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**PERMANENT MISSION OF SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AT GENEVA**

STATEMENT BY

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**DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO
AT THE 88th SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

Geneva, 2 December 2004

Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to use the opportunity to congratulate H.E. Mr. Luis Alfonso De Alba, Ambassador of Mexico, on his election as the Chair of the 88th session of the IOM Council, as well as other members of the Bureau. I would also like to express our thanks to the outgoing Bureau for their sustained efforts in achieving the goals of the Organization. Let me also address particular congratulations to Estonia, Brazil, Turkey and Bahamas as new members and ICESCO as observer to the IOM.

Mr. Chairman,

The complexity of migrations in contemporary world is also reflected in the fact that one country can at the same time be a country of origin, transit and destination. In Serbia and Montenegro we are facing these three parallel processes. Therefore, the question of comprehensive approach in managing migration is of great importance for my country.

Due to its geo-strategic position, Serbia and Montenegro faces with significant migration flows, being a transit state between Middle East and the EU, as well as the country of destination. To address this phenomenon, bearing in mind the dimension of security, economy and human rights, it is necessary to ensure the legislative framework on national level and strengthen the cooperation on regional and international level. With regard to that let me inform you about recent developments in Serbia and Montenegro.

The process of adoption of the Law on Asylum on the level of the state union is underway, as well as the harmonization of national legislation with European and international standards. Serbia and Montenegro has signed and is in a process of negotiation and conclusion of a number of bilateral agreements on readmission i.e. agreements on return and acceptance of persons who do not fulfill or no longer fulfill the requirements for entry or residence on the territory of other contracting party.

Still I have to remind that Serbia and Montenegro has passed through a hard period in last decade, marked with conflicts in the region and economic crisis that brought to a brain drain migration of significant number of young, highly qualified people. As the country in transition we need this

people and their skills, knowledge and experience to be integrated in our country's comprehensive reform process.

Let me also remind that Serbia and Montenegro still accommodates large number of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina as well as the IDP's from Kosovo and Metohija. Therefore, we count on understanding and support of international community in shifting from humanitarian aid to long-term economic development assistance that would enable us to overcome existing problems in this field.

I would like to commend the continuing efforts of the International Organization for Migration regarding the realization of the EU CARDS projects in the field of migrations, namely Regional Migration Module, Regional Police Project and Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme. Furthermore, I have to emphasize the importance of future projects planned for 2005 in the field of technical cooperation in migration management, assisted voluntary returns, trafficking, humanitarian and social programmes etc. We are particularly interested in support and expertise that the IOM can offer in the creation of Serbia and Montenegro's national action plan on migration that should serve as a roadmap presenting the scope of planned activities until 2011.

Mr. Chairman,

My Government looks forward to further broadening and strengthening the cooperation with the IOM, supported by donor countries, as well as the EU, OSCE, SECI and Stability Pact for the SEE. Serbia and Montenegro recognizes its own better future within the process of the overall democratic transformation and full integration into the ongoing integration processes in Europe. To reach this aim we will spare no efforts to make the process of migration turn to the direction of strengthening development and democracy in our own country and the region as a whole.

Thank you for your attention.