



**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF
THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA,
H.E. DR IVO SANADER,
AT THE 674th (SPECIAL) MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

10 July 2007

Mr. Chairman,

Serbia aligned with the statement of the European Union and fully supports it. Allow me, however, to add a few words in our national capacity, as a neighbour and regional partner of the Republic of Croatia.

First of all, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Serbia I would like to join others in very warmly welcoming to the Permanent Council the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, H.E. Dr. Ivo Sanader and thank him for his address. We would also like to use the opportunity to express our condolences to the Republic of Croatia and the bereaved of the victims of the tragic crash of the military helicopter yesterday in Vukovar.

Allow me at the outset, Mr. Chairman, to point out also the excellent cooperation we enjoy with the delegation of Croatia to the OSCE, which, among other things, brought about tomorrow's event, when, under the Croatian chair of the Forum for Security Cooperation, the Chief of General Staff of the Army of the Republic of Serbia, Lieutenant-General Zdravko Ponoš, will present the transformation of the Armed Forces of Serbia at the joint FSC/PC meeting. The whole dimension of this event can best be measured by bringing to one's mind the situation in which both countries – and armies – were only some ten to fifteen years ago.

Having in mind this circumstance, one cannot but acclaim the immense progress both countries made and the extraordinary transition they underwent in this short period of time. As the countries transform on the grounds of common democratic principles and values, the relations between Serbia and Croatia are constantly improving - to the benefit and good not only of the two countries and their peoples, but to the benefit and good of the region as a whole, and thus to the benefit and good of Europe.

These positive and encouraging developments, which happened in such a short time and with far-reaching results, can be attributed to many factors, but I dare say: above all to the human factor – bilateral relations very much depend on the preparedness, goodwill and understanding of the personalities leading the respective countries, and it

is very obvious that the present leaderships in Belgrade and Zagreb live up to the importance of their tasks.

Apart from the human factor, the secret of the accelerated progress of the Serbian-Croatian relations can be found also in a multidimensional approach which provides for the settling of different, even the most sensitive issues through a variety of mechanisms – on bilateral, regional, sub-regional and broader international, multilateral levels. This principle is, of course, also the secret behind the success of the European Union and other forms of associations of countries – bilateral relations are embedded in the framework of commonly agreed structures, principles and values.

In this sense, Mr. Chairman, we would like to commend the work the OSCE did and does in South-Eastern Europe in order to enable the respective countries not only to enhance their own democratic capacities, but to solve common problems together. As is known, Mr. Chairman, Serbia strongly supports these approaches and processes, especially in the sensitive fields of refugee return and the monitoring of domestic war crimes proceedings, and continues to count in this respect on the OSCE-Field presences in the region. We also strongly believe that the open issues, as many others before, will be settled in a way which will be to the benefit and good of the individual countries and the region as a whole.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, allow me to once again thank Prime Minister Sanader for today's address and wish him, his country and his people sincerely the very best.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman