



Statement by H.E. Mr. Ivica Dačić OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia at the meeting of the enlarged Bureau of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

„President Kanerva,
Members of the Bureau,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be today with you at the enlarged Bureau meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. I warmly welcome you, on behalf of Serbia's 2015 OSCE Chairmanship, to Belgrade - where we will host, as of tomorrow, the 22nd OSCE Ministerial Council.

Cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly throughout the year was important for our Chairmanship. In that context, the interaction with parliamentarians during the two Assembly meetings – in February and in July – was important for us. During the February session, we heard substantial comments concerning the priorities of our 2015 Chairmanship and the role that the Parliamentary Assembly plays in the ongoing discussions on European security.

The constructive contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly to the OSCE was particularly visible during this year, when we strived to reconfirm the importance of the principles set out in the Helsinki Final Act. In that context, participation at the 24th Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly, in July in Helsinki, in Finlandia Hall, the very venue where the Helsinki Final Act was signed 40 years ago, had a particular significance for our Chairmanship.

Now more than ever before, when the values on which our Organization is based need strengthening, I am grateful to the Parliamentary Assembly for being the "collective guardian" of these values, which are so important in order to preserve security and cooperation in Europe. I am especially pleased by the contribution of Serbia's parliamentarians to the Assembly's efforts this year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The fact that migration is a topic of today's enlarged Bureau meeting, at the same time when this very topic will probably be the focus of the Ministerial debate over the next two days, reflects both the severity and the magnitude of the problem.

The migration issue evolved, during the course of our Chairmanship, into a migration crisis, which started to affect a large number of participating States as well as the Organization as a whole.

Many OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation have been struggling with the rising flow of refugees and migrants, who are running high risks for themselves and their families in order to escape conflicts and poverty and resettle in Europe. Given that the Western Balkans region is being used as one of the principal routes for these movements, the participating States of the region are confronted with serious security implications, and also with activities of the organized crime groups who engage in human smuggling and trafficking.

As the Chairperson-in-Office, I emphasized on more than one occasion the need for the OSCE to get involved in responding to the current crisis in a more comprehensive and systematic manner, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations. I specifically underlined this during this year's ODIHR Implementation meeting in Warsaw in September and at the 66th Executive Committee meeting of the UNHCR in Geneva in October.

Our Chairmanship organized a joint meeting of the three Committees – Security Committee, Economic and Environmental Committee, and the Human Dimension Committee - in Vienna, on 6 October, entirely dedicated to the migration issue. What emerged as a result of that meeting can be summarized as the following important points:

- OSCE can contribute to responding to the issues related to the current crisis due to its cross-dimensional approach, since this crisis cuts across economic policies, transnational threats, and human rights issues;
- Interaction between the OSCE and other relevant international organizations should lead to concrete cooperation on the ground, including with NGO's
- One of the concrete recommendations of the Joint meeting was that the participating States could second their experts dealing with migration-related issues to the OSCE field operations.

Necessity of information exchange between the participating States on police issues such as border management and the fight against terrorism was also underlined, as was the utmost importance of full adherence to commitments on human rights protection, tolerance and non-discrimination against migrants and refugees; in this respect, the role of ODIHR could be valuable.

As a regional platform, the OSCE, through the Parliamentary assembly as well, can strengthen the dialogue among countries of origin, transit and destination, including the OSCE Partners for Cooperation – the Mediterranean partners in particular. With that in mind, our Chairmanship is hopeful the Ministerial Council will adopt a decision on migration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by wishing you, once again, a fruitful meeting today and a pleasant stay in Belgrade.

Thank you."