

# **CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF STATES PARTICIPANTS IN THE STABILIZATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS OF SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

**Sarajevo, 16 – 18 June 2005**

## **JOINT STATEMENT**

We, Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Committees of European Integration of the States Participating in the Stabilization and Association Process of the South East Europe reiterate our conviction that clear and uncontested perspective of the full membership in the EU represents the most needed and the most effective incentive to pursuing and accomplishing reforms in our respective countries aimed at ensuring regional stability and internal democratic, economic and social development. Democratic and economical

We recall that already existing decisions taken by the EU Member States on the South Eastern enlargement, be they taken at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, or beyond Thessaloniki, have granted the EU membership perspective to all countries of the South East Europe once they individually meet the accession criteria.

Current uncertainty on the ratification of the EU Constitutional Treaty would require some more time for reflecting on an efficient political, economic and social model for Europe. Our position and message is that current challenges related to the EU internal arrangements, future financial perspective or absorption of the new Member States must not in any way adversely affect and delay enlargement process in South East Europe. We are confident that enlargement process can and must go in parallel to the internal debate in the EU on overcoming different views on constitutional arrangements. After all, the fifth enlargement round has been successfully pursued and completed in parallel to the debate within the Constitutional Convention.

The EU would benefit from the fact that it could send encouraging signals proving that cohesive and attraction forces of the Union will work even in the turbulent times. Therefore, we call on the EU Member States to keep the enlargement process high on their agenda by taking early decisions on the opening of accession negotiations with Croatia, granting candidate status to Macedonia, accomplishing the Stabilization and Association Agreement negotiations with Albania, and accelerating launching the Stabilization and Association Agreement negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro.

Bearing in mind that the IPA resources are not going to be increased, we believe that this will have a negative effect on our further democratic and economic development, and therefore we suggest that all IPA components should be accessible from the start to all the countries in the Process of Stabilization and Association, regardless of whether they are to acquire the status of candidate country in 2007 or not.

Our Parliaments stand ready to promote and perform the EU based reforms. We expect the EU to abide by its enlargement decisions, thus confirming its own adherence to the rule of law and democratic procedures. In so doing, they will simultaneously encourage enthusiasm of the politicians and the public in the South East Europe in achieving democratic stability and economic competitiveness of the countries of the region.