

Mr President of the Republic of Croatia

Mr Speaker of the Croatian Parliament,

Ms Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia

Mr Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

(Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia)

Dear colleagues, Members of Parliament,

Distinguished guests and dear friends,

Today the ancient Croatian town of Dubrovnik opens its doors again to the world, as it has done so many times in its history, ready to bring together people of different cultures, traditions, and mindsets. They will all easily agree that Dubrovnik is a place where the land and the sea form a harmony which provides a unique stage for talks about peace and cooperation.

These are precisely the reasons to hold the Fall Meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in this town. To bring together MPs from 56 countries, the participants from many partner Mediterranean countries, and experts and officials from many organizations to jointly assess our achievements and our omissions, and to decide which way to go forwards.

More than ten years have gone by since the beginning of the new millennium. It seems that it is much easier to connect this new world of ours by using digital technology than to make it a better and safer place for the life of most people. Security today, as a general connecting factor, has not only military, but also, first of all, social, economic, energy and environmental aspects.

However, the process by which the remains of the Old World have been transformed into a New Europe in the last 60 years is definitely fascinating. OSCE has given an extraordinary contribution to this. Created on the legacy of the Conference for European Security and Cooperation and Detente of the 1970s, this largest regional security organization, and the second largest multilateral security organization has been active after 1992 in entirely new circumstances.

It is not difficult to prove that today multilateral and regional organizations, including OSCE, need to seriously reconsider their activities. I am convinced that multilateral diplomacy and multilateral organizations cannot meet the expectations if the multicultural concept is not respected in each individual society, if integration of minority communities, ranging from ethnic to gender ones, is neglected.

In addition to this, our organization must affirm its identity by initiating and connecting activities aimed against new multidimensional threats to security, not only to European, but to the essentially expanded transcontinental community of 56 states and neighboring regions, because the security of the area covered by OSCE is undoubtedly connected with the stability and security of parts of Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has the capacity of participating in the search for solution which can bring us closer to the desired comprehensive concept of the security community in the Northern hemisphere. We should recall and emphasize that success will not be possible without the cooperation of direct representatives of the citizens of our participant countries, i.e. their MPs. No other security organization, present on such a large area, has such a pro-active parliamentary dimension as OSCE.

At the time when opportunities have become largely globalised, so have threats. Today, there is almost no local crisis which lacks the potential of becoming a regional one, or a regional crisis which lacks the potential of becoming a global one. Therefore, Croatia, as an active OSCE member, must also know how to contribute to the globalization of solidarity, in particular in our immediate environment.

The anarchic and violent collapse of socialist Yugoslavia left deep political, economic and psychological consequences, which will have a long-lasting impact on relations in this part of Europe. However, positive steps towards the gradual integration of this area into Euro-Atlantic structures have become evident in recent years.

As a victim of aggression and war in the 1990s, Croatia has been frequently on the OSCE agenda as a country which used the services and expertise of this organization. In 1996, the OSCE field mission was established in our country, which lasted a long time, and was mandated to assist in fulfilling the commitments, and in the normalization of the post-war situation.

Although the Office of the organization is active in Zagreb in place of the Mission, today Croatia is mentioned as a model of a state that has successfully used the OSCE presence to the benefit of its own citizens and institutions. Therefore, the decision of the Croatian Parliament to host the 2011 Fall Meetings of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was fully justified.

It is good to recall that Croatia was the first country that applied for EU membership in the 21st century. No other state before applied for membership in the EU which introduced a single currency, and which has grown to 27 Member States, but which also faces serious problems in the Eurozone and political upheavals in its immediate neighborhood.

The stability of Southeast Europe has a direct impact on the stability of the EU, and on its further enlargement processes. As the EU expands eastwards and southeastwards, a possibility always exists for some outstanding inter-state issue from the Cold War period, or even from before that period, to become a point of dispute during negotiations.

Croatia, which has a multiple regional identity, also has the need and responsibility to pursue integrated foreign policy. It is precisely the principle according to which "we shall not export problems with our candidacy but create added value for the EU" that opened the door of Brussels to us.

Ladies and gentleman,

The Mediterranean is not the largest or the smallest sea in the world, but it is probably the most important in the world! We can claim the right to the rich Mediterranean heritage if we treat the numerous problems that exist in the Mediterranean today in a responsible way. There are many

sources of tension on all Mediterranean coasts, and their consequences and roots reach beyond the borders of the region.

We live at a time of uncertainty and in a world in which the lack of trust in international institutions is generally growing. However, this is also a world in which organizations for cooperation in the field of security have developed. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will reaffirm its relevance by building upon its positive legacy, contributing to the resolution, or, even better, to the prevention of conflicts.

In doing this, let us keep in mind the example of Dubrovnik. The only City-Republic on the eastern Adriatic coast was the first political entity that recognized the USA in 1783. It knew how to use shrewd diplomacy to avoid conflicts and to cooperate with Russia, while at the same time maintaining excellent relations with Turkey.

On behalf of the delegation of the Croatian Parliament to the OSCE PA, I wish that we transform the inspiration provided by this unique environment into successful work during the Fall Meetings. Let us respect the ancient inscription on the Rector's Palace in Dubrovnik: *Obliti privatorum publica curate*, or *Leave behind your private interests and promote public interests*.

Welcome.