

**CONCLUSIONS
OF THE PRESIDENTS
OF SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS
(Athens Conference, October 15-16, 1997)**

First, we take into account the profound and radical changes in the european space and, specifically in the South Eastern Europe, in the course of the last decade.

Second, we underline our abiding by the internationally recognised principles of respecting the sovereignty and of territorial integrity of states, the inviolability of national borders, the avoidance of use of violence, the peaceful resolution of differences, the non-intervention in internal affairs, the development of cooperation and good neighbourliness, the safeguarding of human rights at all fields and the respect of the International Law norms.

Third, we consider the intensification of the democratization process and the consolidation of the democratic institutions, democratic freedoms and individual and human rights, as well as the management of economic problems as basic prerequisites for the safeguarding of peace and stability in our region.

Fourth, we point out the european perspective of the states of our region, on the basis of the principles governing the european integration process.

Fifth, we emphasise the special role that can be played by our national parliaments, as genuine expressions of the popular will, in the development of relations among our countries and peoples.

Sixth, we follow closely our Governments' cooperation at all levels and in numerous fields of a political, economic, social, cultural and humanistic nature and we support every initiative whatsoever, undertaken towards that direction.

Seventh, we recognise the need for establishing a more substantial dialogue among our Parliaments, which will lead to the deepening of our relations.

Eighth, we reaffirm our will to strengthen cooperation at the bilateral field and to encourage more frequent parliamentary exchanges, as well as the activation of Parliamentary Committees involved in foreign relations.

Ninth, we stress the importance of developing our cooperation at the regional level, as well as our interest for other initiatives of regional character, already under way in our region.

Tenth, we deem it advisable to institute our dialogue through the organisation ,on a more regular basis and by rotation, of Conferences at the level of Presidents of Parliament.

Eleventh, we declare our intention to create a more permanent forum of understanding and cooperation, including the constitution of a Consultative Assembly of our Parliaments.

Twelfth, we agree, during the next Meeting of Presidents of Parliaments, to discuss and decide upon the establishment of a Working Group, consisting of a representative and an expert from each Parliament of South East European countries, if they wish to participate. This Working Group, shall work on the basis of the discussion and the decision of the next Conference, towards the materialization of the agreed upon constitution of a Consultative Assembly. In the meantime, the Hellenic Parliament shall inform those Parliaments of our region that were absent from today's meeting and, following consultations with all the Parliaments involved, the date and venue of the next meeting shall be determined. To this end, a preparatory meeting can take place in Athens .