

NINTH TRILATERAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF GREECE, BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

Thessaloniki, 7 May 2014

JOINT STATEMENT

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, met in Thessaloniki on 7th May 2014 for the ninth meeting in a trilateral format.

Taking into consideration that our three countries are partners and allies in the European Union and NATO, maintain excellent relations, are connected with strong ties of friendship, solidarity and multifaceted cooperation and partnership in many areas of common interest and activity, participate energetically in a significant number of regional, European and International organizations and fora and constitute pillars of peace, stability, security, growth and progress in Southeastern Europe;

Believing that the future of Southeastern Europe lies in the EU and NATO, we reaffirm our strong support to the European and Euro-Atlantic perspectives of all the candidate, potential candidate and aspirant countries of the region, providing that all accession criteria and the existing conditionality, set by the EU and NATO, are fully met;

Stressing that establishing and maintaining good neighborly relations and productive regional cooperation are essential and integral components of both the European and Euro-Atlantic enlargement processes at all their stages;

We agreed to:

Examine the possibilities to expand our trilateral cooperation format at the public administration sector, with a view to include and engage more administrative structures (e.g. Ministries). In this respect, we shall direct our public authorities to develop communication and implement synergies

on a trilateral format. Our main aim will be to jointly take advantage of the emerging opportunities and address the common challenges in the fields of economy, commerce, trans-border cooperation, energy, tourism, regional infrastructure projects, transport, telecommunications, illegal migration and combating corruption, trans-border and organized crime and trafficking of persons;

Note the important, tangible results attained so far during the current Hellenic Presidency of the European Council in several key areas. The political agreement with the European Parliament on the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM), which is an essential step towards the completion of the Banking Union, the completion of legislation on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the steps taken on the area of migration, border management and mobility of the Union citizens and the adoption of a Directive on maritime spatial planning constitute important steps and developments as well as the positive decision on the visa liberalization for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova;

Accelerate our common efforts for the diversification of energy supply sources and routes and work jointly for the speedy development of important regional energy infrastructure projects, including natural gas interconnectors among our countries and ongoing projects within Southern Corridor and the enhancement of the role of the Energy Community in Southeastern Europe aiming at the creation of energy networks which will connect Southeastern Europe with Central and Northern Europe;

Reiterate our expectation that the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council will adopt as soon as possible the decision for the timely accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen Area. The full readiness of both countries to join the Area has been repeatedly confirmed by the relevant EU institutions, i.e. the European Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, and the adoption of the decision should not be delayed;

Emphasize our genuine will to jointly promote the European and Euro-Atlantic perspectives of all countries in Southeastern European region, depending on the fulfillment of the criteria and the existing conditionality, set by the EU and NATO, and judged by their own merits;

Continue to exchange views on a regular basis and cooperate closely at regional organizations, fora and initiatives, including in the South-East

European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). We praise the work being done during the current Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP, which is the unique political forum for regional cooperation in Southeastern Europe, based on the principles of all-inclusiveness and regional ownership;

Praise the Bulgarian Presidency of the BSEC and the results achieved during its term, in an Organization of particular economic importance for the region. We will cooperate closely within the context of the BSEC during the present Bulgarian Presidency and the upcoming Hellenic Presidency. It is important to pursue continuity of the two consecutive Presidencies in order to attain added value in all priority areas;

Welcome the Hellenic EU Presidency focus on maritime affairs. Remain committed to identifying synergies and complementarities between EU instruments and policies relevant to the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions;

Enhance cooperation, in particular in the EU, including illegal migration, taking into account the pressure exercised by the illegal migratory flows on the countries of the EU border zone and that any crisis inside or in the vicinity of the European continent could cause irregular flows. In this respect, we emphasize the importance of the principle of solidarity in order to achieve a fair burden sharing of migratory pressures and stress that cooperation with third countries of origin or/and transit of migrants remains key;

Remain firmly committed to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and reaffirm our support for a political and diplomatic resolution of the current crisis. We support the EU and NATO efforts to facilitate and engage in a meaningful dialogue, involving Ukraine and the Russian Federation, aiming at finding a political solution and call for the rapid implementation of the Geneva Statement on the ground;

Strongly support a much speedier completion of the preparatory work for the signature of the Association Agreements, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (AA/DCFTA) with R. Moldova and Georgia, as soon as possible, but no later than June 2014 in line with the Foreign Affairs Council's Conclusions on April 14;

Reaffirm our strong commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its EU perspective. In line with April 2014 EU Council conclusions, we reiterate that the criteria and key requirements for the BiH progress towards the EU need to be fully met. We support the active EU engagement in the country and welcome the 'Compact for Growth' initiative and the enhancement of the Structured Dialogue on Justice to other Rule of Law topics, including to anticorruption affairs.

Thessaloniki, 7th May 2014

Mr. Evangelos Venizelos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic
Republic

Mr. Kristian Vigenin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria

Mr. Titus Corlatean, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania