



ADDRESS

by

His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić
Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE
First Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
at the
Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, 15 January 2015

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct pleasure to address the Permanent Council for the first time in my capacity as the Chairperson-in Office of the OSCE and present you an overview of the priorities of the Serbian Chairmanship. My entire address will be distributed in writing. I am looking forward to hearing your feedback on the challenging tasks that lie ahead of all of us in 2015. I take this opportunity to thank the Swiss Minister Burkhalter and his Chairmanship team for the excellent cooperation and the valuable input for our future work. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to Germany as the new member of OSCE Troika.

As this year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, I would like to begin by reminding ourselves of the breakthrough our predecessors were willing and able to achieve. It is not only that they managed to carve out a document which gives guidance on the norms and principles we as participating States committed ourselves to, but they followed up on these commitments in good faith and left us an invaluable legacy in print and deed. Let us recall different references from the Helsinki Final Act which speak of solidarity, common purpose,

overcoming confrontations and distrust, developing mutual understanding and increasing confidence, cooperation in the interest of mankind and well-being of all peoples.

These words resonate today in the same way as forty years ago and appropriately describe the very essence of their endeavour at the time. Although much has changed since then, our responsibility to act consistently in defense of the very norms and principles of this document is ever more relevant. The notions that prevail in this legacy are those of dialogue and compromise, peaceful resolution of disputes, confidence-building, solidarity, responsibility and cooperation. They will be the main tenets of our Chairmanship in addressing the current challenges we are all facing. And this is why I suggest going back to the roots of the CSCE/OSCE so as to raise awareness of our joint responsibility for peace and security in Europe. "Rebuilding trust and confidence in order to create a positive agenda for the future" if I would have to summarize it in a motto.

The Chairmanship of Serbia comes at a very difficult moment. The horrific attack of two days ago in eastern Ukraine, in which several people were killed and wounded, is yet another proof of that. I

strongly condemned this attack and offered my deepest condolences to the families of the victims. I called on all sides to immediately halt the use of force and exercise restraint. I urge them now again to do the same and reiterate the necessity to fully respect the regime of quiet.

Obviously, the situation in and around Ukraine continues to pose a serious threat for the stability of the region, as well as for the European and global security. The main priority of our work will be to support all efforts which can lead towards a peace process. Together with the Troika, we intend to work with the main stakeholders on the peaceful resolution of this crisis through dialogue. Without sincere dialogue between the main stakeholders, as well as among the participating States, it will be extremely difficult to come to a resolution of this crisis. In this regard, it is crucial to invest all efforts to achieve sustainable ceasefire and full cessation of hostilities. Implementation of the Minsk documents by all is essential. The Special Monitoring Mission has the mandate and ability to assist in carrying out the provisions of these two instruments in full and it has proven to be an invaluable and unique asset in terms of international response to the crisis. I strongly support the efforts of the Chief Monitor Ambassador Apakan and the Special Representative Ambassador

Tagliavini and I expect that the work of the Trilateral Contact Group will contribute significantly to strengthening the arrangements signed in Minsk and furthering the peace process.

Just before assuming the Chairmanship, I had meetings with my colleagues from the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as with some of my colleagues from the EU countries, and they all reiterated their determination to work on the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Ukraine. Many of the interlocutors pointed out to the excellent relations Serbia enjoys with all the key stakeholders as a potential advantage. I can assure you that Serbia is ready to act as an honest broker in this process and utilize the advantages OSCE offers as an organization in an impartial and transparent way. It is, however, our joint responsibility, particularly of the key stakeholders in the process, to engage in creating the environment for dialogue and compromise. I also wish to add that compromise cannot be reached at the expense of the OSCE norms and principles we all committed to and this is something I have been very open about.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Based on these fundamental principles upon which the OSCE was founded, we will also place high on the agenda the resolution of protracted conflicts through agreed formats. I believe there is room to try to move away from the status quo in relation to the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area and we should step up our efforts in that direction. Needless to say that the high-level contacts between the parties should continue and the meetings of the formats should proceed regularly without hindrance. At the same time, having in mind the prevailing circumstances, we believe that some small but concrete steps could improve trust and confidence among parties, thus opening the way to tackle substantive problems. At the end of the day, the key to advancing the peace processes related to unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area lies mainly with the parties. On our part, we need to pledge our collective support to their peaceful settlement by investing additional efforts to generate the necessary political will.

This year will be important in terms of ensuring that the most recent experiences of the OSCE are translated into more effective tools and activities which could help us reinvigorate our efforts in addressing the

protracted conflicts and prevent the reoccurrences of crises. These OSCE tools should be employed in order to address the issues of human security regardless of divergence of positions. I once again wish to emphasize the importance and benefits of utilizing the OSCE presences and operations on the ground, as well as the significance of the OSCE as the largest regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Serbia was putting forward the candidacy for the OSCE Chairmanship, we considered that the Chairmanship of a country from the Western Balkans would bring added value to the work of our Organization, particularly in terms of translating the lessons learned from our experiences to the wider OSCE geography. The OSCE has certainly played an important role in the post-conflict transition processes, especially in supporting a wide range of reforms in the whole Western Balkans. Although each region in the OSCE area has its specific context, the need for dialogue and reconciliation is ever more pronounced under current challenging geopolitical circumstances. Our own experience indicates that despite many obstacles, a positive

agenda can be created by reframing the prevailing context in a pragmatic and goal oriented manner. I believe our Chairmanship can also give additional impetus to this positive agenda by intensifying regional cooperation and furthering the reconciliation processes.

