2. We reiterate that the enlargement policy in the SEE region should remain a priority on the EU agenda and that it is important that EU member states continue to actively support the EU enlargement. We call upon the EU to continue with its enlargement policy unabated and encourage the progress of negotiations, provided that the necessary conditionalities and criteria are met and fulfilled by each SEECP participant concerned. We are determined to continue working together and assisting each other on the implementation of our common EU accession agenda. We noted with satisfaction the progress of a number of SEECP participants in their relations with the EU since the last SEECP Bucharest Summit.

3. We are convinced that aligning with European standards, serves first and foremost the interests of all of us, hence we underline the necessity for regional cooperation, good neighborly relations and the need to find mutually acceptable solutions to unresolved issues.

4. We commend the results achieved so far in the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and jointly offer our assistance for its success. We call on the parties to continue with the implementation of the agreements to the mutual benefit.

5. We recognize the importance of joint efforts to identify projects of common interests that improve regional cooperation and regional interconnectivity. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the Western Balkans for preparing projects in the framework of

the Berlin Process and express our confidence on the forthcoming Vienna Summit. Underlining the necessity for improving connectivity throughout the region, we call on for further inclusiveness and openness of the Berlin Process including with more substantial financial involvement.

SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE REGION AND EURO-ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

6. We emphasize the role of the South East Europe region for the security and stability of Europe and acknowledge the actions taken and progress in confidence-building and enhancing cooperation in the security sphere. We will continue to take steps that aim to improve our region's contribution to global peace and security.

7. We reaffirm our determination to continue cooperation in the fight against organized crime and corruption and praise the results achieved since the last Summit.

8. We express our concern about radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism as threats to the security in our region, Europe and beyond. We underlined the importance of working together to counter the root causes of terrorism, as well as on issues such as financing of terrorism, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and reiterate our commitment to continue cooperation in countering violent extremism and in tackling the "foreign terrorist fighters" in its broad spectrum.

9. We stress that the fight against terrorism is not only a matter of national and international security, justice, intelligence and law enforcement, but a multidimensional issue. In this regard, we reaffirm our strong will to further enhance regional cooperation for strengthening the rule of law, implementing policies promoting religious tolerance and coexistence, as direct contributors to the democratization, protection of human rights, gender equality, security and stability of our region and the prevention of radicalization and violent extremist acts.

10. We commend the "Joint Statement on Terrorism" adopted by the SEECF Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Tirana, 24 February 2015, as a concrete example of unity and determination in tackling common challenges through joint actions.

11. We express our readiness to enhance and broaden our cooperation in the defense and security spheres through joint initiatives, including joint contribution to international peace-keeping missions, as a contribution to global security.

12. We express our unwavering support for NATO's Open Door Policy for aspirants from SEE, who are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership and meet the required conditions on the basis of their individual achievements.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION: SEECP-RCC SYNERGY

13. We commend the essential role played by SEECP in fostering dialogue, good neighborly relations, stability and prosperity for the region and its European perspective. The synergy between SEECP and RCC has strengthened and deepened the regional cooperation process in South East Europe, to the benefit of the region and its people.

14. We are committed to further develop and enhance the SEECP – RCC strategic coordination and to continue providing political guidance and support to RCC, serving the European perspective of the region and contributing to the accomplishment of our common goals.

15. We express our support for the RCC's mission of coordinating, guiding and monitoring regional cooperation and streamlining regional initiatives and task forces, with the aim of achieving enhanced effectiveness and coherence.

16. We endorse the Annual Report on Regional Cooperation in SEE 2014-2015, submitted by the Secretary General of the RCC.

17. We commend the progress achieved in the implementation of the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014-2016 and the SEE 2020 Strategy, which enhance the RCC's overall strategy-based approach in making regional cooperation more efficient and target-oriented, thus contributing to fostering economic growth, jobs and prosperity in the region and in bringing the South East Europe region closer to the European Union.

18. We welcome the endorsement by the SEE 2020 Governing Board of the SEE 2020 Strategy Annual Implementation Report, as a valuable contribution facilitating the EU integration process of South East Europe. We express our support to the RCC Secretariat in assisting further the programming, implementation and monitoring processes, towards achieving the SEE 2020 Strategy goals.

19. We commend the efforts and results of the Albanian Chairmanship in Office on ensuring close cooperation and generating synergy between SEECP and RCC by organizing joint activities, as concrete steps for ensuring coherent regional activities and the political guidance of SEECP. We invite the upcoming Chairmanship in Office to continue in this direction.

20. We approve the appointment by the SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Mr. Goran Svilanović for a new mandate as Secretary General of the RCC on 22 May 2015. We express our full support for his mandate and wish the RCC Secretary General every success in carrying out this important mission.

21. We commend the work of The Ad-hoc Working Group on the future of the SEECP and further encourage its work for more results. We welcome the intentions of the upcoming SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office to follow the Consolidated Conclusions in order to achieve the priorities of the Chairmanship.

22. We took note on the Consolidated Conclusions of the SEECP Ad-Hoc Working Group, which includes a set of recommendations for improving the work and the functioning of the Process, based on its mandate tasked by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the SEECP participants. We suggest to start with their implementation and to continue exploring new recommendations with the aim to further improve the efficiency, visibility and the functioning of SEECP.

SEECP ALBANIAN CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

23. We express our appreciation for the ambitious and dynamic agenda of the Albanian Chairmanship-in-Office for further strengthening and enhancing regional cooperation, and highly appreciate the diverse set of programs and events, both in terms of quantity and quality, that have taken place since June 2014.

24. We took note of the Report on the Activities of the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office of the Republic of Albania and called upon the next Chairmanship-in-Office to continue and pursue the initiated activities and processes.

25. We praise the synergy achieved from both the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office and the Regional Cooperation Council through regular coordination meetings with participation also of the European Union representatives, as a valuable platform to keep regional cooperation alongside with ongoing projects and initiatives within the broader European context.

26. We commend the outcome of the informal meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SEECP participants that were held in New York on 25 September 2014 and in Tirana on 24 February 2014, as well as the formal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SEECP participants that was held in Tirana on 22 May 2015.

27. The second session of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, held in Tirana on 23 May 2015, represents an outstanding moment in the development of the parliamentary cooperation in our region, based on the principles enshrined in the Charter of good neighbourly relations, stability, security and cooperation. It followed the successfully organized Committees of the SEECP PA held on 10 February in Istanbul, on 27 February in Bucharest, on 22 March in Sofia and the Standing Committee on 22 May 2015 in Tirana.

28. We stress the importance of Coordination Meetings of the SEECP Troika with the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat and the European Union representatives held respectively on 14 October 2014 and 11 May 2015 in Sarajevo and on 24 February 2015 in Tirana.

29. We welcome the steps towards increasing the visibility of SEECP with the European Union institutions and commending the meeting of the SEECP C-i-O and the Secretary General of RCC with the AFET Committee of the EU Parliament, on 5 March 2015, recommend to the next SEECP C-i-O-s to continue with these efforts.

30. We welcome the results and the Joint Statement of the Conference of the Ministers of Interior and those of Justice, convened in Budva, on 17 April 2015, co-organized by SEECP and the Brdo Process.

31. We welcome the conclusions of the regional Conference on “Upgrading Railways as Growth Engine for SEE: Connecting Europe to Connect Europe” organized in Tirana, on 10 February 2015.

32. We welcome the results of the Regional Conference on Gender Statistics, held in Tirana on 24 October 2014, as well as, the Conference on “Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Policy Challenges, for their outcomes, as follow-up activities to the previous SEECP C-i-O-s.

33. We welcome the results of the High-level Conference on “Good Governance and the Anticorruption Policy Challenges”, co-organized with the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative held on 13-14 November 2014, in Tirana.

34. We welcome the results of the Expert Meeting on “the Role of the Civil Society in Democratization and European Integration”, co-organized with the European Movement Albania, aiming to strengthen the role of the civil society in the European integration processes and for sharing best lobbying practices to improve the image of aspirant countries.

35. We commend the meetings of the Governing Board of the Task Force on Culture and Society held in Durrës, on 28-29 April 2015 and the Conference on Education through Culture, organized in Tirana on 21 May 2015, both dedicated to enhance our collaboration in cultural area, as an important component of regional cooperation.

THE INCOMING CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

36. We express our highest appreciation for the performance and dynamism of the Albanian Chairmanship-in-Office and extended our warmest gratitude for the excellent organization of this Summit.

37. We welcome the incoming Chairmanship-in-Office of the Republic of Bulgaria and decide that the next SEECP Summit will be held in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2016.

38. We took note with satisfaction that the Republic of Croatia will be the SEECP C-i-O for the period 2016-2017.

Adopted in Tirana on 26 May 2015