

APROBAT

In sedinta Biroului permanent al
Camerei Deputatilor



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1050

Parlamentul României Camera Deputaților

București, 22 iunie 2016

INFORMARE privind participarea la Sesiunea plenară a Adunării Parlamentare a SEECP - Sofia, 9-11 iunie 2016 -

În perioada 9-11 iunie 2016 s-a desfășurat la Sofia, Bulgaria, Sesiunea plenară a Adunării Parlamentare a Procesului de Cooperare din Europa de Sud-Est (**AP SEECP**), sub Președinția-în-exercițiu bulgară a organizației.

În baza invitațiilor avansate de gazde, au participat reprezentanți ai delegațiilor naționale la AP SEECP și ai Priștinei, reprezentanți ai unor alte organizații internaționale sau regionale (Adunarea Parlamentară a Cooperării Economice a Mării Negre - **APCEMN**, Adunarea Parlamentară a OSCE, Adunarea Baltică, Adunarea Parlamentară a NATO), ai Parlamentului European, ai unor misiuni diplomatice la Sofia din statele participante la Procesul de Cooperare din Europa de Sud-Est (**SEECP**) și ai Secretariatului Regional pentru Cooperare Parlamentară în Europa de Sud-Est de la Sofia (**RSPC SEE**), precum și oficiali din țara gazdă (*lista participanților anexată*).

Delegația Parlamentului României la AP SEECP a fost condusă de către doamna deputat Gabriela-Maria Podașcă (PSD) și din componența sa au mai făcut parte: doamna deputat Luminița-Pachel Adam (UNPR), domnul deputat Ionuț-Cristian Săvoiu (PSD) și domnul senator Nicolae-Vlad Popa (PNL).

Au mai participat și domnul consilier Mario Ruse, coordonator național al Delegației din partea Camerei Deputaților, și doamna expert Cosmina Moldovan, coordonator național al Delegației din partea Senatului României.

În marja Sesiunii plenare au avut loc, în ziua de 10 iunie 2016, reuniuni succesive ale comisiilor generale, care au fost centrate pe alegerea președințiilor acestor structuri pentru următorul mandat de un an, și reuniunea Comisiei permanente.

Rezultatele reuniunilor comisiilor generale sunt reflectate în anexa Programului de lucru adoptat a doua zi de plenul Sesiunii (*anexat*)¹. Astfel, Președinția Comisiei generale pentru dezvoltare socială, educație, cercetare și știință va reveni Ankarei, iar pentru Președinția Comisiei generale pentru economie, infrastructură și energie - la care a existat doar candidatura Priștinei - și pentru Președinția Comisiei generale pentru justiție, afaceri interne și cooperare în materie de securitate - la care a existat doar candidatura Belgradului - s-a decis ca Biroul Adunării² să gestioneze, până la finele lunii septembrie 2016, o consultare a Belgradului și a Priștinei, în vederea identificării unui posibil acord, decizie luată în contextul neparticipării Belgradului la Sesiunea de la Sofia datorită alegerilor parlamentare anticipate care au avut loc recent în Serbia.

¹ Cu precizarea că în formatul AP SEECP există practica de a utiliza numele capitalelor și nu cele ale participanților / statelor.

² Care de la 1 iulie 2016 va fi format din Sofia - ca fostă Președinție, Zagreb - ca Președinție curentă, și Ljubljana - ca viitoare Președinție a AP SEECP din iulie 2017.

Menționăm că pentru următoarea reuniune a Comisiei generale pentru economie, infrastructură și energie a fost adoptată tema propusă de reprezentantul Bucureștiului, domnul deputat Săvoiu, respectiv: „Reducerea dependenței legate de aprovizionarea cu energie a regiunii sud-est Europene”.

Reuniunea Comisiei permanente a fost prezidată de către doamna Tsatska Tsacheva, în dubla sa calitate de Președinte al Parlamentul de la Sofia și de Președinte al AP SEECP.

Pe Agenda reuniunii a figurat un singur punct: adoptarea unei decizii cu privire la înființarea unui Grup de lucru ad hoc (**GLah**) format din experți pe problematica statutului juridic al Adunării și al Secretariatului acesteia.

Reprezentanții din Podgorica, cu sprijinul celor din Ljubljana și din Ankara, au încercat, fără succes, să adauge în Agendă, fără un anunț prealabil, un punct legat de modificarea Regulamentului AP SEECP. Cererea altor participanți de a primi precizări privind conținutul modificării vizate, s-a lovit de refuzul inițiatorilor și, ca urmare, propunerea de suplimentare a Agendei fost apreciată ca fiind inadmisibilă de către Președinta reuniunii. Precizăm că, din dezbaterile care au urmat, a reieșit că propunerea urmărea modificarea modului de adoptare a deciziilor (introducerea majorității simple sau calificate în locul consensului prevăzut în actualul Regulament) și, în particular, viza votul pe problematica sediului secretariatului, având în vedere că pentru sediul secretariatului există 8 parlamente care s-au exprimat în favoarea propunerii Ankarei, față de trei care s-au exprimat pentru propunerea Sofiei.

În remarcile sale introductive, doamna Tsacheva a pledat pentru înființarea unui GLah format din experți pe probleme de drept internațional din administrațiile parlamentelor participante la AP SEECP. Vorbitoarea a reiterat faptul că Președinția bulgară a propus un proiect de document privind înființarea GLah (prin care se prevăd, între altele: compoziția, durata de funcționare și conducerea GLah, modul de decizie și de raportare) și că pe baza concluziilor înaintate de GLah cu privire la secretariat (ca modalitate de înființare, statut juridic și statut al personalului acestuia, mod de abordare al unor diverse aspecte financiare) dar și la Adunare, se vor putea reevalua actualele propuneri bugetare, inclusiv contribuțiile naționale anuale ale parlamentelor.

În dezbaterile care au urmat s-au evidențiat următoarele:

- opinii negative legate de utilitatea GLah și solicitarea reorientării discuției spre modificarea regulii consensului cu privire la secretariat, dublată de o decizie privind sediul acestuia (Ankara, Ljubljana, Podgorica);
- reacții negative la propunerea de înlocuire a regulii consensului (Atena);
- opinii favorabile privind utilitatea GLah ca instrument care ar contribui la clarificări importante în intervalul dintre sesiunile plenare (Atena, București, Chișinău și Sofia, precum și Sarajevo care a adăugat mențiunea că, pentru neutralitate, GLah nu trebuie găzduit de Ankara sau de Sofia, ci de Zagreb ca viitoare Președinție);
- **solicitări pentru clarificarea cu prioritate a aspectelor bugetare privind secretariatul și nu a celor privind sediul acestuia, deoarece deciziile în parlamentele proprii au în vedere în primul rând aprobarea contribuției anuale (București și Chișinău);**
- coordonatorul național din Podgorica a făcut referiri negative la adresa realizărilor AP SEECP și a criticat activitatea anteriorului Grup de lucru, precum și prestația RSPC SEE;
- **doamna deputat Podașcă a dezaprobat aprecierile negative ale reprezentantului din Podgorica, menționând că există documente substanțiale și cu prevederi importante produse de comisiile generale ale Adunării, precum și că fostul GLah a reușit să producă un Regulament de funcționare al Secretariatului (adoptat în 2015).**

Ca răspuns la aceste poziții, doamna Tsetska Tsacheva a precizat că:

- GLah nu ia decizii legate de Regulamentul Adunării sau de secretariat, ci poate înainta concluzii și propuneri cu privire la statutul juridic al secretariatului și al Adunării. Statutul juridic trebuie clarificat primul deoarece de aici rezultă răspunsuri care pot redefini aspectele bugetare. Nu este corect ca problema sediului secretariatului să fie abordată ruptă din acest context;
- la numai doi ani de la înființarea sa la București, AP SEECF a ajuns să fie considerată pe același palier împreună cu alte prestigioase organizații parlamentare internaționale;
- având în vedere menținerea poziției Ankarei și divergența de opinii legată de utilitatea înființării GLah, constată că nu este întrunit consensul și deci acest punct nu poate fi adăugat în proiectul de Agendă al Sesiunii plene din 11 iunie.

