



Dear Friends,

On the 10th of October a ceremony was held in Sarajevo celebrating the selection of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the seat of the Regional Co-operation Council (RCC) Secretariat. Together with the recent signing of the

Host Country Agreement this marked another important step on the path from the Stability Pact to the RCC. Bosnia and Herzegovina and the city of Sarajevo were already hosting the launch of the Stability Pact in the South Eastern Europe in July 1999. Now Sarajevo is playing the host again, but is also become a very active participant in the creation of a new dynamic of the Stability Pact and its regionally owned successor.

Sarajevo is the starting point of this process, which makes us very happy and proud. It is my honour, on behalf of the state and authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and especially on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens, to sincerely thank the Stability Pact Participating States for this decision and the trust that was given to Sarajevo by making it the seat of the Council's Secretariat. I also want to use the opportunity to thank the Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact, Mr. Erhard Busek, for his outstanding contribution. At the same time, I wish the first Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, Mr. Hido Bišćević, a lot of success in his new and important role.

I would like to highlight one specific area, where it would be important for the Regional Co-operation Council to continue the specific efforts of the Stability Pact: supporting the youth of the region. The initiatives providing different gatherings and events and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience between young generations are highly important. The current situation in the region still remains dangerous because of young people that feel neglected or frustrated. These children and juveniles, who will change the future of SEE for the better, deserve all our attention. The great responsibility of the young generation is to gain from the experiences of the twentieth century's, to forget their hate, to despise violence, and to be able to see their neighbours as a friends and partners.

By establishing the RCC we will have the best possible framework for all kinds of co-operation. Let us use this opportunity to shape our destiny, on which we all depend, in the best possible way.

Nikola Špirić, Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Celebrating the swift entry into force of CEFTA 2006

On November 21st the Prime Ministers of the Parties to CEFTA 2006 will gather in Skopje to celebrate the entry into force of this agreement less than one year since they signed it in Bucharest. CEFTA 2006 will bring important economic and political benefits to South Eastern Europe. It will liberalise, harmonise and modernise the trade regime and improve the investment climate. It enhances regional co-operation, a key to political and economic stability in the region and to closer relations with the European Union.

Speaking at the first meeting of the Joint Committee of CEFTA 2006 in Ohrid on 28 September, Special Co-ordinator Busek commended the CEFTA Parties - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and UNMIK/Kosovo for the swift ratification and entry into force of the agreement. The European Commission stressed the importance of implementing the agreement and the role that CEFTA has played to date in providing a valuable training ground for new EU Member States.

At the meeting, Ministers representing the CEFTA Parties, under the Chairmanship of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, reiterated their commitment to fully implementing this agreement and took a series of decisions that will translate these commitments into concrete actions.

Further information on CEFTA 2006 can be found on the Stability Pact's website at <http://www.stabilitypact.org/wt2/TradeCEFTA.asp>



Erhard Busek, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

Working Table III: RACVIAC Moves from Military to Political-Military Project

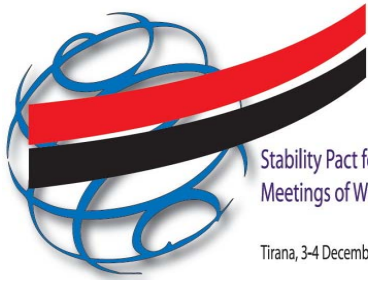
On 11th October 2007 an important step has been taken in the transformation of the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) from a purely arms control training centre into a Centre for Security Co-operation. RACVIAC would continue to address key issues of Defence and Security Sector Reform, but it would also expand to a forum addressing civil-military relations and defence conversion, thus supporting European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes.

At a ceremony in Rakitje, Croatia, where RACVIAC is located, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Dr Erhard Busek underlined that "NATO would like to see RACVIAC become an educational tool in SEE on defence and security sector reform for the NATO/Partnership for Peace". RACVIAC's future relevance will depend on its ability to achieve a high-level of professional competence and to produce practical results for its beneficiaries, thereby ensuring its credibility and standing towards important international partners. This is why strengthening the co-operation with NATO and the EU is of paramount importance, highlighted Dr Busek.

