



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF AMBASSADOR
TIM GULDIMANN,
HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO/ SERBIA,
AT THE 698th MEETING OF
THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 January 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to warmly welcome on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Serbia Ambassador Tim Guldemann to the Permanent Council and thank him for his address and the well-structured and comprehensive report. Let me stress that we are very well aware of the highly complex conditions, under which the Mission in Kosovo is working, and we worry that the conditions could become even more complex.

Mr. Chairman,

Ambassador Guldemann's written report addresses, through the broad spectrum of the Mission's activities, a series of issues, which could be joined together to a mosaic of the overall situation in Kosovo. This mosaic, however, is fragmentary and does not reflect the effect and the results of OMiK's activities and the activities of the international presence in general. And the results are, allow me to say this straightforward, Mr. Chairman, extremely poor. Read about that in the latest report of the European Commission, published on 6 November 2007 under the title "Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 – 2007 Progress Report". There you will learn that in practically all areas of the Kosovo society - and in particular with regard to the implementation of standards and the capacity of democratic institutions – there is very little or no progress at all. We are talking here about the results of the international community's activities after almost 9 years of field presence.

Allow me also to refer in this regard to another document – the comments of the Government of Serbia on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo of 3 January 2008, and I quote:

“After UNMIK and KFOR came to Kosovo in June 1999, until January 2007 there were 7.108 ethnically motivated assaults, 581 Serbs and 104 other members of ethnically discriminated communities were killed, 861 Serbs and 230 members of other nationalities disappeared, and 960 persons were severely wounded; 17.736 houses were destroyed, 18.557 houses were looted, 27.000 apartments were usurped. Furthermore, 119 Orthodox churches and monasteries and 122 Serbian cemeteries and 24 cultural monuments were vandalized. In March 2004, in only two days of organized violence, 3.870 persons were expelled, eight Serbs were killed and 143 wounded, six towns and nine villages were ethnically cleansed, 935 houses and public objects were demolished, three cemeteries were destroyed and 35 churches and monasteries were burned down. (...) The (Secretary General’s) Report indicates that only 30 persons were sentenced for all these crimes committed under UNMIK administration.” So much for the rule of law in Kosovo.

Mr. Chairman,

Every situation can be viewed from different angles and perspectives. If you want to get an unbiased picture of a certain situation you should take into consideration all possible angles and perspectives. We regret that we have to state that the Serbian perspective concerning the Kosovo issue is even more often denied than just simply ignored. Powerful arguments of the Serbian side are not answered by more powerful arguments, but are being annihilated by unilateral decisions and actions. Thus, we have heard so far no convincing argument, why parts of the international community demand that every dispute and conflict in the world should be settled by negotiations, which would lead to a mutual agreement, except for the Kosovo issue. To claim that differences are so big that they can not be overcome is contradictory to every democratic principle. The essence of democracy *is* to sit down and talk, until differences *are* overcome.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me reiterate our position with regard to the Mission in Kosovo – Serbia supports the Mission in Kosovo and would like to cooperate with it for the benefit of all people in Kosovo. Concerning the future of the Mission we would like to recall and underline that it is not Serbia who is announcing and threatening to change the situation in Kosovo fundamentally, which, again, will change the preconditions for the work of the OSCE-Mission.

We wish Ambassador Guldemann sincerely all the best for his efforts to handle the complex situation he and the Mission are facing now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman