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ADDRESS

by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dr. Mladen Ivanić,

at the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Ljubljana,

5-6 December 2005

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset of this Conference let me express my sincere appreciation for the excellent organization and your hospitality. I would also like to thank You, Mr. Chairman, and to your staff for a very fruitful chairmanship of OSCE in 2005.

Only two weeks ago and ten years after signing Dayton Paris Peace Accord, a very important moment has happened for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. My country opened negotiation for Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. The opening of negotiation for the SAA came after BH authorities adopted several structural and very important reforms such as defense reform and tax reform. Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the moment, is much closer toward full membership of the European Union, which is common for all states in the region. The path ahead us is a long one, but from this point on, citizens of my country are able to see a clearer horizon.

Contemporarily with political reforms, authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, concluded defense reform. From January 1, 2006, instead of three MoD, only one Ministry of Defense on the state level will continue to exist. Having this fact in mind, Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfilled every, but one condition for admission into the Partnership for Peace, and in NATO. Final condition is full cooperation with International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague.

The results in this field in 2005 clearly show determination and readiness of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially authorities of Republika Srpska for fulfillment of this condition.

In order to prepare Bosnia and Herzegovina for the future important steps towards EU integrations, the leaders of 8 major political parties recently had talks in Brussels and Washington about possible constitutional changes. Although there will be a plenty of challenges and different views related to the future talks, I personally do believe that we will gradually make an agreement on certain issues, showing our readiness for essential decisions to be made by us, by BiH authorities. During the last decade, the most difficult decade in the aftermath of the War, Dayton agreement was and will be a solid basis of peace and stability in the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen

From Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience, we can assure you that OSCE is regarded as a synonym for professionalism and skill in implementing and carrying out crucial and very important reforms for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am referring to the reforms such as: accepting democratic standards, returning of refugees, fulfillment of property laws, defense reform, education reform, judiciary system reform, war crimes trial monitoring, etc. Those reforms yield excellent results and improvements in those areas are more than obvious.

As you know the role of Office of High Representative will soon be changed and it will be transformed to the Office of the EU special representative. This new Office will be less interventionist and more adversarial one. This fact is clearly signaling that the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is getting better.

Nevertheless the progress already achieved in many areas, we still expect and need the continuation of involvements of the international community in BiH.

Having in mind the knowledge, competence, experience and three dimensional approaches, this is specially related to the continuation of comprehensive role of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why we fully support the introducing of the future OSCE's projects.

Mr. Chairman,

Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes the efforts of OSCE in introducing new "tools" and initiatives in combating organized crime, trafficking of human beings and fighting against terrorism. We are fully aware of necessity of the increasing cross-border cooperation in prevention of these treats.

From Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience we pledge our support to the all actions to be taken by OSCE and its specialized institutions in future.

At the end let me express, one more time, my personal gratitude to minister Rupel and his country for successful chairmanship.

I would also like to use this opportunity to extend best wishes to the incoming Chairman in Office minister De Gucht.

Thank You