

UKRAINE REFORM CONFERENCE, 06 JULY 2017

CROATIA - STATEMENT BY STATE SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ZDRAVKA BUŠIĆ



Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers – primarily Secretary of State Johnson and Minister Klimkin – for convening this important conference on Ukraine. While much has been said with regard to our joint efforts to help our Ukrainian friends with many challenges before them, in my short intervention please allow me to say a few words about specific Croatian contributions and added value to this endeavor.

- In November 2016 the Croatian government set up a Working Group for Co-operation between Croatia and Ukraine.
- Primary goals of the WG are to transfer Croatia's know-how and experience in peaceful reintegration and to pass on our experience on the European integration process.
- Following the first joint meeting of the Croatian-Ukrainian WG, the two sides agreed on further steps, including on launching projects in which the Ukrainian side can learn from the Croatian experience on reconciliation and rebuilding confidence between the peoples in conflict areas.

Moreover, it was also agreed that Croatia would:

- Transfer know-how in the area of security of reintegrated areas;
- Transfer of experience in implementing projects in infrastructure renovation in reintegrated areas, including with the involvement of international aid and the participation of foreign partners;
- Exchange of experience on the settlement and protection of rights of internally displaced persons and their return to reintegrated areas.
- In this regard, we are in process of organizing a visit to Ukraine of Croatian experts who were directly involved in the normalization process in Croatia.
- It is important to emphasize that the WG is a peaceful and practical tool for transferring Croatian know-how to Ukraine. The WG will not, nor will ever be a platform to promote any policies not consistent with the peaceful settlement of disputes.
- We consider the WG not as a parallel structure to already established formats for dialog, i.e. the Normandy format, or the Trilateral Contact Group, which Croatia fully supports. Also, the role of the WG, which is a bilateral instrument, is fully in line with the framework of the Minsk Agreements.

- At the end of my intervention, I would like to add that the Croatian Government headed by Prime Minister Andrej Plenković attaches great importance to relations with Ukraine. Croatia's Prime Minister visited Kyiv in November 2016, at the very beginning of his mandate, and Prime Minister Groyzman visited Croatia last month, and hopefully our bilateral relationship will continue to strengthen.

Thank you.