



Today's visit to the OSCE Mission to Serbia by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Serbia Ivica Dacic is the first one in a series of visits to the OSCE field operations. As the country currently holding the Chairmanship-in-Office, Serbia wishes to offer support to their work and activities and to underline their importance in building democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights, as well as to highlight the significance attached to the region by its Chairmanship.

"Chairmanship by a Western Balkan country adds to the OSCE specific value, particularly as regards the lessons we have learned from the past", said Dacic. "The OSCE Mission to Serbia certainly played an important role in supporting the reform processes in our country. In view of the fact that we have a hands-on experience with the OSCE field presence, we will do our utmost to promote its advantages", said Dacic, adding that he believed that the constructive partnership between Serbia and the OSCE would continue.

Minister Dacic said that regional cooperation was one of the priorities of Serbian Chairmanship and he emphasized the importance of the role played by the Western Balkan Special Representative Ambassador Gerard Studman. "We have to take the full benefit of the potential of the region and to strengthen regional cooperation. This process requires additional efforts, which is a challenge that we accept. Together with my Special Representative, we will work together with the OSCE field operations in the Western Balkans, the joint action of which contributes to the European integration of the region".

OSCE Head of Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Peter Burkhard said that it was an honour for the Mission to be the first field operation visited by the Serbian OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. "The partner relations that we have with the host country are a key factor in the implementation of our mandate. By strengthening democracy, the rule of law in the field of human rights, the OSCE Mission to Serbia and its field presences in South-Eastern Europe contribute to creating the foundations for cooperation in the region", said Burkhard. "I wish to voice hope, the same one the Chairperson-in-Office has already expressed, that partnership between Serbia and the OSCE will remain a hallmark of our relations and that we will continue to offer support and expertise to the Government of Serbia and civil society in the course of the reform process". "Restoring confidence and trust with a view to creating a positive agenda for the future is the principle that Serbia will be guided by during its Chairmanship", said Dacic. "Regional security and stability in the Western Balkans and its positive dynamics must be strengthened. As a region, we have to stand together and continuously point to the universal values of human

rights, tolerance and non-discrimination. That is our duty and responsibility”.

Minister Dacic intends to visit all OSCE field operations in the Western Balkan region in the near future.