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REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

ADDRESS

by

His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić
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 July 2014

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for inviting me to address the Permanent Council today and present the outline of priorities of the incoming Serbian Chairmanship for the year 2015.

Almost two and a half years ago, a unique MC decision was adopted, paving the way for two countries, Switzerland and Serbia, to lead our Organization in 2014 and 2015 in a concerted manner. It would be fair to say that this unprecedented bid aroused curiosity, or even concerns, among many, on how our two states, usually perceived as different in many aspects, will function throughout biannual consecutive Chairmanships. Nevertheless, we decided to embark on this endeavour, to respond to challenges and, through joint engagement and close cooperation, offer our efforts for the benefit of the Organization. On the one hand, Switzerland who had already served as the Chairmanship of the OSCE, is widely known as an influential country with abundant resources and expertise, as well as longstanding high reputation in international affairs. On the other hand, there is Serbia as a country with difficult and painful recent history, passing through reform processes with substantial assistance from the OSCE. Despite these differences, Switzerland and Serbia established a real partnership, which could serve as an example and perhaps as a model for the future.

During this and the following year, we are marking important anniversaries of historic events triggered in the heart of Europe, but with unprecedented consequences for the destiny of mankind. The past should not be forgotten, in particular the victims of the wars. Nevertheless, we should draw lessons from it for the future so as to overcome misperceptions, dispel illusions and avoid mistakes, while aiming to achieve more stability, security, prosperity, both within our societies and states, but also collectively among states and within different international organizations.

Next year, as well, it will be 40 years from adopting the Helsinki Final Act, a document which, after the Charter of the United Nations, perhaps has the biggest significance in modern history. We hope that, despite current circumstances, this anniversary will be used as an opportunity to reform our Organization through “Helsinki+40” process. We will strive to have an open and sincere dialogue about problems and challenges that we are facing, with a view to agreeing on common framework which could guide our Organization in the future, based on recommitment to the fundamental principles upon which our Organization is founded. During the last 40 years we have been facing many crisis and problems, but we managed to respond in appropriate ways allowing our Organization to move forward. Therefore, today's crisis creates for us both the challenge which has to be addressed and opportunity to jointly enhance our cooperation and security. In that regard, let me once again commend our Swiss colleagues for their leadership and dedication at the helm of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

During this year, our organization has been confronted with one of the biggest crises in its history. Since this crisis opened some vital questions for wider European security, we believe it is necessary to invest all possible efforts to address it, with a view to reconsolidating relations within the entire OSCE region.

Comprehensive steps and activities of all OSCE executive structures and the Swiss Chairmanship in Ukraine proved the relevance of the OSCE. These steps could be a starting point in our discussions about the future role of our Organization. It is also obvious, that the decision to establish and dispatch the Special Monitoring Mission is the most important step towards de-escalation of this crisis. Despite many serious problems, including hostage-taking of the SMM members, which we strongly condemned, presence of international monitors on the ground at this very moment is of paramount importance. In this context, let me express our full support for the work of the SMM and for the extension of its mandate without delay. We also support the early decision on rapid deployment of OSCE observers, in accordance with Berlin Declaration from July 2.

We support all activities aimed at achieving sustainable cessation of hostilities. Without that, it would be very difficult to establish an inclusive national dialogue, as a prerequisite for future important decisions which should pave the way for the stabilization of the situation. In this process, OSCE is very well placed, with its rich tool box, to assist Ukrainian authorities in furthering reforms.

As incoming Chairmanship, we will invest all our efforts in strengthening the OSCE role in Ukraine, of course in partnership with the host country and all other participating States. If future circumstances allow, it is our opinion that different projects and activities across all three dimensions are at our disposal and it would be useful to explore all possibilities for broadening the scope of OSCE activities. In view of our own experience, we wish to underline that the OSCE field presences remain an exceptional added value, which have a valuable potential to assist participating states in fulfillment of undertaken commitments. Serbia is a firm proponent of stronger OSCE presences on the ground.

I wish to point out that as a Chair-in-Office, I and my team will continue to work hard, as the Swiss Chairmanship is working now, in a balanced manner and in close consultation with Ukraine and all stakeholders. In the next few months, I intend to consult with the colleagues from a number of participating states on this and other aspects of our incoming Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is natural that during our Chairmanship we will pay particular attention to the Western Balkans, a region we are coming from. This region for many years faced serious problems, wars, hostilities, sanctions, foreign interventions, human suffering and serious violations of human rights. Today, the situation is fundamentally changed for the better. Because of this painful legacy we have to invest additional efforts in order to improve stability and prosperity in the region. We see our Chairmanship as a tribute to our region and its future as well. Particular attention would be given to reconciliation as part of conflict rehabilitation phase in terms defined by OSCE documents and as a concept advanced by our two Chairmanships. In this regard, I wish specifically to mention that Presidents of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia are invited, by the International Commission on Missing Persons, with the support of the Swiss Chairman-in-Office, to sign a Declaration on Missing Persons at the end of August in Mostar. We support this initiative and believe that the signing of the Declaration would be an important contribution to the reconciliation efforts.

