The key role of OSCE as a bridge-builder and a peacemaker was recognized today, said Ministers of the OSCE Troika and the OSCE Secretary General as they accepted the "Ewald von Kleist Award", on the margins of the Munich Security Conference. For the first time in the award's history, it was granted to an organization rather than an individual.

The "Ewald von Kleist Award", which honours outstanding contributions to peace and conflict resolution, was this year given to the OSCE for its "contribution to peace, stability and security in Europe, in particular the efforts of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and also for its diplomatic attempts to end the crisis."

The OSCE Troika consists of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the current, former and next OSCE Chairmanships as well as OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier.

"This Award is an acknowledgement that the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and its role as a forum for inclusive dialogue and joint action are more important than ever today, when we need to find ways to resolve the growing East-West divide," said Ivica Dacic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, as he received the Award during a gala dinner hosted by the Bavarian Minister-President Horst Seehofer at the Munich Residenz on Saturday, as part of the Munich Security Conference. "We must intensify our efforts to overcome growing divisions and continue working toward 'peace through dialogue' – for this, the best platform is the OSCE", Dacic pointed out.

Swiss Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Didier Burkhalter, who was the OSCE Chairman-in-Offce last year, said the Award highlighted the growing recognition of the OSCE's role and potential.

"We need a strong OSCE as a solid anchor of co-operative security in Europe," he said. "It is our shared responsibility not to allow Europe to become divided again. We must persist in our efforts to work out common solutions to overcome the Ukraine crisis and the broader crisis of European security."

German Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who would chair the OSCE next year, said: "The crisis in Ukraine has highlighted the eminent role the OSCE can play for peace and security in Europe. In times of conflict, we will together strive to foster dialogue and enhance and strengthen the OSCE's mandate for peace and security in Europe."

OSCE Secretary General Zannier said the Award was a welcome recognition of the work of the Organization and its people. "This Award is the recognition of the OSCE's unique concept of comprehensive security. All the 57 OSCE participating States must continue working together to strengthen the OSCE as anchor of co-operative security in Europe and working to resolve our differences through dialogue", he said.