

GOVERNEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO*PR Bureau October 09, 2008 22:39***JOINT STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

Government of Montenegro and Government of the Republic of Macedonia, as immediate neighbors of both Serbia and Kosovo and as countries with clear European and Euro Atlantic orientation, have agreed to make the following joint statement in the context of decisions made in relation to the recognition of Kosovo:

Montenegro and Macedonia have consistently supported the process of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina, and they consider the plan of UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo Status Settlement to be a good foundation for finding solution that would contribute to permanent stability and to the new European and Euro Atlantic perspective of the region. The declaration of independence of Kosovo came after the failure of the international community efforts for Belgrade and Pristina negotiations to result in solution for Kosovo status.

Montenegro and Macedonia are committed to permanent stability, peace, security and progress of all the countries of the region, with clear European and Euro Atlantic perspective. In this sense, Montenegro and Macedonia will strive for improvement of regional cooperation institutionalized through regional initiatives as well as for full implementation of the free flow of people, goods, capital and ideas.

Taking into consideration that Kosovo institutions made commitment to fully implement principles and provisions in the plan of UN Special Envoy for the Kosovo Status Settlement, the two countries support the building of democratic institutions in Kosovo with the aim to foster multiethnic society in which the rights of all ethnic communities on cultural, religious and language identity will be guaranteed.

The decision to recognize Kosovo by Montenegro, as a potential EU candidate country and Macedonia, as EU candidate country is a result of a careful political assessment and is based on conclusions adopted by the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on February 12, 2007 and February 18, 2008, as well as on decisions made by European Council on December 14, 2007.

Montenegro and Macedonia, guided by core principles of their foreign policy for building good-neighborly relations with all their neighbors remain committed to further development and deepening of relations with the Republic of Serbia in all areas of common interest, as well as to maintaining traditional close ties among the three countries and their peoples. At the same time, the two countries will continue to render support the Republic of Serbia on its way to European integration.

Montenegro and Macedonia are firmly convinced that the European integration of the countries of the region in the spirit of the Thessaloniki Agenda represent solid and stable basis for faster economic progress, social development and prosperity which will bring better life to all its citizens.

Done in Montenegrin, Macedonian and English.

Podgorica, October 9, 2008