



## **“SOLIDARITY IN ACTION”**

### **FORMAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**OHRID, 31 MAY 2013**

#### ***REPORT***

*on the activities of the Macedonian Chairmanship in Office  
of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP)  
June 2012/June 2013*

### **1. Introduction**

The Report of the Macedonian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office was submitted and approved at the Formal Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 31<sup>st</sup> May and the Meeting of the Committee of the Political Directors on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

This Report summarizes the most important activities and events undertaken within the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office of SEECP.

### **2. General Remarks**

The Republic of Macedonia took over the Chairmanship-in-Office of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) at the Belgrade Summit of the SEECP on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The activities of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office were focused on promotion of the principles of good-neighborliness, regional cooperation and reconciliation through intensification of the political, security, trade, cultural, educational and other cooperation in the region, with an aim to provide conditions for further socio-economic development and progress in the European and Euro-Atlantic integrations.

In view of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the countries of the region, the Macedonian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office gave special attention to the intensive co-operation with the EU and the participation of the EU representatives in all SEECP meetings and activities.

### **3. Meetings and activities**

From the beginning of our Chairmanship-in-Office, we were strongly committed to the implementation of priorities and activities of the SEECP focused on efficient activities and further developments of relations in the field of culture, health, parliamentary cooperation, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, cooperation of the local and regional authorities, science and education.

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office organized the following meetings and events:

#### ***Informal meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs MFA of the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP), held in New York on 27 September 2012***

The meeting was organized on the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session where the main elements of the Priorities and the Calendar of events of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office were presented. Additionally, the Macedonian C-i-O proposed to formalize the practice of holding Informal meetings of the SEECP MFA on the margins of the UNGA.

#### ***First Meeting of SEECP Political Directors, held in Skopje on 10 October 2012***

The Macedonian C-i-O presented the Priorities and Calendar of Events of the SEECP Chairmanship at this meeting noting successful implementation of the RCC on-going Strategy and Working Program and the foundations for the next Strategy and Working Program covering the 2014-2016 period. The meeting was preceded by the SEECP Troika meeting.

#### ***15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Parliamentary Dimension of SEECP, held in Skopje on 15-16 October 2012***

The International Conference themed “15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Parliamentary Dimension - the past, present and the European future of the Region “marked the achievements, challenges and perspectives of the parliamentary cooperation, which would lead to the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly as one of the pillars of SEECP. In addition, SEECP Parliamentary Dimension Working Group held its VII Meeting where the process of institutionalization and further development of the regional inter-parliamentary cooperation was considered. In addition, the group worked on preparation of the final documents that would be submitted at the Tenth Conference of Speakers of Parliament of the SEECP participating states, in Ohrid 2013.

#### ***10<sup>th</sup> Coordination Meeting between the Troika of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat and the European Union (EU), held in Sarajevo on 17 October 2012***

The Coordination Meeting presented the opportunity to discuss the most important activities related to the priorities of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office and the activities of RCC related to the implementation of its Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013.

#### ***Ministerial Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the SEECP Participating States on the topic “National Museums from SEE – Status, management and partnership”, held in Skopje on 13 November 2012***

The Conference provided exchange of views on the current status of national museums, as guardians of culture and its heritage, their models of management, existing partnership, as well as on perspectives for further development of their cooperation. For the purpose of improving the understanding of cultural values and heritage among countries of South East Europe a Joint Statement was adopted, aiming to enhance cross-border cooperation between cultural institutions and operators in the following segments: management, collection, culture heritage protection, application of the contemporary technologies and museum documentation digitalization, cultural heritage presentation, museum education and expert staff exchange.

***Regular annual meeting of the Heads of Consular Departments of SEECP Participating States, held in Skopje on 12 February 2013***

The heads of the consular services from the region countries held their fourth meeting. Promoting good-neighborly relations, regional stability and security and EU integration of the region were noted as key principles of the SEECP cooperation. The implementation of national visa policies in the Region and their impact on the free movement of people, goods and services was discussed. On that note, the possibility in several countries to cross the national borders only by using biometric identification cards only was highlighted as an achievement. Migration policy and the efforts aiming to neutralize the increasing trend of citizens seeking so called economic asylum in some of the Schengen countries, were discussed as well. The meeting has for the first time ever produced a debate on the challenges of most efficiently and rationally creating the so called Southeast European Virtual Consulate which would be tasked with providing consular services in electronic form.

***VII Meeting of the Parliamentary Dimension of SEECP Working Group, held in Skopje on 12 February 2013***

SEECP Parliamentary Dimension Working Group on its VII Meeting continued the discussion on the process of institutionalization and further development of the regional inter-parliamentary cooperation and worked on preparation of the final documents that would be submitted at the Tenth Conference of Speakers of Parliament of the SEECP participating states, in Ohrid 2013.

***11<sup>th</sup> Coordination Meeting between the Troika of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat and the European Union (EU), held in Sarajevo on 27 February 2013***

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office presented the most important activities and events related to the priorities of SEECP and RCC Secretariat presented the activities related to the implementation of its Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013. The meeting provided the opportunity to exchange views regarding the proposals for changes in the List of participants (Annex I) and the Statute of the RCC (Annex II) of the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the RCC as well as exchange of views regarding the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016.

***Inauguration of South East European Health Network Secretariat, held in Skopje on 7 March 2013***

From the 8 Regional Health Development Centers with their role to transform the regional projects into long-term programs of cooperation and development, the Regional Health Development Center for Public Health Services is based in Skopje. The inauguration of South East European Health Network Secretariat in Skopje marks a period of transition of the SEEHN towards full SEEHN ownership of this regional process. In addition, a Round table dedicated to the regional cooperation for health in SEE was organized by the Ministry of Health of Republic of Macedonia.

***Second meeting of Political Directors of the SEECP Participating States, held in Skopje on 9 April 2013***

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office presented the most important activities and events related to the priorities of SEECP. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on the current situation and perspectives of the EU enlargement process in the region. In addition, Macedonian C-i-O presented the draft outcome documents of its SEECP Chairmanship and the Food for thought paper in which two instruments aimed to strengthen the regional cooperation within SEECP were described. The Paper presented a proposal for establishment of ad hoc expert group tasked with preparing recommendations and models in view of strengthening and consolidating the future regional cooperation within the SEECP. The recommendations of the Ad hoc expert group should be adopted and endorsed at the highest SEECP level. The SEECP Political Directors meeting was preceded by the SEECP Troika meeting.

***Second Informal Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States, held in Skopje on 10 April 2013***

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office informed of the most important activities and events related to the priorities of its SEECP Chairmanship. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on the current situation and perspectives of the EU enlargement process in the region.

***Second Meeting of the NGO Network for continuous cooperation in the framework of SEECP, International conference on the topic “European Union through the prism of SEE civil societies”, held in Skopje on 15 - 16 April 2013***

The International Conference on the topic: “European integration through cooperation of the parliaments, the civil society and independent regulatory bodies in South East Europe” discussed the role of the national parliaments in the inter-parliamentary cooperation and in the EU integration process of the region, as well as the improved synergy and coordinated actions between the parliaments and non-governmental organizations represent the driving force for EU enlargement process of the Region.

***IX Meeting of the Parliamentary Dimension of SEECP Working Group, held in Skopje on 16 April 2013***

SEECP Parliamentary Dimension Working Group on its IX Meeting continued the discussion on the process of institutionalization and further development of the regional inter-parliamentary cooperation and worked on preparation of the final documents that would be submitted at the Tenth Conference of Speakers of Parliament of the SEECP participating states, in Ohrid 2013.

### ***VIII General Assembly of NALAS, held in Skopje on 19 – 20 April 2013***

15 associations of local authorities from 11 countries from the SEE attended the VIII General Assembly of NALAS in Skopje and discussed the European charter on equality of women and man, presenting NALAS contribution to RCC in developing the SEE 2020 strategy, electing new leadership of NALAS coming from Slovenia. NEXPO 2013 dedicated to paving the road to the European integration will take place this September in Croatia.

### ***Third meeting of Political Directors of the SEECP Participating States, held in Sarajevo on 24 April 2013***

The SEECP Political Directors held the drafting session of the outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office, the Ohrid Declaration and Joint Statement related to the subject of the Ohrid Summit – disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

### ***12<sup>th</sup> Coordination Meeting between the Troika of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat and the European Union (EU), held in Sarajevo on 24 April 2013***

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office presented the high level events as conclusion of the SEECP Chairmanship. The Coordination meeting demonstrated once again the efficient coordination between RCC and SEECP in the context of the upcoming high-level SEECP political events.

The meeting provided the opportunity to exchange views regarding the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016.

