



16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Meeting

Helsinki, 4-5 December 2008

Address

by Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Mr Hido Biscevic

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address the participants of the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Helsinki on behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and to draw to your attention the activities of the RCC as well as possibilities of our cooperation.

The RCC was established in February 2008 as the successor of the Stability Pact of South Eastern Europe in order to implement the idea of regional ownership and contribute to the overall economic and social development of the countries of the region as well as facilitate their integration into the EU and NATO. Since February a lot has been done - the RCC Secretariat has been established in Sarajevo and achieved full functionality in May 2008, RCC Liaison Office in Brussels to the EU institutions and NATO started its operations in full swing in September and Special Envoy of RCC Secretary General to the Presidencies of the Council of the EU keeps the regional cooperation high on the agenda of the current and incoming EU presidencies. In this context, I would like to inform you the RCC Secretariat has started the process of networking among the countries of South Eastern Europe and our main partners - the European Commission, the World Bank and other IFIs in order to identify, programme and implement the projects that fall within the RCC priority areas - economic and social development, energy and infrastructure, justice and home affairs, building human capital, parliamentary cooperation and last but in this case very important – security issues.

I am glad to say that both the RCC and OSCE work for the benefit of cooperation in Europe – OSCE at a wider - Transatlantic and Eurasian, and RCC at a regional level. I would like to inform you that one of the tasks of the Regional Cooperation Council is to coordinate and facilitate a number of regional organisations that deal with security cooperation in South Eastern Europe. Having in mind all activities OSCE undertakes in the area of security as well as justice and home affairs, environmental protection, parliamentary cooperation, just to mention a few of them, one could easily come to a conclusion that

there are great opportunities for enhanced cooperation. I am certain that we will find ways to build on the already successful cooperation and frequent exchange of views at all levels - expertise, know-how and capabilities of OSCE and RCC should be used to the maximum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This ministerial meeting, convened by the successful Finnish OSCE Presidency, comes at a moment when Europe is facing challenges in both economic and security fields. Let us offer full support to the OSCE and all actors in tackling open issues to the benefit of all. In this light, allow me say that cooperation is always possible and brings concrete results to everybody - regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe proves that every day.

Finally, allow me to greet the incoming Hellenic OSCE Presidency and wish them all success in addressing the important agenda of security and cooperation in Europe.

Thank you!