

ENGLISH only

Permanent Council meeting No 639, November 23, 2006
Statement
delivered by Vesko Garčević, Ambassador of Montenegro
On the 14th Session of the Igman Initiative held in Montenegro

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Delegation of Montenegro I have the pleasure to inform the Permanent Council about the 14th Session of the Igman Initiative, held under the auspices of the President of Montenegro, Mr. Filip Vujanovic, on November 16th and 17th in Montenegro. President of Croatia Mr. Stjepan Mesic and President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Nebojsa Radmanovic took part at the Session, which resulted in a common Declaration on behalf of Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, four countries of the Dayton Peace Agreement. More than 100 NGOs from the Region actively participated in the work of the meeting. Heads or deputy heads of the OSCE Missions in the mentioned four countries also attended the Session.

Declaration calls for the increased cooperation of four countries in the various areas ranging from the return of refugees, respect for the rights of minorities and reconciliation to the fight against organized crime and the regional cross-border cooperation. Countries have particularly stressed the need to openly and with full responsibility face the recent past. Document reiterates that the individualization of criminal responsibility toward crimes committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia is an indivisible part of overall regional process of the confidence building and calls for better cooperation in this field among the countries concerned.

The importance of Igman Initiative, a significant NGO Forum, is well recognized in the Region. The Initiative advocates cross-border cooperation, respect of human rights and democratic values, reconciliation and fostering peace, understanding and good neighborly relations among four countries. It raises public awareness of problems and proposes solutions for outstanding issues that are of interests for four countries. In this respect, it **was the very first day-light after the Balkans dusk in the late 90-ies**. Today it represents a powerful instrument for peace and confidence building in our countries that share an uneasy past as well as a forum for cooperation of the governmental and NGO sector in the Region.