



**JOINT STATEMENT**  
**OF THE MINISTERS OF DEFENSE**  
**OF THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS**

**Budva, 14-15 March 2011**

1. We, the Ministers of Defense of the Participating States to the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP): H.E. Mr Arben Imami, Minister, H.E. Mr Selmo Cikotic, Minister, H.E. Mr Davor Bozinovic, Minister, H.E. Mr Zoran Konjanovski, Minister, H.E. Mr Boro Vucinic, Minister, H.E. Mr Dragan Sutanovac, Minister, H.E. Mr Mehmet Vecdi Gonul, Minister, Mrs. Avgustina Tzvetkova, Deputy Minister, Mr. Panos Beglitis, Alternate Minister of Defense, Mr. Viorel Oancea, Secretary of State for Defense Policy and Planning, Mr. Boris Balant, State Secretary, met in Budva on 14 and 15 March 2011 in order to continue the discussions on the future regional cooperation in the field of security, which were initiated within the framework of our previous meetings in Sarajevo in 2004, Bucharest in 2005 and Sofia in 2008.
2. We warmly welcome the participation of H.E. Mr Huseyin Dirioz, Ambassador, Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning in NATO HQ, H.E. Mr Sarunas Adomavicius, Ambassador, Chief of OSCE mission in Montenegro, Mr Hido Biscevic, Secretary General of the RCC, H.E. Mr Nikola Todorcevski, Ambassador, Director of the RACVIAC – Center for Security Cooperation, accredited Ambassadors of the SEECP countries to Montenegro and Defence Attachès in Montenegro, who attended the meeting as Special Invitees of the Montenegrin Chairmanship-in-Office.
3. We are deeply concerned about the fighting in Libya and strongly condemn the violence, disproportionate use of force and indiscriminate attacks on civilians that could escalate into a civil war. We call for immediate implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011).
4. We reaffirm the vital importance of defense reforms, strengthening of democratic institutions and positive contribution of European and Euro-Atlantic institutions in the region as we agreed that broader and deeper collaboration with international partners and institutions is required to develop and implement sustainable solutions and to promote peace, stability and prosperity.

5. We assess with satisfaction a number of positive developments in South Eastern Europe in terms of promoting stability, prosperity, good neighborly relations, regional cooperation and integration into European and Euro-Atlantic community. Therefore, we are encouraged by the continuing “open door” policy pursued by the EU and NATO as well as their active support for aspirant states.

6. This policy enhances the SEECP countries’ security and provides them with new opportunities to contribute to stability in the region and beyond. We also welcome the commitment to further develop the EAPC/PfP as the essential framework for substantive political dialogue and practical cooperation, including enhanced military interoperability.

7. We welcome the progress achieved by the Membership Action Plan (MAP) countries in meeting the criteria for NATO membership and their contribution to security in the region and beyond, including participation in ISAF. We welcome NATO decision, reiterated at the Lisbon Summit, to extend an invitation to the remaining candidate as soon as a mutually acceptable solution is reached.

8. We truly welcome continuation of further intensive involvement of the EU and NATO with the overall transformation process in South East Europe with the emphasis on defense sector. We also reaffirmed that each country’s progress towards the EU and NATO continues to depend on their individual merits.

9. We emphasize the importance of further experience sharing and cooperation among SEE countries on matters relating to defense sector transformation, having in mind that it bears social and economic consequences. This is more than a demand for a reduction in defense expenditure and requires a fundamental change in defense policies, management and practices. Countries from Southeastern Europe can learn from each other’s experiences and make good use of each other’s lessons learned.

10. We are committed to arms control, which provide predictability, transparency and a means to keep armaments at the lowest possible level for security. We will work to strengthen the conventional arms control regime in Europe on the basis of reciprocity, legally binding limitations, transparency and host nation consent. We also welcome the intention expressed at Lisbon Summit of NATO to establish a Committee to provide advice on WMD control and disarmament.

11. We stress the importance of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) as the successor of the Stability Pact in enhancing regional cooperation and supporting the stability, democracy and development in South East Europe. The RCC provides the SEECP with operational capacities and acts as a forum for the continued involvement of those members of the international donor community engaged in the region. Several Initiatives and Task Forces operate in Southeastern Europe,

mainly RACVIAC – Center for Security Cooperation, the South East and East Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) and the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI), which are supporting the regional efforts. The ultimate aim is to achieve a full regional ownership.

12. We acknowledge the results achieved by the work of RACVIAC – Center for Security Cooperation. We also take note of the Center’s activities such as Cooperative Security Environment, with the focus on Arms Control, Security Sector Reform and International Relations and Cooperation, with a special focus on Euro-Atlantic integration.

13. Insuring security and stability demands a coordinated application of economic, political and military means. In the framework of capabilities for providing security, we firmly believe there is a valuable role for the South-Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM) process and South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG). SEEBRIG is a significant tool of peace, stability and good neighborly relations among Southeastern European nations.

14. We encourage further development of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative into an effective regional mechanism for consultation and coordination of the efforts in this area. One of the main tasks of DPPI SEE is to bring the participants' policies in line with one another, to coordinate existing and new initiatives in the region and, thereby, to help avoid unnecessary duplication of work.

15. Considering dialogue as an important mean in facing challenges in the region, we welcome the dialogue among parties that moves forward the process that contributes to peace and stability in the region, reiterating that the EU and Euro-Atlantic perspective is the future for the countries of SEE. We express readiness to continue to facilitate this dialogue which in itself would be to promote cooperation, achieve progress on the path to the European Union and improve the lives of the people.

16. We welcome the valuable and increased contributions to ISAF mission in Afghanistan made by SEECP member countries and would welcome further contributions. We reaffirm our long term commitment to a stable Afghanistan in a stable region.

17. Recognizing that the existence of surplus ammunitions is still an unresolved issue in the SEE region, we are committed to finding a regional approach in solving this problem in cooperation with international organizations and donor countries.

18. We thank the Montenegrin SEECF Chairmanship-in-Office for the excellent organization of this Meeting.

Adopted in Budva on 15 March 2011.