



Address by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dačić at a ceremony marking the beginning of the Civilian Training Course for the participation in multinational operations:

"Dear Minister Vulin,
Minister Joksimovic,
Distinguished Chief of General Staff, Lt-Col General Mojsilovic,
Ambassador Oricio,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to express my great satisfaction at my attendance of today's ceremony on the occasion of the beginning of the Civilian Training Course for Multinational Operations, organized by the Ministry of Defence in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of European Integration and the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, and to thank Minister Vulin for inviting me as well as for an opportunity that we all together demonstrate the importance that we attach to this activity, which contributes, among other, to an even stronger foreign policy position of Serbia.

Serbia has been making an active and continued contribution to international security and stability by participating in military and police multinational operations, so that our representatives are currently deployed in five UN-led operations and four EU-led operations, with a total of 279 personnel. Many international statesmen and experts in peacekeeping missions and operations continue to praise personnel from the Serbian Armed Forces and from the Ministry of the Interior, emphasizing their high level of training, professionalism and the ability to fulfil even the most complex tasks. This is a confirmation that Serbia has taken an important place both in the UN and in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy, as a reliable partner. Such an engagement has contributed not only to the strengthened positive image of our country, but also to the implementation of certain strategic aspects of our foreign policy. That is why the President of Serbia, the Government of Serbia and our departments attached special significance to an expanded participation in multinational operations by way of building the capacities for dispatching civil structures in such operations. Today we are ushering in a new and important chapter that will further contribute to the

affirmation of Serbia as a "security exporter" and a state that is truly committed to such values as peace and cooperation. The participation of civilians in multinational operations is increasingly important and sought after, due to both the mandate which, in addition to the classical disengagement of the parties in conflict, also includes tasks related to post-conflict reconstruction and institution building, and the special nature of these tasks, because they are normally not part of the engagement of military and police forces. That is why Serbia, under its Chapter 31 commitments, decided to extend to civilians its successful and visible military and police presence in these operations. The process aimed at the achievement of this goal has lasted for two years during which a Subgroup, tasked with ensuring the legal framework and institutional capacity building in the context of Serbia's participation in EU civilian missions within the Chapter 31 Negotiating Group - "Foreign, Security and Defence Policy", was formed by the Ministry of Defence, so that, in June this year, the Government adopted the Action Plan for Developing Civil Contributions of Serbia in Multinational Operations mandated by the EU, OSCE and the UN.

The beginning of the course is not just a step forward in the implementation of the Action Plan in the process of institutional capacity building for dispatching civilians to multinational operations, but also a significant concrete result of an intensified and successful inter-departmental work and cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the formal pillar and coordinator of this process, received unselfish assistance and full support, primarily from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of European Integration, the Ministry of the Interior and other government institutions. I would also like to point out the role of foreign partners, such as the Czech Development Agency, the Prague Security Studies Institute, the International Peace Operations Centre in Berlin, the OSCE Mission in Belgrade, and the ISAC Fund, which all provided valuable professional and logistical support to this process and we expect those to continue to make their full contribution.

Of particular significance are the extraordinary efforts invested by the Centre for Peace Operations of the Serbian Army General Staff in the preparation of the Course, which is aligned with the guidelines of the New European Training Initiative in the field of Civilian Crisis Management (ENTRI), which gives the Course international certification, and to the Centre another confirmation of having valuable staff capacities and expertise enabling successful completion of complex tasks.

So, let me point out that I am very proud that demanding engagements in the field of our foreign, security and defence policy, which additionally highlights the significance of Serbia's position on the international stage, are successfully implemented through joint forces and with full coordination and understanding of all participants.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Serbia has always been committed to developing partnership and friendly relations with all countries in the region, Europe and the world. By constructive positions, initiatives and concrete proposals, we strive today to contribute to preserving world peace and peaceful resolution of disputes, at a time of turbulent political and economic developments on the world stage. We are committed to relations between states and nations based on the achieved civilizational norms and international law, and in particular to the goals and principles of the international order established after the Second World War, such as the sovereign equality of states, non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for the diversity and interests of all involved parties.

This project is part of the above-mentioned efforts of our country on the international level. There is a long and arduous process ahead of us that will require a lot of work to build all institutional capacities and define the necessary by-laws, all for the purpose of dispatch and successful work of our civilian experts in international multinational operations.

I wish you a successful endeavour, hoping that our civilian experts will make their concrete contribution to international peace and security within some of the international missions and operations in the near future, thus further enhancing and valorising the position of our country in the international arena.

Thank you."