

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY
H.E. MR. VUK JEREMIC
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
676TH SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
17 July, 2007**

Canada warmly welcomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic on his first visit to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his address. We note with satisfaction that the Minister has made it a priority to speak before the Permanent Council early in his new capacity.

Canada was pleased to see that a new government in Serbia could be formed and that a political crisis was averted. We welcome the new government's commitments to implementing the reforms necessary for full Euro-Atlantic integration. We continue to support Serbia in attaining these goals.

Although progress has been made in many areas, more needs to be done in order to consolidate the full benefits of various reforms. Particular attention should be paid to police and judicial reforms as well as fighting organized crime and corruption. We also invite Serbia and other countries in the region to work with relevant international authorities to find a resolution to the difficult situation of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Furthermore, we call on Serbia to continue to work towards building a more open and transparent society. Freedom of religion, equal protection of the law for all and respect for minorities are the hallmarks of truly democratic societies.

In this respect, we greatly value the contribution of the OSCE Mission to Serbia to the reform process. We encourage the Serbian government to continue to work closely with the Mission.

The coming months will be crucial to determining Kosovo's future. On this issue, Canada continues to support the current process within the UN Security Council to find a solution that will lead to enhanced regional stability and a multi ethnic society in Kosovo.

We further believe that a clear decision by the Security Council is needed for the deployment of the new International Civilian Representative and the ESDP mission.

Canada views Kosovo as a unique case, both in its origin and way forward, which should not constitute a precedent.

Mr. Chairman, Canada strongly supports international efforts to bring war criminals to justice and help build an effective international criminal justice system. While we note with satisfaction that Serbia has made real progress on this issue, we repeat our calls for the Serbian government to fully cooperate with the ICTY to arrest and transfer war crime fugitives, especially Ratko Mladic, to The Hague.

We would further welcome increased interstate cooperation to remove the impunity loophole for alleged war criminals.

Mr. Chairman, we are confident that Serbia will continue on its path of reform. We look forward to working with Minister Jeremic and the Serbian government to this end.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman