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Delegation of the Serbia

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA,  
AT THE 699th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 January 2008

**In response to the statement by Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner,  
European Commissioner for External Relations and  
European Neighbourhood Policy**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Serbia to extend a very warm welcome to Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, and to thank her for her comments.

As a country that — with successes and setbacks — but still undeterred aspires to integration into the European Union (EU), we emphatically welcome all efforts by the EU to support the States located on what is referred to as its periphery in their reform ambitions as part of a strategic neighbourhood policy and thus to allow them to share in the prosperity and stability of the united part of the European continent.

We believe this is especially necessary and worthy of support where unresolved conflicts threaten the security and stability of the countries concerned and their neighbours. The EU's successful formula for resolving conflicts through dialogue and co-operation, through confidence building and reconciliation, through consensus and integration, and thereby securing lasting peace is the manifest basis of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and we very much welcome this fact.

It is therefore all the more regrettable, Mr. Chairman, in our view, that in the case of the Kosovo problem this tried and tested and fundamentally evident democratic formula is not being applied. Not only is dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina not being encouraged, it is on the contrary being hindered with the arguments that there have been enough negotiations and that a mutually acceptable solution is impossible. I should like to emphasize strongly, Mr. Chairman, that neither of these arguments is tenable. Within the Troika process, for example, which covered a period of 120 days, there were precisely 13 hours of direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina — in most countries of the European Union 13 hours would scarcely be enough to agree on a coalition government, much less on a comprehensive settlement for a rebellious province. And to say that a mutually acceptable solution is

impossible is tantamount not only to disregarding democratic principles but also — in this case — giving in to extortive threats of violence by one party and therefore taking sides. Both these points fundamentally contravene the principles that we all represent here.

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia is and remains more than open to a dialogue with Pristina, with the European Union and with the international community including the OSCE and their involvement in Kosovo. However, in doing so Serbia is dependant on the fairness, partnership, trust, understanding and willingness of its negotiation partners to take Serbia, with all its problems, seriously. It is also dependant on respect for international law, which is the protector of the small and the weak. No one can or should have the privilege of bending the law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.