Recent transfer of ownership of the subregional arms control arrangement under Dayton Article IV represents another example of the progress that the region was able to make in terms of confidence-building and military transparency in a post-conflict setting. This successful story reminds us that there is always room for improvement of our politico-military instruments, including the Vienna Document, and the necessity for their full implementation and modernization. We intend to support the continuation of the dialogue on arms control and hope that the discussions this year will help create an environment conducive to making progress in the European security architecture. We will closely cooperate with our colleagues from Mongolia, Montenegro and Norway in advancing our work in the Forum for Security Cooperation and in preparation for the Annual Security Review Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recent events have unfortunately highlighted once again that the international community should remain vigilant in the face of existing and emerging terrorist threats. I wish to offer once again my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of last week's attack in Paris and to the French people. This horrific act of violence highlighted some very important issues and evolving threats to our societies. Freedom of expression and protection of journalists need to be safeguarded in the face of ever growing challenges posed to them. We need to be unequivocal in our condemnation of all forms of terrorism, while at the same time ensuring that our societies remain united against the attempts to create divisions on the basis of religion. It falls on all our governments to take the necessary measures not only in terms of countering terrorism and providing security to our citizens but also fostering tolerance and non-discrimination in our societies. The OSCE has an important role to play on both of these fronts with its comprehensive approach. We will devote particular attention this year to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, particularly the radicalization of youth.

We appreciate the excellent work done last year by our Swiss colleagues in all three dimensions and during our Chairmanship we will continue to work on the basis of our Joint Work Plan with specific focus on certain topics of interest. Other than the counter-terrorism issues, activities in the first dimension will be focused on emerging threats of cyber-security, mutual impact between organized crime and countering trafficking in human beings and irregular migrations, as well as to the issues of security sector governance and reform. Second dimension will address the issues which are partly motivated by our national priorities such as anti-corruption, water governance and disaster risk reduction and preparedness. We will strive to further update and strengthen the implementation of all OSCE human dimension commitments through strengthening national institutions for protection of human rights. Emphasis will be on the rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including safety of journalists, freedom of assembly and association, protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities and promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of these topics require a crossdimensional approach, while encompassing youth and gender perspectives, which is another quality of the OSCE, especially when it comes to grassroots level activities. I am pleased to announce that we will be the first to appoint the Chairmanship representatives on youth. Aware of the importance of fostering increased participation of youth in political life and decision making processes, we decided to continue the innovative practice of our Swiss colleagues initiated in Basel and provide them with an opportunity to participate in the Permanent Council. Today, we will once again hear from our youth representatives their own views on the issues of security in Europe and the role of young people. I would like to take a moment and give the floor to our youth Ambassador Ms. Milena Stošić.

(Thank you Milena.)

The notion of inclusiveness would not be complete if we did not mention the participation of civil society in our activities and the

complementary role it plays in improving the policies of participating States and safeguarding human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our efforts to achieve the peaceful resolution to the ongoing crisis, we should not lose sight of a broader strategic outlook on the European security and the importance of upholding our common values and principles. The role of the OSCE in this respect remains crucial, both as a platform for dialogue and a mechanism of stability. It has proven that through the last year's engagement in Ukraine despite very difficult circumstances. The main responsibility falls on all of us, 57 participating States, to make progress in the context of the "Helsinki + 40" process and create a positive agenda and tangible outcomes for the stronger OSCE that we envision for the future. I believe that the Panel of Eminent Persons on the European security could be of benefit with some fresh ideas in this respect.

By going back to the roots of the CSCE/OSCE, my intention is to refer to the strength and courage of our predecessors, who were able to muster political will in times of far deeper divisions, and try to reflect

it into our ongoing joint endeavours. In this age of technology and lightning communication, when things move more quickly than we could have ever imagined forty years ago, the threats are evolving at the same pace. Our joint responsibility is to prevent the existing tensions from turning into conflicts of an even larger scale. The years of our engagement within this organization should also give rise to a certain level of maturity in our dialogue. Restoring trust and confidence among the participating States, while respecting the principles and undertaken commitments lying at the core of our security and cooperation should be the essential elements of our joint endeavour. The Chairmanship is considering the possibility of marking the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in the summer with an informal high-level gathering at the very place of its making and we will inform you in due time of the developments in this regard.

Although seventy years passed since the end of the Second World War and defeat of Nazism, extreme ideas and hate crimes have still not vanished. It is our duty and responsibility to continuously point out to the universal values of human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination and the importance of dialogue, confidence-building, solidarity and cooperation in tackling today's challenges. I join the strong voice of

the many world leaders who stand firmly in defense of those universal values of humanity.

Serbia's engagement with the CSCE/OSCE has been longstanding and dates back to its beginnings. At the time Yugoslavia was not only among the founding States of the CSCE, but also the most active and prominent ones. As you might all remember, the first Follow-up Meeting to the CSCE was held in Belgrade in 1977 and 1978. This year in December, after almost forty years, our capital Belgrade will again be the host of a high-level OSCE meeting and I am looking forward to welcoming you on that occasion.

I hope my words will receive broad support around this table and that at the end of 2015 we will be able to create a positive agenda as a step forward for the future of peace and security in Europe.

Thank you for your attention.