



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

**SEECP**

**SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**SEECP regional cooperation 4EU and ME**

**SEECP CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE**

**PRISHTINA 2019-2020**



**H.E. Dr. Vjosa Osmani Sadriu, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Head of Delegation of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo to the SEECP PA**

### **Kosovo Chairmanship-in-Office**

In July 2019, the Republic of Kosovo started its one-year Chairmanship (2019/2020) of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). The chairmanship was taken over from Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Summit of the Heads of States and Government in Brdo, Slovenia, 24 April 2018. During this period, it is expected from Kosovo to chair the regional agenda of the cooperation process between member states of this process and to push forward regional agendas based on the set priorities.

South East Cooperation Process (SEECP) is a regional process organized by the country that holds the chairmanship in office. Chairmanship in Office of SEECP follows the principle of one year rotation (July-June), without a specific rule.

South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) was initiated in 1996 at the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SEECP which was held in Sofia, Bulgaria. This regional cooperation forum aims at strengthening the good-neighborly relations among all participants from South East Europe (SEE), and



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

transforming this region into an area of peace, security, stability and cooperation, with the main goal of full integration of SEE into European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

The SEECP Parliamentary Assembly was established in accordance with the Charter on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, signed in 2000 in Bucharest, the Memorandum of Understanding for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in SEE, signed in 2008 in Sofia and the Final Declarations of the Conferences of Speakers of Parliaments of the SEECP Participating States, which express the mutual will for continuous development and further promotion of the SEECP parliamentary dimension into SEECP Parliamentary Assembly.

At the Conference of Presidents of the Parliaments of the SEECP Participating States held in Ohrid in 2013, it was decided that the SEECP parliamentary dimension shall be transformed and further institutionalized as SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, a permanent parliamentary forum for exchange of experience, dialogue and cooperation.

The primary goal of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly is strengthening the cooperation and coordination efforts of parliaments of all Participating States, with the aim to promote and further ensure peace, security, stability, solidarity and good-neighbourly cooperation in the region, in the interest of their citizens and countries, as well as of Europe in general.

Having regard to the principles of regional ownership and having in mind the fact that the future of all SEE countries is in the European Union, the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly shall act towards:

- Initiation of different forms of exchange of experiences in the field of legislation and its harmonization with the EU acquis, developing and coordinating practices for interaction with the SEECP Governmental dimension, and strengthening of the dialogue with the civil society in the region;
- Assuming the role of umbrella for achieving synergy of the activities of the regional initiatives and forms of cooperation regarding the economic and social development, development of the infrastructure and energy, internal affairs and justice, cooperation in the field of security, and development of the human capital;
- Encouraging, following and monitoring the realization of the goals and priorities defined by the rotating SEECP Presidency and the Regional Cooperation Council, as an institutional structure for transposition of the political declarations and decisions into specific projects and programmes;
- Intensification of the parliamentary diplomatic activities and establishing links with the regional, European and international organizations, institutions and foundations.

Participation of Kosovo in the activities of the South East Europe Cooperation process is a result of the SEECP Summit held in Bucharest on 25 June 2014.



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

Kosovo has fully joined the South East European Cooperation Process (to participate in all the activities of SEECP) in Tirana.

Today, SEECP consists of thirteen (13) participants: Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Rumania, Serbia, Turkey, and Kosovo (since 2015) (listed in an alphabetic order).

### **Thematic priorities and moto of the Kosovo Chairmanship**

Kosovo SEECP Chairmanship especially emphasizes the importance of SEECP as the leading political format for regional cooperation.

In this regard, Kosovo considers that the priorities set by the C-i-O are common issues for the entire region.

Based on the current trends for regional cooperation, influenced by the slow pace of the integration of the region in European and Euro-Atlantic structures; general political and socio-economic situation in the region, Kosovo has decided to further advance three priorities on the regional level during the SEECP Chairmanship:

- Connectivity
- Youth
- Culture and Tourism

Moto of the Kosovo SEECP Chairmanship is: **“SEECP regional cooperation 4EU&ME”**.

Priorities and moto of the Chairmanship aim promotion of the SEE in their efforts for advancing in the European perspective, in order to improve the lives of their citizens.

### **Activities calendar of Kosovo Chairmanship**

Under the chairmanship, the chair country welcomes the annual Summit of the Heads of State/Government, welcomes formal and informal meetings with foreign affairs ministers, other ministerial meetings organized by this chairmanship, meetings of political directors, as well as individual meetings of experts.

