



Address by OSCE CiO, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic at the opening of the Conference "Europe in Crisis: A Call for a New Dialogue 1975-2015: 40 Years of the Helsinki Final Act", held at the European Parliament in Brussels:

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be able to speak here in the European Parliament, in my capacity as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. Serbia's OSCE Chairmanship has marked this important anniversary in July in Helsinki, the birthplace of this ground-breaking document, by convening a high-level informal meeting that included an official ceremony and discussions on strategic issues the Organization is currently faced with. However, it is significant that discussions on this important anniversary also take place in the European Parliament. I believe that this reflects our awareness of the pivotal role played by the Helsinki Final Act in lessening tensions between Eastern and Western blocs, the affirmation of the concept of collective security and in overcoming divisions in Europe. We cannot overemphasize it enough that this document was also instrumental in shaping the European Union as we know it today, which is, of course, particularly relevant in the context of EU enlargement to former "Eastern bloc" countries.

When Serbia was trusted to be at the helm of the OSCE in 2015, we had the pleasure of planning the marking of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act under Serbia's Chairmanship. We saw this as an opportunity to encourage the strategic debate on ways of strengthening the OSCE and its role in maintaining security in Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian regions. However, the circumstances have changed in the meantime. Regrettably, the active and indispensable role of the OSCE has been demonstrated in real world. Earlier this year, we faced a terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine. Only a few days ago, we witnessed another unprecedented terror attack on the streets of Paris. I take this opportunity, in my capacity as Chairperson-in-Office, to reiterate the strong condemnation of this act of terrorism and to offer our condolences to the families of victims. The shock we feel in the face of such terror and extreme violence strengthens our resolve not to let them endanger the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights on which the OSCE and our societies rest, which are guarantors of security and peace for all. The OSCE stands united against all forms of violent extremism, and we firmly believe cooperation is the best response to the dangers our societies are facing.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our agenda has been dominated and continues to be dominated by the crisis in and around Ukraine; but on the other hand, although in the circumstances considerably different than anticipated, we have continued to steer and encourage dialogue on strategic issues within the OSCE.

At this point, only two weeks away from the Ministerial Council in Belgrade, let me briefly recall the most important aspects of the engagement of Serbia's Chairmanship in crisis resolution. The course of OSCE activities has been charted by several developments. From a political perspective, the most important one was certainly the adoption of the Minsk Package of Measures on 12 February this year, in the Normandy Group, which was materialized through the activity of the Trilateral Contact Group, transforming further into a political process on the ground. Since May, significant progress has been made in the negotiations within the TCG and its working groups. In this context, it should be pointed out in particular that since 1 September ceasefire has been holding along the contact line. Similarly, an important agreement has been reached on the withdrawal of tanks and some types of weapons and on verification of this withdrawal, which is carried out by the Special Monitoring Mission. Certain measures have also been agreed in the working groups on humanitarian and economic and social issues, with a view to improving the extremely difficult living conditions of the population of Ukraine affected by the conflict. Negotiations on the implementation of political elements of the Package of Measures, including on the extremely important aspect of modalities for holding local elections in the Donbas region, are currently going on in the working group on political issues. I would like to underline in particular the significant contribution of the Special Monitoring Mission to de-escalation of the situation. Organization-wise, it is highly important that we extended the SMM mandate by another year in early 2015, expiring in March 2016, and provided stable funding for the operation of the Mission during that period. This has helped the Mission to consolidate and increase its size in line with the requirements of the participating States.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ongoing crisis has emphasized the continued relevance of the Helsinki Final Act and of its revolutionary concept of comprehensive security. I believe that the example set by the authors of this document who, at a time of much deeper divisions than today, pluck up courage to make a step forward towards compromise, may prove inspiring for today's generations as well. Whether it be terrorism, the related phenomenon of "foreign terrorist fighters", or mass migration, we should all be aware these are challenges no country is able to overcome alone. As the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, I would also like to take this opportunity to point out that the OSCE is in a position to play a more prominent role as a platform for dialogue and joint action, aiming to overcome the threats we are facing. To this end, we need to work together to refine the Organization's toolbox, strengthen its operational capability and effectiveness, including an adequate financial stability, so that it can be relied upon when 'push comes to shove'.

In the lead-up to the Ministerial Council in Belgrade, I would like to underline in particular the adoption of a decision on migration as one of the Chairmanship's priorities. We firmly believe

that interactive efforts of all the international stakeholders are vital for addressing this complex phenomenon. With its unique cross-dimensional approach to security, the OSCE can be an important "line" of international efforts aimed at a sustainable resolution of the migrant crisis, respecting the human rights of all affected. We should particularly take into account that six OSCE Mediterranean Partners are also countries of the EU's Southern Neighbourhood. Security in Europe and in the wider OSCE area largely depends on the situation in the neighbouring regions. I believe that defining a strategic relationship with neighbouring regions is vital for security in Europe and throughout the OSCE area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I expect the upcoming Ministerial Council in Belgrade to discuss the challenges faced by the OSCE region from a strategic perspective, in the year marking its 40th anniversary. The current crisis emphasized the lasting advantages and usefulness of the Organization in bridging gaps and finding joint solutions acceptable for all the actors. I believe that our Organization has the necessary strength and flexibility to continue contributing to the resolution of the increasingly complex security threats and challenges.

Thank you for your attention.