



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA TO THE OSCE,  
IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ON  
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA, MS DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ,  
AT THE 854<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 March 2011

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Serbia I would like to very warmly welcome the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms Dunja Mijatović, to the Permanent Council and thank her for her report. Allow me also express our appreciation for her constructiveness and cooperative approach shown in addressing and solving issues of our common concern. I believe that only in close cooperation between the Representative and the participating States we will be able to overcome challenges to the freedom of the media that exist throughout the OSCE area.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to briefly address one of the issues the Representative outlined in her written report in the section on Serbia, referring to intimidations against the TV station B92 and its journalists. While these threats and attempts of intimidation were triggered off in particular by some investigative programmes of B92, the Serbian authorities, led by President Boris Tadić and the Minister of Interior Ivica Dačić, reacted immediately by strongly condemning these acts as incompatible with the principles and values of our country and by opening investigations to identify the perpetrators and punish them. According to preliminary findings, the authors of these verbal attacks seem to come from the circles of hooligans and radical and organized crime groups.

While Minister Dačić pledged to do everything to protect independent journalism in general and the journalists from B92 in particular, one hooligan who pronounced death threats against the investigative Journalist Brankica Stanković from B92 television was in the meantime identified and punished to 16 months of prison, and at the same time investigations were opened into the cases that were revealed by B92 as potentially criminal.

Let me with respect to B92 also welcome the activities of the OSCE Mission in Belgrade that aimed at winning public support for the protection of media freedom and independent journalism. Thus, Brankica Stanković received the OSCE Mission to Serbia's 2010 "Person of the Year" award and Ambassador Kypreos led a group of 13

ambassadors in a visit to TV B92 on 8 March 2011 to show support for the broadcaster and its journalists.

In concluding, Mr. Chairperson, let me assure you that Serbia continues to be fully committed to protect journalists and media freedom and provide all necessary legal, political and social conditions for the media to work freely and without any impediments whatsoever.

We are looking forward to the important Chairmanship's seminar to be held in June this year in Vilnius and assure you in this context, as well, that you can count on our constructive support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson