



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA TO THE OSCE,
IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ON
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA, MS DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ,
AT THE 825th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 July 2010

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of Serbia I would like to join other speakers in very warmly welcoming the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms Dunja Mijatović, on the occasion of her first report to the Permanent Council. Let me also express our appreciation for her constructive and cooperative approach shown so far in addressing and solving issues of our common concern. And let me add that Ms Mijatović is always welcome to visit our country.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like just shortly to refer to the case of the journalist Teofil Pančić of the Serbian news-magazine Vreme, mentioned by the Representative, who was brutally beaten on Sunday, 25 July, in a Belgrade bus. The way Serbian officials and representatives of civil society reacted to this incident shows that the attack on Pančić was perceived and experienced as an attack on the values of the Serbian society as a whole. President Boris Tadić, Minister of the Interior Ivica Dačić, Minister of Culture Nebojša Bradić, the Prime Minister of the province of Vojvodina, the State Secretary of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Parliamentarians, representatives of political parties and a number of NGOs and media representatives immediately united in publicly condemning the assault and expressing their conviction that the perpetrators will be found and punished speedily, while underlining that freedom of opinion and freedom of expression and speech have to be protected resolutely and decidedly.

Let me also emphasize that the relevant statements of the Head of the OSCE Mission in Belgrade and of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media were prominently placed in the reporting of the Serbian media on the Pančić case, making sure that the voice of the OSCE was heard clearly. While the police is still investigating the assault on Pančić, the Serbian society is more than ever before unambiguously protecting its democratic values.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman