

**PLENARY SESSION
OF THE FOURTH SEECP PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
8-10 JUNE 2017
ZAGREB**

Ms. Esmeralda Shkjau,

Acting Head of the Parliament, Tirana Delegation to the SEECP PA

Dear Mr. President,

Dear colleagues, dear guests,

First and foremost, please allow me to salute you all on behalf of the Speaker of the Assembly of Albania, Mr. Ilir Meta, who, regrettably, due to obvious reasons cannot be with us, here in Zagreb.

I feel honored today to address this high level audience among colleagues and friends in this beautiful city of Zagreb, as we discuss our common concerns and challenges ahead. This is an opportunity to further acknowledge our strengths and weakness with the only hope to challenge together the uncertainties that our region is facing in recent years.

This fourth session as a Parliamentary Assembly will surely bring a new motivating force to our organization, by adopting documents based on the things that unite us.

We have to remain guided by this spirit because it allows us to make better use of the opportunities in this part of Europe and enable the prosperity of our peoples.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Encouraging all forms of parliamentary dialogue and cooperation is a principle that guides the Albanian parliamentary diplomacy.

National Parliaments are the institutions with the strongest connection to the citizens: it is MPs who best understand the most stringent needs and protect the interests of citizens. Therefore, we think that finding efficient and pragmatic means of cooperation among national Parliaments is of paramount importance and provides a key answer to the current challenges.

We believe in a region entirely integrated in the European Union and NATO, and in the removal of unnecessary barriers to the free movement of people, trade and goods which are essential for our economic growth and achieving of social peace and political stability in the European continent and beyond. Breaking connecting bridges, building dividing walls, and using hatred speeches as well as excluding each-other brings good to no one. All in the contrary, it harms everyone and seriously damage our peoples' aspirations, peace and prosperity, our common future and European perspective.

Your excellencies,

I hope this intervention has offered useful inputs on the theme we are debating.

On behalf of the Albanian Delegation, please allow me to end by expressing our sincere gratitude towards the Croatian Chairmanship-in-Office and particularly towards President Gordan Jandroković, for their outstanding hospitality and commitment. The efforts you have invested during the one year mandate of our Assembly are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your attention!