



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA TO THE OSCE,  
IN RESPONSE TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
ON NATIONAL MINORITIES,  
AMBASSADOR KNUT VOLLEBAEK,  
AT THE 778<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 October 2009

Madame Chair,

[My delegation aligned with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Sweden on behalf of the European Union but allow me to say some words in our national capacity.]

On behalf of the delegation of Serbia I would like to very warmly welcome the High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Knut Vollebaeck, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his substantive report reflecting both the far-reaching relevance as well as the delicate and sensitive nature of his mission. The Republic of Serbia welcomes the High Commissioner's activities and follows them attentively. We value in particular his efforts to translate his mandate into activities that would benefit all parties concerned. Win-win-approaches are a major contribution to stability and security.

Madame Chair,

My delegation already highlighted the importance we attach to the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations before, but let me reiterate that we highly appreciate the way the High Commissioner sparks interest, raises awareness and encourages discussions on them. We consider the idea to organize a final review conference in 2010 on the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations as a follow-up to the round tables particularly valuable, this all the more as the Recommendations are relevant for all participating States of the OSCE.

As for the High Commissioner's activities in Kosovo, Madame Chair, let me underline that we welcome them provided that they are performed in a status neutral manner, that they are in compliance with UNSC resolution 1244 and that they take into account the fact that the International Court of Justice will render an opinion on the legality of the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

Having said this, let me stress that we support the High Commissioner's efforts to contribute, through his activities, to creating a more secure environment and a safer society in Kosovo, in which the level of trust and confidence between all ethnic communities will be enhanced to the benefit of all. As I said - win-win-approaches are a major contribution to stability and security.

On that note we particularly encourage the High Commissioner to continue his activities in supporting the non-Albanian ethnic communities in Kosovo by, for instance, assisting in the development of a Serbian curriculum or facilitating the school education of the Gorani children. Finding sustainable solutions to these and similar open issues would be an important step forward in creating a viable multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, and we believe that the High Commissioner can and should, in the framework of his mandate, play a decisive role in this.

Being well aware of the fact that quiet diplomacy is one of the major excellencies of the High Commissioner's work, we nevertheless encourage him to be fully transparent in performing his activities in Kosovo. The authorities in Belgrade stand ready to assist the High Commissioner and cooperate with him in his endeavours.

In concluding, Madame Chair, let me once again thank the High Commissioner for his report and wish him every success in fulfilling his challenging tasks.

Thank you, Madame Chair.