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REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Statement by Ms Blaženka Babić
Division for Human Rights and Regional International Organisations and Initiatives
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

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Refugees and displaced persons

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Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to speak in this session on behalf of the Republic of Croatia.

My country greatly values the work of the OSCE in the humanitarian issue of refugees and displaced persons by stimulating and facilitating regional cooperation and efforts to assure fair and durable solutions.

We also deem the HDIM to be one of the main tools for the effective monitoring of the implementation of human dimension commitments moreover through the exchange of the best practices and recommendations.

As regard the humanitarian issue of refugees and displaced persons, Croatia has been entirely devoted to their protection and finding permanent solutions.

With a view of assuring sustainable return of remaining vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in need Croatia has continued with the implementation of all planned actions and activities on national and regional level.

The Government of Croatia has invested until the end of 2011 a total of 5,5 billion Euros in housing reconstruction and building, infrastructure reconstruction, welfare and organisation of refugees and displaced persons return, and demining. Additional 87,5 million Euros have been allocated from the state budget for the year 2012.

It is also my great pleasure to inform you that the preparations for implementation of the Joint Regional Program on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons are heading as planned.

The Joint Regional Program represents a crown of joint efforts of four countries in the region - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Croatia - aimed at achieving durable and sustainable housing solutions for all persons in need.

This Program also represents a decisive step towards the final closure of this issue in the region.

In line with this goal, the Sarajevo International Donors Conference on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, held on 24 April 2012, was a great success.

In that context, Croatia commends a strong partnership of the OSCE and the UNHCR in pursuing the implementation of the relevant universal standards in the whole region.

Moreover, the OSCE field missions are an indispensable part of the synergy of the whole process.

Mr Chairman,

The Joint Regional Program on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons represents an outstanding example of regional cooperation and ownership. We have jointly set a new standard in the regional cooperation by applying pragmatic, individual, humanitarian and depoliticised approach in assuring durable solutions.

In this respect, Croatia is ready to share its experiences and best practices identified within the Joint Program and the Regional Process as a whole.

We believe that the positive experiences acquired in the context of the Regional Process in South East Europe can be used like a model throughout the OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr Chairman