



Speech delivered by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office/ First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting in Vienna:

“President Kanerva,  
Secretary General Oliver,  
Distinguished Parliamentarians,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct pleasure to address the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for the first time in my capacity as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. Today I would like to present to you the priorities of the Serbian Chairmanship for 2015. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Switzerland for the excellent work during its Chairmanship and our fruitful cooperation. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Germany as the new member of the OSCE Troika.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by stressing the importance of this year as the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act.

Although much has changed since 1975, the norms, principles and commitments of this document and our collective responsibility to act in accordance with them are more relevant than ever. The legacy of the Helsinki Final Act - dialogue and compromise, peaceful resolution of disputes, confidence-building, solidarity, responsibility and cooperation - will also be the main tenets of our Chairmanship. In line with the Astana vision, we will aim at "Rebuilding trust and confidence in order to create a positive agenda for the future".

Excellencies,

The Chairmanship of Serbia comes at a very difficult moment for security of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. The crisis in and around Ukraine is the most tragic proof of that. Once again, I encourage all sides to fully adhere to the Package of Measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements signed on 12 February, thus seizing the opportunity to de-escalate the conflict and put an end to civilian casualties. I strongly urge all sides to refrain from any action that might endanger the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, which came into effect on 15 February

2015. Another opportunity for a peaceful resolution of the conflict should not be missed. For the effective support of the OSCE, it is crucial that all sides closely co-operate with the SMM, respect and ensure their safety, security, unhindered access and freedom of movement of the SMM monitors on the ground. My Special Representative to the Trilateral Contact Group Ambassador Tagliavini continues to make every effort towards the restoration of peace and stability in Ukraine.

The main priority of our Chairmanship will be to support all efforts leading towards a peace process. We will continue to work together with the Troika and all the key stakeholders. The implementation of the agreed package of measures by all parties is essential. The Special Monitoring Mission has the ability to assist in carrying out the provisions of these two instruments in full, and it has proven to be an invaluable and unique asset. The Trilateral Contact Group will contribute significantly to the implementation of the package of measures related to the Minsk arrangements and furthering the peace process. I strongly support the efforts of the Chief Monitor, Ambassador Apakan, and my Special Representative, Ambassador Tagliavini.

I can assure you that Serbia is acting and will continue to act as an honest broker in this process. Creating conditions for dialogue and compromise must be a joint responsibility of all participating States as well as all OSCE Institutions and structures. To this end, I would like to commend the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for its role in monitoring elections in Ukraine last year; also for creating an Inter-parliamentary Liaison Group on Ukraine that brings together parliamentarians from Ukraine, Russia and other participating States to promote dialogue and contribute to the de-escalation of the conflict. The Parliamentary Assembly has once again demonstrated its importance as a forum for exchanging ideas and initiating joint action. I stand ready to explore together with all of you how we can best cooperate to help restore peace and stability in Ukraine.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Consistent with the OSCE's fundamental principles, the Serbian Chairmanship will also prioritize the resolution through agreed formats of protracted conflicts in the OSCE region. While high-level contacts between the parties and the meetings of the formats should continue, we believe that, considering the prevailing circumstances, some concrete steps could improve trust and confidence among parties, thus opening the way to tackle more substantive problems. The responsibility to advance the settlement processes related to the protracted conflicts in the OSCE area lies mainly with the parties. However, we need to ensure collective support for their peaceful settlement by investing additional efforts to generate the necessary political will.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Serbia was presenting its candidacy, we considered that having a country from the Western Balkans as the OSCE Chairmanship would bring added value to the work of our Organization. In particular, this would offer the chance to transfer lessons learned from our own experiences to the wider OSCE region, including recognition of the important role the OSCE has played in supporting post-conflict transition processes and reforms throughout the Western Balkans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recent tragic events have highlighted once again that the international community must remain vigilant in the face of existing and emerging terrorist threats. After the tragedy in Paris last month, another terrorist attack took place only few days ago, this time in Copenhagen. I condemn this vicious act and offer my condolences to the families of the victims. We need to be unequivocal in our condemnation of all forms of terrorism, while at the same time ensuring that our societies remain united against attempts to create divisions on the basis of religion, culture, ethnicity, nationality or race. Serbia will devote particular attention to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters as well as violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, especially radicalization of youth. The Chairmanship will organize an expert-level, OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on the topic of foreign terrorist fighters in Vienna in July. Our activities in the first dimension will not only focus on counter-terrorism but also on cyber-security; addressing the links between organized crime, trafficking in human beings and irregular migration, which will be the main topic of the Annual Police Experts Meeting in May in Belgrade; and security sector governance and reform, on which the Chairmanship plans to organize an event in April in Belgrade.

As far as our activities in the second dimension are concerned, the topic of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum will be "Water Governance in the OSCE Area – Increasing Security and Stability through Cooperation"; the Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting in October in Vienna will be devoted to the fight against corruption.

Finally, we will strive to further update and strengthen the implementation of all OSCE human dimension commitments. We will do this by supporting national institutions for the protection of human rights, with an emphasis on the rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including safety of journalists, freedom of assembly and association, protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities and promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination. In particular, in light of recent tragic events, the Chairmanship plans to organize an event on the safety of journalists this year.

Many of these topics will require not only a cross-dimensional approach, but also the inclusion of the perspectives of youth, women and civil society, especially at the grassroots level. In this sense, the Parliamentary Assembly could play a very important role, providing new ideas and proposals to develop joint activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our efforts to achieve the peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine, we should not lose sight of a broader strategic outlook on European security and the importance of upholding our common values and principles. The role of the OSCE in this respect remains crucial, acting both as a platform for inclusive dialogue and a mechanism for stability. Making progress in the context of the "Helsinki + 40" process, even beyond 2015, should continue to be considered as a fundamental step toward creating a positive agenda and tangible outcomes for a more effective OSCE, but also as a contribution to rebuilding trust and confidence across the whole OSCE region. In this regard, I expect that the Panel of Eminent Persons on European

Security as a Common Project launched at the Basel Ministerial Council will make useful recommendations, and I look forward to its suggestions for how we can replace the current culture of confrontation with one of cooperation and joint action. I also welcome the Parliamentary Assembly's Helsinki +40 initiative to conduct a series of events devoted to European security and the role of the OSCE. These discussions provide an excellent opportunity to increase cooperation and generate innovative ideas.

I look forward to discussing with all of you, distinguished Parliamentarians, how we can work together to strengthen peace and security across the OSCE region.

Thank you.”