



De-escalation of the situation in Ukraine, based on a ceasefire respected by all sides, will be Serbia's priority as it takes over the OSCE chairmanship in 2015, Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic said today.

Speaking as Serbia assumed the rotating Chairmanship of the Organization in the year when we mark the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, Dacic said the chairmanship represented a major challenge and an opportunity for Serbia to harness political will towards OSCE goals, especially with regard to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, unforeseen when Serbia put forward its bid for OSCE Chairmanship three years ago.

"The response of the OSCE in such difficult circumstances shows that, when endowed with the necessary political will, the organization can put to use its comparative advantages and effectively contribute to addressing the challenges of such crises and testifies to the significance of the OSCE as a regional security arrangement" Dacic said.

"We intend to put all our efforts into finding political solutions to current problems, taking up the reigns from Switzerland in the second part of the Swiss-Serbian consecutive chairmanship which has proved the effectiveness of close collaboration at political and operational level," he said.

Serbia will also prioritise work on protracted conflicts, bringing to the table its own experience as a country that came out of conflict and transitioned towards democracy.

"We can contribute to these processes with the experiences from the Western Balkans, the promotion of the region being one of our Chairmanship priorities, particularly in terms of the positive role of the OSCE and the cooperation with other relevant international organizations," he said, stressing that Serbia is committed to OSCE principles and to working transparently and effectively towards the Organization's goals.

Dacic said that Serbia is ready to implement its priorities in all three dimensions and to work on reaching the envisaged aims, from the fight against terrorism and better water management, to implementing commitments in the human rights domain. "Also, while marking the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we will reflect seriously upon the OSCE's future role", he added.

The Minister will present Serbia's priorities to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 15 January.

The latest news from the Serbian Chairmanship will be posted on Twitter at @Serbia2015OSCE.

*Photo by:OSCE/Jonathan Perfect*