



Opening Remarks of Ms. Dijana Vukomanovic, Head of the Serbian Delegation to the OSCE PA

**Helsinki +40 Seminar: “Reaffirming the Strengths, Envisioning the Prospects”
27 May 2015
Belgrade**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Ambassadors, dear fellow parliamentarians, representatives from the civil society organisations, think-tanks, scientific institutions, academia, students, and last but not least– media representatives,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to welcome you to Belgrade, and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia! Dobro nam došli u Beograd! We are gathering here today in Belgrade, to discuss how vital, how strong and how important the OSCE, as well as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is in the contemporary Euro-Asian and Euro-Atlantic region, as well as within the general world arena.

We salute your active participation in the Helsinki +40 process and your innovative contributions within the process of consecutive seminars that are held so far in Moscow, Washington, Stockholm, Copenhagen, and finally today in Belgrade. Serbia is fully aware of the complexity of the situation in the contemporary Europe and world today, and this awareness is even greater with the fact that Serbia, after Switzerland, and Ukraine before, is doing its best to implement all competencies and responsibilities of its role of the OSCE`s Chairmanship-in-Office during 2015.

We, parliamentarians from the OSCE region are entering into the new partnership with civil society organizations, as well as with research and scientific institutions, thus opening the new chapter in further development and strengthening of the OSCE capacities to face the new, more complicated challenges of the 21st century in our Euro-Asian and Euro-Atlantic region.

Through the engagement of distinguished experts, politicians and diplomats who have been involved in OSCE activities, through this project of consecutive seminars, vivid discussions have been initiated on the OSCE's Helsinki Plus 40 process, providing important food-for-thought materials and recommendations for the OSCE participating States and the Organization in general. I am sure that our Organization is both stronger and wiser because of your involvement.

Thanks to your participation in this series of seminars, we have a new, I would say very challenging, provocative and innovative agenda to be discussed now and in the future ahead of us.

We are gathering here today in Belgrade to discuss what role OSCE can take on, and what role all of us can take on in the world of today, and in the world of tomorrow. That is why the title of our final seminar is:

Reaffirming the Strengths, Envisioning the Prospects
Потврђивање предности, изгледи за будућност.

After 40 years behind us, we are looking towards the future, we want to explore possible new tools and methods of preserving the peace, in order to prevent or to resolve current or potential new conflicts. All of us should practise what we have preached, and what we have written in the Helsinki Final Act. Being so close to this milestone that we will celebrate in August this year, we should express loudly these commitments again, **and again**. People from the 57 participating states are expecting us to deliver our promises that **peace has no alternative!**

In order to be an effective Organization, we must be selective – we must choose very carefully what our priorities of action are – but we should never give up on improving further the collective standards in regard to the OSCE scope of action, such as:

**Conflict prevention and resolution,
Combating terrorism,
Developing Democracy,
Economic Activities,
Human and Minority Rights ...**

Just to mention some of the most important OSCE`s action points.

I would like to remind you that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly occupies a unique position within the Organization, as it provides a vital link between the governmental side of the OSCE and the people in the OSCE area. As a forum for parliamentarians directly elected **by** the people, we are representatives **of** the people, but we have the most noble mission of all: to act **for** the people thus ensuring their best collective interests. That is why we are entering into new partnership with **young generation**, of men and women, who will continue our work, our joint mission, and who will share further commitments that we have written in the Helsinki Final Act. That is why tomorrow we will organize students` debate at the Faculty of Political Sciences.

The road ahead of us will not be easy. In our joint efforts to promote solutions to the main problems and challenges, we parliamentarians, experts, politicians, diplomats, academicians, CSO activists, journalists, students of the OSCE region should help each other to shape public opinion and mobilize political, legislative, human, logistics, financial and budgetary resources in order to give these issues due attention in our respective countries, and in the OSCE region we all care so much about.

Dear ladies and gentlemen, I wish you fruitful, open-minded and, after all, democratic and tolerant discussions!