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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA TO THE OSCE,  
IN RESPONSE TO THE OSCE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND CO-  
ORDINATOR FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS,  
MS. MARIA GRAZIA GIAMMARINARO,  
AT THE 843<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

9 December 2010

Mr Chairman,

Let me first stress that we fully align with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union, we would like, however, to make a few points in our national capacity.

The delegation of Serbia joins previous speakers in very warmly welcoming the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, to today's meeting of the Permanent Council and thanks her for her thorough Annual Report.

Mr. Chairman,

As President Tadić explicitly emphasized in his speech before the United Nations General Assembly in September this year, Serbia will spare no effort in its quest to eradicate the threat of organized crime, THB being the most inhumane and cruel part of it. Having in mind that organized crime and in particular modern day slavery have become a global industry and represent the dark side of globalization, the President underlined that we have the responsibility to create strong regional and global strategic alliances in fighting this menace. Governments and international organizations have to join efforts to eliminate this scourge on our societies.

In this regard we welcome the valuable assistance offered to our country by various stakeholders. Serbia was selected as one of four countries in the world in which, through a first joint initiative of the UNODC, the UNHCR and IOM under the auspices of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking – UN.GIFT, an Anti Human Trafficking Joint program is being implemented successfully, with a particular focus on women and children. Likewise we value the continued support of the OSCE Mission in Belgrade to our authorities and NGOs in policy-making and the implementation of the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. Let me use this opportunity to indicate my country's need of financial assistance for long term services of trafficking for victims.

In their efforts to counter the challenges of THB, our authorities were so far able to achieve considerable successes, among others by breaking international criminal networks operating regionally and globally. In this context we believe that a strategic regional approach is of crucial importance, and we are pleased to report that Serbia enjoys a very good cooperation with its neighbours in this regard. One of the examples of this cooperation is the so-called “SerbAz” case mentioned in the Special Representative’s report, where we have coordinated our ongoing investigations with the authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina and, of course, with those of the country of destination - Azerbaijan, as well. According to our National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings criminal charges against several persons have been raised so far in Bosnia-Herzegovina and most of the victims of this case are citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Special Representative outlined in her report, there is a widespread confusion when it comes to a particularly shameful type of trafficking – namely trafficking for the purpose of organ removal and trafficking in organs, tissues and cells. We share the assessment of the Special Representative that the existing confusion with regard to the definition and classification of these crimes hamper the fight against them and that these forms of trafficking are poorly investigated, which, as a consequence, means that “empirical information on victims, numbers and trends are scarce”.

As recent indictments by EULEX show, an organ-trafficking ring was identified in Kosovo a short time ago, involving doctors and former Kosovo officials. Allow me to remind you that the Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor two years ago opened investigations into allegations of human organs trafficking of kidnapped Serbs and other non-Albanians in the years 1998 to 2001 that contained combined elements of war crimes and transnational organized crime. The investigations were initiated by claims brought forward by the former Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, Carla del Ponte, in her book “The Hunt”. We believe that there is enough ground also for the international presences in Kosovo to continue investigations, identify perpetrators and bring them to justice. This would be a necessary step to prevent recurrence of violations. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo could make a considerable contribution to that.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, we would like to wish the Special Representative and her team the very best in fulfilling their important tasks.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.