



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Mission to Montenegro

Office of the Head of Mission

**Statement by Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu
Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro
at the
14th Session of the Igman Initiative**

**COUNTRIES OF THE DAYTON ACCORD ON THE WAY TO THE EU
– RESULTS AND BARRIERS
Milocer (Montenegro), 16-17 November 2006**

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the first time that I have the honour to represent the OSCE Mission to Montenegro at a regional conference of the Heads of State. I am very much pleased with this opportunity as this high-level regional Conference of the Presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, organised by the Igman Initiative, a prominent non-governmental forum, is yet another step toward promoting dialogue, reconciliation and furthering co-operation in South Eastern Europe, and in particular among the four states represented here at the highest level.

Since the time when the Dayton Peace Accord was signed, the region has been gradually consolidating democratic reform efforts and embarking upon the challenges of the European integration. The four states are at different stages on this road, but their common goal is clearly defined. The support of the international community along this road is also secured, provided that the reforms are continued and European values integrated into the societies and institutions of the respective states.

The OSCE welcomed the positive developments that have led to increased stability in South Eastern Europe. The countries of the region have also achieved

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significant progress in developing regional cooperation which already produced tangible results.

The four Presidents present here spoke so eloquently in favour of enhanced regional co-operation and reconciliation. The post-Dayton experience of the four countries demonstrated that bilateral co-operation needs to be complemented by regional efforts and initiatives.

As far as Montenegro is concerned, we were pleased to witness its successful efforts in establishing bilateral, good neighbourly relations with all the countries of the region, both prior to and following the proclamation of its independence. Cooperation on the ground is satisfactory especially in the areas of border control, energy supply and environmental protection. Bilateral memoranda of cooperation in internal affairs and the fight against organised crime have been signed with a number of partners including most neighbouring countries. Political contacts are frequent and based on mutual understanding and respect. Enhanced cross-border cooperation is one of the current objectives of local government reform. Finalization of agreements with Serbia on the framework of bilateral relations and on pending political, economic and social issues related to the dissolution of the former State Union is one of the priorities.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the last six years in particular, profound changes have taken place in the region, not least with regard to its progress towards the EU. Individual efforts of each of the Western Balkan states to join European and Euro-Atlantic institutions should be accompanied by a regional policy of full regional reconciliation, which is indispensable for creating conditions for a sustainable peace and economic development in this part of Europe. While it is obvious that the four countries are at different stages of the European integration processes, it is in the interest of each of them to join Europe with totally pacified, fully democratic and economically viable neighbourhood. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations form an essential part of the process of moving towards the European Union. It is very important to pursue this goal and to meet a number of challenges which lie ahead, such as:

- **Return of refugees** has long been an important matter for regional reconciliation. By the Sarajevo Declaration of January 2005, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the then Serbia and Montenegro, supported by the OSCE, UNHCR and European Commission, committed themselves to joining forces to resolve this issue before the end of 2006. We hope that the commitments will be respected and that the four governments

will equally show the maximum of political will to close successfully the chapter of refugee returns, as well as to facilitate integration for those refugees who choose not to return through their national strategies on refugees as part of comprehensive strategies on social inclusion and social integration.

- **Full co-operation with the ICTY** is necessary to achieve lasting reconciliation in the region as well as to meet international legal obligations.
- **Inter-state co-operation in the field of war crimes proceedings** needs to be further consolidated. The Palic Process, supported and facilitated by the OSCE, would need to continue at expert level in parallel to the search for a political solution to facilitate inter-state cooperation in war crimes proceedings.
- **In the area of justice, freedom and security**, supported by the OSCE and other international stakeholders, many initiatives have been pursued in the fight against organised crime and in border management. Key challenges ahead include: further improvement of the trans-border cooperation capacity of the police and customs services, support for joint efforts in combating trans-border crime and build-up of operational regional prosecutor cooperation in organised crime cases and corruption-related crimes.
- **In order to efficiently fight trans-national crime and eliminate the visa requirements** separating some of the countries in the Western Balkans from the EU, border security in the region should be brought up to the European standards. In this context, the "Ohrid Process on Border Security and Management", which continues to engage NATO, the EU, OSCE and the Stability Pact, needs to be continued. De-militarization of the borders, a process that has been completed in Montenegro, represents also an important symbolic act in relations between the four states. The removal of army units from the borders is sending a strong reassurance that state conflicts are a matter of the past.
- Accumulation of small arms and light weapons, effective arms export regimes and surplus ammunition stockpiles are issues that also need to be addressed where necessary with international assistance, including from the OSCE. OSCE welcomes and commends the continued work and progress on **regional disarmament**, through the implementation of arms control measures under Article IV of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords.
- **Parliamentary cooperation** has to be further improved, by developing a common strategy for SEE parliaments, in facing new challenges and consolidating security, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region. The Cetinje Parliamentary Forum, established with the OSCE assistance,

could provide a framework for parliamentary cooperation at regional level.

I would like to stress that, while actively supporting the concerned States in all abovementioned areas, OSCE strongly favours the principle of the "ownership of regional co-operation". Regional co-operation remains essential to long-term stability, economic development and reconciliation in the Western Balkans.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

There is a wide range of activities that the OSCE Mission to Montenegro has undertaken to facilitate the achievement of the country's main foreign policy goals: supporting democratic reforms and processes institutional capacity building and inter-state co-operation; protecting minority rights and strengthening inter-ethnic integration; refugee return; police training; assisting with legal reform; media reform; border management; environmental protection and economic development.

The OSCE Mission to Montenegro will continue, and even expand its assistance in the above mentioned areas with a view, inter alia, to help the region become a zone of peace, co-operation and tolerance with open borders.

Let me conclude by stressing that, while the responsibility for and the speed of the European reform processes is and remains with Your respective countries and their institutions, the OSCE stands ready to continue its assistance to support You along this path.