Activities of Kosovo Chairmanship-in-Office that are presented in the activities calendar are as follows:

- **June 19, 2020**      *International Conference: Catching up with the rest of Europe? ([Read more:](#))*
- **June 20, 2020**      *SEECP PA Standing Committee Meeting (More about the meeting ([Read more:](#)))*
- **June 24, 2020**      *7th Plenary Session of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly*

### **The delegation of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo in SEECP PA:**



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

**Dr. Vjosa Osmani Sadriu**, President of Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Head of Delegation of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo to the SEECP PA

Members:

<b>Mrs. Fitore Dalipi Pacolli, MP</b>	Standing Committee
<b>Mr. Uran Ismaili, MP</b>	Chair of the General Committee on Economy, Infrastructure and Energy
<b>Mr. Arben Gashi, MP</b>	General Committee on Security, Internal Affairs and Justice
<b>Mrs. Teuta Haxhiu, MP</b>	Chair of the General Committee on Social Development, Education, Research and Science

Additional information:

**Ms. Bukurije Rukolli**  
*National Coordinator*  
Directorate for Protocol and International Relations  
Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo  
Tel: +3813820010101  
E-mail: [bukurije.rukolli@assembly-kosova.org](mailto:bukurije.rukolli@assembly-kosova.org)  
[www.kuvendikosoves.org](http://www.kuvendikosoves.org)

### **Seventh Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP PA)**

The Seventh Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process was held in Pristina, on 24 June 2020, in a virtual format.

The Seventh Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP PA) was chaired by the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo Mrs. Vjosa Osmani Sadriu (Pristina), President of the SEECP PA. ([Read more:](#) )

**[Final Declaration of the Seventh SEECP PA Plenary Session, 24 of June 2020 adopted in](#)** Prishtina



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO DR. VJOSA OSMANI SADRIU, PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENATRY ASSEMBLY OF SEECP AT THE SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE SEECP PA

Prishtina, 24 June 2020

SEECP regional cooperation 4EU and ME

“Prospects of regional cooperation in the post-pandemic era: *time for a greater integration?*”

### *Introduction*

It’s my pleasure to convene the works on the Seventh Plenary Session of the South-East European Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly. We in Kosovo are honored to be the host of this wonderful organization this year.

Regretfully, we couldn’t host you in Prishtina this year in account of this deadly pandemic we are all facing. However, it’s only for the best that we meet virtually rather than put each other in harm’s way. Thanks to technological advancements, we have been able to hold a very rewarding conference on Friday, a productive meeting of the SEECP Standing Committee on Saturday, and I am looking forward to having a great session of our SEECP Parliamentary Assembly today.

One of our members, Slovenia, celebrates its Statehood Day, so please join me in congratulating our Slovenian friends on this joyous day for their country.

The past few months have been very hard for all of us. Many of our people have lost their loved ones to this virus, some are still fighting for their life in hospitals, and a great number of people are having difficulties making their ends meet. So please join me today in sending condolences for the victims, in praying that those in critical condition will persevere, and in fighting to help ease the dire financial situation that many of our people are under.

Let me start by reaffirming the crucial role of the SEECP and the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly in contributing to the stability and prosperity of South-East Europe. As per our Charter, our objectives here are the “enhancement of political and security cooperation, fostering economic cooperation, and enlargement of cooperation in the fields of human dimension, democracy, justice and combating illegal activities. I am looking forward to discussing with you today how we could work together in achieving these objectives and better



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

understanding ‘The prospects of regional cooperation in the post pandemic era’ through evaluating how greater integration could smoothen the recovery for all of us.

### *Global and regional economic outlook*

This meeting comes at a very unprecedented time and our cooperation is needed now more than ever. The global lockdown that came as a result of the pandemic is generating unprecedented economic challenges that will have a scarring effect on our economies and societies. The pandemic has halted global trade and disrupted economic dynamics, by reducing harshly supply and demand. Free trade agreements were temporarily abolished, and national borders have replaced regional ones.

According to IMF’s predictions two months ago, the global economy is set to contract by -3 percent this year, a figure much worse than the one during the 2008-2009 financial crisis. Similarly so, according to the European Trade Union Institute, by the beginning of May “more than 50m workers had been put on government-supported job retention schemes across Europe,” accounting for an all-time high figure of 25% of the total EU workforce. These numbers give us a preliminary indication of the situation with regards to the caused level of unemployment in our region as well.

In light of these facts, we need bold, coordinated response from our region, aided by the EU, to brace for the ensuing economic fallout and the scarring effect it will have on the social cohesion in our region. Only together can we overcome this challenge and ensure that this crisis won’t provoke a fundamental shift in, and that could be the undoing of, our liberal societies.