În aceeași zi s-a desfășurat și ceremonia de premiere a câștigătorilor concursului de eseuri *"Tinerii din sud-estul Europei pentru prosperitatea regiunii"*, derulat sub egida AP SEECF cu începere din luna decembrie 2015. **Printre membrii juriului acestui concurs s-a numărat și doamna deputat Podașcă, iar pe primul loc între câștigători s-a situat o tânără din România.**

Sesiunea plenară din 11 iunie a fost prezidată de doamna Tsetska Tsacheva, Președintele AP SEECF, care în deschidere a făcut un scurt istoric al AP SEECF.

A urmat alocuțiunea domnului Valentin Poriazov, adjunctul Ministrului afacerilor externe din Bulgaria, care a efectuat o prezentare a abordării Președinției bulgare a dimensiunii guvernamentale, SEECF, cu evidențierea domeniilor cheie vizate (conectivitate, gestionarea problemei migrației, libertatea presei și libertatea de expresie) și a activităților derulate în mandatul acesteia. Vorbitorul a semnalat apoi importanța care trebuie acordată creșterii vizibilității SEECF în raport cu alte formate similare și încurajării și sprijinirii eforturilor tuturor participanților la SEECF în demersul acestora de integrare europeană.

Președintele AP SEECF a revenit cu precizări legate de inițiativa Președinției bulgare a AP SEECF privind realizarea unui mecanism de cooperare al Adunării cu Parlamentul European, astfel:

- a semnalat că urmare a întâlnirii avute la Bruxelles, la 21 martie 2016, între delegația AP SEECF și Comisia pentru politică externă a Parlamentului European, AP SEECF este recunoscută ca partener instituțional al Parlamentului European;
- ca primă materializare a acestei recunoașteri Comisia pentru politică externă a Parlamentului European a invitat președinții Adunării Parlamentare a Consiliului Europei și ai Adunării Parlamentare a OSCE, precum și actualul și viitorul președinte al AP SEECF la o întâlnire la Bruxelles într-un format lărgit prin care se urmărește sincronizarea cooperării inter-instituționale în domenii de interes comun.

Domnul Roberto Battelli, vicepreședinte al Adunării Parlamentare a OSCE (**AP OSCE**), a transmis aprecierile Președintelui acestei organizații, domnul Ilkka Kanerva, față de eforturile AP SEECF de a concentra sinergiile din regiune. Vorbitorul a menționat care sunt preocupările OSCE în această zonă, a descris instrumentele care dau specificitate acestei organizații și a menționat importanța deosebită a forurilor inter-parlamentare ca sprijin pentru organizațiile guvernamentale de profil în contextul noilor provocări de securitate. A invitat AP SEECF pentru a participa la Sesiunea AP OSCE de la Tbilisi din iulie 2016 și a pledat pentru o cooperare intensificată între cele două organizații.

A urmat domnul Plamen Manushev, reprezentant al Președintelui Adunării Parlamentare a NATO (**AP NATO**), în calitate de șef al Delegației bulgare la această organizație, care a dat citire unui scurt mesaj în care:

- au fost făcute referiri la valorile comune ale AP SEECF și AP NATO;

- a fost salutată semnarea recentă a Protocolului de aderare la NATO de către Muntenegru;
- s-a făcut apel la solidaritate în contracararea terorismului și s-a subliniat importanța acordată situației din Ucraina, care a fost apreciată ca având un potențial de subminare a valorilor democratice.

În alocuțiunea sa, domnului Romualds Ražuks, membru al Prezidiului Adunării Baltice, a evidențiat:

- rolul AP SEECF ca platformă strategică pentru cooperare;
- valorile care stau la baza activității Adunării Baltice;
- importanța cooperării dintre organizațiile inter-parlamentare, implicit dintre AP SEECF și Adunarea Baltică, având în vedere noile provocări de securitate, precum și prospecțiile de cooperare pe care organizația pe care o reprezintă le efectuează în raport cu diverse alte formate inter-parlamentare.

Doamna Tsacheva a dat apoi citire unui scurt mesaj din partea Secretarului general al APCEMN, domnul Asaf Hajiyevev, adresat Sesiunii plenare a AP SEECF.

Următorul punct din Agenda Sesiunii l-a constituit dezbaterea pe tema generală *"20 de ani de SEECF: noi realități și perspective împărtășite în regiune"*.

Doamna Tsacheva a deschis această dezbatere cu o intervenție în care a făcut un bilanț al mandatului Președinției bulgare a AP SEECF și a descris contextul jubiliar care a condus la titlul temei menționate.

Au luat apoi cuvântul reprezentanți ai tuturor delegațiilor la AP SEECF prezente. Am reținut din aceste intervenții următoarele:

- SEECF este un proces de cooperare puternic și stabil cu un rol incontestabil în dezvoltarea relațiilor de bună vecinătate dintre statele participante care au suferit schimbări majore în ultimii ani în ceea ce privește integrarea în NATO și UE; în același timp, SEECF reprezintă principalul forum regional în domeniul armonizării legislației naționale cu legislația europeană; pe parcursul deținerii Președinției SEECF Zagrebul va sprijini și încuraja schimbul de experiență și de bune practici cu statele participante care se află angajate în procesul de integrare în Uniunea Europeană; la nivelul AP SEECF este deosebit de important să se ia o decizie cu privire la statutul legal al Adunării și la sediul secretariatului prin respectarea tuturor pozițiilor statelor participante; este nevoie ca SEECF să își reconsidere rolul în plan european în contextul crizei imigranților, care a afectat în mod sever unele dintre statele participante, dar și în contextul crizei economice (domnul Lucian Vukelić, Șeful delegației din Zagreb, care a prezentat mesajul domnului Željko Reiner, Președintele Parlamentului croat care va prelua Președinția AP SEECF de la 1 iulie 2016);
- este necesară o decizie privind secretariatul Adunării, precum și un răspuns comun la problematica migrației și a terorismului (doamna Ayşe Nur Bahçekapili, vicepreședinte al Parlamentului din Ankara);
- trebuie intensificată cooperarea în plan multilateral și bilateral între participanții la AP SEECF (doamna Evangelia Vagionaki, șefa Delegației din Atena);
- **a 20-a aniversare de la fondarea dimensiunii guvernamentale, SEECF, constituie o oportunitate de a reafirma determinarea participanților pentru cooperarea regională; consolidarea parcursului european al regiunii este un proces crucial care necesită solidaritate și eforturi comune; România consideră că SEECF trebuie să aibă pe mai departe un rol esențial în stimularea proceselor de reformă întreprinse de statele din sud-estul Europei în avansarea acestora pe drumul către Uniunea Europeană și NATO; Sesiunea de la Sofia reprezintă un moment jubiliar propice pentru a ne reîntoarce la rădăcini și a ne reaminti că succesul AP SEECF vine din lucrurile care ne unesc, principala motivație care a condus și la momentul istoric prilejuit de înființarea AP SEECF la**

București, în 2014; astfel vom fi mai orientați către soluții și vom avea mai mult succes în utilizarea oportunităților din această parte a Europei, cu rezultate pozitive pentru prosperitatea cetățenilor din regiune (doamna deputat Podașcă, Președinta Delegației din București);

- devine tot mai importantă includerea tuturor statelor din sud-estul Europei în mecanismele Uniunii Europene și sprijinirea perspectivei europene a acestora; în contextul geopolitic est-vest intervin elemente noi, precum criza migrației, care afectează spațiul Schengen și solidaritatea în Europa și alimentează extremismul; pe acest fond, SEECP este o platformă utilă pentru a contracara astfel de amenințări; în problema secretariatului Adunării prioritară este o decizie privind sediul acestuia (domnul Milan Brglez, Președintele Adunării Naționale, Parlamentul din Ljubljana);
- înființarea AP SEECP reprezintă o nouă fază calitativă pentru stabilitatea și dezvoltarea cooperării în regiune; ar fi utilă o decizie cu privire la secretariatul Adunării; se remarcă continuarea reformelor din regiune în contextul amenințărilor recente, așa cum este cazul fenomenului migrației (domnul Trajko Veljanoski, Președintele Parlamentului din Skopje).

