



**Conclusions by Goran Svilanovic,
Chairman of the Working Table I of the Stability Pact for South
Eastern Europe at the 13th Plenary Session of the SP WTI**

As the representative of FYROM highlighted at the meeting, “schools are the heart of the education and research reform” and I would like to add that education and research are topics that are at the heart of the Euro-Atlantic integration of SEE countries. Their participation in setting up a European Area of Education as a common European task should therefore be supported and strengthened further.

In this context, I welcome the expressed intention of the Albanian government to double the funds available for education and research.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Education of Serbia, Mr. Slobodan Vuksanovic, for sharing with us the reform agenda and for his wholehearted support of our new core objective **Fostering and Building Human Capital**, which he promoted and supported from the beginning.

The SP Secretariat, the TFEY, ERI SEE, SEE-ERA.NET, other SP partners, EU institutions and member states will be concentrating on this core objective in the future. Priorities will be:

- *Access to EU networks of Knowledge*- ensuring access for the region to the current expert discussions at EU level (clusters, working groups) on topics of relevance for the national reform agendas;
- *Sufficient share for education in the instrument for Pre-accession assistance* for the preparation and participation in the education programme of lifelong learning, as well as for national reforms;
- *Continuation of the measures for capacity-building, training and knowledge transfer in the region*, also via ERI SEE and especially for participation in the new generation of community programmes in education;

It will be important to ensure the sustainability of the reform effort on building human capital also beyond the mandate of a government or national Parliament. This will be achieved by the international cooperation with partner institutions like ETF, EUA, Council of Europe, OECD, OSCE and Member States, but also by ensuring an inclusive approach to education reforms for all members of society in a lifelong learning perspective.

I would like to thank you all once more for supporting the launching of this new initiative.

As far as Parliamentary Cooperation is concerned, I fully support Ms. Gordana Sobol, from the Croatian Parliament, who invited SEE Parliaments to make better use of the common heritage stemming from living for decades in the same country. This common heritage should be exploited to communicate better on some common legislation issues that can be approached in a cross border fashion. Parliaments of the region should also work together on improving legislation related to people with disabilities, along with NGOs.

Doris Pack expressed her full support of the Parliamentary Troika activities, which aim to bring SEE Parliaments closer together, gathering in particular Committees working on the same issues. Inter-parliamentary Cooperation will be focused in particular on security issues, budgetary control, judiciary reform and freedom of the media.

It has also been stressed that MPs should work on improving their own influence and speed up regional processes by pushing their executives more. MPs often still lack the skills, will, courage and practice of democracy. MPs should participate vigorously in shaping the region's future.

SP activities in Parliamentary Cooperation have to be focused further on capacity building for SEE Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on the harmonization of legislation with the EU *acquis communautaire*, especially via a strong coordination of donors' activities.

In the framework of the regional ownership process more substantial support to regional parliamentary cooperation initiatives coming from the region, such as the COSAP, the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum and the exchange of Women's Caucuses, should be provided.

To guarantee a full handover of the coordination of activities, the regional cooperation among the SEE Parliaments should be institutionalised much more, potentially via a regional focal point in one of the SEE Parliaments.

In the context of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe transformation, the Gender Task Force, as a SEE initiated initiative, will intensify its cooperation with the EU institutions. The GTF will continue to work on the gender aspects of the Stability Pact core objectives with SEE governments, Parliaments, political parties and trade unions.

As announced, in July the GTF is going to co-organize with the Croatian Government, the First SEE Women' Ministerial Conference in Dubrovnik.

In the field of Local Democracy and Cross Border Cooperation, I am happy to announce that in November the SP Council of Europe and the Government of FYROM, with the support of OSI-LGI and the PASOS network, will organize in Skopje an Evaluation Conference of the implementation of the National Working Plans agreed upon in Zagreb in October 2004. Results of the Zagreb follow up conference will be presented at the next SP Regional Table.

I should also like to announce that the Media Task Force is now nearing the end of its mandate, as of the next Regional Table. After having accomplished all its main objectives, the MTF is now ready to undergo its final transition towards full regional ownership.

In this context, I would like to draw the present donor representatives' attention to a project that conducts an evaluation of ten years of media assistance to South Eastern Europe. The evaluation will look at the overall impact of media assistance to SEE provided by foreign donors and present lessons learnt from the numerous projects implemented in the course of those years.