



On the occasion of the assumption of OSCE Chairmanship by the Republic of Serbia, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dačić hosted in Belgrade, today, an official reception for heads of diplomatic missions and international organizations. The reception, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was addressed – in addition to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs – by Jean-Daniel Ruch, Ambassador of Switzerland in Belgrade.

Following is the address by Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić held on the occasion:

«Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the occasion of the end of the Swiss and the beginning of Serbian OSCE Chairmanship. I am particularly pleased to welcome the representative of the 2014 OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Jean-Daniel Ruch, Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia. As you know, this is for the first time in the OSCE that two countries, Switzerland and Serbia, are sharing the consecutive Chairmanship of the Organization. I believe that already at this point, at the conclusion of the first half of this consecutive Chairmanship, we can note that this model has proved effective and that it has enabled continuity and planning of the Chair's activities on a longer term.

The year 2014 has been full of challenges to the OSCE region, since we have faced one of the most serious crises since the end of the Cold War. In highly complex political circumstances, the OSCE responded to the crisis quickly by dispatching a Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. The Organization has thereby demonstrated its effectiveness and affirmed its importance on the global level. The efficient action by the Swiss Chairmanship and the political support of the Participating States by far contributed to such a rapid response to the existing crisis situation.

We are aware that Ukraine will continue to be a dominant OSCE theme in 2015 as well, requiring the same level of engagement. In this context, the top priority of our Chairmanship will be encouragement of a comprehensive peace process.

The Meeting in Basel affirmed the support of the Participating States to OSCE activities in Ukraine, including the Special Monitoring Mission and the Trilateral Contact Group, as well as to full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which will be a guideline for our Chairmanship as well.

Since we will be marking next year the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Final Act of Helsinki, we see this as an opportunity to underline, once again, the importance of this

document. We stand ready to work together with the other Participating States, as well as our Mediterranean and Asian partners, on the reaffirmation of the goals and the fundamental principles of our Organization.

The Meeting in Basel supported the "Helsinki + 40" process. It is our intention to discuss with our OSCE partners, at the very beginning of our Chairmanship, how to follow-up on this process.

Serbia and Germany, members of the 2015 OSCE Troika, supported the decision of the Swiss Chairmanship to create a Panel of Eminent Persons. We expect the work of the Panel to be relevant also for the "Helsinki + 40" process. We further expect the Panel to make a significant contribution to the broader aspects of the European security system.

The Western Balkans continues to be the priority of our Chairmanship. As I already stated at the Ministerial Meeting in Basel, I believe that our region is on the right track and expect that our Chairmanship will give an additional impulse to regional cooperation. As a candidate for EU accession, Serbia is truly devoted to strengthening its cooperation with the neighbouring countries and the region as a whole.

This is not Serbia's first Chairmanship of an international organization, but it certainly is the most complex one, and not only because of Ukraine. We will make our best effort to ensure constructiveness of our Chairmanship and to render positive results. For this reason, our entire Ministry, as well as many other Government departments, will be in the function of our Chairmanship next year.

Furthermore, we are aware that this responsible task cannot be accomplished without the support of all OSCE Participating States and partners. We therefore hope that we will be able to count on your support next year in the accomplishment of our common goal – enhancement of European security and cooperation.

Thank you."