

**MILAN ROĆEN, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION OF MONTENEGRO:
(Address at the OSCE Ministerial Council, Vilnius, December 6, 2011)**

Mr. Chairman,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to greet you on behalf of Montenegro and thank our hosts for the excellent organization of the event. Special thanks go to Lithuania and Minister Ažubalis for the constructive leadership of the Organization during the Chairmanship in a year burdened with various challenges.

Our common goal is to modernize the work of the Organization, so as to adapt to the new circumstances. In this context, we need to further strengthen the OSCE mechanisms, especially in the conflict cycle.

The Chairmanship has rightly highlighted in its priorities the freedom of media as a moving force of democratic processes. Montenegrin experience proves this. To this end, we have decriminalized defamation and improved overall legal infrastructure. We believe there is a need to further improve the safety of journalists and strengthen pluralism in digital media in the OSCE area.

Modernizing Vienna Document is one of the priorities in politico-military dimension. Montenegro will continue to participate constructively in these negotiations. I would like to stress our support to the efforts for improvement of management of small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional arms. Countering transnational threats is an area in which we have a high level of convergence. The OSCE community needs to continue its work in this direction. The same goes for defining further modalities to improve energy security.

As a Mediterranean country which is going through democratic transition, Montenegro welcomes the new phase in our Mediterranean partners for cooperation. I hope we have contributed to the development of dialogue and exchange of experience as a host of this year's OSCE Mediterranean Conference. We also welcome the application of Mongolia to become an OSCE participating state. In the context of further cooperation with Asian Partners, we fully support the continuation of the OSCE engagement in Afghanistan.

We highly value the excellent relationship and long-standing cooperation of Montenegro with the OSCE and its institutions. Expert support, assistance and advice rendered through the OSCE Mission to Montenegro had contributed invaluablely to our democratic reforms and to our progress in European and Euro Atlantic integration. We hope that in a few days the European Council will confirm the European Commission's recommendation and set the date for the accession negotiations with Montenegro. We are also successfully fulfilling our commitments towards the NATO membership. Good-neighborly relations and regional cooperation are our key priority. The progress made by all our countries through the assessments of their individual merits has encouraged us to fulfill the increasingly demanding obligations with more enthusiasm. The example of Croatia is stimulation for all of us. We welcome the success of the Organization in closing down the Office in Zagreb. We are convinced that the Mission in Montenegro, as in all other countries of the region, will fulfill its mandate in an equally successful manner when we reach the same level of integration. Montenegro also supports the joint bid for Chairmanship of Switzerland in 2014 and Serbia in 2015.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate Lithuania on their successful Chairmanship and wish the success to Ireland during next year.

Thank you for your attention.