

**Speaking points of H.E. Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia
at the Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, July 10, 2007**

- Mr, Chairman, I would like to start with thanking Spanish Chair and all distinguished delegations for giving me the opportunity to share with the Permanent Council some thoughts about the work of our Organization and cooperation with Croatia.
- Fifteen years after the Republic of Croatia joined the OSCE – and we marked this only two days ago – is a very good opportunity to inform you about the progress made in implementation of fundamental values, democratic principles and standards of the OSCE in the everyday lives of all citizen of Croatia.
- Fifteen years ago, one third of the Croatian territory was occupied and the rest of the country was suffering the burdens of the war.
- The war and the transition had its inevitable effects on the full functionality of the institutions and other OSCE merited standards.
- But, fifteen years latter, Croatia is a stable democratic society, close to the full membership to EU and NATO.
- From the country receiving the peace keepers on its ground, Croatia become a respected provider of international stability and security, contributing currently to numerous peace keeping missions around the world, but seconding also the staff to many OSCE field presences
- Croatia is also a member of newly established Peace Building Commission and – for the first time – candidate for non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council.
- Guided by the dedication to effective multilateralism and international rule of law, we strongly support all initiatives of the OSCE, from those related to the security,

military, human rights and freedoms, democracy and rule of law, to those related to economic and environmental issues.

- Therefore, Croatia warmly welcomes the efforts of Spanish Chairmanship to balance the activities of the Organization by choosing priorities in each of the three dimensions while respecting their respective intrinsic values within a cross-dimensional framework. We are also very supportive to proposals of the Chairmanship in the document called "Road to Madrid".
- Croatia will continue to be an active member and will participate in all OSCE initiatives and activities, namely the global anti-terrorist coalition, the Forum for Security Co-operation - my country has the honor to chair it in this very moment - then the RACVIAC, the Sava River Commission, the MARRI, and actively participates in others, from CEI to Quadrilaterale.
- Croatia's involvement and active role in these initiatives and activities is extremely important for the further strengthening of **the regional cooperation, which is, together with integration into the EU and NATO, the pillar of Croatia's foreign policy.** Let me update you briefly on that issue.
- Croatia currently chairs or actively co-operates in numerous regional integrations, initiatives and various projects of cross-border co-operation. Two months ago, 10 and 11 May, we accomplished our term of Presidency of the South East European Co-operation Process (SEECOP) with organizing the 10th Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the SEECOP. One important step has been made by creating the regional Cooperation Council with its Headquarters in Sarajevo as the basis of the new regional co-operation architecture.
- Last year I was personally involved in forging of a new Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), convinced that the best guarantee for long lasting stability lies in constant economical progress in all the countries of the region and in its opening for stronger cooperation as well as a market and destination for foreign investments.

- **Allow me now to reflect briefly on eleven years of our fruitful cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Croatia, which could be – without any doubt – considered as a common success and perhaps become a model for wider use.**
- The OSCE played a key role in post-conflict rehabilitation in our region, promoting the comprehensive concept of regional security which also includes **protection of human rights and minority rights, democratization of society and the rule of law**, support for the development of civil society and NGOs, and strengthening tolerance and non-discrimination.
- These principles are a fundamental part of my Government's program - **the profound changes in Croatia were made possible precisely because I have personally taken steps to enhance social tolerance, democratic dialogue, political representation of minorities and an overall, post-war re-orientation of Croatian society towards contemporary European values**
- **This has also created a new environment for better cooperation and for the fulfillment of the mandate of the Mission in Croatia**
- Our cooperation with the OSCE was **extremely important and helpful in institution building, in dealing with transition issues and in enhancing the democratic environment**
- After 11 years of cooperation between the Government of Croatia and the OSCE, we have witnessed the **successful fulfilment of the Mission's mandate, to the benefit of institutions and society in Croatia. This can serve as an example of the positive role and effect of the OSCE's endeavours at large.**
- **Our domestic institutional framework is now self sustainable** and capable of continuing to independently solve remaining issues.
- Furthermore, **the issues covered by the OSCE Mandate are now part of our EU accession negotiations**, with concrete benchmarks enabling the monitoring of commitments and progress made.

- The forthcoming **invitation to join NATO next year, also confirms compliance with required democratic standards** and values.
- **The successful fulfillment of the OSCE Mission mandate should also be viewed within the context of the strong, positive contribution of Croatia, as the most empowered and stable democracy, to the permanent stabilisation of this part of Europe.**
- We have jointly with the Mission in Zagreb established an **innovative and unique consultative mechanism, known as the “Platform”** and have set specific goals and tasks to work towards with the aim of accelerating the completion of the Mission mandate.
- Our “Platform”, as an example of gradually reducing the competences of the Mission and **shifting them to domestic institutions, could serve as a model for other countries in the region and in the wider OSCE area.**
- Through the “Platform” mechanism, **four chapters from the Mission's mandate were successfully fulfilled by the end of 2006** - Police Reform, Media, Electoral legislative reform, and the establishment of an effective framework for civil society.
- Recently, the mechanism of the “Platform” was additionally reinforced by **workshops with local authorities and local communities incorporating** national policies and programs related to sustainable return and rule of law, including our housing care programs, minority employment in the public service and impartial war crimes prosecution.
- **My Government has set as its target the completion of all mandate related issues by the end of 2007.**
- I would like to emphasize that, recently, I have had the opportunity **to extensively inform Chairman in Office, Minister Moratinos, on the achievements that Croatia has made so far, and especially on my Government’s efforts in resolving the refugee return and war crime trials monitoring issues.** I would like to express my deep satisfaction with that conversation and I take this

opportunity to thank Chairman Moratinos for his positive assessment of the Croatia's progress made so far.

- I would like to reiterate in front of this Permanent Council the commitment of my Government and my personal commitment to resolve the housing care issue of the former occupancy/tenancy rights holders who wish to return.
- I have inform Minister Moratinos that we consider that the political aspect of the Sarajevo Process is completed and along with the implementation of our own programs, granting support to every voluntary individual wishing to return, **we are ready to cooperate with and assist the other signatories of the Sarajevo Declaration.**
- **Regarding the few remaining rule of law issues**, wish to stress that we stay irrevocably committed to strengthening our primary human rights institutions, the Ombudsman and Constitutional Court, including **providing necessary increases to the Budgets of the Ombudsman and Constitutional Court** so that external assistance would no longer be needed. We are also in the process of **establishing a system of free legal aid in civil cases**, which will be fully operational next year.
- **I have also conveyed to Minister Moratinos that, regarding the monitoring of war crimes trials**, my Government has already begun **seeking the most appropriate solution and structure for monitoring, in light of the possible completion of the Mission's mandate**. We are considering various options that would satisfy both the requirements of the ICTY (competence) and of the OSCE (transfer).
- We have put forward certain ideas and we remain open for further consultations on the best structure of monitoring.

To conclude:

- I sincerely believe that our coordination and enhanced cooperation with the Mission leads to the realization of all realistically achievable goals agreed within the

“Platform“ by the end of this year, that the domestic institutional framework has become self-sustaining, and capable to solve the remaining issues.

- So the fact is that the mandate of the Mission to Croatia is successfully nearing completion and that the engagement of the OSCE Mission beyond 2007, after 11 years of cooperation, would not be necessary, my Government offering full and verifiable guarantees for the fulfillment of the remaining obligations.

- Such outcome would testify the success of both of us – of the Republic of Croatia as well as of the OSCE.