A urmat prezentarea documentelor elaborate de comisiile generale ale Adunării (anexate), urmată de adoptarea acestora prin consens (nu au existat amendamente).

Astfel, din partea Comisiei generale pentru economie, infrastructură și energie, doamna Diana Yordanova (Sofia) a prezentat proiectele de Raport și de Rezoluție elaborate sub tema generală „Îmbunătățirea infrastructurii în Europa de sud-est - accelerarea proiectelor prioritare”. Rezoluția cuprinde o serie de recomandări menite a îmbunătăți cooperarea în acest domeniu, printre care:

- dezvoltarea și finalizarea Rețelei TEN-T în sud-estul Europei conform standardelor tehnice adecvate și crearea unui sistem de transport eficient care va facilita integrarea deplină a regiunii în sistemul european de transport;
- crearea unui centru regional logistic de distribuție pentru circulația mărfurilor dinspre Orientul mijlociu și îndepărtat, bazinul Mediteranei, Caucaz, Turcia, către Europa Centrală, Vestică și de Est;
- îmbunătățirea conexiunilor internaționale prin proiecte transfrontaliere și eliminarea barierelor care nu sunt de natură fizică;
- examinarea posibilității de dezvoltare a unei abordări regionale comune în domeniul investițiilor în infrastructură;
- facilitarea armonizării legislației naționale cu cea europeană.

Din partea Comisiei generale pentru dezvoltare socială, educație, cercetare și știință, doamna Esmeralda Shkja (Tirana) a prezentat proiectele de Raport și de Rezoluție elaborate în cadrul reuniunii acestei comisii care a fost dedicată problematicei protecției drepturilor copiilor în migrație în Europa de sud-est în contextul recentului flux migrator. În sinteză textul Rezoluției include solicitări și recomandări adresate participanților la SEECP prin care se urmăresc:

- recunoașterea, din perspectiva legislației în domeniu, a minorilor migranți drept copii;
- garantarea accesului copiilor la proceduri de protecție stipulate în documente internaționale de referință;
- întreprinderea de măsuri de reformare a sistemului de azil;
- intensificarea măsurilor care pot contribui la atenuarea factorilor care conduc la migrația copiilor și adolescenților din regiune;
- stoparea deținerii copiilor având statutul de imigrant, prin adoptarea și dezvoltarea de măsuri alternative;
- continuarea investiției în condiții mai bune și adecvate, precum și în capacități sporite pentru primirea copiilor migranți;

- asigurarea accesului la diverse servicii, în primul rând a celor de bază, dar și la servicii specializate;
- realizarea unei dezbateri anuale în parlamentele participante la SEECP, prin care să se evalueze situația copiilor, inclusiv a celor care sunt parte a fluxului migrator, și a măsurilor în domeniu întreprinse de guvern;
- acordarea de prioritate dezvoltării sistemelor de protecție a copilului și adecvării măsurilor acestor sisteme la nevoile copiilor migranți, precum și colaborării efective cu sistemul de justiție și alte autorități care se ocupă de aplicarea legii pentru a preveni violarea drepturilor în domeniu;
- întreprinderea de către parlamente a oricăror măsuri care se impun pentru a fi stopată discriminarea copiilor proveniți din străinătate și pentru a asigura accesul acestora la sistemul de protecție al copiilor pe baze egale cu copiii naționali.

Au fost apoi adoptate consensual: Programul de lucru al AP SEECP pentru perioada 2016-2017 și Declarația reuniunii (anexate).

Principalele aspecte asupra cărora se concentrează secțiunea operativă a Declarației de la Sofia vizează:

- acțiuni pentru creșterea rolului AP SEECP ca platformă de cooperare care poate promova formularea și implementarea de politici relevante ale Uniunii Europene;
- eforturi pentru mobilizarea sprijinului politic și public pentru reforme care să asigure pe termen lung stabilitate, democrație, statul de drept, prosperitate și relații de bună vecinătate pentru participanții la AP SEECP;
- acțiuni pentru dezvoltarea mecanismului de cooperare inițiat între AP SEECP și Parlamentul European;
- propuneri de acțiuni comune ale instituțiilor europene și AP SEECP menite a contribui la atenuarea presiunii fluxului migrator;
- necesitatea combaterii efective a terorismului și extremismului violent și întreprinderea de acțiuni, în acord cu dreptul internațional, contra celor care sprijină aceste fenomene;
- sprijinirea rolului parlamentelor SEECP în facilitarea implementării legislației relevante a Uniunii Europene care privește strategiile macro-regionale care stau la baza unei cooperări transfrontaliere efective și a dezvoltării proiectelor majore de infrastructură;
- creșterea conștientizării și participării cetățenilor cu privire la întărirea cooperării în Europa de sud-est, precum și a contactelor interpersonale, în special între tineri, ca punte între diferite națiuni și culturi.

Propunem ca prezenta Informare să fie distribuită către:

- Comisiile parlamentare ale Camera Deputaților cu atribuții în domeniile vizate de prevederi cuprinse în secțiunile operative ale documentelor adoptate la Sofia;
- Direcția de specialitate din Ministerul Afacerilor Externe.

Deputat Gabriela-Maria Podașcă



Deputat Luminița-Pachel Adam



Deputat Ionuț-Cristian Săvoiu



Redactat: Mario Ruse, coordonator național al Delegației (Camera Deputaților), DGAE - DCOIUE



PLENARY SESSION OF THE SEECP PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY 9-11 JUNE 2016, SOFIA

AGENDA

- 1. Adopting of the Agenda.**
- 2. Opening speeches.**
Interventions from international and regional organizations.
- 3. Debates on the general theme “20 YEARS SEECP: THE REGION – NEW REALITIES AND SHARED PERSPECTIVES”.**
- 4. Presentation and adoption of the Reports and Resolutions of the General Committees.**
- 5. Adoption of the Final Declaration and Work programme 2016/2017.**
- 6. Miscellaneous.**



PLENARY SESSION OF THE SEECP PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY 9-11 JUNE 2016, SOFIA

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANKARA Ms. Ayşe Nur BAHÇEKAPILI Mr. Hüseyin BÜRGE Mr. Hakan ÇAVUŞOĞLU Mr. Cengiz AYDOĞDU Dr. Ahmet YILDIZ Mr. Ali YILDIZ Mr. Fatih BAYDAR Mr. Süleyman GÖKÇE Ms. Elif Beyza PEKER Mr. Timur HALILOV Ms. Tanya BLAGOVA	Vice Speaker MP MP MP Head of the Research Department National Coordinator Foreign Relation and Protocol Department Ambassador Second Secretary at the Embassy Interpreter Interpreter
ATHENS Ms. Evangelia VAGIONAKI Mr. Georgios STYLIOU Mr. Georgios PALLIS Ms. Argyro TRAGAKI Mr. Peter KADREV	Head of Delegation MP MP National Coordinator Interpreter
BUCHAREST Ms. Gabriela-Maria PODAŞCĂ Ms. Luminita-Pachel ADAM Mr. Ionut-Cristian SĂVOIU Mr. Mircea DOLHA Mr. Mario RUSE Mr. Nicolae Vlad POPA Ms. Cosmina MOLDOVAN	Head of the Delegation MP MP MP National Coordinator Senator National Coordinator, Senate

CHISINAU Ms. Mihaela SPĂȚARU Ms. Galina BALMOȘ Mr. George MOCANU Mr. Ștefan GORDA Ms. Viorica STANISLAVCIUC	Head of Delegation MP MP Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary National Coordinator
LJUBLJANA Mr. Milan BRGLEZ Mr. Branko ZORMAN Ms. Katarina RATOŠA Ms. Tanja PANDEV Ms. Mojca SILA Ms. Metka LAJNSCEK Mr. Dušan NINIĆ	Speaker MP Head of the Office of the Speaker National Coordinator Senior Adviser, Protocol Minister Plenipotentiary Security Officer
PODGORICA Ms. Žana FILIPOVIĆ Ms. Snežana JONICA Mr. Jasmin BOYADŽIĆ	Head of Delegation MP National Coordinator
PRISHTINA Mr. Kadri VESELI Ms. Blerta DELIU KODRA Mr. Ismajl KURTESHI Mr. Muhamet MUSTAFA Mr. Shpend KALABA Mr. Delfin PLANA Mr. Blerim LATIFI Mr. Gezim KASAPOLLI Mr. Driton LAJCI Mr. Shaban SELIMI Mrs. Ariana MUSLIU SHOSHI Mr. Bashkim RRAHMANI	Speaker MP MP MP Ambassador Minister Consular in the Embassy Political Advisor of the Speaker Political Advisor of the Speaker Political Advisor of the Speaker Director of Protocol and International Relations Coordinator of International Relations Personal Assistant
SARAJEVO Mr. Bariša ČOLAK Mr. Momčilo NOVAKOVIĆ Ms. Hanka VAJZOVIĆ Ms. Jadranka RADOVIC Ms. Helena LONČAR Ms. Dubravka ISTUK – PAVLOVIC Mr. Miroslav POROBIJA	Deputy Speaker MP MP National Coordinator Advisor Interpreter Security Officer

