

**Statement by the delegation of Montenegro in response to HoM to Montenegro,  
Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu  
800th Permanent Council meeting  
25th March 2010**

Delegation of Montenegro would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Badescu back to the Permanent Council and thank her for the comprehensive and balanced Report on the work of the Mission during the last reporting period. The Report shows the growing level of political stability and reform progress in Montenegro, in spite of many challenges, including those posed by global economic crisis.

We wish to reiterate our appreciation for the work of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and model partnership established throughout the years between the Mission and all stakeholders in Montenegrin society.

The Mission has contributed a great deal to the steady pace of reforms in Montenegro and has witnessed the significant progress achieved both in overcoming outstanding political issues and in pursuit of our strategic goals of Euro Atlantic integration. In that regard, 2009 was indeed a successful year: in EU integration process, backed by wide political consensus, we have replied to the EC Questionnaire - thus demonstrating growing capacities of our institutions; citizens of Montenegro are now able to travel visa-free to Schengen countries after the relevant decision by EU in December 2009, and on NATO integration front- also in December 2009 -Montenegro has joined the NATO Membership Action Plan. We are now awaiting the opinion by the EC on our application for EU membership which will hopefully result in candidate country status by the end of this year.

These steps are a result of hard work and strong political commitment by Montenegrin Government and institutions and society as a whole to reforms in all areas pertinent to our democratic development and Euro Atlantic integration. As the Report shows, a lot has been accomplished, but we are fully aware that a lot still remains to be done. Montenegro is highly motivated by its achievements, but equally committed to maintain and speed up the pace of the reforms in order to face many challenges ahead in remaining crucial and most complex phase of our integration. We are therefore focusing our efforts on further consolidation of reforms by strengthening institutional, administrative and human capacities in implementation of reforms in key areas such as judiciary, fight against corruption and organized crime, legislative harmonization, as well as in diminishing the social and economic effects of global financial crisis.

We appreciate continuous support of the OSCE Mission, which coincide with strategic priorities of the country and our reform agenda. Activities of the Mission that range from support to the work of Parliament, improving good governance, accountability of local authorities, police reform, as well as capacity building of institutions to further tackle corruption and organized crime, ran in parallel with the above mentioned efforts of Montenegro. We welcome valuable support of the Mission regarding the rights of minorities, especially Roma population, implementation of AP in fight against trafficking of human beings, but also in regard to domestic violence, anti-discrimination, gender equality and media. As to specific projects, the court-monitoring project, related to the performance of the judiciary as well as cross-border cooperation with neighbouring countries are some of the major success stories that the Mission and Montenegrin stakeholders have achieved. We also very much value the role of the Mission in implementation of MONDEM project. Assistance by the Mission, as well as other OSCE bodies, in the ongoing process of harmonizing the Election law with Constitution will be important also in the next period, supporting the efforts of Montenegro to implement these and other relevant OSCE commitments.

Montenegro, as acknowledged in the Report, continues to contribute to regional stability, security and cooperation. We are fully aware that intensive regional cooperation, development of good neighbourly relations and political and economic stability of countries of Western Balkans represent the only guarantee of a better future for all our citizens, where EU perspective remains the biggest incentive for moving forward. This is why Montenegro actively participates in all regional initiatives and fosters excellent bilateral relations with its neighbours. We will give further concrete contribution to regional cooperation by chairing, for the first time, three regional initiatives in 2010 (Central European Initiative, Adriatic/Ionian Initiative and South East European Cooperation process), which testifies to our growing capacities.

Mr. Chairman,

We are confident that the Mission will continue to provide valuable assistance to Montenegrin society, in line with needs and priorities of the country, and also fully taking into consideration the progress we achieve in this process. It is also important to continue the excellent practice of synergy of Mission's activities with other international actors present in the country.

Montenegro will stay committed to promoting core OSCE values and be a responsible partner of international community in strengthening its own and regional stability and prosperity.

As this is the last Report of Ambassador Badescu to the Permanent Council as the Head of Mission to Montenegro, we wish to take this opportunity to thank her for excellent work and constructive cooperation we had in the course of her mandate, especially since it took place during one of the most important and sensitive periods of modern Montenegrin history. We wish her all the best in her future professional and personal endeavours.

Thank you.