

**Mr. Šefik Džaferović, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Parliamentary Assembly, Sarajevo**

Honorable Speaker of the Croatian Parliament and the Chair of SEECF Parliamentary Dimension, Mr. Jandroković;
Distinguished Speakers of Parliaments of SEECF participants;
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to greet all of you on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and wish the successful work of this session.

At the very beginning, I would like to thank our host for the warm welcome and congratulate them for the successful organization of the 4th Plenary Session of the SEECF Parliamentary Assembly. The process of cooperation between the countries of South East Europe has opened great opportunities for connecting its participants, not only in the political field, but also on economic, security, social and all other areas that contribute to the overall development and improving the quality of life of the citizens of this part of Europe.

Parliamentary Dimension of the initiative itself represents a kind of forum where we have the opportunity to present our vision of the value of overall cooperation and ways in which it can contribute to the progress of the region. As a dynamic, originally democratic and above all an innovative force, the Parliamentary dimension contributes in particular to the promotion and prosperity of the whole region, so it is very important for us, parliamentarians to continue to take the ownership in this process.

The parliamentary dimension is manifested primarily through the establishment of a common legal framework that would enable the development of projects with special emphasis on the improvement of legislation as the main prerequisite for the safety and protection of the environment, cultural heritage and goods in all its forms.

This process of communication and exchange of experience with neighbors is very important for Bosnia and Herzegovina since it is fully in line with the approach of the EU towards our country, while from the aspect of its organization, it regulates and encourages the stronger ties in the region. Regional projects should therefore become the cornerstone of joint cooperation

so that through their realization we can strengthen the society and common values that we share as region.

Regional cooperation, as one of the priority of Bosnia and Herzegovina foreign policy, through its parliamentary dimension has enormous potential to initiate systematic solution of important issues in order to achieve political stability and promote sustainable economic, social prosperity of South East Europe. For countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina where the process of integration is in its due course, close cooperation with EU Member States and tackling common challenges and opportunities specific to the region is of key importance. The vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a European country is a guiding principle for all of us, because the European perspective is a powerful tool for political and economic recovery, so I hope that the activities of the South East Europe Cooperation Process will contribute positively to the pre-accession process not only of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but other non-EU countries as well. I also believe that this year's plenary session, as well as the ministerial conference scheduled in July, will create possibility for further continuation of mutually beneficial interactions in all other important areas of life and the functioning of the region.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to today's topic - relationship, cooperation, communication, the way forward, my answer is that we have to find a way to step forward in all the areas that this forum deals with: economics, infrastructure, energy, justice, internal affairs, security cooperation, social development, education, research, science, namely in all areas. If you ask me – what in this moment might appear as ideas? I draw your attention to those items of the Final Declaration that refer to proactive cooperation with the European Parliament, therefore this initiative, this regional initiative, should improve cooperation with the EU in all aspects. Models of EU strategy for specific regions are well known, so why not promote the idea that the EU has, for example, the economic development strategy of the region of South East Europe. The second issue is also contained in the Final Declaration and it refers to the programs aimed at as far as possible the free flow of people, goods, capital and services. Our region consists of countries that are members of the EU and countries that aspire to become EU members. Regimes of movements between countries are very different, we need to do any efforts with the EU and among ourselves to make the flow of people, goods, capital and services within our countries as free as possible.

Once again I would like to thank the host for excellent organization of this session, wish the Republic of Slovenia successful chairmanship in the coming year and of course I also want to congratulate the republic of Monte Negro for full membership in NATO.

Thank you for attention!