### *European solidarity*

Of course, during this time European solidarity has been more important than ever. Mindful of this, on March 30, the European Commission announced that it would provide €8 million in immediate support for the Western Balkans to deal with the health emergency and that it would reallocate €74 million to aid the recovery of the region. One month later, on 29 April, it announced that it had mobilized a package of €3.3 billion to the benefit of Western Balkans to address the ensuing health and humanitarian needs as a result of COVID-19. This display of solidarity during such an unprecedented crisis showed, once again, that the EU is a reliable partner for all of us. As President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said: “We have a special responsibility to assist in this pandemic our partners in the Western Balkans, as their future clearly lies in the European Union”. This display of solidarity came even for those who were quick to say that “European solidarity doesn’t exist”. Thankfully Europe was here for us when we most needed new.





Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

### *Enlargement*

We note the Commission's revised accession methodology, published on 5 February, 2020. The principles upon which it is built - credibility, political steer, dynamism, and predictability - ensure a credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans. But simply talking about perspective isn't enough any longer. As we continue to deliver on reforms and as the EU sticks to its end of the bargain, we will all benefit. So, the EU also sticking to its end of the bargain is very important. The EU's readiness to reward positive behavior is essential if liberal and pro-European forces in our countries are to hold their ground.

Recently, the EU has made great inroads into the enlargement process. On March 25, members of the European Council agreed to open negotiations on EU membership with Albania and North Macedonia. The decision of March 25 to open negotiations came as a huge relief to all of us as it reiterated the EU's commitment to the enlargement process.

### *NATO*

Coincidentally, just two days later, on March 27, we were met with another milestone as North Macedonia joined NATO as its 30th ally. NATO has been an essential component of the peace and security that our region has enjoyed in decades and we're delighted as more and more countries from our region join this organization of peace-loving nations. We in Kosovo are working hard to become the next member.

### *Regional cooperation*

On regional cooperation, let me emphasize that strategic alliances can help all of us with building back better and help us with rethinking our modalities of cooperation. As multinational corporations are rethinking production lines and planning to move from big markets to markets closer to home, the countries of the South East Europe could use these developments to their benefit. We now have a momentum and it is upon us to explore scenarios around how greater regional partnerships, regional integration in terms of governments' cooperation, trade, production, and technology could create more promising prospects for a better positioning of Europe and our region in particular in this alluded new global configuration.

In addition, and most importantly, let me emphasize what I say in my everyday work and in every single meeting that we have with colleagues from the region, from the European Union, and from the United States



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

and beyond, as all of us understand that peace, stability and democracy is crucial, we should understand that there can be no peace and reconciliation without justice for the victims.

### *Digitalization and the European Green Deal*

In light of highly dynamic developments and facing the prospects of a digital revolution, our countries have to initiate a serious collaboration in the area of the digitalization of our region and the preparation of the workforce for the challenges and opportunities of this new era. It is through sharing of experiences and bilateral and multilateral initiatives that we can all stand a chance to benefit at greater margins.

Yet, as we do so, we must remain focused in following the roadmap set by the European Green Deal, and jointly agree to turn environmental and climate challenges into opportunities across all policy areas, while guaranteeing that our joint journey ahead is just and inclusive for all.

### *Visa liberalization*

For these opportunities to materialize, some basic preconditions have to be met. The free movement of goods and the optimization of provided services call for the free movement of people. For all the progress made, however, the European Union has yet to deliver on its promise to grant the people of Kosovo the long overdue visa liberalization. Still to this date, despite all our efforts and recognized achievements, 2 million Kosovars - one of the most pro-European people, mind you - are cut off from the rest of Europe, threatening the disheartenment from the EU.

### *Conclusion*

Let me conclude by reiterating my message of today. All economic indicators tell us that we are in for a big recession that will ravage our economies and which - if we don't rise to the occasion - could lead to a fundamental shift in our political landscape. Luckily, there are encouraging signs that this time we will all be together in overcoming this challenge. We believe that with European solidarity, the advancement of the enlargement process and the regional cooperation among our countries, we can solve all our problems.

The European Commission's revised enlargement methodology and the opening of negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania represent encouraging signs that the enlargement process is alive and well.





Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo  
*Kuvendi – Skupština – Assembly*

Dishearteningly, the people of Kosovo still can't travel freely in the EU, despite doing its part for a long time now. It is high time that the EU sticks to its end of the bargain. Our people must be granted visa liberalization if the EU is to maintain its credibility in the region.

Finally, ladies and gentleman, speakers of Parliaments, heads of delegations, and representatives from international organizations, as we lay out our joint path forward, we ought to be mindful of embracing timely and efficiently global development trends while guaranteeing that our future policies within the framework of economic development are shaped in the spirit of the European Green Deal. I thank you all for your attention and, of course, your kind presence in this very important occasion for the organization and for us as Kosovo as its head.