RACVIAC was created in 2000 as an initiative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in the field of regional security. At present there are 24 nations involved in RACVIAC. Its new Director is Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Colonel Ion SAVCIUC from Moldova (left) was appointed as the new Chairperson of the Multinational Advisory Group (MAG RACVIAC). Ambassador Nedžad Hadžimusić of Bosnia and Herzegovina (right) took up position as Director of RACVIAC.





Stability Pact for South East Europe
Meetings of Working Tables

Tirana, 3-4 December 2007

Upcoming Events

8 November 2007 | Sofia

Police Forum Meeting

9-11 November 2007 | Pecs

A Soul for Europe Initiative

14 November 2007 | Vienna

Energy Community Treaty - Donors Meeting

15 November 2007 | Vienna

International Academy of Central European Schools Conference, Project presentation

15 November 2007 | Vienna

1st Gas Forum

16-17 November 2007 | Sofia

International Conference "Regional Co-operation in the Black Sea and Danube Regions: Addressing Challenges and Providing Perspectives"

21 November 2007 | Skopje

Meeting of Prime Ministers of Parties to CEFTA 2006

21 November 2007 | Sofia

Round Table of the Ministers of Economy of the CEI member states

21-22 November 2007 | Torino

Educational Reform Initiative SEE Governing Board and Senior Officials Meeting

23-24 November 2007 | Graz

Fostering the Human Potential in Higher Education and Research in SEE: The Challenge of Brain Circulation

27 November 2007 | Sofia

CEI Summit, Heads of State and of Government

3-4 December 2007 | Tirana

Stability Pact Working Tables Meeting

4-5 December 2007 | Thessaloniki

BAC Meeting

6-8 December 2007 | Zagreb

SEE Health Network Meeting

18 December 2007 | Belgrade

Ministerial Council Meeting on Energy

Working Table II: eSEE Agenda Plus signed in Sarajevo

On October 29 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Romania and UNMIK/Kosovo took an important step toward jointly building the information society in South Eastern Europe, by signing at Ministerial level the eSEE Agenda Plus. The agreement seeks to spur development of the Information Society in SEE in the period 2007-2012. Among the measures to be implemented is to increase access to the internet in all schools, expand the availability of high speed broadband services, and promote the development of e-Government and e-Business, digital libraries, e-Participation and e-Democracy.

The Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Erhard Busek stressed the need to turn the digital divide into a digital opportunity. With this aim he appealed for an adequate, co-ordinated and sustainable investment in ICT infrastructure in the region. "Well-structured and mutually beneficial partnerships between governments and the private sector will hasten this progress", he stated. The appointed Secretary General of the RCC, Hido Bišćević, noted, "It is precisely the knowledge-based economy, so profoundly linked to the information society and e-projects, that will serve as

the best platform for the general advancement of South Eastern Europe in all segments of our economies and in all areas of our societal development".

Equipping classrooms with computers and Internet links is one of the tasks of eSEE Agenda Plus.



WORKING TABLE III: The SEE Countries Take Important Step for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention

On September 24, 2007 in Zagreb, government representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania and Slovenia have taken an important step forward in their efforts to improve the region's disaster response capability and co-ordination by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on the Institutional Framework of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE).



The MoU will further enhance regional co-operation and regional consultation in the field of disaster management and commit the participating countries to assume more technical and financial responsibility for disaster preparedness and prevention. The remaining countries of the Stability Pact DPPI SEE initiative, i.e., Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, are committed to sign the MoU after completion of their internal procedures for decision-making.

The forest fires in South Eastern Europe this year as well as the floods of recent years have claimed several lives and had a significant negative economic impact on the countries of region. They have also highlighted the importance of the work of DPPI and the need of the countries of the region to work together and elaborate more concrete strategies on how to face the challenges stemming from natural disasters and co-ordinate the necessary assistance.

Established in 2002 as a cooperative framework among the Stability Pact beneficiary countries, plus Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey, DPPI SEE has been focusing on capacity building for disaster preparedness and prevention. The DPPI SEE Secretariat, based in Sarajevo, is coordinating all activities.

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