

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. VUK DRASKOVIC, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO,
AT THE OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
Sofia, 7 December 2004

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I congratulate our Bulgarian friends for their hospitality and an excellent organization of this Conference. I also congratulate the outgoing Chairman-in-Office of the Organization, Minister Passy, and I wish full success to the incoming CiO, Minister Rupel.

Security and cooperation are the centrepiece of the name of the OSCE.

Unfortunately, today there is a part of Europe, a part of the Balkans, a part of my own country, Serbia and Montenegro, that lacks the fundamental security rights for an entire nation. That part of the region is Kosovo and Metohija where Christian Serbs are deprived of their fundamental human right to life, safety of property, freedom of movement, and freedom of their own faith.

For the last five years, since 10 June 1999, the date when the Province came under UN administration, nearly 250 000 Serbs have been driven out of Kosovo, 40,000 Serbian homes have been totally destroyed as well as 150 centuries-old churches and monasteries. More than 2,500 Serbs, including many children, have been killed.

What must be done? OSCE standards and those of modern Europe must be respected and applied at long last.

The "three E" formula is brief and very clear.

The first "E" stands for European level of minority protection in Kosovo and Metohija, for both Serbs and other non-Albanians, with maximum respect for Europe's principles of positive discrimination.

The second "E" stands for Europe's model of decentralized power in this Province. Meaning maximum local self-rule in the municipalities, but in accordance with the Serbian Government's plan guaranteeing autonomy for Serbs, including that of Serbian enclaves, those Christian islands in an Albanian sea, and a special status for churches and monasteries.

The third "E" stands for European status and quality of the State border of Serbia and Montenegro with Albania. That border cannot be changed or renamed. It must be invisible on the ground. In other words, Kosovo and Metohija must be an open region in Europe within a European Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo and Metohija should be Europe's bridge of cooperation and reconciliation, rather than a place where the fundamental human rights of Christian Serbs are trampled underfoot.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.