FIFTH PLENARY SESSION
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
OF THE SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS

Ljubljana, 14 April 2018

FINAL DECLARATION

WE, THE SEECP PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY:

Reaffirming the principles enshrined in the Charter of Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation, signed in Bucharest in 2000, as the founding document of the SEECP,

Following the Inaugural Declaration of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, adopted in May 2014 in Bucharest, as well as the Final Declaration of May 2015 adopted in Tirana, the Final Declaration of June 2016 adopted in Sofia and the Final Declaration of June 2017 adopted in Zagreb,

Emphasising the importance of regional cooperation based on an all-inclusive approach and equal footing¹,

Confirming the commitment to the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the SEECP Participants and reaffirming the importance of the European Union enlargement process as a mechanism to secure peace, stability and security of the region²,

¹ According to the parliament of Bucharest, this paragraph is interpreted as follows: "Emphasising the importance of regional cooperation based on an all-inclusive approach and equal footing among participants,"

² According to the parliaments of Belgrade and Chisinau, this paragraph is interpreted as follows: "Confirming the commitment to the process of European integration of the SEECP Participants and the support to the efforts of the Euro-Atlantic aspirants and reaffirming the importance of the European Union enlargement process as a mechanism to secure peace, stability and security of the region,"
Aware that the European Union and the European perspective are a guarantee for peace, stability and development that have no alternative,

Noting that integration into regional and sub-regional organisations is complementary to European and Euro-Atlantic integration,

Recalling the priorities set by the Slovenian SEEC P Chairmanship-in-Office, that contribute to an enlarged, safer, youth-empowered and digital Europe,

Aware that integration and coordinated cooperation between regional and sub-regional organisations and forums brings about useful synergies,

Supporting the Commission’s Communication for a Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkan, delivered in February this year,

Recalling the activities and projects of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), that are focused on delivering sustainable and positive change in South-East Europe,

Assuring that closer cooperation between the SEEC P Parliamentary Assembly and the RCC offers an opportunity to more easily achieve common goals, such as stronger social market economies and sustainable development, rule of law, and greater security in South-East Europe,

Reaffirming the commitment that the SEEC P Parliamentary Assembly wishes to become the leading regional parliamentary organisation and represent a platform for addressing the challenges of South-East Europe,

Highly appreciative of the work of the three General Committees of the SEEC P Parliamentary Assembly and welcoming their reports and resolutions as the outcome of their efforts to assist our parliaments in developing efficient exchange of best practices in South-East Europe,

Recognising that the SEEC P Parliamentary Assembly can be more convincing and more successful with an approach supported by professional and qualified human resources that focus their knowledge and energy on solving all issues identified as priorities at the political level,

HAVE AGREED TO:

Reaffirm the fundamental role of the SEEC P and the SEEC P Parliamentary Assembly in enhancing stability and prosperity in the region of South-East Europe,
Underline that the perspective of European Union accession and membership continue to be the main driver for reform, stability and security in the region and that the European Union enlargement process represents an irreplaceable tool for strengthening the commitment to European Union integration of the SEECP Participants which are on their path towards European Union membership.

Encourage, support and commit to the dynamics of the European Union enlargement process on an individual merit-based approach, underlining the Union’s responsibility and commitment for keeping the enlargement momentum alive and strengthening regional connectivity and integration through initiatives at EU level.

Emphasise that the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly possesses big potential for playing a key role in assisting the SEECP Participants in harmonising their legislative framework with the European Union acquis.

Further pursue an active approach in establishing relevant coordination mechanisms for combating organized crime and terrorism and improving border controls, recognizing the important role played by the Integrative Internal Security Governance in this sense.

Ensure that the prospects of youth are kept high on our agendas and to promote educational mobility, better job opportunities, and better social environments, given that these elements are crucial for the reconciliation in the region and for diverting young people from radical ideas and negative values.

Further develop digitalization and connectivity as key issues that will reflect the readiness of South-East Europe to play a role in future European economic and social progress and to grasp the new reality, by fully supporting initiatives at EU level contributing to this objective.

Further invest efforts in developing proactive cooperation with other regional and sub-regional organisations that share our European values in order to enhance visibility and overall effectiveness of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly.

Invite RCC experts to collaborate for substantive consultations on topics of RCC’s expertise, whenever deemed necessary.

Keep the debate and work on establishing a fully functioning permanent Secretariat for the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly high on the agenda in order to raise its effectiveness.