### ***Fourth meeting of Political Directors of the SEECP Participating States, held in Skopje on 15 May 2013***

The SEECP Political Directors held the drafting session of the outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office, the Ohrid Declaration and Joint Statement related to the subject of the Ohrid Summit – disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

### ***X Conference of Speakers of Parliament of the SEECP Participating States, held in Ohrid on 27 – 28 May 2013***

The Conference discussed the impact of the economic crisis in the region and the role of national parliaments in meeting new challenges concerning climate change, energy, transport and security. Declaration and Report of the activities of Parliamentary dimension Working group was adopted. The SEECP Participating States fully supported the transformation and institutionalization of the SEECP parliamentary dimension into SEECP Parliamentary Assembly as a regular parliamentary forum for exchange of experience, dialogue and cooperation on issues of special interest for the SEE countries and their citizens.

### ***“50 Years Skopje Earthquake – 50 Years of European Earthquake Engineering”, held in Skopje on 29 – 31 May 2013***

Republic of Macedonia in 2013 commemorates 50 years of the disastrous Skopje Earthquake and also observes 50 years of the European earthquake engineering as an expression of human efforts

and decisiveness to prevent future catastrophic events. In this regard, the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology – IZS in Skopje organized International Conference on earthquake engineering “50 Years Skopje Earthquake – 50 Years of European Earthquake Engineering” under the auspices of the President of Republic of Macedonia, Dr. Gjorge Ivanov with common goal to share expert observations and scientific knowledge from the latest research results and design innovations in the field of earthquake engineering.

***Fifth meeting of Political Directors of the SEECP Participating States, held in Ohrid on 29 May 2013***

The SEECP Political Directors held the closing drafting session of the outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office, the SEECP Ohrid Ministerial Declaration and “Solidarity in Action” Joint Statement related to the subject of the Chairmanship-in-Office – disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

***VI Annual Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council, held in Ohrid on 30 May 2013***

The Annual Meeting of RCC was co-chaired by the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office and RCC Secretary General. The meeting provided the opportunity to note the excellent cooperation between RCC Secretariat and the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office and to exchange views on the advancement of the regional cooperation. The Annual Report and the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016 were adopted.

***Formal Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States, held in Ohrid on 31 May 2013***

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office presented the Report on the activities and events related to the priorities of its SEECP Chairmanship. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on the current situation and perspectives of the EU enlargement process in the region. The SEECP Ministers for Foreign Affairs adopted the RCC Annual Report and the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016 as well as the SEECP Ohrid Ministerial Declaration and “Solidarity in Action” Joint Statement as outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP.



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The meeting provided the opportunity to exchange views regarding the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016.

### ***Fourth meeting of Political Directors of the SEECP Participating States, held in Skopje on 15 May 2013***

The SEECP Political Directors held the drafting session of the outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office, the Ohrid Declaration and Joint Statement related to the subject of the Ohrid Summit – disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

### ***X Conference of Speakers of Parliament of the SEECP Participating States, held in Ohrid on 27 – 28 May 2013***

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and decisiveness to prevent future catastrophic events. In this regard, the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology – IZS in Skopje organized International Conference on earthquake engineering “50 Years Skopje Earthquake – 50 Years of European Earthquake Engineering” under the auspices of the President of Republic of Macedonia, Dr. Gjorge Ivanov with common goal to share expert observations and scientific knowledge from the latest research results and design innovations in the field of earthquake engineering.

***Fifth meeting of Political Directors of the SEECP Participating States, held in Ohrid on 29 May 2013***

The SEECP Political Directors held the closing drafting session of the outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office, the SEECP Ohrid Ministerial Declaration and “Solidarity in Action” Joint Statement related to the subject of the Chairmanship-in-Office – disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

***VI Annual Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council, held in Ohrid on 30 May 2013***

The Annual Meeting of RCC was co-chaired by the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office and RCC Secretary General. The meeting provided the opportunity to note the excellent cooperation between RCC Secretariat and the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office and to exchange views on the advancement of the regional cooperation. The Annual Report and the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016 were adopted.

***Formal Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the South East European Cooperation Process Participating States, held in Ohrid on 31 May 2013***

Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office presented the Report on the activities and events related to the priorities of its SEECP Chairmanship. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on the current situation and perspectives of the EU enlargement process in the region. The SEECP Ministers for Foreign Affairs adopted the RCC Annual Report and the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2014 – 2016 as well as the SEECP Ohrid Ministerial Declaration and “Solidarity in Action” Joint Statement as outcome documents of the Macedonian Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP.