



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND
AND THE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE,
H.E. MR. ALEXANDER STUBB,
AT THE 708th MEETING OF
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Serbia warmly welcomes H.E. Mr. Alexander Stubb in his new capacities as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Minister, for assuming these duties and responsibilities, and let me assure you that the Republic of Serbia is firmly committed to a continued constructive cooperation with the Chairmanship, your excellent delegation here in Vienna and the OSCE as a whole, thus contributing to the strengthening and affirmation of the organization and our common principles and values. Let me at this point refer also to the fruitful co-operation of our authorities with the OSCE Mission in Serbia and express our appreciation for its support in the ongoing reform process in our country.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Serbia strongly believes in the principles and values of the United Nations and the OSCE, both organizations established to stop wars between nations, to provide a platform for resolving disputes by dialogue and compromise solutions, to maintain international peace and security and to guard international law and obligations. All signatory States of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act have committed themselves in sovereign equality to abide by these binding codes of conduct as the ultimate authorities, and so does Serbia.

Hence, the Republic of Serbia considers all principles and provisions as they are set out in the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Security Council resolution 1244 to be in force and to undisputably confirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia, including its Southern province

of Kosovo. All other acts, which are not in compliance with these principles and provisions, must be considered to be null and void.

And, accordingly, Mr. Chairman, Serbia considers that the OSCE with its field presence in Kosovo has to abide by the valid and binding principles and provisions. The OSCE should not support the independence of Kosovo, since it is not endorsed by the UN SC and thus is considered to be illegal. After all, most of the participating States did not recognize the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina.

This means as well, that UNSCR 1244 constitutes the only legal basis for any international presence in Kosovo. Accordingly, the OSCE in Kosovo should exclusively cooperate with the only legal international presence in Kosovo determined by resolution 1244, which is UNMIK, the OSCE being, according to its mandate, a “distinct component” of it.

And this means that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo should not undertake activities in cooperation with the Pristina authorities that legitimize the illegal independence of the province or the Ahtisaari Proposal, which was not accepted by Serbia and never endorsed by the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

It is in the interest of this organization and all its participating States that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo remains active and contributes to reducing existing tensions in Kosovo and the protection of human rights, in particular those of the most vulnerable sections of the population in the province - the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities –, including the right of the return of IDPs and refugees, the freedom of movement, the right to property and the protection of the endangered Serbian cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to once again invite the OSCE, the participating States and the Chairmanship to recall the principles and values of this organization and apply them to the Kosovo issue in the same way as we do it to other conflicts throughout the OSCE region.

In concluding, allow me to wish you, Mr. Minister, the very best for your challenging tasks ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman