

**„Current Challenges Facing Southeastern Europe and
Combating Malignant Behaviour of Russia in the Region“**
*Address by President of the Parliament of Montenegro Mr Ivan
Brajovića, Washington, 5 February 2019*

I would like to thank senators Inhofe and Fatmir for the opportunity to address you briefly. Let me greet all present here. I believe that we are all encouraged by the solution of a long-running dispute between Macedonia and Greece, which has unblocked Macedonian path towards NATO and the EU. I personally congratulated Macedonian officials on this, during my recent visit to that country. - I hope that we will be looking forward in the same manner to the final outcome of the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. That is a complex problem, which, aside from the issue of functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is the biggest burden for our Region. We have to repeat countless times that - without stability, we cannot achieve much-needed economic development of Southeastern Europe.

Montenegro is focused on regional cooperation and particularly proud of its good neighbourly policy. We have no open issues that can significantly burden these relations. Despite numerous challenges we have become a NATO member. This was especially important for us in order to enhance our sovereignty and territorial integrity, while benefits of membership in economic sense have been already visible.

Bearing in mind the achieved progress, we rightly expect to be the first next member of the EU. It is in our interest that all countries of the Southeastern Europe become a part of NATO and the EU. We are ready to share our experiences and knowledge with all who is interested in this. Europe cannot be complete and strong enough without the Western Balkans integration

Russia's relation and its reaction towards our NATO membership are well-known. All of us remember the narrative by the officials and media in Russia with regard to our NATO accession.

We are honoured to be among 29 allies sharing the same values and we firmly believe that every state, regardless of its size, has an important role in security architecture of the North-Atlantic region.