



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA TO THE OSCE,  
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**Ambassador Vladimir Matek, Permanent Representative,  
in response to Statements on the arrest of General Gotovina**

(584<sup>th</sup> Permanent Council, 15 December 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of the Republic of Croatia thanks the distinguished representatives who took the floor on this item for the statements they made. Allow me now to stress, in the same context, some additional elements:

In the Statement Croatian Government published the 8 of December, the firm position was expressed - and the Prime Minister Sanader reiterated it in his intervention to the Parliament - that:

*"No one can be above, or outside the law. The rule of law is one of the fundamental principles upon which the Republic of Croatia is founded, both in relation to domestic law as well as pertaining to Croatia's international commitments. This undoubtedly includes the Constitutional Law on the Co-operation with the ICTY, which was adopted by the Croatian Parliament back in April 1996.*

*Every indictee must face the indictment, appear before the court and respond to the charges brought against him."*

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of the Republic of Croatia believes that this is the only possibility to establish the full truth, not only in the specific case of General Gotovina, but also on the fact that the Homeland War was a liberating, legitimate and just war, that Croatia was a victim of aggression and had the right to defend itself and liberate its territories, what sometimes seems to be forgotten.

Here, Mr. Chairman, I would like to quote another part of the Government's Statement:

*"General Gotovina's arrest in Spain represents an affirmation of the reliability of the assertions made by the Republic of Croatia that he was not within the reach of the Croatian authorities nor was he in Croatian territory (...) All those who trusted and supported us in times when Croatia's efforts to co-operate with the Hague Tribunal were being questioned, are now being proven right. It has now become evident that such doubts were unfounded."*

To conclude, I wish to thank all of those countries for their support.