

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE CIO OF
THE OSCE, H.E. Dr DIMITRIJ RUPEL, delivered by Vesko Gerčević,
Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro, at the 540th Meeting of the
Permanent Council, 13 January 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Delegation of Serbia and Montenegro I am delighted to join others in warmly welcoming our new Chairman-in-Office, His Excellency Dr. Dimitrij Rupel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. We find the program of the Slovenian Chairmanship well structured, precise and well balanced. Allow me to emphasize that the program of the Slovenian Chairmanship seems to have good potentials for the appropriate and needed balance between our three dimensions and continuation of activities focused on the main outstanding issues that we discussed at length during successful Bulgarian Chairmanship last year. At the same time it gives space for new programs and projects in many areas.

I can assure you Mr. Minister that the Slovenian Chairmanship in Office will enjoy our full support in efforts aimed at enhancing an inclusive and co-operative character of the Organization through a cross-dimensional approach. Only in that way we will be able to strengthen the OSCE in order to address effectively the modern threats and challenges. In a year when we will be marking important OSCE anniversaries, a balance among politico-military, economic and environmental issues without undermining human dimension is the key of our success. We stand ready to work hand in hand with other delegations in order to make the OSCE more efficient and effective.

At the same time, let me take this opportunity to highlight one of the priorities that is outlined in the Minister Rupel's statement. It is a comprehensive approach to "migration and integration" policy. This is certainly not a topic easy to handle. We know that from the perspective of Serbia and Montenegro that has been facing this phenomena for decades having hundreds of thousands citizens worldwide. There is no better investment in the long run in conflict prevention and building of democratic standards than efforts put in promotion of tolerance, equal rights for all, mutual understanding and respecting all the scope of diversities among people working and living in the same place. This topic is closely lined with some of the significant questions related to immigration policy, visa

regimes, free flow of people, border management, trafficking in human beings etc. that needs to be addressed thoroughly through a cross-dimensional approach.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to underline how pleased we are to see Slovenia taking the OSCE helm. The tremendous success of the Slovenian transition in the last decade is, in our view, an excellent guarantee for the successful lead of the Organization during the challenging year ahead. We are confident that a good understanding of the ongoing processes in our part of Europe that Slovenia no doubt evidently has, can serve as an asset for our joint endeavors in a year to come and work to the benefit of both, respected countries from the South East Europe and CIO. In this context, I would like to stress our full support for the aims of the Slovenian Chairmanship to consolidate the OSCE work that has been done so far in the Western Balkans in order to accelerate the accession process of these countries to the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Bearing in mind these motives, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro, H. E. Vuk Drašković, visited Slovenia only several days ago and discussed with CIO, Minister Rupel, further engagement of the OSCE in Serbia and Montenegro, SEE and especially its role and position in Kosovo. We fully agree with the assessment that issue of Kosovo will be of utmost importance in 2005 for Serbia and Montenegro, the Region as a whole and the OSCE as well. We are confident that the OSCE has a significant role to play as an indivisible part of wider international presence in Province ensuring prerequisites for the creation of democratic, multiethnic Kosovo, where human rights of all people regardless their ethnic or religious origin are fully respected in accordance with the European standards.

In conclusion, I would like once again to thank our Bulgarian colleagues for their successful Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2004 and to warmly welcome Belgium as a new OSCE Troika member.

Mr. Minister, we wish You and Your dedicated team in Vienna, under able leadership of Ambassador Lenarčič, all success in your important tasks and good luck in 2005.

Thank you.