

# SEECP DEFENCE MINISTERS MEETING

## - *ADDRESSING POINTS* -

Mister Prime Minister, dear colleagues, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my privilege having an opportunity to address such a distinctive audience on behalf of the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the very beginning I would like to say that defense reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina even though officially completed at the end of 2007 represents a “never-ending” process given the trends in other societies across Euro-Atlantic region.

Still, it is important to stress that final goal of defense reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to transfer BiH defense establishment from a position of consumer to a position of provider of defense services and to reach such a level of stability within the country that will allow closure of international forces mission in BiH and full transfer of responsibility for its own security. This should eventually end up in meeting requirements for its accession to fully fledged NATO membership.

While undertaking very comprehensive activity in an area of defense reform, Bosnia and Herzegovina has also achieved significant results in fulfilling its requirements within the framework of NATO Partnership for Peace Program.

After recognizing Peace Support Operations Training Center, in Sarajevo, as one of 15 PfP Training and Education Centers, BiH has come to a position of making constructive contribution within the NATO/PfP training and education system.

This has clearly been recognized by all Allies during recent presentation of the IPAP Presentation Document at the SPC Meeting in Brussels and more importantly I have a pleasure to state that almost unanimous support has been gained for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s accession to a next level of cooperation with the Alliance, being Intensified Dialogue.

When it comes to the framework of regional cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina sees it as almost equally important as its endeavor towards NATO and EU membership. More importantly, regional dimension of cooperation should be seen as an inseparable part of wider Euro/Atlantic approach.

Therefore, BiH has been trying to participate in all necessary activities tackling regionalization and there have been several achievements in that regard.

Southeast Europe Cooperation Process, Southeast Europe Defense Ministerial, Regional Cooperation Council, Southeast Europe Initiative, International Military Sports Council are just some of which Bosnia and Herzegovina is full fledged member of.

While participating in joint regional activities, BiH is also trying to play more active role by taking over organization of some of them.

Even though regional cooperation has immensely helped a lot of participant countries on their ways towards NATO and EU membership, it seems to me that some of the principles should be strengthened more. Regional ownership is probably crucial one since countries involved are entering cooperation for their own sake, not for Brussels'.

Furthermore, coordination of different efforts should ease their de-confliction while providing synergic and cost effective approach. It is therefore, high time to thoroughly look at the possibility of burden-sharing of some initiatives, where military education and training could represent only one concrete example.

Finally, let me conclude by stressing that Europe can not be complete without the Region of Southeast Europe and I would therefore like to plead for speeding up the process of the Region's integration in light of Thessalonica's message of offering clear European perspective for all countries that naturally belong to.

Be it geographical, cultural or Europe as an idea of those choosing to live in.