SKOPJE	
Mr. Trajko VELJANOSKI Ms. Gorana POP GEORGIEVA Ms. Biljana OGNENOVSKA Mr. Marjan GJORCEV Mr. Nenad MLADENOVIC Ms. BESA DRNDAR Mr. Goran GJOSHEVSKI	Speaker Associate in the Cabinet of the Speaker Deputy National coordinator Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Second Secretary at the Embassy Interpreter Security
SOFIA	
Ms. Tsetska TSACHEVA Ms. Diana YORDANOVA Mr. Djevdet CHAKAROV Mr. Stefan KENOV Mr. Korman ISMAILOV Ms. Vesela STOITZEV Ms. Sonya IVANOVA Ms. Mariana PAMPOROVA	President of the SEECP PA MP MP MP MP National Coordinator Interpreter Interpreter
TIRANA	
Ms. Esmeralda SHKJAU Mr. Qiriako KURETA Ms. Elona DUSHALLARI	MP Ambassador First Secretary at the Embassy
ZAGREB	
Mr. Lucian VUKELIĆ Mr. Vedran BABIĆ Ms. Ljerka ALAJBEG Ms. Ana PERIC Ms. Martina PETEK-STUPAR Ms. Alma STEFANOVIC LJUBIC	Head of Delegation MP Ambassador National coordinator Head of the Department for International Affairs Deputy Head of Mission in Sofia
RSPC SEE	
Ms. Mariana VITANOVA	Head

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Valentin PORIAZOV	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PABSEC Ms. Pavlina LOZANOVA	PABSEC International Secretariat, Secretary of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee
OSCE PA Mr. Roberto BATTELLI Ambassador Andreas NOTHELLE	Vice-President of OSCE PA Special Representative
BALTIC ASSEMBLY Dr. Romualds RAŽUKS Ms. Anete KALNĀJA	Member of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, Vice Chairman of the Latvian Delegation Senior Consultant, Secretariat of the Baltic Assembly
NATO PA Mr. Plamen MANUSHEV	Representative of the NATO PA President, Head of the Bulgarian Delegation to NATO PA
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Mr. Georgi PIRINSKI Ms. Agnes Jungerius	MEP MEP



SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017

The Chairmanship-in-Office 01.07.2016-30.06.2017 is held by the National Parliament, Zagreb.

During the Presidency the following meetings will be held:

- 1. Plenary Session to be organized in May/June 2017 by the country holding the Chairmanship**
- 2. At least two meetings of the SEECP PA Standing Committee in the country holding the Chairmanship. The first of the Standing Committee meetings to be held in autumn 2016.**
- 3. Two meetings of the SEECP PA General Committees – the first one to be organized at least two months prior to the Plenary Session in order to provide all delegations with adopted documents in due time**

ANNEX

- 1. Parliament, Pristina has offered to host the meeting of the General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy, and Parliament, Belgrade has offered to host the meeting of the General Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Security Cooperation. The Bureau of the SEECP PA will, until September 30th 2016, make consultations with the Parliament, Pristina and the Parliament, Belgrade to reach agreement on hosting the meetings of the General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy and General Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Security Cooperation.**
- 2. Parliament, Ankara will host the meeting of the General Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science.**



THIRD PLENARY SESSION OF THE SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

10-11 JUNE 2016, SOFIA

FINAL DECLARATION

Reaffirming the principles enshrined in the Charter of Good Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation, signed in Bucharest in 2000, as the founding document of the SEECP,

Following the Inaugural Declaration of SEECP PA, adopted in May 2014 in Bucharest and the Final Declaration of May 2015, adopted in Tirana,

Led by the Rules of Procedure of the SEECP PA governing the functioning of the SEECP PA,

Noting that the year 2016 marks the 20th anniversary of the launching of SEECP, which consistently affirms its role as the leading political format of cooperation in the region, factor of security, stability and prosperity,

Noting that increasing the intensity and the institutionalization of parliamentary dialogue is key to addressing the manifold challenges facing the region and to projecting the creation perspective for the development of Southeast Europe,

Reaffirming the importance and the role of parliaments in actively contributing to the promotion of the further enlargement of the European Union encouraging the exchange of expertise and experience with SEECP parliaments of non EU Member States,

Appreciating the increase of the visibility of SEECP among the EU institutions as an important factor for the successful European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the SEE region,

Highly appreciating the initiated dialogue for further strengthening the cooperation between SEECP PA and the European Parliament as an important step towards the realization of the priorities of the Assembly,

Noting the importance of deepening the relations of SEECP PA with citizens of the region and especially with young people as a guarantee for the promotion and implementation of democratic reforms and increasing the efficiency and transparency in the work of the Assembly,

Welcoming the reports and confirming the Resolutions of the General Committees on Economy, Energy and Infrastructure, and Social Affairs, Education, Science and Research,

SEECP PA:

- 1. Calls on** the SEECP parliaments to work actively for the development of the SEECP PA into a wide platform of parliamentary cooperation promoting the formulation and implementation of EU relevant policies based upon lessons learned and best practices of SEECP participants,
- 2. Expresses** its full support for the efforts made by the non EU Member States, to bring their legislative framework in line with EU law and welcomes the progress they have achieved in this regard,
- 3. Calls on** the EU and the SEECP PA participants to combine their efforts for a more active communication aimed at mobilizing the

political and public support for the necessary reforms ensuring long-term stability, democracy, rule of law, prosperity and good neighbourly relations,

4. Welcomes the meeting held on March 21, 2016 between SEECP PA and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament as a first step in the efforts to build continuous cooperation between SEECP PA and EP,

5. Calls on SEECP PA and the EU Parliament to continue to develop their cooperation towards building a sustainable mechanism of interaction and welcomes the opportunities for joint activities outlined at the above-mentioned meeting:

- **regular discussions or relevant debates** on various topics in order to support and accelerate the process of EU accession of the SEECP participants,
- **annual exchange of views** with representatives of the SEECP PA during one of the meetings of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament during the Spring session or before the presentation of countries specific reports,
- **ad-hoc participation** of MEPs in the activities of the SEECP PA including Plenary sessions, hearings and other events, including on issues of mutual interest in their agenda,
- **exchanging information** and expertise between SEECP PA and the European Parliament/Committee on Foreign Affairs,
- **inviting representatives of the SEECP PA** to events /conferences, seminars, etc./ organized by the Directorate for Democracy Support of the European Parliament in Brussels and in the countries engaged in the enlargement process or pursuing reforms for advancing on the European path.

