



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic is visiting Warsaw today where, as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, he opened the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the largest annual human rights conference organized by the OSCE.

Minister Dacic also had an opportunity today to talk with Polish Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna. After the meeting, the two Ministers addressed the media at a joint Press Conference:

“I am very pleased to be in Warsaw today, where I have an opportunity, as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, to open the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. This is the most important annual human dimension meeting and I am grateful to ODIHR, Director Link, and Poland for organizing such a big and important event.

As I said earlier today, this meeting is an excellent opportunity to gain insight into the results of the participating states in terms of fulfilling the obligations in the human dimension area, and also to discuss the challenges that we are all facing.

As the OSCE Chair, Serbia has paid particular attention to the issues of freedom of expression and media freedom, of which a conference was organized in Belgrade, in March.

Issues such as the rule of law, strengthening of institutions for the protection of human rights, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and association, protection of national minorities, are the issues that we have intensively dealt with at the meetings we organized. In addition, we dealt with the issue of women and their role within all three OSCE dimensions, the issues of vulnerable social groups, including the LGBT population. We also devoted much attention to the youth issues. The Serbian chairmanship together with the Swiss chairmanship appointed its youth representatives.

I do not need to underline that the crisis in and around Ukraine is a serious challenge to the European security. As the Chair, Serbia strongly supports the political process being carried out through the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and working groups. We are convinced that the political process is the only way to achieve a sustainable solution; we support the work of Normandy format and the Minsk Agreement.

In recent weeks, a number of OSCE participating states, including my own, are faced with the influx of a huge number of refugees coming from war-torn countries, irregular migrants from the Middle East, mostly from Syria.

The migrant crisis, which has hit the Balkan countries, poses not only a humanitarian, but a security problem as well. It is clear from the way that some countries are making an effort to deal with the influx of migrants that it is a crisis of values, solidarity and even humanity.

Some of the topics of this year's Human Dimension Meeting will be devoted to the problems of migrants, refugees and displaced persons.

As the representative of a country that has an experience in addressing these three categories, I would like to emphasize that it is crucial that fundamental human rights of these people are fully respected.

I hope that during this meeting we will have a quality discussion that will result in useful recommendations for solving the problem of migrants and refugees.

Two days ago the OSCE Troika meeting was held in Magdeburg where we agreed to include this topic in the issues for discussion at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade, in December.

It is necessary that countries, including the European Union, have a joint approach - a common policy on the migrant crisis.

The migrant crisis is the biggest crisis in Europe since the Second World War. It does not affect individual countries, it has an impact on the structure of the European Union, causing tectonic disturbances in the system of values, as well as in the mechanisms established within the EU.

I am referring to the Schengen system, the policy of the European Union without borders, as today Serbia is directly faced with the consequence of the fact that the European Union does not have unified and common policy. We are between two prongs of the European Union - one represented by Greece and partly Bulgaria, where migrants are coming from and, the other simply blocking the borders thus preventing migrants from going further.

Following the incidents on the Hungarian-Serbian border, we agreed with Hungary to open the highway, which took effect yesterday. We are also faced with the fact that nearly all border crossings towards Croatia are closed for traffic. I have been trying today to reach my colleague Vesna Pusic by phone in order to get an explanation why the road has been closed to freight traffic. A line of trucks on the Croatian border is more than 20 kilometers long.

Are we now once again in Europe with an iron curtain, instead of being in Europe without borders? How is it possible that an EU member state can ban traffic from other, neighbouring countries? How much economic damage does this bring to Serbia? This certainly cannot be the policy of the European Union and we are asking it to respond immediately to this situation. Why is traffic being blocked to freight and passenger vehicles? What does this have to do with the refugee crisis?

In Europe, the borders were closed only in times of war. And there is no reaction of the European Union, it is absolutely lacking. An informal meeting of the EU Heads of state or government will be held on Wednesday. I think that it would be appropriate for them to make a decision on how to deal with the existing problem. Some 150 000 migrants passed through Serbia in the last few months. Out of this number, only 600 sought asylum in Serbia. They all wish to move on. I will recall that in the last few days, additional 5,000 migrants came to Serbia from Macedonia. They entered Macedonia from the European Union.

Would it be a solution if Serbia raised an iron curtain towards the European Union? Remember how the people rejoiced at the demolition of the Berlin Wall, and how the peoples in Europe rejoiced at the fact that they could travel freely. Yugoslavia was never part of the Soviet bloc and has always had an open policy to all. We do not accept the policy of closing Serbia with an iron gate, blocking traffic and closing highways. Is Europe capable of managing an organization such as the European Union? If not, and I am saying this on behalf of Serbia, we will be forced to take countermeasures.

The EU countries are also part of the OSCE. I think we cannot be silent on this subject. This subject concerns not only Serbia, but other countries that also take part in this third dimension of the OSCE, because of which we have gathered here today. Serbia's OSCE Chairmanship has initiated the process of drafting the decisions for the OSCE Ministerial Council, to be held on 3-4 December in Belgrade. The negotiations on these draft decisions will be continued here in Warsaw, and therefore I invite all delegations to join the negotiations and contribute that the decisions, to be adopted in Belgrade, be substantial and relevant in terms of enhancing a level of fulfilling the existing commitments", stated the Serbian Foreign Minister in Warsaw.