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STATEMENT

By the delegation of Montenegro
At the 689th meeting of the Permanent Council,
November 22nd, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

From 16-19th of November the old capital of Montenegro, Cetinje, was a host to the Seventh meeting of Cetinje Parliamentary Forum, a traditional and unique parliamentary initiative in the Region. The chairpersons and members of the respective Committees for security and defense of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro with representatives of Greece and Italy as observers, met in Cetinje to discuss the topic of the meeting entitled "Partnership for Peace and perspective for NATO membership – factor of stability in the Region".

The meeting of the Forum was opened by Montenegrin Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Ranko Krivokapic and Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro Ms. Parascheva Badescu.

The first day of the meeting witnessed the discussions on the process of EU integration of South-East European countries and challenges in the reform of security and defense sectors. The second day was dedicated to the Parliamentary oversight of security sector.

Ministers of Defense of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina also addressed the participants, as well as Montenegrin Foreign Minister Mr. Milan Rocen who used this opportunity to reiterate that good neighborly relations and the EU and NATO membership are a high priority of the Montenegrin Foreign Policy.

The joint political statement endorsed by the participants at the end of the meeting, emphasized once again the importance of the Parliamentary role in the implementation of Euro Atlantic standards in the area of defense and security both in civil and military institutions of the Region. At the same time it has underlined a central role that parliaments should play in exercising an effective oversight and democratic control of the security sector in accordance with recognized international standards.

Mr. Chairman,

Cetinje Parliamentary Forum - the unique regional initiative has so far gathered more than 350 parliamentarians in two summits and four meetings of speakers and members of parliaments and EU member states representatives since its establishment in 2004.

Allow me, at the end, to thank the OSCE Mission to Montenegro for its continuing support in this regard.