



**8TH CONFERENCE OF COMMITTEES ON EUROPEAN
AFFAIRS/INTEGRATION OF THE STATES PARTICIPATING IN THE
STABILIZATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS IN SOUTH EAST
EUROPE- COSAP**

SKOPJE, 24 - 25 NOVEMBER 2013

The 8th Conference of the Parliamentary Committees on European Integrations/Affairs of the states participating in the Stabilization and Association Process in South East Europe was organized in Skopje at the initiative of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

At the Conference the Parliamentary Committees on European Integrations/Affairs from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Serbia took participation.

The members of the Committees on European integrations of the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey and the Parliament of Kosovo¹ also participated at the conference as guests.

In the function of regular exchange of views regarding the issues that refer to the Stabilization and Association Process, as well as the EU enlargement process, the participants at the 8th Conference in Skopje:

1. Expressed their overall consent regarding the assessments contained in the Strategic document of the European Commission regarding the EU enlargement as a long-term and strategic concept in Europe and the region which gave positive results;

¹ This reference is without prejudice to the positions of the status and is in accordance with UNSCR 1244/99 and the opinion of the International court of justice on the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo.

welcomed the open-door policy of EU despite the financial crisis in the union. This policy is still encouraging the accomplishment of the requested criteria and standards for EU membership by the candidate and aspirant countries.

2. Referred again to the significance of the accomplishment of the Copenhagen criteria which remain to present a base of the accession process and that their fulfillment should remain the only imperative. They underlined that the bilateral disputes should not block the accession process of the countries to the EU and should be resolved in a constructive and good-neighborly spirit.
3. Positively assessed the new approach of the EU institutions regarding the enlargement policies for the future negotiation framework where priority is given to the issues related to judiciary and fundamental rights, as well as justice and interior affairs. They agreed that these policies should be adjusted to the EU standards at the beginning of the accession process.
4. Underlined the importance of further development of regional cooperation and good neighborly relations as a significant pillar of the EU accession process; underlined the need for development of constructive approach in the relations with the neighbors and other countries which are part of the enlargement through the development of bilateral and regional cooperation regarding all the issues related to the integration of the candidate and aspirant state. Expressed commitment for close and continuous cooperation in the framework of the South-Eastern Europe Process of Cooperation (SEEPC), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Central-European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), Energy community agreement (ECA) and the European Common Aviation Area Agreement.
5. Underlined the possible negative implications of the implementation of the recently adopted Resolution for suspension of the visa-free regime due to the possibility for use of the newly established mechanism which limits the free movement of citizens from the countries included in the Stabilization and Association Process to the countries of the European Union. They underlined that this measure is not in line with improvement of the Euro-integrative processes of these countries.
6. Supported the new concept of pre-accession funds – IPA 2 (2014-2020) which over bridges the differences between the countries

pursuant to their candidate status which enables several countries to have access to the funds, especially the ones for socio-economic development. Concluded that the previous usage of the European funds within the frames of IPA 1 (2007-2013) is partial. At the same time, they point to the need for bigger use of the pre-accession funds IPA 2 through reinforcement of the administrative capacities, improvement of the programming and preparation of projects, as well as inclusion and cooperation among all the relevant stakeholders. They underline that for bigger access and use of these European funds, the European Union must review and simplify the administrative procedures, as well as the expenses for IPA funding;

7. Underlined that it is of the interest of all states from the region to undertake overall changes and reforms on national, regional and global level for surpassing the global economic and financial crisis. Considering the general connectivity and interdependence, there is a need of joint, rather than individual address to the economic, energy and climate challenges, with a contribution of all states from the Region.
8. Pointed to the need of intensifying the regional trade and investments, increased transparency, movement of goods, investments, services and people within the frames of the region, bearing in mind the provisions of CEFTA and the big potential that this Agreement has for all the countries in the Region. Point to the fact that the inconsistent implementation of the provisions stipulated in the agreement leads to unwanted consequences in the trade relations between the countries.
9. Commit to further liberalization of the trade of agricultural products and services, elimination of the unnecessary technical barriers in the trade, facilitation of the trade by inclusion of transparent mechanisms and simplification of the trade procedures in the framework of CEFTA, as well as promotion of regional cooperation in the following areas: competition policy, right of intellectual property and public procurements in the part of competitive economic environment.
10. Welcome the decision of the representatives of the countries participating in the South-Eastern Europe Process of Cooperation (SEEP) in the 10th Conference of Speakers in the SEEP for their consent for the Parliamentary dimension of the SEEP to be transformed in a Parliamentary Assembly of the SEEP as a standing parliamentary forum for exchange of experiences,

dialogue and cooperation regarding issues that are of special interest for the countries in SEE and their citizens which will act in synergy with the regional and international partners.

11. Congratulate the Republic of Croatia for joining the EU on 1st July 2013 and emphasize this as a successful example of a country from the region that has successfully completed the necessary EU reforms. The example of the Republic of Croatia represents a motive for all the countries in the region to be committed to the fulfillment of the criteria requested by the EU.
12. Expressed their gratitude to the host – the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the organization of the 8th Conference of Parliamentary Committees on European Integrations/Affairs of the states participating in the Stabilization and Association Process in South-Eastern Europe and for their contribution to the work of the conference.
13. The states participating in the Process of Stabilization and Association express their preparedness for continuity in the mutual cooperation and express their overall support for the next COSAP Conference in the framework of the Presidency of the Parliament of Montenegro.

Skopje, 25th November, 2013