

## **JOINT STATEMENT**

Adopted at the Fifth Conference of European Integration Parliamentary Committees of states participating in the Stabilization and Association Process in South Eastern Europe

Belgrade, 23 - 24 November 2009

With the purpose of conducting regular exchange of opinions concerning issues relating to the Stabilization and Association Process, the participant states of the 5<sup>th</sup> COSAP meeting in Belgrade:

- Fully endorse and support the assessments made in the Strategy paper of the European Commission on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010, assured that the renewed consensus on enlargement of December 2006, shall pave the way for the reinforcement of democracy and the rule of law, respect of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development in the region and the European Union; Moreover, they express full willingness to meet all remaining conditions and European Commission recommendations stated in the annual reports and those stemming from the European/Accession partnerships;

- Welcome the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the reform of the institutions of the enlarged European Union facilitating the adaptation of its policies with the rapid changes happening in the world, convinced that the reforms shall additionally strengthen and simplify the institutional framework for further enlargements. Instead of claiming „no recovery - no enlargement”, we claim “no enlargement - no European Union”;

- Welcome the European Commission’s proposal and the conclusions of the Council of Ministers on the introduction of visa-free regime for all countries meeting the visa roadmap requirements, indicating that the free movement of citizens is a precondition for peace, freedom, economic and social development;

- Call upon the European Union to keep clear signal of encouragement to continue the enlargement process with the countries of the South East Europe, having in mind that it will have positive effect on security and stability in the region and Europe as a whole. Express conviction that the future enlargements will be made pursuant to the determined criteria without any undue delay and that each country shall be assessed individually, according to its individual performance;

- Call upon Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation to intervene with parliaments of EU member states to involve EU integration parliamentary committees of countries of SEE in work of COSAC as observers or associate members what would directly improve quality of work of respective committees;

- Welcome the possibility of using the EU Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance within the Stabilisation and Association Process until the necessary

membership criteria are met and express assurance that the new instrument shall provide considerable incentive to improvement of administrative capacities and specially administrative capacities of the parliaments, modernisation and reforms in accordance with the *acquis communautaire*, and significantly improve trans-boarder cooperation and the cooperation of institutions, civil society, local authorities and economy;

- Encourage all states participating in the Stabilisation and Association Process to continue pursuing further the development within the Stabilisation and Association Process, by implementing comprehensive social reforms facilitating the strengthening of democratic institutional capacities and the functioning of their market economies;

- Underscore the need for further development of cooperation, exchange of experiences and mutual support facilitating the stable reinforcement of the rule of law, resolute fight against corruption, terrorism and organised crime, and in this respect particularly underline the need for promotion of the integrated border management;

- Underline the need for cooperation and exchange of experiences of countries of SEE, specially emphasising necessity for joint effort in translation of *acquis communautaire* in South Slavic languages, bearing in mind similarities of respective languages;

- Reaffirm their readiness to intensify their engagement in the regional cooperation through the Regional Cooperation Council, application of CEFTA Agreement, Agreement on Energy Community, Agreement on Single European Sky, as well as by deepening cooperation in the sphere of economy, culture, technology, education, science and research;

- Reaffirm their readiness to strengthen the regional parliamentary cooperation by supporting Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation and regular participation of parliamentarians in its work, as well further institutionalisation and strengthening of initiatives in the framework of the South-East European Cooperation Process;

- Support the initiative to organize the EU – Western Balkan Summit in the first half of 2010, ten years after Zagreb Summit and in the format of the Thessalonica Summit 2003, with a clear message to the region regarding its perspective of EU accession;

- Conclude that the European perspective for the region and the timely integration to the EU is of key importance for the security, stability, good neighbourly relations, development and economic prosperity, and that the cooperation among the countries of the region is vital for their individual strengthening and for the establishment of an attractive and developed part of Europe.