



## **SOUTH EASTERN EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION PROCESS**

### **MINISTERIAL MEETING**

#### **ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE**

*Sofia – Bulgaria, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2008*

### **JOINT STATEMENT**

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the South Eastern European Co-operation Process (SEECP) Participating States, meeting in Sofia at the invitation of Bulgaria as the Chair in Office of the SEECP to discuss disaster preparedness and prevention in South Eastern Europe (SEE);

**AWARE** that in SEE disasters have a regional dimension and the entire region shares common risks and many similar challenges in the area of natural and man made disasters;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that natural or man made disasters can generate severe damage threatening the safety, security and prosperity of the region and its citizens;

**RECOGNIZING** that good bilateral and regional co-operation in the field of disaster prevention, preparedness and response can make a significant contribution in saving lives, as well as improving social, economic and environmental development, supporting stability and improving prosperity in the region and for its citizens;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)<sup>1</sup> on the Institutional Framework of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI) for South Eastern Europe, the Parties have assumed responsibility for regional co-operation in this field and, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to disasters;

**NOTING** the importance of progressively linking the candidate and potential candidate countries in the SEE region to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to ensure effective mutual assistance during major emergencies;

**WELCOMING** this meeting as a major opportunity for exchange of information views and experience with international partners and for the development of a common approach to the disaster management and risk reduction challenges in the region,

**HAVE AGREED TO:**

**ENCOURAGE** national disaster management authorities in South Eastern Europe to strengthen their capacities in community resilience and preparedness for natural and man made disasters and to enhance their cooperation in the field of disaster management within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding<sup>2</sup> on the Institutional Framework of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe;

**INVITE** all partners from the international community involved in disaster management to seek further synergies, to develop complementarities and to interact with the DPPI thereby further enhancing regional cooperation and collaboration in this field;

---

<sup>1</sup> Since the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has signed this MoU as “the Republic of Macedonia” instead of the legal name agreed upon in the framework of the UN (SC Resolutions 817/1993 and 845/1993) Greece cannot recognize the signature of this country, which was accepted to the Stability Pact as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>2</sup> See 1

**CALL** for a DPPI strategy, including a bi-annual action plan that would provide support and would complement national activities in the field of disaster management and further enhancement of regional cooperation in close collaboration with the DPPI partners;

**WORK** towards increased cooperation with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the EC Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative;

**USE** similar exchanges in the future to continue the established high level dialogue and to foster regional cooperation.

**WE MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS HEREBY:**

**CONFIRM** our support for regional structures, in particular the Regional Cooperation Council under whose auspices the DPPI operates;

**CALL UPON** the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) to support the DPPI Chair in Office to prepare the draft Strategy and Action plan, as well as to address any legal and administrative issues for the DPPI;

**STRESS** the importance of continued and additional technical and financial support to the DPPI Secretariat;

**EXPRESS** our gratitude to the international community for its support to date and look forward to its continued support in the future;

**INVITE** the in-coming Chair in Office of the SEECP to convene a ministerial meeting on this subject in early 2009 to allow us assess progress made in implementing our commitments; and

**PRESENT** our gratitude to the host of the meeting, the Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents of the Republic of Bulgaria, for the warm welcome and the flawless organization of the meeting.

**Adopted in Sofia on 9 April 2008**