



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION



TURKISH SEECP CHAIRMANSHIP

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## Conference on "Regional Security through Regional Ownership: A New Era of Cooperation?"

Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

D-02-S  
08<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
Ankara, the Republic of Turkey

**Abstract** *The event was organized under the Turkish South East European Cooperation Process Chairmanship, in cooperation with RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation. During two working days, 40 participants from 9 countries, together with representatives of regional security cooperation organizations and eminent subject matter expert speakers, had a chance to elaborate several important aspects of regional security concept based on the principle of regional ownership. This subject was introduced with the aim to provide the key stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss corresponding priorities, challenges and opportunities within the framework of the required enhancement of synergy of existing efforts.*

*SEECP was confirmed as an important political initiative that should serve as a primary source of so much needed common regional political will and guidance. In particular, Turkish SEECP Chairmanship received recognition for identifying this requirement and taking proactive approach towards enhancement of regional dialogues and security cooperation mechanisms.*

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### Activity Background

In order to be able to achieve the established goals that actually make the foundations for the process of the development of modern democratic societies under the European Union standards, it is necessary that the countries of SEE region gradually undertake responsibility for their own future and thus become emancipated actors in the development of new and democratic Europe. This is an exceptional endeavour that promotes the idea of lasting peace, stability and prosperity through cooperation and identification of common solutions for the issues that go beyond individual national scopes and require integral political support. This is especially important for the countries of the region, historically burdened by conflicts and

Regional Ownership  
Principle

separations. Thus, regional security cooperation initiative represents a crucial preventive element in overcoming any security challenge in South East Europe, and in this respect, South East Europe Cooperation Process, currently under Turkish Chairmanship, plays a key role in the process of improving regional stability.



Eminent Speakers during Conference Opening Session

From left to right:

Mr. Pjer ŠIMUNOVIĆ, State Secretary, MoD, HR  
H.E. Ambassador Mr. Selim YENEL, Deputy Undersecretary, MFA, TR  
H.E. Suleyman DEMİREL, 9<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Turkey  
Amb Nikola TODORČEVSKI, Director of RACVIAC  
Mr. Dušan SPASOJEVIĆ, State Secretary, MoD, RS  
Mr. Petar ESMEROV, State Secretary, MoD, MK

Furthermore, the enhancement of the concept of regional ownership is an

essential approach in ensuring sustainability of the existing regional co-operation networks.

Without doubt, regional ownership is a powerful political catalyst in fostering regional stability and security, but also an irreplaceable element in supporting the economic development of the region and its integration into democratic community of European countries.

Thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation was provided with a unique opportunity to contribute to the South East European Cooperation Process initiative through engagement in co-organization of an event that promotes this concept and discusses corresponding priorities, challenges and opportunities within the framework of the required enhancement of synergy of existing efforts among the key stakeholders.



Swissôtel Ankara - Distinguished Participants Group Photo

The Conference was primarily designed to establish a common platform both for the efficient exchange of individual views and best practices in this issue, including the importance of the evaluation of the applied regional security co-operation frameworks in order to outline most feasible, sustainable and concerted approach on security and stability in SEE.

Long-term and Sustainable Solutions

**Activity Facilitators**

The Conference activity was planned, organized and executed as the joint event between Turkish SEECF Chairmanship (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the

Republic of Turkey) and RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, who respectfully shared corresponding organizational and financial responsibilities. Turkish SEECF Chairmanship took larger burden and fully provided operational support as the host of the event. Common vision of the activity led to the development of a corresponding Conference Agenda that included all previously and jointly defined objectives.



Welcome Address by Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski  
From right to left:  
**H.E. Suleyman DEMİREL**, 9<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Turkey  
**Amb Nikola TODORČEVSKI**, Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation (speaking)

**Activity Venue, Duration and Participation**

The Conference was held from 8 to 10 December 2009 in the Swissôtel Ankara, in the Republic of Turkey. It was organized as a three-day event, two of which were working days.

During the working day sessions, held at the Istanbul Conference Hall, participants had the opportunity to hear presentations and engage in open discussions on the corresponding subject matter issues. Besides the opening welcome gathering organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and hosted by H.E. Ambassador Selim Yenel, the second conference day also included an informal assembly at downtown Ankara, hosted by H.E. Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski.

Conference included a total of 40 participants nominated by the contributing

SEECIP countries; regional security cooperation organizations such as Regional Cooperation Council (RCC); the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI); RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation; South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG); Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE); and eminent speakers invited by Turkish SSECP Chairmanship. This number does not include embassies' representatives accredited in the Republic of Turkey and present at the conference.



Keynote Address by H.E. Suleyman DEMİREL

From left to right:

**Prof. Dr. Hasan Ünal**

**Mr. Pjer ŠIMUNOVIĆ**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia

**H.E. Ambassador Selim YENEL**, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

**H.E. Suleyman DEMİREL**, 9<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Turkey (speaking)

### Activity Description and Contents

The Conference was conducted as a combination of individual presentations, subject matter deliveries, and open discussions. They were executed through four distinctive panels.

The event started with the introductory session announced by Ms. Gül Büyükerşen Oral, Head of Balkans Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey. First to welcome the audience were high representatives of two co-organizing partner organizations: H.E. Ambassador Selim Yenel, Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski,

Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

After welcome addresses, the Conference participants had the honour to hear the keynote speech by a very eminent speaker, H.E. Suleyman Demirel, the 9<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Turkey.



Conference in Session

The main message delivered in his speech was that solutions which are based on mutual cooperation and trust are fundamental to achieving lasting peace, stability and prosperity. For this reason regional dialogue and cooperation mechanisms should be enhanced and thus Turkey strongly supports all regional initiatives. This is important more than ever due to fact that there are still some issues to be resolved within the Balkans.



Conference in Session

Conference participants warmly applauded H.E. Suleyman Demirel's contribution.

The continuation of the Conference brought the core of the Agenda in the form of four sessions. The first one considered the interrelation between regional and EU security and was chaired by Prof. Dr. Hasan Ünal. The initial deliveries were provided by the most eminent speakers from three regional countries: Mr. Pjer

Šimunović, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia; Mr. Dušan Spasojević, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia; and Mr. Petar Esmerov, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>.



Conference in Session

Third from the left:

**H.E. Ambassador Milorad Šćepanović**, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro (Montenegro takes over the SEECP Chairmanship in 2010)

Distinguished speakers delivered their views on new incentives toward assuming regional responsibility from the regional countries' perspective. The same topic was discussed by three expert speakers, namely Mr. Diego Mellado, Counsellor in EU Delegation in Ankara; Mr. Arben Gazioni, Chairman of NATO SEEGROUP, and Prof. Krunoslav Pisk, Director General of the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik.



Conference in Session

Each conference session had designated time for questions and answers, which allowed participants to engage in open and fruitful discussions.

Next session was dedicated to more practical and tangible issues primarily

considering the existing regional initiatives. This core subject panel was chaired by Mr. Efrem Radev, representative of Regional Cooperation Council, who actually delivered the initial expose. He was followed by H.E. Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski, Director of RACVIAC- Centre of Security Cooperation; Brigadier General Zyber Dushku, Commander of SEEBRIG; Mr. Trpe Stojanovski, Director of MARRI Regional Centre; and Mr. Orhan Topcu, Head of DPPI SEE Secretariat. The end of the session also brought very intensive discussions on the subject of very much needed coordination and synergy of efforts in the field of regional security cooperation.

Third Conference session, under chairmanship of Dr. İbrahim Kaya, discussed assumed challenges, responsibilities and priorities in the process of security cooperation through application of regional ownership principle. This panel was supported by presentations from respected regional subject matter experts Mr. Valeriu Ostalep, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova; H.E. Ambassador Prof. Dr. Lisen Bashkurti, President of the Albanian Diplomatic Academy; Lieutenant General (retired) Stegios Papatīs, former Director of RACVIAC; Brigadier General Reinhard Trischak, Director of Military Policy Division in Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports of the Republic of Austria; and Colonel Hamza Višća, Head of International Cooperation Branch (J5) in the Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The end of the panel part of the Conference was designed to provide a brief preview of the possible proposals for achievement of concerted approach on security cooperation, based on the best practices and challenges experienced by regional countries. Each SEECP country representative delivered brief statement on the current achievements and opportunities from their national point of view.

<sup>1</sup> Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

## **Conference Conclusions**

Engaged discussions resulted in several relevant conclusions. There is no doubt that the regional dialogue and cooperation mechanisms should be enhanced. In this respect SEECP Chairmanship is recognized as the regional political authority that should assume more political power and a decision-making role, in that way directly supporting bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives through ensuring so much needed common regional political will. Countries of the region by almost unanimous majority share common goals within the EU and NATO integration frameworks. Thus, SEECP should be a driving force on the strategic level for all required reforms and ultimate democratic development of the region. This is even more important if we recognize the fact that the region still faces some bilateral security challenges. These challenges should be discussed openly and there is no better place to start than at the SEECP initiative, while on the other hand regional security cooperation organizations can provide regional security policy execution support. In this regard, the role of Regional Cooperation Council should be considered as important one regarding the coordination of existing cooperation networks among mentioned regional security cooperation organizations. In order to be successful in this mission, RCC should be provided with more political support and guidance at the regional level, where again SEECP perfectly fits this profile. Mechanisms that should provide desired synergy of efforts must include development of common strategies, planning and coordination processes. There is a general opinion that there is no real duplication of efforts, but there is the issue of weak coordination among regional initiatives that needs efficient complementary tools.

The last session within the scope of the Conference started with the individual reviews by two partner conference proponents. H.E. Ambassador Şanivar Olgun, Director General for the Balkans and Central Europe of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke on behalf of Turkish SEECP Chairmanship and expressed her satisfaction with the event, emphasised that the required momentum has been achieved and should be maintained. In this respect, Turkish SEECP will propose organization of similar meetings in the following years by the incoming Chairmanships. Ambassador Olgun emphasized the need to develop a regional approach to security challenges in Southeast Europe and announced Turkish CiO of SEECP's intention to organize an evaluation meeting in May 2010 to establish a modality in order to better coordinate, synchronize and streamline the priorities and work of major initiatives in the region, in collaboration with the EU and RCC, the results of which will be submitted to the SEECP Summit on 23 June 2010.



Conference in Session

Ambassador Nikola Todorčevski, Director of RACVIAC expressed his gratitude for the opportunity given to RACVIAC to be part of such an important initiative and contribute to joint vision of enhancement of regional ownership principle. He said the Conference was needed and its success is the result of the fact that Turkey, which always had a proactive policy towards the region, took the initiative and accepted to host such an event of great importance for the future efforts within the scope of regional cooperation.