

## Official Iulia Matei: Romania firmly supports continuation of Euro-Atlantic integration process in South-East European region

**Secretary of State for European Affairs Iulia Matei on Friday attended the informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), on which occasion she mentioned the importance of cooperation at regional and European level to ensure an adequate response to the situation generated by the pandemic.**

According to a press release sent to AGERPRES by the MAE (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the agenda of the meeting focused on debating how to cooperate in the South-Eastern European region based on the experience of the states in the region in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secretary of State Iulia Matei emphasized the role of the South East European Cooperation Process in contributing to the stability and security of the Western Balkans and also reiterated the importance of regional and European cooperation in overcoming current challenges, especially in the current pandemic context, and the need for solidarity to ensure an adequate response to the situation generated by this crisis.

The Romanian official stressed the importance of economic projects in the region, especially those of interconnectivity, which will ensure the resilience of the economies of these states to the shocks generated by the current crisis, noting that such actions will reduce vulnerabilities in extreme situations and dependence on other global actors.

Iulia Matei mentioned, regarding Romania's support for SEECP participants, the delivery of medical equipment to Skopje and Podgorica, through the RescEU mechanism, and the support provided to the Republic of Moldova, by sending medical teams and a significant volume of medical equipment.

She reiterated Romania's strong support for the continuation of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes in the South-Eastern European region, underscoring that enlargement was one of the priorities of the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2019.

"Ensuring a credible European perspective for the region is an objective of strategic importance for the stability, security and development of South-Eastern Europe. In this regard, the decision of the European leaders, during the current crisis, to open accession negotiations with Albania and the Republic of Macedonia sent a strong message of the European Union's commitment to the region, which must be confirmed by a decision to effectively launch accession negotiations with the two countries, to be then doubled by concrete action of the candidates in terms of reforms required by the accession negotiations," the same source also shows.

The event was organized by the SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office of Turkey (2020-2021) and took place as an in person meeting.