SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION

OF THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (SEECP PA)

Prishtina, 24 June 2020

DECLARATION

WE, THE SEECP PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY:

1. **Reaffirming** the principles enshrined in the Declaration on Good-Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans, signed in Sofia in July 1996, marking the beginning of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Charter of Good Neighborly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation, signed in Bucharest in 2000, as the founding documents of the SEECP;
2. **Highlighting** the main objectives of SEECP PA, as defined in the Charter, which are enhancement of political and security cooperation, fostering economic cooperation, and enlargement of cooperation in the fields of human dimension, democracy, justice and combating illegal activities;
3. **Confirming** the commitment to the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the SEECP Participants and reaffirming the importance of the EU enlargement process as a mechanism to secure peace, stability and security in the region;
4. **Appreciating** the role of the Regional Cooperation Council, as an operating mechanism of the SEECP, in fostering regional cooperation and supporting the European perspective of South East Europe;
5. **Acknowledging** the importance of the cooperation between SEECP PA and the European Parliament for the realization of the goals of the Assembly and committing to establish this cooperation;
6. **Encouraged** by the positive work of Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science and its report and resolution;
7. **Reiterating** the commitment to make the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly a leading regional parliamentary organization that will effectively address the challenges of South East Europe and will lead to good neighborly relations in the region;
8. **Aware** that European Commission has recently intensified its efforts on environmental issues, by setting ambitious goals for the environment, such as - the European Green Deal, and encouraged by this momentum to push forward similar objectives for our region;
9. **Mindful** of the global health and social risks that COVID-19 pandemic poses and concerned about the looming economic fallout;
10. **In solidarity** with the families of victims of COVID-19 pandemic and with the people all over the world who have been affected in one way or another by these unprecedented times;
11. **Recognizing** the imperative need for a multinational effort to address this pandemic and acknowledging the positive role that regional cooperation can play in easing its impact;

HAVE AGREED TO:

1. **Reaffirm** the important role of the SEECP and the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly in strengthening stability and prosperity in South-East Europe;
2. **Highlight** that the prospect of accession to the European Union remains a strong motive for reform and stability in the region;
3. **Reconfirm** that SEECP is one the main driving engines behind regional cooperation in South-East Europe and commit to increase their reliance on this essential mechanism for the region;
4. **Expecting** more certain dynamics of the European Union enlargement process, which should guide the aspiring participants to continue implementing the necessary reforms;
5. **Call for** the EU to keep the enlargement process alive and steady in order to maintain its credibility and to ensure that participantsdon’t explore other alternatives that are opposed to the European founding values;
6. **Emphasize** that the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly can play a significant role in facilitating the SEECP participants in their objective to harmonize their legislative framework with the European Union *acquis* through exchange of experiences and best practices;
7. **Commit** to put special emphasis on youth issues – by promoting educational opportunities, strengthening job prospects, developing student exchange programs, etc. – as youth development is a crucial factor in creating democratic, sustainable relations in the region;
8. **Continue** to promote good neighborly relations in, and cooperation among the SEECP PA Participants with mutual respect and appreciation, in function of making the region more democratic, resilient and economically prosperous;
9. **Commit** to foster a more proactive cooperation with the European Parliament and other inter-parliamentary organizations with the aim of strengthening parliamentary democracy and parliamentary culture through open, inclusive and benevolent dialogue in order to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the SEECP PA;
10. **Enhance** communication among the parliaments of SEECP PA Participants in order to bring about mutual progress;
11. **Commit** to bring environmental issues front and center in order to ensure that our developmental goals are aligned with our aim to have safe and sustainable communities for generations to come;
12. **Highlight** the need for a coordinated, bold response to safeguard against the health and social risks of COVID-19 pandemic and against the looming economic fallout;
13. **Call on** the SEECP participants to share their experience on fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to be ready for future outbreaks;
14. **Emphasize** the need to build capacity for regional cooperation against natural disasters and cries**.**