



National Assembly of
the Republic of Serbia

Annual Meeting of Representatives of Defence and Security Committees from Southeast Europe Parliaments

Belgrade, 29th June – 01st July 2015

JOINT STATEMENT

(draft)

The third *Annual Meeting of Representatives of Defence and Security Committees from Southeast Europe Parliaments* took place in Belgrade, from 29th June to 01st July 2015.

The conference, attended by representatives of eight Defence and Security committees, was hosted by the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, and supported by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

The topic of the conference was Flood Relief Cooperation in Southeast Europe.

Guided by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which underlines the need to promote a “culture of prevention”, and by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which underlines the responsibility of states to prevent and reduce disaster risk including through international, regional, subregional transboundary and bilateral cooperation;

Recalling the Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the European Council on the assessment and management of flood risks; the Decision No. 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the European Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism;

Recognising the contribution of European Union’s Programme on Civil Protection Cooperation with the Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates and IPA Civil Protection Programme II - IPA CP 2 to strengthen resilience to disaster in the SEE region; and the Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Floods in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Turkey - IPA FLOODS to strengthen resilience to floods in the SEE region;

Underlining the importance of bilateral and regional cooperation of the SEE Governments based on regional ownership, such as the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe, and as recommended by the works of the

2014 RACVIAC Regional Conference "Floods in South East Europe – Lessons learned and future steps";

Conference participants have agreed to consider encouraging and fostering governments in the region to take concrete steps in the near future for the completion of the following processes / or measures:

1. *Developing* a regional strategy for disaster management in the SEE region as a high priority on the collective effort to make the region safer from the risk of disasters;
2. *Developing* civil protection capacities for continued effective flood risk management, in line with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the EU Floods Directive; this should include sound plans on flood risk management, promoting sustainable land practices that improve water retention, and working on flood defences and climate resilient infrastructure;
3. *Introducing* early warning systems at all levels, and upgrading contingency planning and emergency measures;
4. *Adapting* intergovernmental communication in case of disaster situation, making it more effective, faster and thus easier to avoid delays;
5. *Cooperating* regionally on river basin management, and continue the good practice of implementing the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin;
6. *Providing* priority support to most vulnerable groups of populations, in particular for housing solutions as well as ensuring access to health and education;
7. *Ensuring* transparency, efficiency and accountability in the use of financial assistance received;
8. *Ensuring* standardized, up to date, national databases shared among regional authorities;
9. *Achieving* clear division of responsibilities and accountabilities of all institutions and actors in flood prevention management.