

Welcoming speech

SEECOM: Time to implement the good ideas

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Your Excellency, Mr. Ambassador Whitting,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

„Aller guten Dinge sind drei“ is a German saying. Or in free translation “All good things come in threes”. The SEECOM conference is now organised for the 3rd time in its founding place – Budva – and thus has already established tradition as Europe's largest conference for government spokespersons. My colleagues from the SEECOM Steering Committee and I are delighted to welcome you here again.

Most of you were here in 2013, when we established an entirely new organisation out of this conference. Largely through the commitment of Vuk Vujanović, and in close partnership with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and our common partners UNDP and RCC, SEECOM has become the first professional European organisation for government and parliament spokespersons. Communication experts from the judiciary and other authorities are also welcome as members. With this profile, SEECOM differs from all the other PR organisations in Europe.

So far, SEECOM has been more like a forum than an institution. There is no fully staffed office, no daily available hotline and no filled bank account. These typical characteristics of an association will come step by step. But what we made in the past twelve months is a remarkable progress content-wise. On Sunday, we will discuss two work programs that the Steering Committee has developed at a meeting hosted by KAS in April. You will hear more about the future prospects from Krunoslav Vidić and Vuk Vujanović. We have also exchanged with the Club of Venice, who shares our values and many of our topics, and can be a co-organiser of future events. Vincenzo le Voci, the Secretary General of the Club of Venice, is with us today.

When I spoke with you, Vuk, but also with many of you in the last few months, I was always certain: We are not running out of good ideas. Now it is time to implement them. As in any dynamic association, all members are welcome to contribute with their knowledge and skills. Anyone who has specialized on a topic and wants to initiate a working group is welcome to do this.

Modern government communication is far more than propaganda or the clever avoiding of annoying questions. It creates transparency and acknowledges citizens and journalists as partners. Different roles, but a common vision of how to work together - that's what truly matters. In Eastern and Western Europe, there is still room for improvement. Today and tomorrow we'll hear some of the best ideas on how this can be achieved. I am glad that besides the experts from South East Europe, we also have high-level speakers from the UK – Mr. Aiken – as well as Germany, the United States and the EU.

The agenda is so promising that we, as the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, want to continue to support different events of SEECOM. I am also pleased that we have such excellent partners as RCC, UNDP and the British Embassy in Podgorica.

I wish you all an exciting and pleasant SEECOM 2014.

Thank you for your attention!