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ENGLISH only

STATEMENT

By Ambassador Vesko Garcevic, representative of Montenegro
At the 682nd meeting of the Permanent Council,
October 18th, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

I have a privilege to inform the Permanent Council about recent positive development in Montenegro:

A couple of days ago, on Monday 15th October, Montenegro and EU signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement that sets a legal framework for bilateral cooperation with the EU and the gradual adoption of its standards by my country. The SAA was signed on behalf of the European Union and Montenegro by EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn and Montenegrin Prime Minister Željko Šturanović respectively. In this context, allow me to particularly thank the EU Presidency and all others in the EU for helping Montenegro not to be “lost in translation” and safely step out from the “linguistic maze” which in one moment seemed to jeopardize the process.

Besides this formal and legal meaning, this act has a rather symbolic and political character for Montenegro. We understand that the implementation of this Agreement is now of crucial importance. We are fully aware that hard work remains to be done in years to come and no one can do that instead. Some compare this procedure with a long, exhausting 5000 m steeplechase in which we are just running the firsts laps. But this race we see as a positive challenge, the SAA as an inspiration for the future undertakings and confirmation of our previous results.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to inform you also that the new Montenegrin Constitution is to be adopted by two-third majority in the Parliament very soon as a result of a long, but transparent and participatory deliberation carried out in a complex social post-independence environment.

The story about the Montenegrin Constitution has two equally important segments:

First, the Constitution has been drafted in close consultation and cooperation with the experts of Venice Commission. Furthermore, almost all their expert recommendations and suggestions are incorporated in the final draft and will be embodied in the new Constitution. So stipulated, Constitutional provisions will reflect what is considered to be the core European values and high standards, among others, in the field of protection of human rights, rule of law and guaranteed independence of judiciary. The new Constitution should represent a unique identity card of modern Montenegro and its civic, democratic, social and ecological orientation.

Secondly, the process in which the overwhelming two-third majority in the Parliament has been gained over the basic Constitutional provisions is yet another proof that people in Montenegro can in democratic and transparent manner, in a spirit of consensus and compromise, handle very contentious and many-sided issues. This we consider to be a manner in which we should keep running over hurdles that shall come across on our EU race.

Finally, before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity and inform that my minister will elaborate in more details on the current situation in Montenegro in his address at the PC, next Thursday.

Thank you.