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OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL, BRUSSELS, DECEMBER 4-5

**ADDRESS BY MILAN ROĆEN,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an exceptional honour to address you as a representative of Montenegro, the youngest country of the world, the youngest OSCE participating state. This Organization has given enormous contribution to Montenegro's democratic rebirth. Together with the European Union and other key factors of the international community, by supporting democratic forces in Montenegro, the OSCE has played an important role in Montenegro becoming the great example of the European policy in the Balkans, the first country Balkan's long history that has restored its independence in line with the highest democratic standards. That is why we believe it is symbolic that the OSCE is the first Organization Montenegro was admitted to as an independent state. I would like to thank to all who have welcomed Montenegro as new OSCE participating state.

Allow me to express my gratitude to the Chairman-in-Office - Belgium, and Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Karel de Guht, on organizing this event successfully and on heading the OSCE in a constructive way in the past year.

I would also like to join all countries that supported the arguments and assessments in address by Finland as EU Presidency on many open issues the OSCE is facing with at this point. I would also like to say a few words in national capacity.

Montenegro is fully committed to goals and standards of the OSCE set in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. Such commitment was formally confirmed by the signature of Montenegrin Prime Minister on Helsinki Final Act in September this year. We have also confirmed it in practice, on a democratic and fair referendum held on May 21, with the support of the EU, OSCE and Council of Europe, when our citizens demonstrated political maturity by taking decision on Montenegro's state and legal status. Both the citizens who voted in favor of independence, and those who were against it. It was more yet again confirmed on first

parliamentary and local elections after the independence held on September 10. In this way, we have not only strengthened our internal stability, but also contributed to the stability of the Region.

European and Euro Atlantic integration is a strategic orientation of Montenegro's policy. On this road, our short term priority is to intensify activities on negotiations on signing Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, as well as to join NATO Partnership for Peace Program, taking into the account the invitation to join the PfP on NATO Riga Summit. We believe this invitation represents recognition of Montenegro and its democratic capacities, as well as an important impetus for the stability of the Region on our common path to the Euro Atlantic integration. Recently formed first Government after the independence is truly committed to these tasks. It is a great honour for small Montenegro to be welcomed in all capitals of the world, from Washington and Brussels, to Moscow and Beijing. However, our key priority, above all, is to build the best relations and cooperation with our close friend Serbia, as well as good neighborly relations with all the countries of the Region, since we share the desire to fulfill European and Euro Atlantic perspective.

We are extremely grateful to the OSCE - ODIHR on its support and assistance during recent elections, as well as in all electoral processes in Montenegro in the past decade. The Government, which has won an impressive support of citizens based on mentioned strategic orientation, will continue with determination to build democracy, improve the rule of law, develop market economy, respect human and minority rights and further promote multiethnic harmony, we are so proud of. We are fully aware that only if we build stable institutions, strengthen administrative capacities, reform judiciary and the police, implement reform laws and build integrated defense-security system, could we make a step closer to the European and Euro Atlantic integration. The process of making new Constitution in Montenegro is under way, and the highest standards and values of the democratic societies will be built into it.

We expect the OSCE to continue being our constructive partner as we unfold new reform processes in Montenegro. On its side, Montenegro will give its full contribution to the OSCE activities in all three dimensions.

I would like to express our satisfaction with the fact that new Rules of Procedure will be adopted on this year's Ministerial Council by which the efficiency of the Organization and its bodies and institutions will be improved. We also thank the ODIHR for its Report. I would also like to emphasize the importance of adopting Ministerial Decision in the area of fight against terrorism and the OSCE's contribution in this regard as a regional actor known for its comprehensive approach to security. We firmly support the OSCE approach in fight against the

organized crime, illegal migration, trafficking in persons, environment protection as well as in other modern challenges and threats we are facing today. We are ready to give our contribution in this regard, thus enhancing regional and global stability.

In Montenegrin history, this year will be recorded forever, because it is a year in which we have restored our statehood after almost a century, in line with OSCE principles. In the end, allow me to wish success to the new Chairman-in-Office in the year ahead of us, a year which will hopefully, for both Montenegro and Balkans as a whole, make our European dreams more real.

Thank you for attention.

Brussels, December 4, 2006