6. Acknowledging that international protection should be insured for those in need, while at the same time respecting the dignity and

human rights of migrants not in need of international protection, calls on the European institutions and the SEECP PA participants to work together to curb migration pressure in Europe through strengthening the regional dialogue and cooperation with the full involvement of the most affected countries in the region in the efforts to find a commonly acceptable solution, by attaching particular importance to effective border management, access to legally safe and efficient asylum procedures while ensuring a fair burden-sharing system, to the implementation of existing commitments in dealing with migration and the effective implementation of readmission agreements,

7. Highlights the need to deal effectively with terrorism and violent extremism, and calls for action in accordance with international law against those who sponsor or provide support to terrorist groups or harbour them,

8. Calls for a regular exchange of information and opinions between parliaments of the SEECP regarding current issues on the international political agenda and for producing and publishing common positions of the Assembly,

9. Supports the role of the SEECP parliaments in the facilitation and implementation of the relevant EU legislation related to macro-regional strategies that underlie effective cross-border cooperation and the development of leading infrastructure projects,

10. Emphasizes the need to raise citizens' awareness and participation in strengthening the cooperation in Southeast Europe, as well as strengthening people to people contacts, particularly among young people in the region as a bridge between different nations and cultures,

11. Highly appreciates the active participation in the essay contest "Young people from SEE for prosperity of the region" and is committed to further support projects and initiatives in the field of youth policies, education and university cooperation,

12. Confirms that, until having a fully functional Secretariat and an operational budget, the parliament holding the Chairmanship-in-

Office of the SEECP PA shall serve, with assistance of the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South East Europe, as an ad hoc Secretariat for the Plenary Session, the Standing Committee, the President and the Bureau of the Assembly while the parliament holding the Chairmanship of a General Committee or of an Ad hoc Working Group shall also fulfill the tasks of an ad hoc Secretariat for the respective body of the Assembly,

13. Recommends that the next Presidency and the Bureau of the Assembly will continue to actively work towards achievement of the priorities of the organization, and in particular on the joint consultations for further strengthening cooperation between SEECP PA and the EP and for promoting European integration of the region, as well as political association and economic integration,

14. Recommends to the next Presidency to achieve continuity in terms of visibility of the PA and its opening to the citizens of the region.

Adopted 11 June 2016, Sofia

**General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP PA)**

March 2016, Sofia, National Assembly

R E P O R T

on

“Improving the infrastructure in SEE – speeding up the priority projects”

Rapporteur: Diana YORDANOVA

Over the last decade, the region of South East Europe has gradually become a more economically advanced. Some of the countries have progressed further in the transition towards the integration with the European Union (EU), while others are on the path towards the EU. The short-term economic forecasts for the SEE region remain vulnerable and concerns have increased as a result of the near conflicts.

The development of a modern high-performing infrastructure to connect the EU with its neighbouring countries should play a crucial role in the recovery strategy. In an era of tight budgets and economic austerity, regional coordination on the aspect of national and international transport planning and prioritisation of the projects are essential ingredients for setting up the blueprint of the economic recovery. The path towards sustainable growth will depend on structural reforms and long term investments as much as macroeconomic reforms coupled with microeconomics measures for improving productivity. In this context, efficient transport planning of investment and priorities represents a catalyst for development and deeper regional integration.

The South East Europe represents a transport platform between different European Transport Corridors and can represent a bridge between Europe and Far East. Transport systems in South East Europe have traditionally developed along national lines. While the SEE region is rather geographically limited, infrastructure planning remained for years (and still does) focused on national priorities more than on Transeuropean ones. Such approach leads to inefficiencies in the transport system of the entire region in relation to the Europe and international transport axis.

The SEECP is a leading format for cooperation in the region and within its 20-year history, the Process has proven itself as an effective and beneficial mechanism providing security and stability in Southeastern Europe and the transport system plays an important role in the progress of economic development in the South-East Europe and represents a key factor in promoting closer interaction and enhanced cooperation among countries.

Globalization of the modern economy has led to enormous growth of the trans-national transport flows, as well as to new requirements regarding the efficiency of the international transportation. Taking into account the vital role of transport in ensuring sustainable development, transport cooperation among the SEECP countries must be developed and improved in accordance with the new challenges and concepts, in order to create a highly efficient regional transport system combining national transport programs with the development plans for the Pan-European transport corridors.

In the same time the region of South-Eastern Europe is one of the most vulnerable ones in terms of energy. The countries in the region have insufficiently developed energy infrastructure and system coherence.

In the context of the present reality, building the transport infrastructure and realizing the main diversification projects for the region as the main prerequisite for energy security must be the subject of consistent actions at the highest political levels in all South East European countries. In that regard, the General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy highly appreciate the good cooperation – both bilateral, and in the context of the multilateral projects, initiatives and policies.

The present moment is also very important to all the countries from SEECP, given the common efforts of EU Member States to handle with the migration and tackling the refugee flow.

The infrastructural and energy connectivity is the most important area of particular interest and adds value for the competitiveness and economic growth of the region, which in turn encourages sectoral cooperation in a number of other fields of common interest. Building of a developed transport infrastructure and regional energy infrastructure are important parts of the future steps towards the integration and stabilization.

Current EU Transport Policy for the Networks in the South East Europe

Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 setting out the new guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) was published in December 2013. It represents an important step forward in the integration of all European National Transport Systems leading to an optimisation of the Network that serves the population and supports the economic development of European regions.

The new policy aims to close the gaps between Member States' transport networks, remove bottlenecks that still hamper the smooth functioning of the internal market and overcome technical barriers. It promotes and strengthens seamless transport chains for passenger and freight, while keeping up with future technological trends.

The regulation provides for dual level structure of the network:

- Core network that includes the most important EU transport links and nodes. It has to be implemented by 2030 and will concentrate the majority of the EU funding
- Comprehensive network that provides full coverage of the EU territory and access to all areas. It should be completed by 2050.

To facilitate the implementation of the core network 9 multimodal corridor are created. They are governed through flexible structures (corridor forums, chaired by European Coordinator) and working groups.

The TEN-T Guidelines foresee that European Coordinators have to draw up work plans for the respective core network corridors which resume the current state of infrastructure along these corridors and sets out the challenges for future infrastructure development. Since the beginning of 2014 the Commission's action are largely focused on the preparation of the work plans. On behalf of the Commission, external consultants' teams spent the full year to undertake comprehensive corridor studies. These study activities constitute the main basis for the work plans. They include detailed analyses of corridors features and identify the action needed to bring the corridors up to the required quality and capacity standards. Orient/ East-Med and Rhine-Danube corridor work plans are now completed and on 22 December 2014 they were formally submitted to the Member States directly concerned.

The objective is to promote sustainable, efficient transport systems, taking into account technical and interoperability aspects, in order to facilitate movements at border crossings, which meet the economic, social, environmental and safety needs of European citizens, help to reduce regional disparities and enable European business to be competitive in the world markets. Especially in the region of the SEE, the "grid" consists of Corridor IV (North-

Southeast), Corridor V (West-East), Corridor VII (the Danube Inland Waterway), Corridor VIII (West-East), Corridor IX (North-East) and Corridor X (Northwest-South). Three out of the four transport Areas are sited in South East Europe: the Adriatic –Ionian Seas, the Mediterranean Basin and the Black Sea Basin.

Cooperation in the transport field and the extension of the Acquis Communautaire in the recently accessed the EU, the candidate and the potential candidate countries from the SEE region is more advanced than for the other EU partner countries that are included in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The basic needs of the transport system in the region addressing the specific areas in which further development should be streamlined in order to achieve greater level of connectivity and integrity of the SEECP area:

1. Promoting institutional cooperation and administrative capacity building in transport sector as well as common transport policy measures to improve institutional cooperation and best practice exchange to ensure high return of investments in transport infrastructure.
2. Development and completion of TEN-T Comprehensive Network in South East Europe according to the appropriate technical standards and establishment of efficient transport system which will facilitate full integration of the region into the EU transport system.
3. Attracting global freight flows by improving SEECP area sea ports' capacity and transport services together with developing strong and efficient hinterland connections to Central and Southern Europe (especially railway and barge connections) and inland multimodal terminals.
4. Establishment of the South East Europe as a regional logistical distribution centre for the movement of freight from the Far and Middle East, the Mediterranean Basin, Caucasus and Turkish territory to the Central, Western and Eastern Europe.
5. Improvement of South East Europe international connections by concentrating on cross border projects and elimination of cross border bottlenecks and nonphysical barriers.
6. Facilitation of freight and passenger transport by promoting intermodality and establishing harmonised standards for transport documents, security and services, together with enhanced development of integrated electronic data interchange information system and modern traffic management system.

National Transport Policies aligned with the EU Policy (Strategic Framework)

The Community Strategic Guidelines distinguish the guidelines of action for cohesion policy to “give effect to the priorities of the Community with a view to promote balanced, harmonious and sustainable development”.

