

Speech

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Ladies and gentlemen,

In my brief statement on the implementation of the OSCE commitments concerning democratic elections I would like to specifically focus on solutions under electoral legislation in Serbia aimed at advancing the political participation of national minorities.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to introduce you with the general electoral solutions for national minorities in the Republic of Serbia. Having in mind that in the December 2003 elections, due to the existence of the 5% electoral threshold, political parties that gather representatives of national minorities were not able to secure mandates within the National Assembly, the then elected National Assembly adopted, as one of the first pieces of legislation passed in 2004, the alterations to the Electoral Law. The alterations to the electoral legislation foresee the abolishment of the electoral threshold for political parties or coalitions of political parties of national minorities. The solution, the so-called “natural threshold” for political parties that gather representatives of national minorities, allows these parties to win mandates in the National Assembly through the electoral process, which represents a very important measure of affirmative action. The government of the Republic of Serbia is of the opinion that the aforementioned legislative solutions are so designed as to assure parties of national minorities participation in the legislative branch of government after the next elections.

The Republic of Serbia is before the adoption of a new Constitution. The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, in the session held on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006, adopted the text of the new Constitution. The oncoming referendum will give voters the opportunity to decide on the final adoption of the Constitution.

The draft Constitution foresees a wide specter of political rights and a wide legislative framework for the holding of democratic elections and for the forwarding of democratic processes on the national, regional and local level. It is

particularly important to point out the fact that the draft Constitution foresees, in the National Assemblies of the Autonomous Provinces and local self-governments that have a population that is of mixed national composition, a proportional representation of national minorities. After the adoption of the new Constitution, it is expected that the elections will be held on all levels of the organization of government.

My Government remains firmly committed to improving the position of national minorities and ensuring their proper representation in all levels of government, through democratic elections, is a crucial means to achieve this goal.

Thank you.