



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA TO THE OSCE,
IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
H.E. MR. KAREL SCHWARZENBERG,
AT THE 748th MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 January 2009

Madame Chair,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Serbia, I take great pleasure in very warmly welcoming to the Permanent Council H.E. Mr. Karel Schwarzenberg, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, on the occasion of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. We thank you, Mr. Minister, for your devoted address that bears testimony to the strong commitment of the Czech Republic, a young and passionate member of the European Union, to the advancement of the European agenda both with relation to its core values and its comprehensiveness. In this sense we firmly believe that the motto of the Czech presidency – “Europe without barriers” – is more than a mere phrase.

Madame Chair,

The central strategic priority of the Republic of Serbia for the year 2009 is to accelerate the process of our European integration, and we are grateful for the ceaseless efforts of the OSCE Mission in Belgrade to contribute to our endeavours.

Yes, we are resolved, and we will devote all our available resources to greatly advance our European future during the Czech presidency. Each and every representative of our Government and authorities is actively working on creating the preconditions for an unfreezing of the Interim Trade Agreement between Serbia and the EU as soon as possible and the beginning of the process of the SAA ratification in the national parliaments of the EU member states. We believe that the unilateral application of the Interim Trade Agreement by Serbia, which will be put into effect in the coming days, will be adequately valued in our track record, thus contributing to the acceleration of Serbia achieving Official Candidate Status.

We also hope deeply that our progress in meeting the conditions of the Road Map for visa liberalization and our active approach to an adequate valorisation of our achievements in this field will find the approval and esteemed support of the Czech presidency.

Madame Chair,

It is past high time to unfreeze the Interim Agreement and to overcome the recalcitrance of few on the definition of full cooperation with the ICTY. We are doing everything in our power to fulfill our obligations to the Tribunal, and no one should doubt that Serbia is acting in complete sincerity. This is why Serbia's Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić a few days ago extended an invitation to the Council of Ministers of the European Union to send a mission to Serbia that would assess on the spot the degree of Serbia's cooperation with the ICTY, a measure which would for sure convince even the last unbeliever. Serbia *is* strictly respecting international law and *is* complying with her commitments on the road to Europe, and we expect others to do so, as well. With regard to the ICTY this means: All war crimes must be treated equally before the Tribunal.

And now, with your permission, Madame Chair, I would like to highlight some issues related to our southern province of Kosovo. Let me first underline that the Government of the Republic of Serbia approves all provisions of the SAA and its concordance with the state policy pertaining to Kosovo and Metohija, in particular having in mind that the status of Kosovo is mentioned in Article 135 of the SAA, which explicitly refers to UNSCR 1244.

Let me, secondly, reiterate that we hold it essentially important that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo implements its activities strictly in the framework of its mandate and resolution 1244 and in a status neutral way, as we expect EULEX to act under the authority of the United Nations, abiding by its status neutrality.

Let me, thirdly, point out that the Republic of Serbia wants to cooperate with its neighbours in the region, as with other countries, in order to create a political space for focusing on those things that unite us, and not on those that divide us. But when we speak about regional cooperation of countries, the approach has to be crystal clear: regional cooperation means the cooperation of internationally recognised states, participating States of the OSCE, member states of the United Nations, the Council of Europe or other international organisations. In this sense there are no *sui generis* cases, and Kosovo cannot be one, since this would mean that the Charter of the United Nations and other principles of international law do not apply to Kosovo and that in the case of Kosovo determined rules of conduct of the international community have not to be observed.

The Kosovo UDI is and remains a unilateral act with a multitude of destabilizing impacts.

This leads me, Madame Chair, to the last, but not the least item related to Kosovo – the establishment of the so-called “Kosovo Security Force”. Allow me to ask this distinguished audience: What would you call an army, created on the territory of your country, based on a document – in this case the Ahtisaari proposal – that was never endorsed, neither by your government nor the United Nations Security Council, the supreme authority for the maintenance of international peace and security, and, in this case, the only authority to guard the implementation of resolution 1244? You would call it, in all likelihood, an illegal paramilitary organisation and a clear threat to the national security of your country. This is what Serbian President Boris Tadić did in his letter addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, pointing out that the establishment of the so-called “Kosovo Security Force” flagrantly violates both our Constitution and international law, constitutes a direct danger to the consolidation of peace and stability in the Western Balkans, and is completely unacceptable to the Republic of Serbia.

Allow me to recall at this point that Serbia’s status proposal for Kosovo stipulated a complete demilitarization of the south Serbian province. This is what Kosovo really needs – a thorough lesson in peace and pacification.

In concluding, Madame Chair, allow me to wish Minister Schwarzenberg and the Czech Republic a highly successful overcoming of barriers in Europe.

Thank you, Madame Chair