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SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS

THIRD CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF PARLIAMENTS

DECLARATION

Tirana, 5 March 2002

Mr. Namik DOKLE, Mr. Željko MIRJANIĆ, Mr. Sejfudin TOKIĆ, Mr. Ognjan GERXHIKOV, Mr. Apostolos KAKLAMANIS, Mr. Stojan ANDOV, Mr. Gheorghe BUZATU, Mr. Kamer GENÇ, Mr. Žarko KORAČ, Mr. Milutin OJDANIĆ participated at the Third Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of the participating countries in South-East European Cooperation Process, held in Tirana, on 5 March 2002. Mr. Mate GRANIĆ participated also in the capacity of observer.

Mr. Adrian SEVERIN, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Uluç GÜRKAN, Vice President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr. Donal KURSCH, Vice-coordinator of Stability Pact, and Lord RUSSELL-JOHNSTON, President of the Governing Board of International Institute for Democracy attended also the Conference as guests.

The participants adopted the following:

Reaffirming our common determination to enhance continuously the cooperation among our Parliaments, peoples and states, in the interest of peace, welfare and common progress and on the basis of the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-East Europe,

Emphasising our resolution to participate actively in the construction of the Europe of the third millennium and reaffirming the whole region's orientation towards integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures,

Recalling the Conclusions of the previous Conferences of Presidents of Parliaments of South-East Europe, held in October 1997 in Athens and March 2001 in Skopje,

I

1. Stress that securing peace and stability, while respecting sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the frontiers, is a pre-condition for successful regional cooperation and progress of the countries in the region.
2. Support efforts being made in achieving and implementing the Framework Agreement, and welcome the efforts made for the adoption of the subsequent constitutional reforms and legislation changes, and, at the same time, condemn all forms of violence as means for the settling of problems.
3. Welcome the establishment of the new Parliament of Kosovo, as one of the measures envisaged in the UNSCR 1244 and invite all the political forces

represented in it to help in the building of a democratic and multi-ethnic society in favor of peace and stability in the region.

4. Stress the important role played by international organizations and their Missions in the region, and appraise their contribution to ensuring peace and stability in South-East Europe.
5. Condemn fiercely the barbarious terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States of America and all forms of terrorism that pose a threat to stability and security. Express also our commitment to promote the widest possible cooperation in order to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism as well as its consequences in the financial and social sector, and deprive terrorism and its international networks, or their supporters, from all possibilities of safe havens.
6. Reconfirm our support to the consistent individual punishment of the war criminals for the crimes committed in the territories of Former Yugoslavia, and in that context, supporting the work of the ICTY in the Hague, as well as all the activities undertaken in apprehending and bringing all the indictees to justice.
7. Encourage the holding of regular Conferences of the Presidents of the Parliaments, meetings of the Chairmen of the Parliamentary Committees on Foreign Policy and other Committees as fora of multilateral political dialogue embracing all countries in South-East Europe. In this spirit, it was suggested to consider the possibility for the establishment of a Parliamentary Assembly, within the context of SEECP. These fora would have substantial contribution to the active exchange of information and experience in order to consolidate co-operation, to foster security and stability in the region, as well as to promote the efforts aiming at European and Euro-Atlantic integration
8. We reaffirm our support for the efforts undertaken by the Stability Pact and our commitment to enhance our close cooperation with the Stability Pact to the benefit of promotion of regional trade liberalisation, creation of infrastructure networks and identification of other important projects of common interest.
9. Reaffirm the need to find sustainable solutions to secure the return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in safety, with the necessary international assistance.
10. Welcome the ongoing efforts to further promote and reinforce coordination between European Union, Stability Pact and SEECP, to the benefit of peace, stability and economic development of the region.

II

11. Reaffirm our commitment to concrete and specific common actions, within the scope of parliament competence, to address terrorism, organized crime, all forms of illicit trafficking, in particular of narcotic substances, and corruption.
12. Reaffirm our full support to the development of Parliaments as the centers of the democratic decision-making process, expressing to the greatest possible extent the opinion and the aspirations of the voters.

13. Reiterate our commitment to respect the rules and the standards of democratic, fair and free direct elections, and shall regularly exchange views on improvement of the legislation in this area and its implementation.
14. Emphasize the priority we place on the full participation in parliamentary activities by all legitimate and qualifying democratic parties.
15. Reiterate our commitment to the full respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as provided for in the relevant international texts and documents.
16. Shall encourage the sharing of the best practices in parliamentary procedures and parliamentary efficiency in our countries, with a particular emphasis on the adequate staff training and information services report.

III

17. Welcome the process of accession, as well as the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) of the countries in the region with the European Union and shall strengthen the cooperation among our Parliaments regarding the necessary alignment of legislation with that of the European Union, as well as the supervisory role of the Parliament over the governmental activities in the economic, legislative, institutional and other reforms.
18. Shall support the governments to work closely to further promote the economic development of SEECP Region, and stress the need for the implementation of the Action Plan for Regional Economic Cooperation.
19. Shall encourage efforts aiming at promoting a sustained culture of cooperation with the non-governmental entities of civil society, including especially educational, scientific and cultural institutions, considering education and cooperation as powerful means in the creation of a climate of tolerance and mutual understanding. The Parliaments are invited to recommend to their Governments to foster dialogue among the schools and universities in the respective countries for the encouragement of the educational projects, especially in the field of History and other relevant disciplines.

We, the participants of the Conference, appreciate the efforts of the Presidency in the framework of the parliamentary dimension of SEECP, and look forward to the next Conference of Presidents to be held in Belgrade.