



**THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY OF THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION
PROCESS (SEECF)**

**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE REGIONAL
COOPERATION COUNCIL (RCC),**

MR. GORAN SVILANOVIC

BUCHAREST, 10 MAY 2014

Excellencies,
Honourable Members of the Parliaments,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here today and to address this distinguished body.

Bucharest is a place of significance for the SEECP and the regional cooperation in South East Europe. It reminds us of the historical moment, on 12th of February 2000, when the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in SEE was signed, laying the ground of a project of peace, stability and prosperity in South-East Europe.

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Romanian parliament for the leadership and openness, for the fruitful cooperation achieved with the RCC and its Secretariat during the Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP.

The motto “Sharing One European Future” clearly depicts the essence of your C-i-O, and the common goal of the region. Through an array of activities and concrete projects carried out throughout the year, the SEECP C-i-O contributed substantially to the European and Euro-Atlantic integration efforts of the aspirants from SEE.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the SEECP Participating States for their determination and commitment to make the region of South East Europe a better place for its people, as well as for their efforts that have led to the inauguration of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly.

It is beyond any doubt that this event is an unwavering expression of everyone’s aspirations around the table for prosperity and stability in South East Europe.

This gathering unveils the potential of the SEECP when speaking with a common voice. It also shows what regional cooperation can achieve if perceived as a way for building consensus and taking resolute action.

In this context, one can only be reassured that the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly will function as an effective and inclusive body within which Parliaments can pursue a higher level of cooperation in the service of common goals.

Parliamentary cooperation in general contributes to reconciliation, mutual understanding and good-neighbourly relations. It plays a key role in launching and nourishing public debate and strengthening political cooperation towards joining the EU.

Speaking of the EU, we have witnessed progress being made on the European integration path. But we have also seen that lingering issues such as, the effects of the economic crisis, do not disappear with countries moving forward in the EU accession process.

This is where the RCC intervenes. Our response last year was the development and adoption of the RCC Strategy and Work Programme (SWP) for 2014 – 2016, with the South East Europe 2020 Strategy as its central pillar. The SEE 2020 in particular aims at boosting prosperity and job creation, as well as at underscoring the European perspective of the region's future. The SEECP MFAs, at their meeting in Ohrid on 31 May 2013, declared their unequivocal support and commitment for its successful implementation.

Parliaments, as legislators, will be indispensable to this endeavour, by virtue of their central role in promoting and implementing reforms, notably within the framework of the countries' European agenda, as well as in increasing the efficiency and transparency of governing structures.

Having said this, I would like to give you a glimpse of the RCC's forthcoming work. We are engaged in the development of the national and regional action plans for the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy and of the quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring progress. The three elements – national action plans, regional action plan and the baseline data – will constitute the SEE 2020 Baseline report that RCC wants to produce by June this year.

Following the SEE 2020 Governing Board, which is expected to adopt the Baseline report, I intend to report to the RCC Annual meeting and to the SEECP high-level events, which will take place here in Bucharest in the second half of June under the Romanian SEECP C-i-O, on the progress made so far in the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

Therefore, the RCC and all stakeholders involved in the RCC SWP for 2014 – 2016 and the SEE 2020 Strategy count very much on your support in providing the legislative framework for attaining the goals commonly agreed by the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The adoption of the Declaration on the inauguration of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly represents an expression of continuity, of institutionalization of the

parliamentary cooperation within the SEECP format, and at the same time of renewed commitments to contribute in making South East Europe a prosperous region.

Needless to say, the RCC will continue to support parliamentary cooperation, and offer assistance, as appropriate, to the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly and its mission.

By way of concluding, allow me to thank once again Mr. Valeriu Ștefan Zgonea for organizing excellently this meeting, and to congratulate the SEECP Participating States for this momentous achievement.

Thank you for your attention.