

BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA
Ministarstvo vanjskih poslova



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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**ADDRESS BY H.E. SVEN ALKALAJ, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL, Vilnius, 06-07.12.2011.**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Allow me to begin by offering Lithuania as the host country my sincere congratulations on the excellent organization of this year's Ministerial and to join our gratitude in return for the hospitality. I would like to commend the Lithuanian Chairmanship in setting an ambitious agenda for our work over the past year and to thank our hosts for their tireless efforts to find common ground and pave the way for a very successful Vilnius meeting.

This event crowns a year full of fruitful activities, a year that has also witnessed developments requiring full and constructive engagement of all member countries, and a year that has clearly shown the growing importance of the Organization as the forum for open and frank dialogue in the spirit of mutual respect, transparency and reconciliation.

We are congratulating Ireland for taking over the OSCE Chairmanship in 2012 and are looking forward to proactively and constructively working together with our Irish friends. Allow me to use this opportunity to wish them every success on this road.

Bosnia and Herzegovina endorses commitments and activities of the OSCE, as the most inclusive and comprehensive regional security organization, providing a unique platform for political dialogue on European security. The wide scope of activities of the OSCE, performed through promotion of crucial values of peace and stability within the European, Transatlantic and Euro-Asian frame as well, had already unanimously verified its universal dimension in many ways.

Increased mutual trust, arms control, disarmament, preventing conflicts or their resolution at an early stage, promotion and advancing of human rights could be barely conducted at current stage without OSCE's tools and mechanisms. The recent experiences show that all activities in the area of early conflict prevention and crisis management, together with the organization's cross dimensional competences must remain at the core of the OSCE and our future work. They

also show that we have the necessary means and mechanisms, if there is a common will among participating states to make use of them. Taking into account our own experiences from the recent past, Bosnia and Herzegovina stands ready to actively contribute to the early conflict prevention and neutralization of situations that could lead to such, in the OSCE region, should the need arise.

The indivisibility of the European and Euro-Atlantic security area and recent challenges we face in our common reality – fighting terrorism, energy security, access to natural resources, just to mention some – reaffirm the most important need to keep an arena for dialogue and the OSCE reasonably can be considered as the key venue. Having in mind that matter at hand bares relevance and affects security and stability within the regional frame, and given Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment to play a constructive role within the OSCE forum, we add our voice in processes dealing with security issues of common importance.

Commitment and dedication in efforts to ensure Euro-Atlantic prospective of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a long-term goal, commonly needed for benefit of all of us in Bosnia and Herzegovina is nothing less than unequivocal, and keeps European and Euro-Atlantic integrations on highest position among priorities on our agenda.

Our ongoing efforts, undertaken with the aim of the country's full integration into the Euro-Atlantic politico-security structures, will significantly contribute to increased security at national, regional and global level. A wide scope of regional possibilities in the area of South-East Europe have successfully been turned into regional opportunities, after having established strategic economic exchange, linking people and ideas, tangible cooperative security in the region as a contribution and part of European Security was reached and has been maintained.

Security and stability, as we all know, are prerequisites for unfettered internal development and a precondition for good neighborly relations and constructive regional cooperation. In this context, Bosnia and Herzegovina strives to provide a meaningful contribution to the regional security and stability by adhering to and implementing its commitments under the OSCE instruments.

Esteemed Colleagues,

Developing good-neighborly relations on the principles of mutual respect, maintaining peace and stability in the region, as well as mutual support on the path of European integrations is prescribed in the basic documents of the BiH foreign policy. We will adhere to this, regardless of how difficult are the

problems we meet on that path, even when it comes to the most sensitive issue of these relations, such as war crimes, violation of human rights and humanitarian law. We support the general view that everything has to be investigated and those responsible brought to the justice, regardless of the country and the individuals in question.

Our region is recording steady progress on its path of democratization and the rule of law as well as on the path of European integrations. Promotion of stability, security and prosperity in WB is one of the EU priorities. What needs to be done is strengthening the European perspective of the region which, as we know, stimulates economic and political reforms.

Creation of integration processes, which transformed the European state system, and promotion of their value represents the most efficient way of achieving overall stability and security in the region. The Western Balkan region was the cradle and still is the major catalyst of Europe's emerging security role.

In addition, I would like to stress that the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the largest international civilian organization in the country, has been a most valuable partner in a number of key areas – defence reform, education, security sector reform, capacity-building and democracy to name just a few. Its ability to reach full understanding in closest communication with local authorities on all levels and bring various communities to more mutual trust and higher degree of tolerance, significantly contributed in gaining common stability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying that democratic and political forces that are to succeed in building consensus in Bosnia and Herzegovina on a series of reforms of political institutions would gain legitimacy to lead and implement the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union.

We believe that a “more for more” approach that affirms EU relations towards its partners can be a solid basis used in world relations as well. The countries should invest in their mutual relations both ways and in such a way, that they give as much as they get. And this is applicable regardless of the fact whether we talk about institution building, economy, or global politics.

During our two year's mandate in the Security Council which ends this December, Bosnia and Herzegovina was working with other countries to actively promote international peace and security, and above all, preventive diplomacy.

Our constructive and proactive role in the Western Balkans region has been recognized by our neighbours and it is my sincere hope and belief that, other regions can use and benefit from this example to further build on their relations.

Allow me to assure you that just like being determined to maintain its active and constructive role in the OSCE, Bosnia and Herzegovina is equally determined to remain a reliable partner in achieving sustainable peace and security in the world.

I thank you.