At the participant's level, these Strategic Guidelines form the basis for identifying investment priorities, which are then elaborated in National Strategic Reference Frameworks that are subsequently further detailed in Operational Programmes (OPs) for thematic areas including transport. In this respect, EU countries prepare their National Strategic Reference Frameworks

and Operational Programmes attempting to integrate Community priorities into national and regional development programmes, responding through their transport policies to the EC challenges and providing synergy among different transport systems.

In order to guarantee the optimum efficiency of transport infrastructures for promoting regional development, attention is paid to improving the connectivity of landlocked territories to the TEN-T. In this respect, the development of secondary links, with a focus on intermodality and sustainable transport, is promoted. In particular, harbours and airports should be efficiently connected to their hinterland. Additionally, "Motorways of the sea" and short-sea shipping are recognized as a viable alternative to long-distance road and rail transport and projects are treated as priorities for the participants where this opportunity exists.

Regarding the Candidate and Potential Candidate countries in the South East region, there has been advanced progress in some countries in the field of Transport sector, while at others, preparations in the area of Transport are at an early stage. Activities and priorities in the domain of transport infrastructure are directed to the achievement of the strategic objectives described in the European Commission document "Transport and Energy Infrastructure in Southeast Europe" and having confirmed the intention to foster the transport reforms of the SEECP regional participants in order to support the integration of the region into a single transport market facilitated by a Transport Community Treaty.

In these terms, activities and priorities in the domain of transport infrastructure on behalf of the Candidate and Potential Candidate are directed to the achievement of the following strategic objectives:

- establishment and adoption of an efficient legal, organizational and institutional framework;
- development of multimodal transport through the connection of all types of transport infrastructure as well as connection with corridors outside the region;
- rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure, elimination of border crossings obstacles,
- competitiveness and cooperation between transport modes;
- environmental protection through mandatory development of studies about the effect of infrastructure facilities on the environment and
- investment programmes which must be based on economic parameters.

The criteria for project prioritisation among the transport projects identified by the National Transport Plans aligned with the EU Policy could focus all the transport modes, road, railway, maritime, inland water way or air transport subsector, as well as multi-modal nodes and terminals. Fundamentally, these projects should meet several criteria (planning, financial and technical) adjusted to the recommendations of EC proposal for the new TEN-T guidelines.

SEE countries should continue to exchange views on the directions of further development of infrastructure in the EU and in the region in the context of improving economic development, attracting foreign investments and creating new jobs.

The pillars for the development of the transport system in South East Europe (including modes of road, rail, air, and naval transport, as well as intermodal transport) should focus on:

- *Economic efficiency*: the transport system must be economically efficient in terms of transport operations and for the users themselves. Specifically, the benefits of investments in transport should exceed the cost of that investment.
- *Accessibility*: a transport system that allows facilitation of access between all regions. Moreover, the transport system must be configured to allow economic development at national and regional levels.
- *Reduced environmental impact*: the development of a modern transport infrastructure according to the environmental effects, while minimizing the impact on air quality and reducing the noise associated to transport activity. Transport investments should minimize negative impact on the environment.
- *Sustainability*: the sustainable transport modes - rail, bus and waterways - that are more efficient in terms of energy consumption and produce fewer emissions should be developed with priority. The transport system must be economically, financially and environmentally sustainable.
- *Security and safety*: investments in transport sector should produce a safer transportation system.

There are still some necessary efforts that should be harmonized with the EU transport policy and the Western Balkans countries' transport strategies need to be followed up by masterplans and sectoral measures in comply with EU standards and regulations. Therefore, the countries of the Western Balkans undertake necessary measures, such as:

- Adoption of laws and by-laws in accordance with European standards wherever possible and finding ways of strengthening transport and transport infrastructure institutions;
- Adequate preparation for the use of EU pre-accession funds for transport, i.e. for the use of IPA (necessary state bodies and structures that would ensure unhindered and efficient implementation of projects, necessary efficient time planning, development of strategic documents);
- Strengthening activities in all types of transport and transport infrastructure so as to improve traffic safety;
- Ensuring more funds for the maintenance and development of railway infrastructure;
- Intensifying activities towards international financial and other institutions and organisations for the purpose of greater assistance in the realisation of priority projects;
- Taking steps in the reconstruction of railways and the unsuccessful competitiveness with other transport means;
- Improving navigation security control and marine environment protection;
- Initiating activities to clean up the Sava river bed and reconstruct and develop its ports through regional cooperation;
- Developing necessary studies and investment and technical documentation so as to create the necessary preconditions for negotiations on modes of financing priority infrastructure projects;
- Performing preparations for joining the EU road transport market;
- Developing an integrated and balanced multimodal transport system as to integrate all transport models into a common European transport network;
- Enabling simpler procedures at border crossings and creating preconditions necessary to facilitate the issuing of visas, especially for business purposes.

Priority projects

The list includes projects of common interest for the Community in the field of all the land transport modes and in the territories of all the SEECP participants and EU Member States, aiming at better interoperability between the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the SEECP Comprehensive Network and to an efficient SEE transport system by addressing critical bottlenecks, in particular cross border sections and intermodal nodes. They envisage completion of the connections needed to facilitate transport, optimisation of the efficiency of existing infrastructure, achievement of interoperability of network components and integration of the environmental dimension into the network. The majority of the projects concern interventions on the road and the rail network, in order to relieve the networks and eliminate the bottlenecks.

The SEECP priority project list will have direct impact on improving regional transport connections. It should be pointed that list encompasses projects only from road, rail and inland water way due to the scope of work of the project (refers to land transport modes, thus not excluding any kind of projects that provide connection of ports and airports with the comprehensive network of the SEE region).

Majority of investments are related to revitalization of railways infrastructure. Mainly TEN-T high speed line construction and conventional line upgrading projects have contributed to high cost of railway projects. Nevertheless, construction of high speed lines will reduce congestion, all eviate carbon footprint and shift modal split toward environmentally friendly and safer mode.

The second highest share of investment is directed in the road infrastructure owing to the major motorway construction projects. The third share are investments in inland water ways/inland waterway ports. Inland waterway projects are present in some of the Members and are encompassing river navigation improvement and extension of ports capacity.

Connecting Europe Facility

A new financial instrument – Connecting Europe Facility was established by Regulation (EU) № 1316/2013. It will support projects of common interest in the field of transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructures.

The total financial resources n the transport sector is 26.2 billion euros, including 11.3 billion euros transferred from the Cohesion Fund.

Investments under the CEF will be spent on the basis of annual and multi-annual work programs which details priorities and the total amount of financial support for each priority over the years.

We wish to emphasize the importance of strengthening regional cooperation and the necessity of joint activities to prepare analytical and technical documentation for the construction of energy and transport infrastructure and the possibilities of using EU funds earmarked for these projects.

Energy efficiency

We should not forget that the region of South-Eastern Europe is one of the most vulnerable ones in terms of energy due to its overdependence on Russia – a domineering supplier of energy resources. The countries in the region have insufficiently developed energy infrastructure and system coherence. Their markets have hardly started to develop which is also reflected in the lack of a functional regional market.

The need to improve energy efficiency is also main priority of the governments in SEE region. It is realized through adoption of laws on energy efficiency and consistent transposition of EU Directives in national legislation, establishing of administrative structures implementing strategic measures on national level, creation of financial mechanisms, raising awareness of the citizens and the business etc.

Building a common energy market and an energy structure will increase the energy efficiency of energy supplies due to the optimal allocation of energy flows. On the other hand, the spare capacity which ensures the safety of the interconnected energy system will be reduced, thus reducing the costs which impact electricity prices.

Beyond infrastructure, the promotion, additional funding and implementation of soft measures could benefit the infrastructure investments by generating added value of improving the mobility in the SEE. Soft measures could reduce the administrative boundaries and lead to proper operation, ensure smooth movement of persons and goods, overcome the border crossing obstacles with coordination and by using the synergies of the different transport modes and provide new innovative technologies for information exchange, cooperation and coordination for sharing problems.

In conclusion

Taking into account that the administrative and financial capacities of individual SEECP participants to attract investments are limited and that economic and social growth largely depend on them, we need to develop a joint regional approach to investing in infrastructure development.

General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy

RESOLUTION

Adopted 11 June 2016, Sofia

Reaffirming the principles enshrined in the *Charter of good neighborly relations, stability, security and cooperation*, signed in Bucharest in 2000, as the founding document of the SEECP;

Following the Declaration on the Inauguration of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly adopted on May 10, 2014;

Guided by the Rules of Procedure of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly which establish the functioning of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly;

In accordance with the SEECP PA Work Programme 2015/2016 adopted on May, 2015;

Emphasizing the importance of SEECP as a forum that promotes the further enlargement of the EU and underlining the commitment to the principle of “all inclusiveness”, as an important element of regional stability and sustainable development;

Underlining that cross-border cooperation and improvement of the transport infrastructure are bringing government authorities and people closer, and that the regional cooperation and good neighborly relations are a pre-requisite for a full European integration;

Acknowledging the basic needs of the transport system in the region addressing the specific areas in which further development should be streamlined in order to achieve greater level of connectivity and integrity of the SEECP area;

Having in mind Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 setting out the new guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), published in December 2013;

Expressing the need of a continuous financial support in advancing the accelerated reforms and additional infrastructure investment on key corridors in SEE region as a precondition for a long-term sustainable connectivity and closer economic exchange in the region;

The General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy, which was convened in Sofia on March 12, 2016:

1. **Calls on** SEECP members to promote institutional cooperation and enhancing their capacities for development of transport sector as well as common transport policy measures to improve institutional cooperation and best practice exchange to ensure high return of investments in transport infrastructure.

2. **Recommends** development and completion of TEN-T Comprehensive Network in South East Europe according to the appropriate technical standards and establishment of efficient transport system which will facilitate full integration of the region into the EU transport system.

3. **Recommends** attracting global freight flows by improving SEECP area sea ports' capacity and transport services together with developing strong and efficient hinterland connections to Central and Southern Europe (especially railway and barge connections) and inland multimodal terminals.

4. **Recommends** to the SEECP participants to work towards the establishment of the South East Europe as a regional logistical distribution centre for the movement of freight from the Far and Middle East, the Mediterranean Basin, Caucasus and Turkish territory to the Central, Western and Eastern Europe.

5. **Calls on** improvement of South East Europe international connections by concentrating on cross border projects and elimination of cross border bottlenecks and nonphysical barriers.

6. **Calls on** facilitation of freight and passenger transport by promoting intermodality and establishing harmonised standards for transport documents, security and services, together with enhanced development of integrated electronic data interchange information system and modern traffic management system and eliminate barriers for free movement of goods and passengers.

7. **Advises** the SEECP participants to focus on setting up models to develop a joint regional approach to investing in infrastructure development.

8. **Invites** the SEECP parliaments to facilitate harmonization with EU legislation and to contribute to smooth adoption of the transport-related legislation and regional projects.

9. **Invites** the all relevant stakeholders in the SEECP participants to promote and stimulate the market for clean and energy-efficient vehicles, thus improving the contribution of the transport sector to the environment, climate and energy policies of the EU.

Adopted 11 June 2016, Sofia

**SEECF PA GENERAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SCIENCE**

Albanian Parliament premises, Tirana on 8-9 April 2016

REPORT

ON

**“PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILDREN ON THE MOVE-A
CALL FOR PROTECTION OF MIGRANT CHILDREN IN SOUTH-
EAST EUROPE REGION; THE RECENT MIGRATION FLOW”**

Rapporteur: Esmeralda SHKJAU, Tirana

Introduction

The latest data, as of the end of 2014, shows that there are nearly 60 million displaced persons worldwide, over half of whom are children. The 2015 mixed-migration flows in Europe are challenging governments, including our governments, to respond in a way that respects the rights of refugees and migrants, particularly children. In 2015, in the European stream, children accounted for an average of 30% of the total number of refugees and migrants. Out of, 1,014,836 people who crossed the Mediterranean, arriving on Europe's shores in 2015, one in four was a child. In South-East Europe this proportion was higher: one in three¹. Between January and November 2015, out of 1.201.970 applications for asylum among European Union Member States, 433.203 of them were submitted by children²

These children are on the move due to situations of fragility and poverty back home, climate change, and armed violence and conflict including gross human rights violations. Against this background, millions of girls and boys leave their countries of birth or habitual residence in search of protection from conflict, violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination; improved living standards and better economic and social opportunities; family reunification; or several of these factors³.

Migration is also considered as an important factor contributing to development and prosperity, at the individual level, but also at the level of family, community and country of origin and destination. Most decisions to migrate, including those made by children, are made out of a complex combination of choice and necessity. Migration influences not only the lives of children on the move, both with their families or unaccompanied, but also the plight of children who are born to migrant parents in countries of destination or who are 'left behind' by migrating parents in their countries of habitual residence.

Children on the move, in particular those undocumented and unaccompanied or separated, are vulnerable to a range of human rights violations, including violence, exploitation and physical, sexual or psychological abuse; trafficking; detention; return and family separation against their best interests; lack of access to birth registration, justice, education, health and social services; xenophobia, discrimination and social exclusion; etc.⁴ Despite these challenges, migration can be an empowering experience and open considerable development

¹<http://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/unicef-refugee-and-migrant-crisis-europe-regional-humanitarian-situation-report-7-11>

²EUROSTAT as per data updated on 4 February 2016

³ See for example Study of the OHCHR on the challenges and best practices in the implementation of the international framework for the protection of the rights of the child in the context of migration, available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/151/41/PDF/G1015141.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴ Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No 6 on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin, available at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=5&DocTypeID=11

opportunities for many children, especially when regular and safe migration channels and appropriate legislation and policies are in place.

In 2015-2016, our region has been often at the focus of discussions on protection of children on the move. The Western Balkan route has been the main route for the refugees and migrants crossing Mediterranean towards Northern Europe. On the other hand, some of the SEECP Participants themselves continue to experience population's emigration flows, including of children. Our status, as an EU member or non EU member affects the freedom of movement opportunities for our citizens. Regardless of these different scenarios, we all have the obligation to ensure that the rights of all children on our region, including children on the move, are fully guaranteed and respected, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children on the move and the challenges faced

As already stated, in addition to the refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and moving across the Western Balkan route, many children on the move within Europe today are children from the South-East Europe, Western Balkans. Free movement of workers is a fundamental principle among EU Member States. EU nationals have the right to move to another EU country to work without a work permit. When an EU national is working abroad in another EU country, family members also have the right to reside and work in that country, regardless of their nationality. Children have the right to be educated there. Many children from our countries also move within Europe for education purposes and based on student visas. Such movements contribute not only to the development of the child but also to enhanced exchanges and bridges between our societies.

Non EU Member States nationals can however not move to an EU Member State for work without a work permit. Even when non EU citizens are equipped with work permit and are regular residents in the EU Member States, their families and children still need specific permissions to join them. The conditions put are often too demanding, threatening thereby family life, which is one of the core principles of our societies. They might also push the children to turn to smugglers and traffickers in order to reach their parents residing regularly among EU Member States.

Another scenario regards citizens from non EU Member States who ignore the legal requirements and still migrate to an EU Member State. Often children are part of this group. Many of these children are exposed to various risks while on the move and returned back to their countries of origin, once identified.

Yet, other children may flee abusive homes or other types of threats to their integrity and safety encountered in their own community, in the absence of effective child protection systems or weak and inadequate response from the law-enforcement and justice system.

In some of our countries the system of tracking these children leaving their communities, travelling to the EU and/or returning to their country of origin is still inaccurate, not allowing for a clear panorama of the dimensions of the problem and hence for adequate policy development in response to the phenomenon.

In all these contexts our governments have the responsibility to make sure that the movement out of the country is a free choice and that our citizens do not feel the pressure to seek opportunities elsewhere. More opportunities and alternatives need to be provided within our countries, especially by investing in quality education, ensuring social cohesion and youth employment opportunities and guaranteeing the right to a legal remedy and to the personal integrity. We also need to assist those children and families returning to the country by facilitating their reintegration in schools, communities etc.

Arriving refugee and migrant children

Refugee and migrant children arriving and on the move in our Region must be protected and cared for on equal grounds, with the same rights and opportunities. Most of them – 41 per cent – come from Syria, followed by Afghanistan (27%) and Iraq (16%).⁵ As many of these children are escaping war and conflict, their vulnerabilities are high. UNICEF has identified 5 particularly vulnerable groups consisting of babies and small children; children with disabilities and special needs; lost children; children left behind; and unaccompanied adolescent on the move. All these children have also undertaken a dangerous journey towards Europe. Since 1 September 2015, 342 children – many of them babies and toddlers – have drowned in the eastern Mediterranean.⁶

Once they reach our borders, they need to access territory, protection, care and be given possibility to claim international protection. While border control is very important and we are all committed to ensure adequate migration management, this should not go against respect for human rights, our international obligations and national laws.

Efforts need to be joined, and good examples followed, because many of the children face the risk of ending up stranded in open air, without services and care. Others are placed in reception centers, which start to be overcrowded and where the conditions remain poor. In such centers, there are often no sufficient gender and age segregated safe spaces, gender segregated water sanitation and hygiene facilities, safety and security measures for children and women. Accessibility for children and parents with disability is also a problem.

In the midst of chaos and confusion - new restrictions at borders, new documents needed – refugee and migrant children need a safe space to play and be children again; mothers need a private area to rest and feed their babies; some need counselling and, referral to health

⁵ UNHCR data portal <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

⁶ UNICEF data, January 2016

services; all of them need trusted professionals able to support them; and unaccompanied children need somebody to talk to, somebody who will act in their best interests. With this regard, a continuous cooperation between line Ministries, Social Protections and the Ministry of Education in the region is necessary, particularly between the Ministries responsible for social protection.

All competent institutions in the South-East Europe also need to cooperate with international actors in our region which have invaluable experience in tackling these issues and to define risk analysis procedures, best interests of the child - minor unaccompanied migrant, operational identification procedure standards and measures of social and family legal protection, provide additional field workers for direct work with the children, constant presence of experts and their constant training.

All SEECP Participants are investing in further development of the child protection systems and today they might be unable to provide the needed support and assistance required by these children on the move. There is a need for more and better qualified social workers, teachers and psychologists to help the children. There is also a need to further invest in asylum law and procedures to make sure that they are child and gender sensitive. Children experience particular forms and manifestations of persecution, including under/age recruitment, subjection to early marriage and female genital mutilation, which occur even in the so-called safe countries. How efficient are our systems to prioritize asylum claims made by children, consider them in a timely fashion by also respecting procedural guarantees and best interest of the child? All European State face challenges in this direction.

Efforts are needed to make sure that the children do not get separated by their families while on our Region. Especially, the children who are unaccompanied and separate face a real risk of becoming prey of smugglers and traffickers. It is difficult to quantify how many children are vulnerable or how many may have been already exploited or abused, as exploitation is often hidden. Many of the children do not trust the system as they fear of being delayed or detained.

In order to be able to provide adequate assistance and support to these children on the move, there is a need for an ongoing and transparent debate within our societies. Social cohesion is one of our common goals and assistance to children on the move is part of transformation of the region into an area of peace and stability. In that respect, constant cooperation and consultations with the International Migration Organization, UNICEF, UNHCR, commissariats for refugees, non-governmental organizations and humanitarian organizations of EU Member States are necessary.

Conclusions and the role of the Parliaments

Against this background, when the rights of the children are at stake, the role of the parliaments becomes crucial. The main roles of the parliaments include to check and challenge the work of the Government; make and change laws and debate the important issues of the day at the national level, but also increasingly at the regional and international level.

Faced with the current situation, our governments need to become more accountable to the parliament on the measures taken by them and how these measures respond to the vulnerabilities of the children, protect their rights and respect the international obligations undertaken. The Parliament has the instruments to control and to encourage the governments on existing best practices regarding protection of children on the move. There is a need to call upon our governments to further develop the services needed for all children, including children on the move. There is a need to know more about the situation of children on the move, the need for services by these children and what challenges are faced in response. This Platform should further push the improvement of education, health services, care and protection for children, including different categories such as our own child citizens on the move and/or refugee and migrant children arriving in South East Europe.

There is a need also to be pro-active by all actors, including civil society, on legislative reform, by identifying legislative gaps and propose amendments and new laws enabling us to better care and protect children on the move. Many of our Parliaments have already established special committees on the rights of children. Such committees can provide a strong voice on protection of the rights of all children, including children on the move, and seek support across political parties and throughout our societies. We have to play an active role in transmitting to our societies values such as respect for human rights, diversity and social cohesion. Our policies and interventions should be coordinated at the regional level and aimed at ensuring better protection and care for all children, including children on the move, whether they come from our own countries or other regions of the world.

General Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science

RESOLUTION

Adopted 11 June 2016, Sofia

Reaffirming the principles established in the Charter of good neighborly relations, stability, security and cooperation, signed in Bucharest in 200, as the founding document of SEECP;

Guided by the Rules of Procedures of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly adopted on May 2014 which establish the functioning of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly;

In accordance with the SEECP PA Work Programme 2015/2016 adopted on May, 2015;

Emphasizing that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols are legal binding instruments for all our countries;

Taking note of the General Comment No 6 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin;

Following the Recommendations given by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the Day of General Discussion: 'The rights of all children in the context of international migration', in 2012;

Deeply concerned by the situation of refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe, their access to rights and services;

The General Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science, which was convened in Tirana, on April 9, 2016:

1. **Urges** SEECP Participants to recognize minors on the move as children, first and foremost. Border control and immigration policies should never be enforced at the expenses of the rights of the child;
2. **Calls upon** SEECP Participants to guarantee that every child has access to an effective procedure to claim international protection. Any claim for international protection by a child should be considered in its own merit, in a timely fashion and respecting all procedural guarantees and the best interests of the child;
3. **Recommends to** SEECP Participants to undertake immediate measures aiming at reforming the asylum system and make sure they become child and gender sensitive;

4. **Calls upon** SEECP Participants to step up measures for eradicating child poverty, improving the education system, increasing the effectiveness of the care, child protection and justice for children systems, in order to reduce the push-factors for migration of children and adolescents from our Region;
5. **Urges** some SEECP Participants to cease the detention of children, with or without their parents, on the basis of their immigration status. Instead, to the greatest extent possible, and always using the least restrictive means necessary, they should adopt alternatives to detention that fulfil the best interests of the child, along with their rights to liberty and family life through legislation, policy and practices that allow children to remain with family members and/or guardians and be accommodated as a family in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved;
6. **Calls upon** SEECP Participants to continue investing in reception conditions both by enhancing their capacities and the conditions. Reception centres should meet children's needs in design, functioning and equipment. Sufficient gender and age segregated safe spaces should be available;
7. **Urges** all SEECP Participants to ensure access to basic services for children on the move and their families, including first medical aid, adequate food and non-food supply, mother and child safe spaces, child-friendly spaces and recreational activities for children, counselling, education etc., as well as referral to specialized services when needed (i.e. hospitalization, specialized mental health care, etc.);
8. **Encourages** Parliaments of SEECP Participants to hold an annual parliamentary debate that assesses the situation of children, including children on the move and the measures undertaken by the Government. More data and information is needed about the situation of children on the move, their needs, and the risks they face. The development of specialized services and social policies should be guided by such data. Children and youth should participate to such a parliamentary debate including children on the move themselves;
9. **Calls upon** SEECP Participants to prioritize the enhancement of child protection systems to also address the particular needs of children on the move and ensure their effective collaboration with the law-enforcement and justice system, with a view to hold accountable all those perpetrating violations of children's human rights. The Parliaments should monitor and ensure accountability so that budgetary decisions are driven by children's issues at all levels and contribute to systems strengthening. Budgetary decisions need to enhance alternatives to migration for national children and promote the reintegration of those who are returned; and

10. **Supports** SEECF Participants in undertaking all required measures to bring to an end the discrimination of foreign children and ensure that they access child protection systems on equal basis with national children. Further investments in such systems need to ensure that these systems provide the services needed also by refugee and migrant children arriving in the country and that sufficient and well-qualified guardianships, social workers, psychologists, teachers, doctors, police officers, magistrates and lawyers are available to assist the children.