



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA,  
IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS OF THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER  
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
H.E. MR ALEXANDER GRUSHKO,  
AT THE 38<sup>th</sup> JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF  
THE FORUM FOR SECURITY COOPERATION  
AND THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 February 2009

Madame Chair, Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Serbia I would like to very warmly welcome the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr Alexander Grushko, to this Joint Special Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation and the Permanent Council. Let me also thank the Deputy Minister for his thoughtful and challenging address.

Madame Chair, Mr. Chairman,

Events in the past year in the OSCE space have shown that cooperative security seems not to be a matter of course anymore, which implicates that it is time for the participating States to engage each other in a frank and open dialogue about inclusive ways how to bolster security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Serbia strongly supports the enhancement of a dialogue, which would strengthen the security of our common space, a dialogue which is even more important in such difficult and unpredictable times, as we are facing now, and in a world that is marked by unique complexity. To engage in a frank and open dialogue means that we have to listen to each other closely and unbiased, it means that we have to restore confidence and trust, it means that we have to leave behind us old patterns of thought and look into the future with only one interest – to ensure lasting peace and stability in our region, to ensure a secure life of *all* our citizens.

Madame Chair, Mr. Chairman,

One of last year's events that has shaken the confidence in cooperative security throughout the OSCE space and has caused mistrust among participating States was undoubtedly the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo – an act undertaken in direct violation of the basic tenets and principles of international law: the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), as well as the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and

numerous other binding covenants that guarantee Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The unilateral declaration of independence has called into question the very nature of the international system and its agreed principles, setting a ready-made precedent that any number of ethnic minorities with a grievance against their capitals could use. And we all know that there are dozens of Kosovo-s in the OSCE region and throughout the world, just waiting for secession to be legitimized, to be rendered an acceptable norm – with the perspective that existing conflicts can escalate, frozen conflicts can reignite, and new ones can be instigated. And, indeed, after Kosovo's UDI we saw increasing nervousness, growing tensions, and straight violent escalation in separatist regions of the world.

To those who would at this point plead that Kosovo's UDI is not a dangerous precedent for the international community, because it is *sui generis* – a unique case, I would like to say: this comes down to claiming that Kosovo is an exception to international law, that Kosovo stands beyond the rules and principles that govern the behaviour of the international community. Or that international law does not apply to Serbia. Who has the right to declare such exceptions?

Madame Chair, Mr. Chairman,

An imposed and one-sided solution can by definition not be a stable and sustainable solution. Serbia's position has not changed and it is consistent with the principles of cooperative security: Kosovo should be solved through dialogue, compromise and consensus-building amongst all the stakeholders and in compliance with international law. Instead of imposing one-sided acts, instead of perpetuating Kosovo's legal, political and economic limbo, let's make it a precedent for a 21<sup>st</sup> century democratic, viable, sustainable and lasting conflict resolution and a contribution to the consolidation of the security architecture of all of Europe and the OSCE space. Let's start with Kosovo! Serbia is ready for that at any time, and she has demonstrated this readiness by responding to Kosovo's UDI with utmost responsibility and restraint, thus setting an example.

In concluding, let me recall what Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić said at the Helsinki Ministerial Council in December last year, referring to Belgrade's aspiration to advance dialogue and to its important role in the CSCE process: "Serbia is again determined to play an active part in the modernization of the agenda of peace, security and cooperation in Europe". There is nothing to add to that.

Allow me to once again thank Deputy Minister Grushko for his address, as well as for his understanding and support and to wish him sincerely the very best.

Thank you very much