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Delegation of France

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE AT THE
756th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 March 2009

**Regarding the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the
NATO intervention in the former Yugoslavia**

Madam Chairperson,

First of all, we should like to join in associating ourselves with the grief felt by the families of the victims, of all the victims, of the events that occurred in the region in 1999. A military operation is never a victory; it is a failure, a failure of diplomacy, a failure of the Rambouillet talks, for which we spared no efforts, as it turns out in vain.

Our participation in the operations of 1999 was motivated and justified ultimately by a real humanitarian emergency. Moreover, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly of the United Nations subsequently recognized the existence of a “responsibility to protect”. This does not constitute a precedent.

This situation in 1999 led us to become involved in a lengthy process, under the watchful eyes of the international community, which culminated one year ago in the recognition of the independence of Kosovo by most of us here.

At the same time, France has observed, welcomed and encouraged the remarkable democratic changes that have occurred in Belgrade since 2001. It continues to observe, welcome and encourage them. Today we turn together, Paris and Belgrade, to the future, and that future will be a European one. I have no doubt that Serbia shares this priority. I have no doubt that it also wants to make an active contribution to regional stability.

Thank you for your attention.