

21<sup>st</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council  
Basel, Switzerland, 4-5 December 2014

ENGLISH only

Statement by

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**Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor and a pleasure to address the 21<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to start off by joining my colleagues and congratulate you and the government of the Swiss Confederation for a remarkable Chairmanship of the OSCE, especially when we are confronted with grave threats to peace and stability such as the ones we experienced this year.

2014 has proven to us, more than ever, that the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security is more relevant than it has ever been. While we continue to fight with old challenges and continue our efforts on important issues such as protracted conflicts, this year we were met with significant new challenges that concern us all. The security situation in Europe is challenging, and it continues to be challenged – right now, as we speak here today.

The prompt actions taken by the Organization under the Swiss Chairmanship to address the crisis in Ukraine provided crucial first steps and set the stage to meet this crisis head on. We can only underline our support for the efforts of the OSCE, the Special Monitoring Mission, and the Minsk Protocol of September 5<sup>th</sup>, as well as the September 19<sup>th</sup> Memorandum. Many Bosnians and Herzegovinians are part of the SMM, and Bosnia and Herzegovina looks forward to continuing its support.

As we mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act next year, we must remain committed to the continuation of the “Helsinki+40” process to reform and guide the OSCE, so that we can continue to strengthen the visibility and effectiveness of the OSCE and to increase security and stability in its region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was proud to be host of the OSCE Mediterranean Conference, earlier this year, in Neum. Together, with colleagues both from OSCE participating states and Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, we extensively discussed important topics such as the fight against terrorism in the Mediterranean region, as well as illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Consequently, we consider that tomorrow's discussion, during the plenary session, on terrorism is a timely and well-chosen topic, as the scourge of terrorism sweeps across the OSCE realm and beyond.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to the global fight against terrorism. Just yesterday in Brussels, we have reaffirmed our commitment and expressed our readiness to actively contribute to the global coalition's activities against terrorism. Discrimination against any faith, any religion, and any group leads only to the worst of human behavior. In Bosnia and Herzegovina this led to the Srebrenica Genocide, and we strongly join the world in saying ‘never again’. Given our horrendous experiences, we are particularly eager to help stop terror in other places. And this goal can only be achieved through a comprehensive and common approach, with the ultimate goal of promoting and creating shared societies and shared values, where we can all be united in our defenses. The creation of a vacuum must be avoided, and this pertains both to the fight against ISIL, as it does to the successful transformation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the Western Balkans to productive and successful members of the EU and NATO families.

We also held General elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October this year, and I want to take a moment to extend our gratitude to the OSCE, to ODIHR, and to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, for their participation in the election observation mission. As the post-electoral process is ongoing, we welcome the latest UK-German initiative on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is this initiative, its goals and priorities, and the ultimate wellbeing of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens, around which a new government coalition should gather, and not the other way around. *Their* priorities should be economic governance, rule of law, and a more effective state – ultimately benefiting us all, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the region.

As unprecedented and devastating floods hit the Balkans, it only reinforced the message that we require a common approach. I want to thank all of our friends for their assistance during those troubling times, and we look forward on working together, under the Serbian chairmanship, on these important issues, such as water governance and disaster risk reduction. I also want to acknowledge the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina which responded to the devastating floods and landslides by opening five temporary premises in affected areas.

A little later today, it will be my great pleasure, together with my colleagues and neighbors, to take part in the Transfer of Ownership Ceremony on Dayton Article IV, Annex 1-B Sub-Regional Arms Control Agreement. This ceremony will symbolize a true success story for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia in the area of arms control and confidence and security building.

I can say that we are quite pleased that our friend and neighbor will chair the OSCE in 2015, and I am delighted that the Serbian Chairmanship will pay particular attention to the Western Balkans, with a focus on regional co-operation and reconciliation as part of conflict rehabilitation. These are important issues to us, and we continue our work, together with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as we move forward in dealing with the past through actions such as war crimes processing domestically, building more resilient communities that respect diversity and reject discrimination, and strengthening democratic and effective governance of the security sector.

Regional cooperation one of the corner stones of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy, and we want to continue our active approach toward a substantial and meaningful contribution to regional security and stability. Allow me to also extend our gratitude to Amb. Gerard Stoudmann, Special representative of the Chairman in Office for the Western Balkans for his work in this arena.

At the end, allow me to inform you that Bosnia and Herzegovina will take over the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe this spring, and it particularly delights me to see two countries from the Western Balkans chair two of the most significant multilateral organizations that deal with issues of the utmost importance for our countries and our citizens.

I look forward to your statements and to our dialogue, and I would like to wish Serbia much success during their upcoming Chairmanship. At the end, allow me to express my sincere pleasure about the decision on the German and Austrian OSCE Chairmanship in 2016 and 2017.

Thank you.