



MC.DEL/48/17  
12 December 2017

ENGLISH only

**TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**  
**Vienna, 7 and 8 December 2017**

**Statement of H.E. Marija Pejčinović Burić,**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs**  
**Republic of Croatia**

Mr. Chairman,  
Secretary General,  
Ladies and Gentleman, Dear colleagues,

Allow me to begin by thanking the Austrian Chairmanship and Minister Kurz for his commendable work during this year. Sebastian, thank you for the efforts you and your team have been putting in so many pressing issues. Your dedication helped in overcoming prolonged deadlock with appointments of the heads of the three autonomous institutions to whom I extend my congratulations. I would also like to use this opportunity to congratulate the newly appointed Secretary General Greminger.

As we gathered here to reflect on number of issues and to adopt important decisions, which should guide the Organization in the coming period, we could agree on the need for the OSCE to play more decisive role in contributing to European security.

Preserving peace and stability within and between states has to be our common objective and shared responsibility. To that end, political will, renewed adherence to the established principles and implementation of OSCE's commitments remain fundamental.

Mr. Chairman,

Croatia deeply regrets steady deterioration of the security situation in Eastern Ukraine. We are concerned for the human suffering that the conflict continues to inflict. The full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all sides is essential to move towards a sustainable political solution in line with OSCE principles and commitments. It should start with mutually agreed and sustainable ceasefire. We reiterate our commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Remembering the tragic death of a Special Monitoring Mission's member in April, as well as the incidents that continue to happen week after week, we need to send a clear

signal to all those responsible that they are accountable. We need to ensure safe and conducive environment for our monitors to fulfil their mandate.

Croatia is currently has 9 observers on the ground, and deeply cares for their and their colleagues' security.

Mr. Chairman,

Croatia highly values the OSCE's commitment to the stability of South-Eastern Europe through its field presences and supports the work of all Missions in South-East Europe. We continuously call on them to strengthen their engagement on national minority rights, legislative reform, promote tolerance and non-discrimination and media freedoms. Of particular importance, where the respective mandates provides for that, is to continue to work in the area of the rule of law and in monitoring cases of war crimes.

In line with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provided a basis for securing lasting peace, institutional and political equality of three constituent peoples and all its citizens, the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a foundation for sustainable peace and generator of stability in South-Eastern Europe. Issues such as just and fair political representation through electoral reform, education of the young people, countering violent extremism represents important features of its work, which Croatia will continue to support and monitor its progress.

Mr. Chairman,

Having in mind broader picture and security environment in the OSCE area, Croatia supports OSCE's role in addressing and solving protracted conflicts in the existing formats and in line with the OSCE principles.

We commend the process of the Structured Dialogue, initiated by (then) minister Steinmeier last year, as a way to overcome current and future security challenges in the OSCE area through constructive engagement.

In conclusion,

For the OSCE to implement its ambitious agenda, regular funding and timely decisions are needed. In that sense, I wish Italy - our Mediterranean neighbour and friend - and personally to you, minister Angelino - all the best during your Chairmanship, and welcome Slovakia as the new Troika member.

Thank you very much.