



Statement
Delivered by Ambassador Dragana Radulović,
Permanent Representative of Montenegro, at the Permanent Council
Meeting No. 748, 29 January 2009

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

My Delegation would like to welcome Minister Schwarzenberg and thank him for his briefing on the priorities of the Czech Presidency. Minister's views on the cooperation between the EU and the OSCE gives us confidence in further promotion of common security and stability in the OSCE area.

We wish to express our belief that the Czech Republic will successfully conduct the EU affairs in the next six months and live up to the tasks ahead. Future of the EU institutional reform, energy policy and global financial crisis, present only the part of challenges that will shape the agenda of the Minister. We particularly value the fact that this comprehensive agenda includes the strengthening of the EU perspective of the Western Balkans countries as one of the priorities of the Czech Presidency. We wish to assure the Minister of the full and open cooperation by our side in that regard.

We would like to take this opportunity to emphasize once again the commitment of Montenegro to achieve its strategic goal of Euro Atlantic integration. The prospect of joining the EU engages the whole society, which shows the undisputed consensus on the issue.

Montenegro has applied for EU membership in December last year. This has been the fruit of a carefully thought-through process in cooperation and close consultation with EU Member States, and was based on the positive track record in overall reforms, and in particular in implementation of the SAA/Interim Agreement, signed with the EU in 2007.

We are continuing fulfillment of our obligations diligently and stand ready to successfully implement the ones awaiting us in due procedure, which we expect to be opened after our application. We hope that our efforts will bring about positive EU reaction and that Montenegro would become an EU candidate country.

Let me emphasize that Montenegro gives particular importance to the visa liberalization process. We are working hard on fulfilling efficiently criteria in the Road Map which will hopefully result in a visa free regime for our citizens, not only for us but for the entire Region. That would make EU values even more tangible.

Madam Chairperson,

EU accession process in my country is fully compatible with our longstanding foreign policy priority of strengthening regional cooperation and good neighborly relations. We are the part of a Region that shares the same goals and whose EU future has no alternative. Close regional cooperation is both a precondition and best recommendation for our success in EU integration. We believe that it is of essential importance that enlargement process of the countries of our Region continues without delay, not depending on the current challenges regarding the ratification of Lisbon Treaty, but rather on results in reforms. We are convinced that countries should be judged by their individual merits, since each has its own dynamics of reforms. However, it doesn't exclude our sincere wish for the success of our neighbors, which can only have positive effect and enhance the prospects of the entire Region.

Let me conclude by saying that we are fully aware of the tasks and challenges that stand before us, and we intend to face them with confidence in our capacity to meet the final goal. We count on the support of the Czech Presidency and would like to wish the Minister and his team, including the OSCE Delegation, all the success in their endeavors during the next six months. Montenegro will be your reliable partner.

Thank you.