

Mrs Podașcă's presentation on the Working Group Report

Thank you Mr. President

Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Distinguished guests,

SEECF is a successful story. After a long journey which has taken more than 18 years, and due to our combined efforts and hard work, we are all here for a historical moment: the first Parliamentary Assembly of the South-Eastern Europe Cooperation Process.

The Balkans are proving today, to the whole Europe, that through open dialogue and by finding common ground it can provide an unique insight of friendship and unity.

I would very much like to congratulate all of you. [*pauza pentru aplauze, aplauzi tu sa dai tonul*]

In May 2013, at the Speakers' Conference held in Ohrid, we had been given a clear mandate: to organize the first Parliamentary Assembly. The Working Group met twice in Bucharest and undertook a huge challenge: to achieve consensus over the Assembly Rules of Procedure.

Please allow me to praise the members of the National Parliaments that were involved in this long and difficult process: I'd like to give thanks to all the national coordinators, for their hard work and strong commitment. And I would also like to commend the extraordinary support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

You can all review the Working Group Report, which has been printed and inserted in your folders. I will only touch upon a few key elements.

Dear colleagues and guests,

The current Chairmanship-in-Office proposed a new organizing scheme [?] for the Working Groups: we have been collecting long time before the WG all the amendments to the documents that were to be approached. We also found it useful to distribute the aggregate feedback before each meeting.

Moreover, the current Chairmanship-in-Office proposed that after each meeting a procedure was to be launched in order to reach for tacit agreement on some technical improvements to the documents.

All these additional procedures helped us reach consensus on hundreds of amendments and comments, for the first time in this Group.

Many other activities have been carried out by the current Chairmanship-in-Office in order to support the effectiveness of the Working Group including the personal involvement of the Chairperson-in-Office. On behalf of the Working Group I'd like to thank Mr. President Zgonea for his tremendous involvement and support.

Dear colleagues and guests,

The Working Group has reached consensus on four strategic documents fundamental to the inaugural session of the Parliamentary Assembly of SEECp. Allow me to highlight the key accomplishments:

- The draft Rules of Procedure, the keystone document which includes more than the provisions on the procedures. The draft Rules was shaped in such a way that, once adopted, it will guarantee a certain degree of institutionalization for the SEECp Parliamentary Assembly. It

was also aligned with the provisions of the documents adopted by the Speakers in Ohrid.

- The draft Declaration on the inaugural Assembly which is the main political document
- The draft Work Program for 2014/2015
- The Working Group Report from which I'll like to underline several provisions.

One important proposal is to establish an Ad hoc Working Group of the Parliamentary Assembly, in line with the provisions of the draft Rules of Procedure.

We, the Working Group, are calling for a vote of the Parliamentary Assembly to establish this future Ad hoc Group with the clear mandate of finishing the work on Secretariat and the budget. Of particular importance are the draft Rules of the Secretariat.

Consequently, the future Ad hoc Working Group shall consider all amendments to the draft Rules of the Secretariat and to the possible Compromise Model of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly Secretariat. All these documents that are part of this mandate have been agreed by the present Working Group and distributed by the current Chairmanship-in-Office to all national delegations. I have to make it clear that all these documents are not subjected to consideration by the present Parliamentary Assembly but are to be discussed in the next Ad-hoc Working Group.

We are also proposing that the Ad hoc Working Group shall report to the next Session and in this respect shall forward its Report to the President of the Assembly at least 30 days prior to the next Session.

Finally, we want to benefit from the experience of the current Working Group members, so we kindly recommend the Assembly to consider their nomination for the next Ad-hoc Working Group.

The Working Group of the Parliamentary Dimension had also adopted several other decisions reflected in the Report, including invitations presented to several international organizations and special guests to the present Inaugural Session.

Dear colleagues,

Your vote in favor of this Report will implicitly establish the Ad hoc Working Group with the already presented mandate. This would be an essential step for the future of the Parliamentary Assembly of the SEECP.

It has been a great honor and challenge as well for me to Chair this Working Group during its last term. Its achievements belong to the entire Group.

I'm sure the future Ad hoc Working Group, if you agree on its establishment today, will learn greatly from our experience and I am ready to give it my full support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am proud to stand here today, in front of you, at the opening of the first Parliamentary Assembly of South-Eastern Europe Cooperation Process. We should all be proud of what we have accomplished. We have written an important page of European history. A page about unity, solidarity and friendship.

Thank you!

I am ready to answer to your possible questions on the Report if any.