

**Address of H.E. Mr. Milan Roćen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro  
at the OSCE Ministerial Council**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to greet you on behalf of Montenegro, the youngest OSCE participating state. It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to brief you on current processes in Montenegro. This has been a year of further strengthening of our political and economic stability, cooperation with countries of the region, and progress on the road to European and Euro Atlantic integration. If you allow, I will also share with you our view of the Organization and its role in Montenegro and South East Europe.

I would like to thank the Chairman – Finland for successful organization of this event and leadership of the Organization in very complex circumstances. This has been a period of many security challenges that have been quite a test to the OSCE and its ability to respond to crisis promptly and efficiently. We see the OSCE as one of the most important international actors in conflict prevention and resolution through different mechanisms we have developed together.

This conference has a special significance also because it is held in Helsinki, the cradle of our Organization. It is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the important role the Organization played in creating the atmosphere of trust and cooperation among the countries of bipolar Europe. Then existing divisions were successfully surpassed largely thanks to the OSCE. That is why we should look for the inspiration today in basic principles of the Organization, equally important in all three dimensions and commit ourselves to their implementation. Along these lines, as an Organization genuinely committed to protection of human rights, we believe it would be wise to adopt separate Decision devoted to universal importance of UN Declaration on Human Rights whose anniversary we celebrate these days.

We also hope that in the spirit of compromise we will be able to reach consensus on Ministerial Declaration. We believe that the idea of Summit, although it has been ten years since Istanbul, warrants profound consideration and serious preparation.

Although a young state, Montenegro is recognized as factor of stability in the region due to its internal political and economic stability and multiethnic harmony. We are implementing obligations from our European and Euro Atlantic agenda. We strive for accelerated path to the EU and NATO, in accordance with our possibilities and results, in partnership with countries of the region and member states. To this end, we plan to submit application for EU membership soon.

We fully understand that the adoption of European standards and values is in correlation with overall reforms of the Montenegrin society to which we are deeply committed. Montenegro is recording dynamic economic growth for several years - GDP growth is between 8-10%, we have high level of foreign direct investments and constant trend of unemployment reduction. Our Government is committed to adopting preventive measures to meet the challenges of financial crises on global level. At the same time, we are working on improving and harmonizing our legislation with the European one so that we could further promote respect for democratic freedoms and human and minority rights and strengthen our institutions.

Constructive cooperation with our neighbors that share our common strategic goals is one of the key priorities of Montenegro's foreign policy.

In these processes, the OSCE is our respectable partner. The OSCE Mission to Montenegro, in synergy with the EU provides significant support to the Government and other actors. We very much appreciate the assistance given to us in this period by ODIHR.

In the end, I would like to thank Minister Stubb for success and efforts put in leadership of the Organization during the year. At the same time, I wish the new Chairman, Greece, success in implementing numerous obligations in the forthcoming period. Montenegro will remain to be a reliable partner in achieving the OSCE goals.

Thank you.

Helsinki, December 4, 2008