



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
ON CURRENT ISSUES CONCERNING KOSOVO/ SERBIA,
AT THE 717th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 June 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Serbia would like to draw the attention of the distinguished Permanent Council to issues concerning the situation in Kosovo, a situation, which this august body somehow seems to have lost sight of lately due to the painstaking preoccupation with other topics. If something is out of sight, it can be out of mind, but that does, of course, not mean that the real problem does not exist.

Let me, at this point, Mr. Chairman, underline once more our deep belief that, in situations of conflict and conflicting positions, only dialogue and compromise, instead of one-sided actions, can lead to viable and stable solutions. What should be a commonplace for common sense, however, does not seem to be applicable everywhere and at any time.

Mr. Chairman,

Last week, Serbia once more officially pointed out her strong belief in the power of democratic principles and values and international law. As President Boris Tadić stressed in his letter of 12 June to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, which we distributed to the delegations, “the Republic of Serbia has every interest and intent to support a process that leads to a compromise solution to the future status of our southern province” and is open for any dialogue with all stakeholders to overcome disagreements and thus contribute essentially to peace and stability in Serbia and in the whole region.

Until such a solution is reached, as president Tadić underlined, “the international community led by the United Nations should keep a central role in the maintenance of peace and stability in Kosovo and Metohija. That is why its structure and composition remains of paramount importance”. In this respect, President Tadić reiterated Serbia’s firm position that a reconfiguration of the international presence, to which the Secretary General’s letter referred, “must be decided by the United Nations Security Council”. Serbia is prepared to continue

engaging in a dialogue with the United Nations, as well as with the European Union, to arrive at satisfactory arrangements and to find a legal way forward, acceptable to all stakeholders and approved by the Security Council.

Mr. Chairman,

The unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia's southern province of Kosovo and Metohija on 17 February this year was an illegal act, and it remains so. It violated international law – the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and Security Council resolution 1244, and so does the new constitution, adopted and put into force by the Kosovo institutions according to the provisions of the Ahtisaari Proposal. Certainly, one illegal act cannot be remedied or legitimized by another illegal act.

There is urgent need for a dialogue, Mr. Chairman, in order to overcome challenges before us and thus effectively implement the principles, values and goals we all share.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman