

**Speaking points of Mr Jan Truszczyński, Dep. Director General DG ELARG  
at the final meeting of the Working Tables in Tirana**

**3-4 December 2007**

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests

- Let me begin with sincere words of thanks and acknowledgement for the Government of Albania for hosting this important event.
- Many thanks are due for the Stability Pact and the Working Tables' staff for having brought the process so far - and so successfully. Let me join those who have expressed their gratitude to Dr Busek: the EC, on its part, too is indebted to him for his energy, inventiveness, creativity and unique ability to develop relationships which generated success of the Pact.
- The Enlargement Strategy adopted by the Commission one month ago deals at length with the perspectives of the Western Balkans countries and their progress towards the EU. Regional cooperation is a key requirement in the SAP process and now, with the transition from Stability Pact to the new RCC, these countries themselves will take over the responsibility for their cooperation.
- EU will, needless to say, continue to support local ownership of initiatives. EC is providing political support for the RCC and - given the fact that most of the countries of the region have an European perspective - is providing guidance as regards the region's aspiration to move closer to the European structures. But this is not all: we cover a sizeable part of the running costs of the RCC Secretariat (34%) and contribute to the budget of many ongoing initiatives and projects.
- As most local projects and initiatives, especially those surviving the necessary and due stage of streamlining, are related to the region's course towards the EU, EC can easily fit these, when appropriate, in its framework of pre-accession financing instruments. The acronym IPA is already well-known in the countries benefiting from it, that is, in the enlargement countries of this region.
- Let me dwell on this instrument a little longer: our Multi-Beneficiary Indicative Planning document, adopted by the Commission at the end of May 2007, has 11 areas of intervention: regional cooperation, infrastructure, justice and home affairs, internal market and trade, public administration, civil society, education, youth and research, market economy, nuclear safety, interim civilian administration and administration in general. The fields have been identified on the basis of consultations with national authorities, IFIs (International Financial Institutions), the Stability Pact, CSOs (civil society organisations) and line DGs (the other General Directorates of the Commission). In current prices, the allocations for regional and horizontal programmes for 2007-2011 reach the figure of close to 730 M euros (in 2007-2009 this is more than 400 M euros). Indicative allocation: 42-50% for market economy, 25-35% for EU acquis requirements, 10-15% for political requirements (like regional cooperation, interim administration, education, civil society etc).

- We will intervene to complement the national programmes in fields where there is a clear comparative advantage to be gained: e. g. tackling cross-border problems, obtaining a greater efficiency through established harmonised approaches (like harmonised national statistics systems), or facilitating a network of experts, coordinating assistance provided by IFIs. For providing advice as regards implementation of EU acquis we also have a resource: through TAIEX instruments. These programmes of ours, I would like to add, are in full swing.
- Most of the Multi-Beneficiary aims that regard the Western Balkans are identical with the RCC's 5+1 priority areas. In the selection of the concrete programs eligible for support, we shall listen to the opinion of the RCC and not only listen to them but we expect them to come out with bankable ideas. We really expect the RCC to be operational – it is only understandable: we have put in our money!
- With the gradual disappearance of the Stability Pact, the relation between the EC and RCC will be based on new foundations. EC is not going to be THE Brussels instance for the countries of the region, on the model of the Stability Pact, a last resort to call when needed. In the new setup it is going to be the RCC itself that, as an operational arm of this new regionally owned framework, is going to take over from the SP and inherit many of SP's functions and seats. With SEECP there for political guidance, RCC will very soon be an essential operational structure for the Western Balkans cooperation. We, in EC would like to exploit the momentum, exactly as we would like to capitalise also on the incoming Slovenian presidency's priority related to this region. We shall certainly have all this reflected in our Communication on the Western Balkans, planned for early March 2008.
- RCC is now its own master. We sincerely hope the recruitment of the personnel will be successful, they will find the right persons for the jobs and on 1st January, when the Host Country Agreement enters into force, the Secretariat begins its work in Sarajevo.
- Wishing them success means wishing us all success.