Today, Serbia and other Western Balkans countries are dedicated to further accelerate the euro-integration processes and substantive regional cooperation. In this context, let me reiterate our full commitment to the EU led dialogue between Belgrade and Priština and to the implementation of all arrangements based on the Brussels agreement of April 2013. We are ready to continue the dialogue and this is our priority. In this context, I wish to commend the engagement of OMIK in the north of Kosovo and Metohija aimed at strengthening the capacities of the four municipalities there, but without diminishing its activities throughout Kosovo.

The role of our organization in the Western Balkans is still important. We work closely, and will continue to do so, with Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, Swiss and our Special Representative for the Western Balkans, a distinguished diplomat with vast experience and expertise. We intend to continue with activities initiated this year by our Swiss colleagues. For example, they are preparing to organize, together with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) a high-level conference later this year on irregular migration in our region. If hopefully the meeting takes place, we will work, again with the RCC on the follow-up next year.

Having in mind the improved situation in this region, we are convinced that there are more opportunities for enhanced horizontal cooperation among OSCE missions on the ground. We believe that lessons we have learned could be of assistance perhaps for some other regions in the OSCE area and we would be ready to establish region to region cooperation, including possible exchange of experiences which can improve practical performances on ground. It is my intention, as a future Chairman-in-Office, to visit all OSCE field presences in the region, including the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

Allow me once again to express gratitude to all participating States for their assistance and support during the recent catastrophe in the Balkans caused by unprecedented floods. Tomorrow I will attend the Donor Conference in Brussels, organized by the EU, France and Slovenia. This disaster, unfortunately, additionally justifies necessity to promote water governance as the main topic for next year's Environmental and Economic Forum and I expect that the decision on that will be adopted this week. We believe that this topic has a strategic importance for our Organization in the years to come, and that it deserves a serious consideration from different perspectives.

Mr. Chairperson,

We will continue to support all agreed formats established in order to resolve protracted conflicts. It is obvious that current crisis has an impact on some of these conflicts. In this context, our intention is to put additional efforts in order to keep regular sessions of different negotiated formats on track and with no impediments. In carrying out these tasks, we attach particular importance to the work of our special representatives which will remain on their positions during our Chairmanship. It is obvious, however, that regardless of our Organization's efforts, ideas or proposals, main responsibility lies with the parties involved. From our own experience, we can amply confirm this. Having in mind the prevailing circumstances, we believe that perhaps some smaller but concrete steps, could improve trust and confidence among parties, thus opening the way to tackle substantive problems.

We will continue to work on strengthening the OSCE capacities and mechanisms to actively respond in all phases of the conflict cycle, from early warning to post-conflict rehabilitation

and reconciliation, and to achieve concrete results in terms of stabilizing the situation on the ground. In view of the experiences of the Western Balkans, I wish to point out that concrete and sustainable solutions can only be reached through constructive political action and dialogue. I would like to mention that we support the renewed, more systematic efforts of the OSCE in strengthening mediation activities. In this regard, I wish to underline once again the significance of political will for mediation efforts to be successful.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE's comprehensive and cooperative approach to security represents a major asset of our Organization. We believe that organization's cross-dimensionality is its key strength and comparative advantage. In that context, we believe that we have to pay much more attention to our youth, their needs and strivings. Therefore, during 2015 we will propose to work on an Action Plan on Youth and Security from a cross-dimensional perspective, thus putting the "youth dimension" highly on the OSCE agenda, in a more systematic and creative way.

Apart from developing an action plan on youth as foundation of our work for the future, we intend to further promote policies to combat trafficking in human beings and pursue developing an OSCE gender equality implementation strategy with the aim to further enhancing gender mainstreaming and implementation of all gender related commitments, including UN Security Council resolution 1325. We also believe that concept of good governance goes beyond second dimension and needs to be extended and considered from the cross-dimensional perspective.

We will continue to strengthen and improve cooperation with civil society and think-tanks in each of dimensions. We commend the work of the established OSCE academic network and we will support their contribution to the overall activities during our Chairmanship as well.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the Astana Commemorative Declaration, the participating States recalled a common vision that comprehensive and lasting security is not possible without respect for human rights and democratic standards. Recognizing that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of the OSCE comprehensive security, in the Joint Work Plan of our two Chairmanships we agreed on further updating and strengthening the implementation of all OSCE human dimension commitments, strengthening the links with civil society and promotion of its active involvement, as well as the follow-up to the process of reviewing human dimension events and strengthening OSCE monitoring instruments in this area. At the same time, we all witness today that numerous challenges in implementation of our common commitments still exist.

Therefore, we believe that additional efforts should be invested in implementation of the human dimension commitments in many areas, such as the rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including protection of journalists, freedom of assembly, protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities, tolerance and non-discrimination. We also see the value in strengthening national institutions for protection of human rights, thus ensuring progress towards better implementation of our commitments.

In this context, let me use this opportunity to underline the role of OSCE institutions assisting participating States in implementing our commitments. Their role is indispensable and

therefore we must create the necessary conditions for them to carry out the functions. In these times of constant and rapid changes in our societies, when many participating States face additional challenges, only strong, independent and professional institutions, with sound financial and human resources, can help us properly address these issues. We must jointly work towards overcoming divisions and mistrust, despite some divergent views on the work of some OSCE institutions. As incoming Chairmanship, we will continue the work on human dimension events review, believing that these issues should be addressed within the Helsinki+40 Process, with a clear aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization, as well as to strengthen the human dimension.

In pursuing these goals we will cooperate with other international organizations. Council of Europe is one of our main partners in dealing with human dimension. Therefore we will proceed with practice introduced by our Swiss colleagues and establish close cooperation with Belgium and Bosnia and Herzegovina as countries leading the Council of Europe in 2015. We will also invest additional efforts in broadening cooperation with our Asian and Mediterranean partners.

Mr. Chairperson,

Traditional topics pertaining to second dimension, such as transport and labour migration will remain on our agenda and in daily work of the relevant OSCE structures. Co-ordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities and his Office will have our full support in this, but also in other areas of their engagement such as fight against corruption and anti-money laundering, which are priorities of Serbian government as well. We also believe that advancing co-operation in water governance would contribute addressing the other environmental issues and represents a follow-up to the disaster risk reduction with respect to water management. Majority of field presences has respective mandates and projects developed in the second dimension. Therefore, the OSCE has to respond to the interest of host countries in developing activities in these areas.

Mr. Chairperson,

The implementation of commitments undertaken within the framework of the politico-military dimension represents an important factor of stability, transparency and confidence among the OSCE participating States, as I elaborated in more details addressing Annual Security Review Conference two weeks ago.

Arms control and confidence and security building measures remain vital for the improvement of security in our region. Compliance with the principles and obligations stemming from these documents and their consistent implementation remains essential.

We are committed to continuing a comprehensive dialogue within the OSCE in order to maintain military stability, predictability and transparency, by updating and modernizing the Vienna Document, strengthening and implementing the Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security, as well as OSCE documents on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition.

Although current situation is not conducive to moving forward on many of these issues, we simple believe that we have to continue with our deliberations, including on making prospects for exchange of views on the conventional arms control and CSBMs. Such

discussions should be coherent with related activities and possibly “Helsinki+40” developments, create added value and avoid duplication with other formats. As a platform for dialogue, OSCE should be used as a framework for discussions on many different issues, including on those on which currently there is no agreement.

Mr. Chairperson,

We will as well pursue discussions on SSR/G and we welcomed the establishment of the Group of friends in the OSCE as a first important step towards more structured debate. In that regard, we hope that together with other members of the Group of friends, and in an incremental way, we will further develop more systematic approach, including through lessons learned and sharing experiences and best practices. We are planning to organize a follow-up event to last week’s UN-OSCE Conference on this topic during our Chairmanship.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today we experience new challenges, risks and threats of transnational character. These threats, such as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking etc. require coordinated action of the participating States. I want to emphasize the role of the Organization which, realizing the importance of countering transnational threats, undertook significant steps in recent years through adoption of relevant decisions, exchange of experiences and best practices, establishment of cooperation between competent institutions of the participating states, as well as the academic institutions.

Given the evolving nature and the need for constant monitoring and adjustment of responses to these threats, during the Serbian Chairmanship, we plan to carry out a number of activities in this field. We intend to deal with transnational challenges and threats from a cross-dimensional perspective. It is not possible to treat negative phenomena such as corruption and illegal migration in isolation. We can counter them through strengthening democratic institutions.

We will continue the practice of previous Chairmanships by organizing regular events in the field of transnational threats, based on the adopted decisions. This is the area where the cross-dimensional approach of the OSCE shows its full potential. Countering organized crime, terrorism and drugs trafficking represent burning issues for the entire OSCE region. Youth being at the centre of our attention, we intend to address these issues, among other, from the perspective of prevention and protection of our young population.

In the context of transnational threats, but as well in many other topics, it is particularly important to cooperate with other relevant international organizations in a coordinated and complementary manner. OSCE should find a niche to act and continue to develop capacities for response to new challenges and threats. A good example in this regard is a pioneer endeavour of the OSCE on confidence building measures in the field of ICT/cyber-security. We will continue to render our support in that regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

If we wish to achieve our goal and move closer to the vision of free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian security community and also to improve the role of the OSCE as the largest and most inclusive regional security organization under

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, then we have to work on rebuilding trust and confidence among participating states. This process is equally important on the ground, where devoted representatives of the OSCE implement with dedication and courage the mandates given by us, here in the Permanent Council, where main decisions have to be adopted, and in our Capitals where the political will should be generated. Together with providing adequate resources, this is the foundation of our activities and perhaps the recipe for success. In essence, this is the main substance of “Helsinki+40” process and this process depends on all of us – 57 participating States. Current Swiss and incoming Serbian Chairmanships are ready to lead this process in order to strengthen visibility and effectiveness of our Organization and to increase security and stability of our region.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.