Distinguished Chairman,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The South East European Process for Cooperation was established in 1996 as a regional forum for South East European States. I shall not recall the most recent decade of the 20th century when the SEE States have been through an intensive process of deep social and economic processes of transition. Unfortunately in some regions, such as the Western Balkans, these processes led to a senseless war which caused suffering of hundreds of thousands people. The key goal of this forum is to deepen the cooperation between the participants in the process for preservation of peace and stability, as well as strengthening the awareness for our European historic belonging, but also for the future. In these years I believe that we have all learned the historic lesson that wars are not solutions to the problems or the open disputes, on the contrary, dialogue and cooperation are. In the same time, considering the former geo - political structures we were clearly determined for overall integration in the Euro – Atlantic structures.

In May 2014, in Bucharest, the Parliamentary Assembly was established, which in the past years was a significant organization forum, I would add, efficient mechanism in achieving of the fundamental principles and values of SEECP. Since then many things have changed. Five states of our 13 Members Club, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Croatia, and our host Slovenia, became full – fledged members of EU, and together with Turkey, Albania and Montenegro are Members of NATO. The rest of the states, including the Republic of Macedonia not only declaratively, but essentially work on fulfilling the so-called Copenhagen criteria, aiming, within a reasonable timeframe, to become members of United Europe and the NATO Alliance, I shall remind of the Conclusions of EU Conference in Thessaloniki and the Newest SEU Strategy on the Region.
Dear friends,

Many small parts will eventually create something impressive, and at this moment Europe without the Western Balkans seems to me as a mosaic which lacks few parts, preventing the masterpiece to be complete and perfect. In the same time, in Europe and beyond, particular geo-strategic processes are significant and evident. Starting from the debt crisis, to the Great Britain's referendum, thus the relations between EU and Russia clearly outline these new geo-political processes. That is why, now, the question that is self-implied is where is the Western Balkans is in this situation, in other words, the South East Europe states, which are not yet members. It is a fact that through these new developments, the great forces, if you wish the grand players in the international scene, wish, one way or another, to strengthen their position and influence in Europe. In this processes, they follow their interests which most often are contrary to many European principles and ideals. Certainly, the easiest way of intrusion is thought the missing parts of the image, as I have mentioned at the beginning, through the Western Balkans. Here, former players use the energy sector as intrusion point, while later use the investments in infrastructure and so on. Metaphorically speaking, EU should fill and complete the whole image through the overall integration of Western Balkans, thus finalizing the idea that was defined in the times of Schuman, Monet, Gaspar, Adenauer, Churchill, the founders of the idea of United Europe.

We, in the Republic of Macedonia, are aware of these processes. In the same time, we, not only declaratively but essentially work on the fulfillment of our obligations. We have a clear goal ahead, approaching the European ideals, principles and standards to Macedonia, but also approaching Macedonia to Europe. Rest assured that we have political consensus from all relevant political entities, and even more important the public polls demonstrate that over 70% of the citizens support the membership of the state on the Euro-Atlantic family. All this is a great motive, but also an obligation for the current parliamentary majority and Government, to be fully dedicated to surpass all open issues that burden the bilateral relations with the neighbors and the Region in general. As you are well informed, we have ratified the Agreement on Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation with Bulgaria, and the negotiations with Greece are intensive under the auspices of Mr. Mathew Nimitz, Representative of the United Nations on the name dispute. We have established a practice for scheduling joint government meetings with the states from the region, and the emphasis on these meetings is on the development of the overall bilateral relations, the developments in the Region, and certainly the Euro-Atlantic integrations.
In other words, I would say that we are decisively walking the European path, a path on which there was no hesitation because of not justified or non-disputed criticism we have received for this Euro-Atlantic determination of ours.

Guided by all this, I am convinced that the Parliamentary Assembly of SEECP and other organization fora, should, and I believe can, assist in finding the true answers and measures for the current geo-strategic processes. Answers which will lead towards strengthening of the region in all aspects, in other words strengthening each state. In the same time, this will be our contribution in strengthening the location, position and role of the European Union in the global geo-strategic movements in the world.

Thank you!