

**X MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES FOR
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION/AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN
THE STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS
OF THE SOUTH-EAST EUROPE
(COSAP)**

JOINT STATEMENT

The X Meeting of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for European Integration/Affairs of the Countries participating in the Stabilization and Association Process of the South-East Europe (COSAP) was held in Belgrade on 10 and 11 March 2015.

This meeting was attended by members of European Integration parliamentary committees of Albania, Montenegro, the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia

Members of the Committee on EU Harmonisation of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Committee for European Integration of the Parliament of Kosovo* participated in the meeting as observers.

Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Latvia, Deputy Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Croatian Parliament, Head/representative of the EU Delegation to Serbia, representatives of the Regional Cooperation Council, representatives of non-governmental organisations, and the representatives of the diplomatic corps participated in the meeting as guests.

With the purpose of accomplishing an all-inclusive participation in COSAP we strive to improve the regional cooperation.

As part of the regular exchange of opinions on the Stabilisation and Association Process issues and on the EU enlargement issues, participants of the X COSAP meeting in Belgrade:

1. Fully agree with the support and assessments referred to in the EU Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2014-2015, confident that the existence of consensus on the continuation of the enlargement process enables strengthening of democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law and sustainable development both in the region and in the European Union; support the position of the European Union on the credibility of the enlargement policy that contributes to mutual benefits of peace, security and prosperity in Europe, reinforces EU political and economic strength and has a powerful transformative effect on the countries concerned.
2. Welcome clear and unambiguous decisions and statements of the EU institutions on the importance of continuation of further enlargement, confident that the clear perspective of EU membership is a key stabilising factor in the region.
3. Extend full support to the fulfilment of all the requirements arising from the Stabilisation and Association Process and express their complete readiness to fulfil the remaining conditions and carry out the recommendations of the

* This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

European Commission referred to in the annual reports and European and Pre-accession Partnerships.

4. Invite the European Council to consider the progress made by EU candidate and potential candidate member states in the implementation of the reforms and provide support to further accession process; emphasize that continuing to delay the opening of the negotiations entails an increasing and unpredictable cost for the regional stability and undermines the credibility and the effectiveness of the EU's enlargement policy.

5. Clearly committed to the perspective of EU membership, express readiness to implement the necessary reforms, with a particular emphasis on the rule of law and fundamental rights, strengthening of democratic institutions, economic governance and improvement of economic competitiveness, with an aim of ensuring a higher quality of life for all their citizens.

6. Support the new approach endorsed by the Council in December 2011, which includes placing of main emphasis to the rule of law issues in the negotiation process, confident that tackling these issues in the early stage of the accession negotiations is pivotal for its success.

7. Convinced that strengthening economic governance and competitiveness is essential, underline that the reforms need to be continued with an aim of achieving the economic growth, enhancing the business environment and increasing foreign investments, and urge the European Commission to continue providing assistance in tackling unemployment and social issues by, inter alia, strengthening a coordinated cooperation with international financial institutions and supporting the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) for developing transport infrastructure, energy sector, small and medium enterprises, etc.

8. Underscore the need to adopt and implement the strategies for the reform of public administration and their accompanying action plans in order to make the public sector become more efficient and professional.

9. Provide full support to launching a new Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA II 2014 - 2020, which provides financial resources by sectors for the countries in the Stabilisation and Association Process to fulfil their conditions to join EU, and for the support to regional and cross-border cooperation. Readiness of state, regional and local authorities and participation of civil society in programming, implementation and evaluation of the use of EU funds is deemed to be one of the most important prerequisites for the success of the accession process.

10. Agree that the European Integration Process significantly contributes to strengthening regional and cross-border cooperation, promotion of good neighbourly relations and mutual respect, as prerequisites for stability and honest and lasting reconciliation in the region. In this regard, reiterate a full support to the work of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), as well as the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), and implementation of the Regional South East Europe 2020 Strategy.

11. Emphasize the importance of regional cooperation between Committees for European Integration/Affairs in promotion of European Values, exchange of best practices in adopting and harmonising of national legislation with the *acquis*, strengthening the parliamentary oversight function, international assistance programmes and cross-border/regional projects.

12. Call for more efficient fight against organised crime, implementation of anti-corruption policies and legislation particularly in public administration, public procurement and law enforcement; as well as underline the importance of enhancing administrative capacities.

13. Extend gratitude to the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for organising X COSAP Meeting– and express full support to the next chairing parliament - the Parliament of Albania.