

**Address of the Minister of Defence Vlado Misajlovski at the ceremony on the
occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the South East Europe
Brigade
Boro Menkov Barracks – Kumanovo
03 Sep 2024**

Distinguished Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Distinguished Generals,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Distinguished Military Attachés,

Dear guests and friends,

It is my distinct honour and privilege to address you on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the South East Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) - one of the most significant projects of the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Cooperation Initiative - SEDM.

I express my sincere gratitude to the Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Bilbil Bitri, to all former commanders, to all civilian and military, former and current members of the Brigade and their families for the continuous commitment and contribution to fulfilling the Brigade mission throughout these 25 years.

Congratulations! By working for SEDM/SEEBRIG and serving at the same time your countries and our citizens, you have only confirmed the commitment of all member nations to the Initiative that has brought cooperation and dialogue and has enabled the creation of an environment that fosters mutual solidarity and support among the countries.

As the host nation of SEEBRIG, it is our immense pleasure that the members of our armies have been working together, contributing to the successful work of the Command for four years here in Kumanovo.

Dear attendants,

Considering the current geopolitical situation in Europe, the jeopardized security, numerous forms of hybrid threats, fake news, disinformation, as well as the lessons learned from the past dealing with the COVID crisis and natural disasters, we have a strong motive to

continue to strengthen our defence capacities, and to enhance our defence bilateral and regional cooperation.

As a member state of this Initiative, 4 years ago, we achieved one of our strategic goals, a full fledged membership in the Alliance, and our participation in this Initiative significantly influenced the fulfillment of our goal. Today, our service members work side by side with our friends and allies, and our military is a valued contributor to global peace. We remain focused on fulfilling our second strategic goal - full membership in the European Union, which will contribute even more to the stability and development of the region.

As we celebrate this anniversary, on the eve of the SEDM Ministerial meeting in Tirana, we reaffirm our commitment to the guiding principles and future priorities of this Initiative, because the 25th anniversary is not only an occasion to pay tribute and celebrate successes, but also a possibility to approach all challenges with readiness and determination.

Let us keep learning from each other,

support each other

and remain jointly committed to building a secure future.