

Conference of the Speakers
of the European Union Parliaments

Europe Beyond the Crisis

Honorable Madame Speaker Boldrini,
Esteemed Parliament Speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to greet you on behalf of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. It is a great pleasure to be able to address you at the meeting of Parliament Speakers of the European Union member states.

Today, Serbia is a candidate country, but I hope that the day when a Speaker of the Serbian Parliament will take part at these conferences as a representative of a member state is not far ahead.

I would, therefore, particularly like to emphasize that in the current Parliament there is an overwhelming consensus regarding the European integration process, since all parties support the EU membership of Serbia.

Honorable Speakers of Parliament,

We are carefully and regularly reviewing Progress Reports on Serbia. This March, the European Parliament praised the progress Serbia has made within the reform process, promotion of good-neighborly relations and the dialogue, and called the European Council to open negotiations on individual chapters.

We also see as encouraging conclusion made by the European Parliament Rapporteur, Mr David McAllister, who assessed that Serbia has made a significant progress on its European integration path, placing a focus on the seriousness of reforms implemented by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Furthermore, Government measures implemented within the economic reforms framework are leading us towards the full economic stability of the country.

The National Assembly has enacted a great number of reform laws, proposed by the Government, which regulate the area of labor and employment, privatization, planning and civil construction. Our strategic

goal is to create favorable business environment and encourage private initiatives. This is important for the realization of our goal and that is to make Serbian economy export-oriented and more competitive.

Our international partners have also recognized the reform process we are undertaking. At the end of February, Serbia concluded an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on a Precautionary Stand-By Arrangement worth one billion Euros. This is a clear signal to foreign investors that Serbia is a stable country and a credible partner.

Finally, allow me to highlight the fact that more than a half of my country is determined on the European Union membership for Serbia. Bold economic reforms have been supported by more than two thirds of our citizens. This demonstrates our society's readiness and awareness of the importance of reforms, for our own sake, and not only because of the EU membership. Through opening of chapters, the EU would demonstrate to our public that it is acknowledging this important political momentum and aspirations of the citizens of Serbia, and that it truly wants Serbia as a full-fledged member of a family of the most developed European nations.

Thank you very much indeed.

Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

Maja Gojkovic