

Address by Nikola Novakovic,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, representing
the South East Europe Cooperation Process
25 November 2011 in Tallinn

Dear colleagues,

It is our pleasure and honor to be here with you at the 30th Session of the Baltic Assembly, the session that marks its 20th anniversary. On behalf of the Parliaments of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States and my personal name, I would like to congratulate you for the two decades of your long and fruitful cooperation.

It is my pleasure, as the representative of Serbia, the country which at the moment is holding Chairmanship in office of the SEECP Participating States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Romania, Turkey, Slovenia and Serbia, to represent here today, together with Ms Marianna Vitanova, the Head of the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation, our regional Cooperation Process.

Regional cooperation is an important element of European integration, which in turn is an indispensable tool for a durable stabilization of the region. By upgrading regional ownership to enhanced regional responsibility, delivering concrete and visible results to the benefit of the people of the region and relying on the stimulating effects of the EU enlargement policy, we could produce the best response strategy to the needs of the countries from the region. This can become an effective, long-lasting contribution to enhancing positive developments in South East Europe.

I would like just shortly to inform you that the South East European Cooperation Process Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South East Europe, signed in Bucharest on October, 12, 2000, where Signatory Countries committed themselves to firmly act in order to transform the region into an area of peace, security and stability in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation for the benefit of their countries and people and of Europe as a whole. The participating countries signed the Memorandum of understanding on inter-parliamentary cooperation in South East Europe at the 7th Annual Conference held in Sofia on 14 April 2008, strongly believing that the future of the South East European countries lies in the European Union, with EU membership as the ultimate goal.

The Working group of the Parliamentary Dimension SEECP has been established with the aim to research and propose the possible forms of the institutionalization, objective that follows up from the final declarations adopted at the SEECP Speakers Conferences. Besides our interest to develop cooperation with the Baltic Assembly and to advance bilateral cooperation with its every member state, we are interested to learn on spot how your regional assembly does function and we are also here for that reason.

Dear colleagues,

I will use this opportunity to underline that the Republic of Serbia attaches particular importance to development of its relations with South-East European countries, as basis for facilitating stability and enhancement of the comprehensive good-neighbourly relations, which would enable the integration of this part of Europe with the EU. Starting from this priority of our foreign policy, the Republic of Serbia has defined all the priorities of the Chairmanship-in-office of the SEECP.

Serbia is particularly devoted to the continuation of democratic processes and promotion of European values in the participating states of the South-East European Cooperation Process, with the aim of accelerating EU integration of all the countries in our region. Serbia is also interested for the intensification of institutional dialogue with the European Commission and EU institutions.

We put particular emphasis on the fight against organized crime, which is a constant threat to stability of our countries and an open threat to their further prosperity, what requires close cooperation and full coordination of activities of the police and judicial institutions of all countries in the region.

We are interested to be engaged in the realization of as many as possible infrastructural projects in the region, such as Corridors 7 and 10, as a necessary prerequisite for better links between the countries of the region, and their better links with neighboring regions.

We are streaming to overcome the economic crisis and its consequences, strengthening economic cooperation, trade, attracting investments.

Our aim is also to raise the level of regional cooperation in the field of environmental protection, prevention and alleviation of consequences of all types of disasters and to improve cooperation in the field of education, science and culture.

At last, but not least, the Republic of Serbia also pays considerable attention to the strengthening of parliamentary dimension of cooperation within SEECP. Furthermore, it is in full concordance with the place of the institutions we are coming from and with the purpose of our visit to your Parliamentary Assembly. In this context, it is important to emphasize that the further deepening of cooperation in the SEE region necessarily requires its institutionalization, including the parliamentary dimension.

In close connection with the strengthening of the parliamentary dimension of the SEECP, that is its institutionalization, our interest is also to develop cooperation of this regional Process with other regional and international organizations and initiatives.

And we are here today with you, to congratulate you, to learn from your experiences, and to express our interest for intensification of the cooperation between your Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Dimension of the SEECP, hoping that cooperation within our regional organization will be fruitful as yours.