



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MIROSLAVA BEHAM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SERBIA TO THE OSCE,  
UNDER CURRENT ISSUES  
ON THE SITUATION KOSOVO/ SERBIA,  
AT THE 880<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF  
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

15 September 2011

Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Serbia is deeply concerned about developments in our southern province of Kosovo. In view of the imminent threat of unilateral action by the Pristina-based ethnic-Albanian authorities, our highest state representatives alerted the United Nations, the European Union and NATO. Allow me to communicate to you parts of the letter Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić addressed to the United Nations Secretary General:

“Over the past few days, a series of official announcements – including by the ‘prime minister of Kosovo;’ Hasim Thaqi – have been made to the effect that on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> 2011, the ‘government of Kosovo’ intends to unilaterally impose customs and border police control over the administrative boundary crossings (known as Gates 1 and 31) between North Kosovo and Serbia proper. We have received information that KFOR and EULEX intend to facilitate the operation and its underlying objectives. This would constitute grave violations of their respective status-neutral mandates under UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

The Republic of Serbia remains committed to the preservation of peace and stability in the region. However, there is no doubt that Pristina’s announcement constitutes a serious threat to their maintenance. It comes less than two months after the July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 unprovoked armed incursion into North Kosovo by the territory’s ethnic-Albanian authorities. A great deal of effort was required to prevent the resulting tensions from spiraling out of control, as was discussed during the August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Security Council session.

The Serbian Government has sharply condemned the announcement by the province’s ethnic-Albanian authorities, designed to unilaterally change the situation on the ground. If they are allowed to carry out their unsanctioned, unilateral action, the continuation of the dialogue between Serbia and Pristina will become impossible, as will the implementation of what has already been agreed.

Responsibility for the consequences that would result will rest with the authorities in Pristina and those with the mandate and capacity to stop them. There must be no repetition of the July 25<sup>th</sup> inaction, when the international community failed to prevent Pristina’s unauthorized incursion into North Kosovo.

It is with this in mind that I urge the United Nations to take all necessary measures to prevent a course of action that has not been sanctioned by your ASRSG or the Security Council. Resolution 1244 (1999) must be respected in full. It is imperative that both EULEX and

KFOR continue to operate under the overall authority and within the status neutral framework of the United Nations. In the present circumstances, this requires them to take all appropriate preventative measures against the announced unilateralism.”

Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetković in his letter addressed to the High Representative of the European Union, Baroness Ashton, reminds of the importance of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and possible effects on it by unilateral actions:

“Neither the management of the customs regime nor revenue collection procedures at Gates 1 and 31 have been subject of any discussions and are not part of the agreement on customs stamps reached on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, [in the EU-facilitated dialogue]. However, Serbia is ready to propose that these issues be placed on the dialogue agenda.

Pristina’s declared aims are incompatible with EULEX’s status-neutral mandate. It is with this in mind that I insist on the European Union taking all necessary measures, which include the use of EULEX’s executive powers, to prevent Pristina’s unilateralism.

A failure to do so would seriously undermine the continuation of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Pristina, as well as the implementation of what has already been agreed. Our relationship with EULEX would be adversely affected, as well. (...)

The Republic of Serbia remains committed to the preservation of peace and stability in the region. The threats by Pristina constitute a direct challenge to both, and demonstrate its unwillingness to respect what the EU-facilitated dialogue is designed to accomplish.

The only acceptable changes to the reality on the ground can be those which are the product of agreement between the parties to the dialogue. To retain its legitimacy, EULEX must act to prevent the announced unilateralism.”

In this sense, Mr. Chairperson, we call on all stakeholders to refrain from any action which is not consensual and would run counter to the principles of the OSCE and the peaceful resolution of disputes. *And consensual means – with the consent of Serbia as one of the two main stakeholders involved.*

In concluding, Mr. Chairperson, let me inform the Permanent Council on the most recent development, which is that today the Security Council will hold consultations on current events in Kosovo.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.