

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF
STATES PARTICIPATING IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS
Cetinje, March 27, 2009**

The Fourth Conference of the European Integration Parliamentary Committees of states participating in the South-Eastern Europe Stabilisation and Association Process (COSAP) was held in Cetinje upon the invitation of the Chairman of the Committee for International Relations and European Integration of the Parliament of Montenegro, Miodrag Vukovic, PhD. The Conference was opened by the Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro, Mr. Ranko Krivokapic. The Fourth COSAP Conference represented at the same time the Eighth Meeting of the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum (CPF), originally initiated by the Parliament of Montenegro, at which the European integration was the subject this year. In addition to the members of the European Integration Parliamentary Committees of COSAP Member States, the meeting was attended by the guests from the Parliaments of Bulgaria, France, Holland, Italy, Romania, Sweden, the House of Lords of the UK Parliament, representatives of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in the South-Eastern Europe (RSPC SEE), as well as high representatives of the European Commission, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), World Bank (WB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

In the function of regular exchange of attitudes concerning the issues related to the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), the participants of the 4th COSAP Conference in Cetinje:

Express full consent and support to the assessments in the Strategic Document of the European Commission on the EU Enlargement, as well as the conviction that the EU will continue with the enlargement process with the countries from the South Eastern Europe in the next period, having in mind the importance of this process for the security and stability of the region and Europe in general, although there are undisclaimable barriers in this process, caused by the world economic crisis and institutional changes within the Union;

Invite the EU member states to keep the enlargement process high on their agenda by encouraging enthusiasm of politicians and publics in the South-East Europe for achieving democratic and security stability and economic competitiveness of the states in the region;

Express their attitude that the future enlargements should be realized based on the established criteria, and that each country should be assessed individually, according to its own merits, specially stressing the importance of the Visa liberalisation, accession to the structural funds and obtaining the candidate status in regard to the fulfilment of the established criteria;

Identify that, although differing in the transition stages, within the period of two years, between the Third COSAP Conference held in December 2006 in Skopje and the Fourth Conference taking place in Cetinje, the progress of each country on its way to the European integration is indisputable and it is a priority goal of COSAP states' policies;

Encourage all the participants in the Stabilization and Association Process to continue with the progress in the process of Euro-integration and carry out the necessary reforms, in civil and business sector - wide mobilization, and implement measures that will strengthen the democratic and institutional capacity in their countries, as well as the functioning of their market economies;

Emphasize the need for the lasting and mutual cooperation and support, aimed at establishing a sound rule of law and a decisive combat against corruption and other forms of organized crime;

Express opinion that the parliamentarians from the EU member countries and parliamentarians of the European Parliament, will continue to develop the dialogue and cooperation with the parliamentarians of the countries in the region, and to strengthen the communication with the electorate for the future EU enlargement, although the actual economic development affects negatively the enlargement process and the public opinion of the member states;

Confirm their readiness for increased engagement in the regional cooperation process, primarily through Regional Cooperation Council as a regionally owned forum for cooperation, as well as a free trade zone by expanding and amending the existing CEFTA Agreement and other regional initiatives;

Confirm their readiness, with regard to the role of the Parliaments as the highest national representative and legislative bodies, to strengthen the regional Parliamentary cooperation by supporting the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in Sofia, through its institutionalization and permanent involvement of the members of parliaments in their work; By supporting regional cooperation of the European Integration Committees of states participating in the South-Eastern Europe Stabilization and Association Process, since the regionally cooperation represents one of the basic requirements for the progress of the region in the European integration process.

Express their gratitude to the host country, Montenegro for the organization of the IV Conference of Parliamentary Committees on European Integrations/Issues of countries participants in the Stabilization and Association Process in South-Eastern Europe, and its contribution to the work of the Conference.