



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic met today in Vienna at the OSCE Troika headquarters, in his role as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, with the OSCE Troika Ambassadors, consisting of Serbia, Germany and Switzerland, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and live from Ukraine with the Special Representatives - Ambassador Apakan, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, and his personal Special Representative in the Trilateral Contact Group in Ukraine Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini.

“We talked about the current state of affairs in Ukraine, on the implementation of the Minsk Protocol and concluded that, despite all the problems - certain incidents that still occur, the problems concerning procedural matters of verifying the withdrawal of heavy weapons, it is obvious that the process in Ukraine entered into de-escalation phase, and that there are positive steps suggesting that this will not be just a pause between the two conflicts, but a process that will lead to a political solution to the problems in Ukraine based on the Normandy Four Decision.

I wish, as Chairman-in-Office, to welcome the progress in the implementation of the Minsk Agreement, to commend the role of the OSCE Representatives and Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini and Ambassador Apakan, as well as the political will shown by all stakeholders, in terms of the cease-fire and the beginning of heavy weapons withdrawal, hoping that this will lead to further de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine”.

The Serbian Foreign Minister pointed out that both the UN Security Council and the EU had asked to inform them and talk with them about the way of strengthening the OSCE Mission, since the OSCE is given, by Normandy decision, a key role in the implementation of their political agreement at the level of the highest state leaderships of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France.

“I had a telephone conversation today also with the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini about the ways in which the EU can strengthen the mission in Ukraine. I will send a letter to all Foreign Ministers of the OSCE Participating States requesting all countries to consider how they can help when it comes to funding, technical equipment, personnel, number of observers in certain countries.

This week when I spoke with all 15 UN Security Council members, the Foreign Ministers of China, Russia, Ukraine, US Secretary of State Kerry, EU High Representative Mogherini today, the OSCE Troika Ambassadors and the OSCE Secretary General, a prominent role of Serbia, as the OSCE Chair, has been emphasized and our Chairmanship positively rated, which is of great importance for foreign policy and international positioning of Serbia.

As the OSCE Chair, we will continue the talks on the extension of the mandate of the Mission in Ukraine, these days. Its mandate expires by the end of March, but our goal is to reach an

agreement on a further extension by mid-March”, said Minister Dacic.

“We have already agreed, in the talks with the Foreign Ministers of Russia and Ukraine, that the Mission be mandated for twelve instead of six months, if that is acceptable to all OSCE Member States. After that, in consultation with representatives of Russia and Ukraine, discussions will be held on all modalities, the mandate, number of people, technical equipment ...

It is important for Serbia to present itself as a good negotiator when it comes not only to political but also organizational issues such as negotiations on technical and organizational matters like the organization of a peace mission”, underlined the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Dacic.