



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic participated today in the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the “Brdo Process” in Slovenia.

The event was co-hosted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and France, Messrs. Karl Erjavec and Laurent Fabius. Participating also in the meeting are all the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Western Balkan Region, of Austria and Italy and the European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn, as well as State Secretary at the German Federal Foreign Office Markus Ederer.

Minister Dacic participated in both sessions of today’s conference where he exchanged opinions on the issues of interest for the Western Balkans, as well as on issues of wider geostrategic importance. The first session was dedicated to the issues of security and political stability of the European neighbourhood, while the second concerned regional development.

“Serbia strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms, devotes particular attention to strengthening the stability and security both in the Western Balkan region, and in Europe and its neighbourhood, as well. Our current responsibility in this regard is all the greater given our present role as the Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. I am confident that all our colleagues present here share in common the desire to see prosperity and stability in Europe and its neighbourhood; that open security issues are addressed through dialogue and that joint efforts are made to ensure a safe life for all our citizens”, said Minister Dacic and underlined that, with regard to combating terrorism, Serbia was strongly committed to responding to current security challenges presented by all forms of extremism and radicalization.

“We are ready to contribute, in coordination with our partners world-wide, particularly the EU, to the elimination of all threats on national, regional, European and global levels. Every country, irrespective of its size, should have a role to play that corresponds to its resources and possibilities, because terrorism, extremism and radicalization

recognize no borders”, stressed the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Head of Serbian Diplomacy.

“We are endeavouring to contribute to countering terrorism also in our current capacity as OSCE Chair. Having assumed the OSCE Chairmanship at a geopolitically highly complex and challenging moment, we are acutely aware that security in Europe and the wider OSCE region significantly depends also on the situation in the neighbouring regions. Given that terrorism and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters pose a serious security threat both to the OSCE region and its wider neighbourhood, we decided that the first OSCE conference on the first, politicomilitary dimension - during our Chairmanship - be devoted to counter-terrorism efforts, focusing in particular on the problem of foreign terrorist fighters. We believe that following the tragic events in Paris and Copenhagen, due attention should be given to this phenomenon, as highly important for European and broader international security.

As the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, I would like to address a very serious security issue referred to in the interventions made by my previous speakers, which is the situation in Ukraine. First, I wish to underline that Serbia supports the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, as well as the work and efforts of the “Trilateral Contact Group” (TCG) and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. We are also supportive of the political process aimed at addressing the crisis in Ukraine, carried out in the “Normandy format”. Second, our active position as the OSCE Chair is reflected also in the fact, for example, that following the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis, we issued 25 statements in January, available on the websites of the OSCE and the Serbian Foreign Ministry. Third, I wish to voice clearly, this time again, our full support to the implementation of the Minsk package of measures and to send once more a message from this conference to all parties to the conflict, to take the opportunity to restore a durable peace in Ukraine. This is primarily in the interest of Ukraine, but also in the interest of Europe and all of us as part of it”, said Minister at the end of the first working session of the Brdo Process Conference.

Opening his intervention at the second session devoted to regional cooperation, a particularly significant issue, because it concerns reconstruction and recovery of the region following last year’s floods, Minister pointed out several facts: “The Southeast Europe region is exposed to the effects of climate change, as reflected in the catastrophic floods that hit countries of the region and Serbia, in May 2014. Let me remind you that two million people were directly affected by floods in Serbia, of which number more than 32,000 were forced to leave their homes, while transport infrastructure, agriculture and electric power system of the country suffered damage amounting to more than EUR 1.5 billion. As a country that suffered such terrible consequences of natural disasters, I would like to emphasize in particular that Serbia is, at the regional level, active in cross-border cooperation to overcome the negative consequences of climate change and natural disasters, as illustrated by the cooperation between the relevant services during last year’s floods that struck Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. I strongly believe that the resolution of global climate change issues requires a comprehensive action at the multilateral, regional and national level. Serbia endeavours to contribute to global action against climate change by participating at significant international events dealing with this issue. Therefore, I take this opportunity to wish all of you, and my French colleague in particular, successful outcome of the UN Conference on

Climate Change to be held in Paris in December of this year”.

Today’s event also included discussions on the issues of positive impact for the youth in the region, while the OSCE Chair Minister Dacic stressed that Serbia attached great importance to investing in youth, both at national and regional level. The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted in February this year the National Strategy for Youth 2015-2025, where employment and entrepreneurship of young people, as well as their education and training are highlighted as top priorities. The Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia is continually working on providing financial support to students for gaining work experience and creating opportunities for employment. The Minister also emphasized that Serbia paid great attention to the perspective of youth in the region, as well as to the promotion of regional cooperation on youth policy, and in that regard mentioned the initiative of the Serbian Prime Minister to create the Western Balkan Youth Union, the realization of which has been worked on intensively.

In bringing his remarks to an end at the second session, Dacic expressed his satisfaction with the “Brdo Process” conference closing with the topic of connectivity between the EU and the region, and said he was glad for the encouraging assessments made by Commissioner Hahn. One of the key foreign-policy priorities of Serbia is good-neighbourly cooperation in the Western Balkan region.

“I strongly believe that strengthening cooperation in the region will bring the whole region into the European family, which is our strategic goal. We are aware that economic progress is one of the key elements in the EU enlargement process in the Western Balkans and that it will require stronger connectivity and implementation of common regional projects in many areas. Serbia is completely ready for this process and you can count on our full cooperation for the purpose of achieving the welfare of our societies and better life of our citizens”, concluded Head of Serbian diplomacy Ivica Dacic.