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Statement by

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Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and
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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and a pleasure to address the 19th Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to start off by joining my colleagues and congratulate you and the Irish government for a remarkable Chairmanship of the OSCE this past year. I was quite impressed by your pragmatic and fair-minded approach and, particularly, by your efforts towards OSCE's concept of a common, comprehensive, and indivisible security, based on a cross-dimensional set of agreed principles and commitments.

Also, at the outset, I would like to express my congratulations to Mongolia, as the 57th participating state of our Organization.

Today, as always, we are in need of an effective multilateralism, and your work, as well as the work of the OSCE, is of tremendous importance in this sphere, particularly as we approach the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2015.

The OSCE has been steadily working towards building a secure and more prosperous world, built on mutual understanding and open dialogue. We, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, can certainly vouch for that.

In its comprehensive security concept, starting with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, which was justifiably considered a breakthrough in East-West relations, all up until today, with the Vienna Document 2011 and the decision to welcome Mongolia as the 57th participating state of the OSCE, the OSCE has steadily progressed in assisting to create not just a democratic and peaceful Europe, but to , as it is often said today, "promote peace and stability from Vancouver to Vladivostok."

Of course, the dreams of a region entirely at peace were dramatically shattered during the bloodshed and war that befell my country as well as our neighbors in the Balkans. But even then, states turned to the OSCE, at first to end bloodshed, and later, to work on destroying weapons and rebuilding communities – work that has continued to this day.

The OSCE continues to play an important role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I would like to use this opportunity to commend the OSCE Mission to B&H for the work they have done and continue to do on a daily basis.

People refer to OSCE's field missions as jewels in the crown of the OSCE, and since Bosnia and Herzegovina is host one of the largest of all OSCE field missions, let me assure you that this is indeed the case. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a valuable partner for a number of particular areas - like education, elections, security sector reform, and the strengthening of democratic institutions – just to name a few.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina steadily continues on its euro-atlantic path towards full NATO and EU membership, our work with the OSCE and assistance by the OSCE have helped Bosnia and Herzegovina in its transition from being a recipient of international security in the 1990s, to becoming a provider and exporter of international security today.

Regional cooperation is one of the corner stones of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy, and we continuously strive to provide a meaningful contribution to regional security and stability.

Strict adherence to and implementation of commitments under the OSCE instruments, including the Open Skies Treaty and the very successfully implemented Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control, or a regional review of answers to the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, are just some of the ways in which Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to contribute to regional stability and cooperation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains committed to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 and undertakes activities regarding development of the National Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the implementation of this resolution.

Nationally, Bosnia and Herzegovina is aware of the need to further empower under-represented groups of people, both in politics and public life.

In regards to the implementation of the 2009 European Court of Human Rights' Sejdic-Finci ruling, there are different views on how to solve this long-lasting problem of discrimination of people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But, we have made significant progress in resolving this matter, and as the dialogue among B&H political parties continues, it is my sincere hope that we will be able to resolve this issue soon, so that all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens can enjoy one of their basic human rights.

As we all know, the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, encompassing politico-military, economic and environmental, as well as human aspects, addresses a wide range of security-related issues that matter to all of us. Along those lines, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues its progress in combating human trafficking, as well as in the continuous efforts in the fight against terrorism.

Protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential to the progress and security of all countries, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is no exception here. We consider democratic institutions and the rule of law to be just as important for maintaining peace and stability, as issues considered in politico-military or economic dimensions of the OSCE.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the UNSC Resolution 1325 on gender issues and encourages the role of women in the forthcoming processes in our country. The Corfu process will assist us to further define and redefine the OSCE and its role – and to successfully assist us in building a more prosperous, more democratic, and more peaceful Europe.

I am convinced that the full implementation of the existing commitments of the OSCE, in all three dimensions, will make our world more secure. But, we have to be both innovative and constructive. The OSCE's reform process will not be easy, but it will provide us with more confidence and with new ideas – both how to implement existing commitments and how to tackle new, cross-dimensional challenges to our security.

In that regard, BiH fully supports Helsinki+40 process and its outcomes.

I look forward to that dialogue, both here and in the future. The real jewel of the OSCE is the open dialogue among its participating states, as well as OSCE institutions and structures. I look forward to us working together to take OSCE to the next level, while keeping its purpose as a real forum for open and constructive discussions.

Allow me, at the end, to commend our hosts for a superbly organized conference, and, last, but certainly not least, welcome the upcoming Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Thank you.