



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND
AND THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE,
H.E. ILKKA KANERVA,
AT THE 695th SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 January 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Serbia very warmly welcomes H.E. Ilkka Kanerva, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, for the first time in the new capacity as Chairman-in-Office to the Permanent Council. We wish you, Mr. Minister, and your delegation a successful year. Our delegation is looking forward to constructively cooperate with the new Chairmanship and the OSCE as a whole. And let me take this opportunity to thank Spain for its able leadership last year.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are all aware of, the Kosovo issue represents one of the major political challenges of this year - for the OSCE and the international community. We are also aware of the fact that the Kosovo issue is not going to be solved politically by the OSCE. However, many of the OSCE participating states will decide on the fate of the South Serbian province. In fact, each and every participating state has, in the end, to take a decision of its own about how to position itself in regard to the resolution of this issue. It has to have a clear view on whether this decision will be in line with democratic standards, whether it will be in line with international law and whether it will be in line with the OSCE basic principles and norms and, last but not least, with the Helsinki Final Act.

In this sense the Kosovo issue will affect the OSCE as the sum of its participating states politically very well. Further, we firmly believe that the OSCE is the

adequate framework to raise the question of a possible illegal violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a participating state and the principles of conflict-resolution. Such a discussion will inevitably involve a debate on the very foundations on which this organization is based – with maybe far-reaching consequences.

And last but not least, the OSCE will be faced with its engagement in Kosovo. We agree with the European Union and other speakers that the OSCE has to play an important role “in supporting our common goal of promoting in Kosovo a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic society based on the rule of law, the highest level of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms”. This is urgently needed. However, this has to be done in compliance with international law, since any other option will fundamentally erode the credibility of this organization and the principles and norms it wants to establish in Kosovo or any other part of the OSCE region – the very principles and norms which guide us, as you said, Mr. Minister, since the time of the CSCE and the Helsinki Final Act.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman