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**STATEMENT BY MS. MIROSLAVA BEHAM,
AMBASSADOR OF SERBIA,
ON ELECTIONS IN KOSOVO/ SERBIA (17 NOVEMBER 2007)
AT THE 689th MEETING
OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 November 2007

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Serbia shares the assessment of the European Union that the elections in Kosovo held on November 17 took place in a peaceful manner, and we would like to thank the OSCE Mission in Kosovo for contributing to this circumstance. Peace and peacefulness is what Kosovo and the region need more than anything in order to stabilize and improve achieved results in the field of reforms, which would eventually lead them into the European Union.

Another assessment, however, that the elections were conducted orderly, is an evaluation which can be disputed. If we speak about orderly in the sense of the maintenance of public order, then the elections were orderly, yes. If we speak about orderly in the sense that everything was in order, then they were not orderly. For example, it was not in order that among the candidates who competed for political functions we noted individuals indicted before the Hague Tribunal. It was also not in order that among these candidates Belgrade authorities found, within their limited possibilities, individuals who illegally occupy the property of Internally Displaced Persons, predominantly Serbs. The written request of the Serbian authorities addressed to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Joachim Rucker, to verify these cases and eliminate the respective persons from the candidates' lists, remained unanswered - despite the fact that the existence of these cases is in contradiction with the regulations of UNMIK and by all means sends a very bad political message to the people in Kosovo.

It is also beyond our common conception of order that thousands of Serbs live in enclaves and have to be protected and that, in spite of the repeated promises of Kosovo-Albanian politicians and UNMIK, hundreds of thousands of Serbs and other non-Albanians cannot return to their homes in Kosovo. There are no security and humanitarian conditions for Serbs and other non-Albanians to live a normal life, let alone to participate in the political life of a majority community, the attitude of which cannot be described always as friendly towards the smaller communities.

May I remind you, Mr. Chairman, that after the elections of 2001 Serbs *did* participate in the work of the Parliament in Kosovo and that their active engagement was futile, since they were constantly outvoted by the Albanian majority and no provisions were made to change this circumstance. Now, when the election campaign of the Kosovo-Albanian parties was expected to be focused almost exclusively on the issue of independence, the major Serbian parties in Kosovo had one reason more to decide not to participate in the political process of establishing a new government and Parliament, which is striving for independence and where Serbs have nothing to say, anyway. - For the Serbs in Kosovo very little is in order. And, by the way, the low overall voter turnout may indicate that the Kosovo-Albanian population is not satisfied, either, with its political leaders. After all, independence can not be eaten.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to take this opportunity to shortly draw the attention of the distinguished Permanent Council to the last round of the Kosovo-talks held in the framework of the Troika process in Brussels on 20 November. The Serbian delegation, headed by President Tadic and Prime Minister Kostunica, presented an analysis of the functionality of the Serbian status proposal by comparing it to the examples of Hong Kong and the Åland Islands. I do not want to dwell on the details of this presentation, which will be distributed to the delegations, but would like to underline that Serbia offers a 20 years international agreement on the basis of this proposal, which provides for a democratic, orderly and peaceful resolution of the Kosovo status issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman