



The work of the OSCE's field operations in South-east Europe in promoting regional co-operation is important for sustaining stability in the region, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić said today on the margins of the 22nd OSCE Ministerial Council in Belgrade.

Addressing the heads of the six OSCE field operations in the Western Balkans, Dačić said that enhancing co-operation in the region had been a key priority of Serbia's OSCE Chairmanship this year and that he hoped progress on this would continue especially regarding topics like migration and the fight against terrorism.

Noting that the current challenges facing the region are far too complex for any country or organization to be able to overcome alone, Dačić said the OSCE should continue to work closely with other stakeholders in finding an effective response to issues, both new and old.

"Trust and confidence built over time may be easily undermined, and we need to work continuously, aiming to enhance the reconciliation process in the region," he said. "Political will is vital in this context but sight should not be lost, either, of the contribution to be made by OSCE field presences on this path."

He welcomed progress and achievements in a number of projects undertaken jointly by the region's field operations, including in the areas of housing, sustainable return and reintegration of displaced persons, promoting dialogue between prominent women across the Western Balkans, addressing the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, water governance and migration.

Gérard Stoudmann, the OSCE Chairperson's Special Representative on the Western Balkans, encouraged all the field missions in South-east Europe to continue strengthening their co-operation.

"Notwithstanding progress and hindrances towards their respective transition paths, States in the Western Balkans have all been facing new challenges stemming from the massive migration flows throughout the region," said Stoudmann. "In this context, the OSCE, as lead organization for security and co-operation in Europe, cannot overlook these challenges. As a platform for dialogue the OSCE ought to contribute to shaping common policies whilst making best use of its conflict prevention toolbox."

The heads of the six OSCE field operations in the Western Balkans taking part in the meeting

were Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania Florian Raunig; Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina Jonathan Moore; Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo Jean-Claude Schlumberger; Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro Janina Hřebíčková; Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia Peter Burkhard; and Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje Nina Suomalainen.