



"Mr. Chairman, Minister Lajčák,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, may I thank our host, Minister Lajčák and Slovakian Chairmanship-in-Office for organizing this Informal Ministerial Gathering of the OSCE participating States, in this beautiful highland environment.

The Meeting was convened at the critical point in time for our Organization which has been faced, for many years, with serious and accumulated problems. In spite of the efforts made by the Slovakian and other former chairmanships to engage participating States in a meaningful dialogue which would reinforce the Organization and its efficiency in addressing the key issues, we are still far from achieving this goal.

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Current developments and the atmosphere prevailing on the international stage as well as a range of security challenges that we face on a daily basis, make it incumbent upon us to urgently go back to the OSCE core principles, i.e. dialogue, compromise, peaceful settlement of disputes, confidence-building, solidarity, accountability and cooperation.

A while ago, Mr. Borrell mentioned UN Secretary-General Guterres whom I recently met and discussed with him the current issue of multilateralism. Once we used to say that the world was bipolar, then unipolar, then multipolar and now it is anarchic, to quote Guterres. I have to say that he is probably right.

Likewise, the time has come to demonstrate together political wisdom and accountability, concurrently with the political will and readiness for a compromise, as key elements in an effort

to restore confidence and de-escalate the existing tensions.

All participating States need to re-examine how they perceive the contribution made by the OSCE to their own security and that of their citizens, including the readiness to approach the dialogue on the settlement of issues preventing the operation of the Organization in its full capacity, in good faith. I would single out issues such as OSCE financing, regular meetings held under the Rules of Procedure as well as the chairmanship of the Organization.

I am surprised in particular by the fact that the Chairmanship-in-Office that used to be a great honour for the country the candidacy of which was endorsed, has turned into a tedious obligation that participating States are trying to avoid. Our experience in 2015 when Serbia held the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, has shown that it was an extremely challenging and complicated endeavour but that it was also an opportunity to contribute, through a pro-active, transparent and mediating approach, to the strengthening of the effective operation of the Organization and increasing its visibility. Simultaneously, the Chairmanship-in-Office presented another opportunity to promote the country and its capacities.

Drawing on its past experiences, Serbia has strongly supported peaceful resolution of all disputes in the OSCE region, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every participating State as one of the fundamental principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. I would also like to underline that Serbia is committed to the OSCE capacity-building for efficient response throughout the conflict cycle, from early warning to post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation.

Mr. Chairman,

I would also like to comment on the situation in the Western Balkan region, which is currently affected by a lack of enthusiasm as a result of the deceleration of the EU enlargement process.

Serbia is fully committed to European integration and regional cooperation. We believe that only a pro-active approach, flexibility and readiness for making a compromise by all sides, could contribute to regional stability and security.

On the other hand, I cannot but recall that despite the commitment of the Government of Serbia to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, the entire process has ground to a halt. Due to their irresponsible actions, i.e. the decision to impose 100% tariffs on goods imported from Central Serbia, the Pristina politicians have directly brought the civilian population in the Province at risk, while blocking the dialogue aimed at finding a long-term and compromise-based sustainable solution.

In this respect, and relying on a cooperative spirit existing in our Organization, we expect the 2020 Albanian Chairmanship to be successful and based on full respect of all OSCE principles, norms and assumed commitments.

In conclusion, I would like to thank once again our host, Minister Lajčák, for the successful organization of this meeting, and to offer him Serbia's support and assistance in overcoming the key problems faced by the Organization."

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