



MFA Secretary General Veljko Odalovic stated today that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued clear instructions to all the diplomatic and consular missions in the world to open special bank accounts, and a global account intended for assistance to flood victims, into which payments can be made via PayPal from 193 countries, was also opened in Brussels.

Odalovic specified at the session of the parliamentary Committee on the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region that the Brussels account was opened due to the fact that banks in the majority of countries were closed over the last weekend, and that all the money would be channeled into the special account of the Serbian Government.

The MFA Secretary General announced that the Serbian Government would create a special body that would determine what the state must do in order for prevent this scenario from being repeated next year, for instance in the same period.

Mr. Odalovic also specified that Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic would tour Obrenovac today, together with Ambassadors accredited in Belgrade, in order for them to have an insight into the situation on the ground, and in order to acquaint them in the most direct way possible with the extent of the flood repercussions and the measures undertaken to rescue the affected.

Compulsory twenty-four hour shifts have been introduced in diplomatic missions and consular posts so that the Serbs from the Diaspora and everyone who wishes to assist could do so, Mr. Odalovic said, stressing that any help would be welcome, be it one blanket and ten diapers, and that nobody would be sent back regardless of the amount of aid they provide.

According to Odalovic, organized aid from Serbs from the Diaspora and the world has already started to arrive, for which reason the neighbouring countries were requested to facilitate the administrative border procedures, in order for the aid to be delivered where needed as soon as possible.

Air Serbia also announced that it would provide assistance, Odalovic added, emphasizing that smaller amounts of humanitarian aid are being transported by regular flights, and that special

flights would be organized in case of need.

MFA maintains constant day-to-day contacts and coordination with the MoI Emergency Management Sector, the Red Cross and the Ministry of Health, Odalovic also stated.

When talking about the funds that would be raised and that the Serbian nationals are paying into special-purpose accounts, Odalovic said that they would primarily be used to alleviate the damage caused by disastrous flooding, and subsequently for the recovery that is certain to last.

"Everything will be transparent, I know that there will be people who are tied to their neighbourhood and who will want the funds they have donated to be disbursed for the restoration or construction of a school or something else in their community, and we will try to make it possible, Odalovic said.

The session was also attended by Head of the MFA Emergency Staff Zoran Djuricic, who said that the diplomatic and consular missions were instructed to issue a recommendation to the Serbian nationals to send both money and the commodities in short supply.

He reiterated that letters had been sent to the neighbouring countries with a request to facilitate the humanitarian aid transport over their borders, and that positive response had already come from Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary.