



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
ON THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO/ SERBIA
AT THE 691th MEETING
OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 December 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of Serbia to take this opportunity to make a few remarks concerning the fact that the Permanent Council today was not in the position to take a decision on the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

As we outlined in the PrepCom yesterday, the Kosovo status process is again entering into a decisive phase with the submission of the Troika report to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 10 December and the following discussion in the Security Council on 19 December. Let me reiterate, in view of that fact, our firm belief that it is indispensable for a peaceful and sustainable solution, for the sake of peace and stability, that the negotiating process continues until we find an agreed settlement, which will be endorsed by the Security Council and will represent the basis for a new international presence, including the OSCE. I can not imagine anybody in this hall, who could not agree that this would be the most reasonable and commonsense outcome of a dispute. In fact, this is what the very principles of this organization bind us to – to build confidence and peace through a democratic and sincere dialogue until we find mutually acceptable solutions to any conflict. I remember very well the words of our former British colleague, when he in May this year announced the establishment of a common government of former antagonists in Northern Ireland and assessed: Who would have thought this to be possible only some years ago? Yes, who would have thought this to be possible only some years ago, and it was worth investing all possible energy and time into creating the conditions to come to this solution!

Mr. Chairman,

Instead of insisting on its own principles and values, parts of the international community are trying to urge Serbia to accept the allegedly inevitable – the loss of more than 15 per cent of her territory, including people and more than a thousand mostly ancient religious objects, against her will. It is hard to explain to Serbs why, when Milosevic was still in power, a settlement was imposed which left Kosovo

legally and formally part of Serbia, and why now, having overthrown Milosevic and lived according to the rules of the international community for the last seven years, the Serbs face being punished by losing Kosovo according to the will of a minority population in Serbia against the will of the majority population in the country. This is not a policy which is likely to strengthen democracy in Serbia and in the region.

To make the absurd even bigger – parts of the international community are telling Serbia: Yes, we are going to do you harm and to violate international law, but, please, be understanding, cooperative, constructive and helpful. We are going to violate the Helsinki Final Act, the United Nations Charter and Security Council resolution 1244, but these documents will stay in force for you and partly for us. With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, this is more than complete nonsense – this is dangerous nonsense. This is to teach the people in Kosovo, in the whole of Serbia as well as in the region that law can be breached by the stronger, with the perpetrator telling the victim that it has to stick to the law.

Mr. Chairman,

We all know that the situation in Kosovo is not good. But it is no solution to make a bad situation worse by unilateral actions and by thus deepening antagonisms. This is why Serbia calls on the international community to allow the Kosovo status process to go on smoothly, without encouraging one side that it will get what it demands. It is the parties to this dispute themselves who have to come to a mutual agreement, with the help of a fair mediation on the part of the international community. The Troika process was helpful in the sense that it enabled at least a sensible change in the atmosphere of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. Let this still fragile plant continue to grow, and we would not have to discuss the legal basis for the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, but what the Mission could do to support the dialogue and make life better for all people in Kosovo, and thus in Serbia and in the whole region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman