



***Statement
Delivered by Ambassador Vesko Garčević,
Permanent Representative of Montenegro, At the Permanent Council
Meeting No. 722, 17 July 2008***

We would like to welcome the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, H.E. Bernard Kouchner and express pleasure for the opportunity to be briefed on the French Presidency's views on the correlation between the EU and the OSCE in the areas of mutual importance and interests. Having heard your intervention, we are confident that the French Presidency will continue with the promotion of cooperation between the EU and the OSCE so that we can make another step in achieving the shared goals of stability and security in Europe and the wider OSCE area. In this context we would like to see your comments, Mr. Minister, on the future engagement of the OSCE in SEE and the so called "synergy" between the EU and the OSCE in the field, not only in my country.

Mr. Minister, Montenegro perceives the Union for the Mediterranean as a forum where the Mediterranean dimension of Europe can be better addressed and where cooperation with the wider Mediterranean region will be enhanced. This is yet another area where the OSCE and the EU can develop a beneficial interplay in the future.

Once again, I would like to stress that the EU integration is the strategic priority of my country. After having signed the SAA last year, we have made a real progress which is so far assessed as successful. Thus, we are building a basis for submitting an application for the membership, which we plan to do by the end of the year, in coordination and consultations with the Commission and the EU members states.

Having in mind the question of the institutional reform of the Union, how do you see, as a person with a rich experience with my region, the accession dynamic today and tomorrow and not only of my country?

My country believes that the peoples in our region have proven they can overcome problems and change image after the tragic events in the past. The EU integration process will help in dissolving the still existing negative stereotypes of the region. In our view the Western Balkans' EU process is an indispensable segment of the broader concept of stability and security of the European continent. We are therefore confident that the EU accession process of the Western Balkans should be marked not only by clear requirements, but also clear rewards.

Finally, with, I would say, substantiated hope that the French Presidency will be devoted to a further Western Balkans integration, we would like to express our best wishes to you, Mr. Minister, and to your able team here at the OSCE.