



Leaving the OSCE chairman-in, first Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic at the 125th ministerial meeting of the European Council in Brussels called "Divided responsibility for democratic security in Europe":

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished fellow Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and great pleasure to participate in the Ministerial Meeting of the Council of Europe.

First of all, I would like to thank the Kingdom of Belgium for the excellent organization of the Meeting and to congratulate it on the remarkable results achieved over the past period, during its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. The Belgian Chairmanship has confirmed the position prevailing in the Council of Europe that the modalities of maintaining and promoting the standards of the Council of Europe in our continent should be viewed in a comprehensive manner, and that every segment of the social fabric is equally important in the accomplishment of this goal. It is true that today's Europe is faced with great challenges in the preservation of peace and stability in its territory.

Nevertheless, this should by no means put aside the issues of human rights, the rule of law, as well as social, cultural and other rights which, if ignored, could lead to even greater turbulences in our continent.

This is also an opportunity for me to thank Belgium for the good communication that we had in the first half of this year, as Chairs of the CE Committee of Ministers and the OSCE, hoping that it will continue in the same manner during the Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the same time, I would also like to congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina, wishing it every success in chairing the Committee in the coming period, along with my assurances that it can count on any assistance and support of the Republic of Serbia, if and when needed. My country looks forward with keen interest and sympathies to the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers by a country from our region, and it will continue to do so over the next six months. At this high-level meeting, I would first of all like to reiterate the determination and commitment of the Republic of Serbia to respect the principles, standards and core values that the Organization stands for.

In the year when we are observing the 70th Anniversary of the Defeat of Fascism, we are forewarned by issues that we are currently facing that, while looking in retrospect, we should reflect upon the path that Europe has traversed ever since. The Council of Europe belongs to those international organizations established in the aftermath of the Second World War to the effect that what Europe had faced and countered 70 years ago is never repeated again. This Anniversary also warns us to be cautious in order to recognize in a timely fashion the phenomena having the potential to cause instability and to threaten peace in Europe.

It was with these motives in mind and great attention that we examined the CoE Secretary General's Report on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe, to conclude that we fully share his perception of identifying two major challenges to the democratic security in Europe, reflected in the phenomena of extreme violence and the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis.

The issue of democratic security is very topical indeed and, in some parts of Europe, it is being put to the test and followed by considerable volatility, requiring the influence of the international community, including the Council of Europe, which is specifically indicated in the Secretary General's Report.

It is commonly known that the problem of terrorism and other forms of extreme manifestations of violence is indivisible by its nature, meaning that it recognizes no borders and that it is impossible to be contained within a strictly national framework.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the basic starting point in the efforts to address issues of the security of democracies in Europe is, in fact, contained in the very agenda item under our consideration. It is "shared responsibility" that is a necessary approach to the problem in order to avoid conflicts and instability in the Member States. Xenophobia, populism and chauvinism are phenomena faced by the world today, and Europe is no exception in that respect. The terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen, as well as in Zvornik and Kumanovo, have unfortunately illustrated in the worst possible way their brutal manifest form and served as a reminder that these phenomena should be strongly opposed.

Serbia strongly condemns terrorism in any shape or form, as well as all forms of extremism and radicalisation, aware that the complexity of these phenomena requires coordinated action on the wider international level, and dealing with all their aspects with the aim of a comprehensive response.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Regrettably, the still ongoing crisis in Ukraine has reminded us how fragile the security of a democracy can be and how political clashes may escalate into armed conflicts. The situation in Ukraine calls for peace and stability to be defined as priority goals. Serbia has supported and will continue to support direct action of regular and ad hoc bodies of the Council of Europe which, within the mandates given to them to protect human rights, aim to contribute to solving

the crisis.

I would like to remind you that Serbia has assumed the responsible office of the OSCE Chair at a politically very complex and challenging moment. In this capacity, we are making every effort to rebuild confidence and trust among participating States.

The only road to peace and prosperity leads through mutual cooperation, respect and appreciation, which we could learn from our own example after the difficult and challenging period of the 1990s.

Having mentioned our example, it is impossible not to refer to the unacceptable position of the members of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija, which is far below the human rights standards of the Council of Europe. On this occasion, I will reiterate the support of the Republic of Serbia to any action of the Council of Europe aimed at improving the implementation of the Council of Europe standards in Kosovo and Metohija, to the benefit of all people living there, and which is, at the same time, carried out in accordance with international legally binding documents, primarily UNSC Resolution 1244. Serbia will continue to be a constructive partner in defining such action, in full compliance with the status neutral approach adopted by the Council of Europe.

Thank you for your attention.