



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,  
ON THE SITUATION IN SERBIA  
AT THE 703<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF  
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 February 2008

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the European Union and the United States for raising their concerns with regard to the events that took place on the margins of a peaceful protest of hundreds of thousands of people against the illegal unilateral independence of Kosovo on February 21<sup>st</sup> in Belgrade.

The Republic of Serbia strongly condemns in particular the attacks on the diplomatic missions and any kind of violence and assures the participating States that not only everything will be done to properly protect embassies and other foreign property in the future, but that the perpetrators will be identified and punished. 192 people were arrested on the spot, and the events are now under thorough investigation, supervised by the National Security Council which was convened for that purpose two days ago, chaired by the President, with the participation of the Prime Minister, the Ministries for Defense, Justice and Interior, the Chief of General Staff as well as the intelligence services.

Let me assure you, Mr. Chairman, that the extremely unpleasant and unacceptable events of the 21<sup>st</sup> of February enhanced the trauma and the feeling of despair which an overwhelming majority of peaceful citizens in Serbia experiences since the illegal unilateral declaration of independence by the interim government in Pristina. Tens of thousands of Serbs rally almost every day around the world to protest what they consider to be not only a gross violation of international law, but an act of plain ignorance of the justified concerns of Serbs with regard to Kosovo, the cradle of their identity. And they do it in an overwhelmingly peaceful manner.

Mr. Chairman,

As we noted yesterday, when responding to the address of the Prime Minister of Ireland - instead of doing our best to enhance prosperity and unity for the benefit of us all, we now have growing discord and more dividing lines – in Serbia, including Kosovo, in the Balkans, in Europe, in the world. We have more tensions than before the unilateral declaration of independence, we have more instability and insecurity. This organization is, according to its very core principles and values, *obliged* to ensure

that dialogue is continued, that tensions are reduced, that peace and stability are maintained and that confidence is restored. We urgently appeal to the OSCE and its participating States to recall its own commitments and to forcefully engage in finding a solution to the Kosovo issue that would be acceptable to all parties to the conflict. Serbia is more than prepared to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman