

```
<!-- /* Style Definitions */ p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal
{mso-style-parent:""; margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan;
font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New
Roman"; mso-fareast-language:SR-CYR;} p.MsoFooter, li.MsoFooter, div.MsoFooter
{margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan; tab-stops:center 3.15in
right 6.3in; font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times
New Roman"; mso-fareast-language:SR-CYR;}
p.CharCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarChar
CarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarChar,
li.CharCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarChar
CarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarChar,
div.CharCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarChar
rCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarChar {mso-style-name:" Char Char Car Char
Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char
Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char"; mso-style-link:"Default Paragraph Font";
margin-top:0in; margin-right:0in; margin-bottom:8.0pt; margin-left:0in; line-height:12.0pt;
mso-line-height-rule:exactly; mso-pagination:widow-orphan; font-size:10.0pt;
font-family:Arial; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-ansi-language:EN-US;
mso-fareast-language:EN-US;} @page Section1 {size:595.3pt 841.9pt; margin:1.0in 1.0in
1.0in 1.0in; mso-header-margin:.5in; mso-footer-margin:.5in; mso-paper-source:0;}
div.Section1 {page:Section1;} -->
```

Dear Prime Minister Papandreou,

Respected Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and privilege to greet you all to the third Ambassadors' Conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

For the entire world, 2009 was a challenging year. Governments across the globe struggled to find solutions to the great economic crisis. At the same time, the international community has had to deal with an increasing number of geopolitical fluctuations, social pressures, and environmental concerns.

Together with all the rest, Serbia has been affected by these tumults. Yet thanks to determined leadership and responsible policies, we are beginning to emerge from this difficult period stronger and more confident as a nation. Our vigorous and constructive engagement with the international community has been integral to our efforts.

The dedicated vision of President Boris Tadic, supported by the capable government stewardship of Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic, will continue to point our way in 2010. When it comes to foreign relations, it will be the task of Serbian diplomats abroad—together with our Belgrade-based colleagues—to not only maintain 2009's momentum of achievement, but to increase it in 2010.

As your minister, I want to thank you for your selfless service, and lay out for you Serbia's four foreign policy priorities for the next twelve months.

One, working to rapidly attain membership in the European Union. Two, continuing to peacefully defend our constitutional order. Three, consolidating regional stability and cooperation. And four, deepening our economic relationships across the globe.

Our task will be to constructively engage with all nations, near and far, that seek to work with us on the basis of mutual respect and understanding. To that end, in 2010, the Republic of Serbia will continue to confidently pursue a carefully balanced and active foreign policy, built around four centers of gravity, or pillars, as articulated by President Tadic.

Our first pillar is Brussels, the capital of the Union we seek to join as soon as possible.

The next one is Moscow, with whom we have enjoyed comprehensive ties of friendship over the long course of history, our most stalwart ally in the peaceful defense of our territorial integrity.

Another is Beijing, with whom we have established a strategic partnership we look forward to consolidating in the years ahead.

The last, but by no means least, is Washington, a key actor on the world stage and in the Western Balkans. One of our most significant accomplishments in 2009 was pressing the reset button on our bilateral relationship. Through concerted efforts, we managed to contain our differences, and decided to work closely together in the years ahead.

Excellencies,

Before proceeding any further, I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to our distinguished guest from the Hellenic Republic, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs George Papandreou.

For my nation, you stand as a *megalopsuchos*—a great-souled man. Whenever this country needed you, you were there. We remain profoundly grateful of your personal contribution to Serbia and the whole region.

George Papandreou's early and consistent encouragement of Serbia's reform movement helped to lay the foundation for our peaceful revolution. His presence in Belgrade during the inauguration of our democracy as Foreign Minister of Greece, conferred undisputed international legitimacy to the victory we achieved at the polls.

As a young activist, I happened to be in charge of coordinating George Papandreou's arrival in our capital, and found myself nervously waiting for him in front of Sava Centar, where the historic event was taking place on that fateful October evening.

We shook hands, and I remember what he said to me: "Congratulations. Today, Serbia begins its European journey."

Excellencies,

The coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty has created a concrete opportunity for this generation of Europeans to complete the greatest peace project in the history of the world.

Greece, under the leadership of George Papandreou, has again seized the initiative, by proposing a roadmap for the EU accession of the Western Balkans: Agenda 2014.

The Republic of Serbia wholeheartedly embraces this call. We believe the promise made in Thessaloniki in 2003 can be fulfilled in Athens in 2014. One hundred years after the conflict between the Kingdom of Serbia and the Hapsburg Empire initiated a global maelstrom of war and revolution, permanent peace in Europe can finally come into being. By fulfilling Agenda 2014, the book can be closed for good on an era that did not witness the enduring stability the peoples of the Old Continent so richly deserve.

This goal is undeniably ambitious, yet Serbia is confident that it is achievable. Our political will is strong. Our capacity to complete the necessary reforms is clear. And our track record is evident—for 2009 was Serbia's best EU accession year ever.

In the past twelve months, visa liberalization became a reality, the Interim Agreement with the European Union was unfrozen, and our application for EU membership was submitted in Stockholm by President Tadic.

In 2010, these concrete deeds must be followed through with all deliberate speed. In our view, Agenda 2014 is the ultimate benchmark against which real progress in every Copenhagen Criteria field of interest should be measured.

Excellencies,

The internal debate about Serbia's European future has come to an end: the rapid attainment of membership in the European Union is our central strategic priority.

Serbia will devote all available resources to the fulfillment of this crucial goal through active and sustained engagement with Brussels and all the national capitals of the Union. This will include on-going full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. We do not consider this simply to be a legal imperative, but also an ethical duty—to our neighbors and the world, of course, but foremost to ourselves. We will keep at it until we see it through.

By working closely together on all accession issues as partners aiming at a common future, we can help ensure the EU Council takes two important political decisions in 2010: first, to enable the beginning of the ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement; and second, to extend official candidate status to Serbia.

Through sustained action, the steps necessary for the realization of Agenda 2014 will firmly stay in focus, paving the way for the entire Western Balkans to accede to the European Union.

Excellencies,

Another important foreign policy priority will be to carry on with diplomatic efforts to uphold our constitutional order. In 2009, we worked very hard to contain the effects of UDI—the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo and Metohija.

I want to sincerely thank the representatives of the vast majority of UN member States that respect my country's territorial integrity. Our nations stand together in safeguarding the foundations of international law, as set forth in the UN Charter.

In 2010, Serbia's principled position on UDI will remain the same. Our red lines are clear and consistent. They will continue to be honored without exception. We will not recognize UDI,

implicitly or explicitly. This is a constitutional imperative, as well as our moral, historical and—above all—democratic duty. On this fundamental point, our nation is united as one.

Our absolute commitment to keep facing the challenge posed by Pristina's attempt at secession in a constructive, non-confrontational manner—designed to overcome differences and not entrench them, through law and diplomacy—will remain in force.

This strategic decision on the part of Serbia constitutes a paradigm shift in favor of peace in the Western Balkans. Thanks to our efforts, an issue of such fundamental importance and complexity—passionately involving all at once identity, boundaries, communal rights, opposing historical narratives—has been steered clear of resorting to the force of arms for the first time in the history of our region.

Excellencies,

Over the last twelve months, we progressed along two parallel tracks regarding Kosovo. At home, we worked closely with the UN and the EU on resolving practical matters on the ground in a status-neutral manner, to the benefit of all residents of the province. In so doing, we made

sure the local population—irrespective of ethnicity—did not fall victim to status disagreements.

Abroad, we continued with our diplomatic efforts, and made full use of the instruments of peaceful adjudication. Through the UN General Assembly, the International Court of Justice was tasked to rule on whether Kosovo's UDI is in accordance with international law.

This has turned out to be a landmark case. It is the first time that the ICJ has been asked to consider the legality of a unilateral attempt by an ethnic minority to secede from a UN member State in peacetime, in defiance of its Constitution and against the will of the Security Council. It is also the first time all five Permanent Members of the Council participated in a proceeding before the Court.

A few weeks ago, a crucial stage in the judicial process—oral hearings—came to an end. A record number of countries presented their views, making it the largest case in the history of the Court.

It will deliver its conclusions this year, with overarching consequences for the international legal order. It is therefore particularly important for all to respect the fact that the ICJ has begun its deliberations. The judges' work should be allowed to run its course, unhindered by political pressures, such as further recognitions of Kosovo's UDI.

Once the ICJ hands down its opinion, an opportunity will be created to find a way forward.

We believe dialogue is the most effective means to achieve the only sustainable outcome: a mutually-acceptable, viable solution that will not recklessly sacrifice geo-strategic priorities of all, on the altar of communal aspirations of a single party.

We stand ready to flexibly engage with stakeholders in good-faith, for our intent is not to triumph or to subjugate, but to resolve the issue in a way that will contribute to advancing regional priorities, within the framework set forth by international law.

I should like to place our decision to transfer the UDI issue to the judicial arena in the general context of how we want to manage political differences. Serbia has in effect put forward a new model for ethnic conflict resolution in the 21st century—one that could be applied anywhere in the world where the divides are deep, the historical burdens heavy, and the issues involved go to the very heart of defining one's national identity.

By doing so, we have highlighted the importance of strictly respecting a rules-based approach to global governance. In our increasingly interdependent world, Serbia believes that even deep-seated disagreements can and should be resolved in an atmosphere of mutual respect, through consensus—not by imposition or unilateral action.

Excellencies,

I come to our third core foreign policy priority: enhancing regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Like all responsible UN member States, Serbia attaches particular importance to good neighborly relations.

This crucial objective is framed by our conviction that the EU accession processes of Western Balkan countries can only be accelerated by working in concert, and not at cross-purposes. Mutual support and genuine encouragement are not merely policy options, but strategic necessities.

Unfortunately, the unity we seek has been somewhat undermined as a result of regrettable decisions by some of our neighbors on the Kosovo UDI issue. These have not contributed to regional stability. Nevertheless, our carefully measured responses have ensured that the political fallout which naturally resulted was largely contained.

In 2010, Serbia will continue to stand as the region's pivot country, uniquely placed to act as the EU accession accelerator for the entire neighborhood.

To further this process, we will devote particular attention to defending the rights and interests of Serbs living outside the Republic of Serbia.

We see these communities as natural links in the aim to enhance relations between the various regional capitals and Belgrade. We also see them as important economic bridgeheads, and focal points in ongoing reconciliation efforts throughout the Balkans.

Democratic Serbia expects our co-nationals living outside our constitutional borders to continue to act as loyal citizens of their respective countries, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity we fully respect.

At the same time, as President Tadic has made clear, “we will insist that neighboring countries entirely abide by the democratic standards of Europe and the basic rights of Serb communities to safeguard their identity, their language, their culture, and their faith. This is of exceptional importance.”

Excellencies,

Before moving on to the next portion on my remarks, I want to say a few words about Bosnia and Hercegovina. As our most important neighbor, its stability and prosperity is crucial to that of the Western Balkans.

Being a responsible member of the international community, Serbia will continue to encourage representatives of all the three constituent peoples to agree on necessary reforms, with the aim of accelerating Bosnia’s EU accession—a strategic priority for all.

We have made it clear that we will support whatever arrangement is acceptable to the parties,

stressing the need for pragmatism and compromise.

Consensus-building is a core 21st-century European value and decision-making principle, aptly illustrated by the fact that on important institutional changes, all must give their consent. Sometimes this takes longer than one would like, as the Lisbon Treaty ratification process reminds us. But at the end of the day, agreement is reached—enabling everyone to move forward together.

Excellencies,

The final foreign policy priority for 2010 is economic diplomacy. Serbia will enhance its efforts to deepen existing economic relationships and create new ones, across the globe.

This is a natural extension of our world-wide political outreach in 2009. Our future prosperity hinges in large part on how well we harness our competitive advantages, and on how we make better use of free trade agreements such as CEFTA—which Serbia will chair in 2010, promote our FDI potential, and gain access to emerging and growing markets.

A number of the countries we look forward to engage with are members of the Non-Aligned Movement. As an old friend and an observer state to NAM, we believe that increasing our levels of trade and investment can be beneficial to everybody.

But this is not the only reason why Serbia seeks to re-invigorate its ties to NAM countries.

It is also because we believe international stability and prosperity cannot be consolidated without taking into account the views of the majority of the global family of nations.

I should like to mention that our capital, Belgrade, played host to the First NAM Summit in 1961.

We have therefore proposed that its fiftieth anniversary be celebrated here, with an extraordinary Summit under the Egyptian chairmanship.

Making Belgrade the location to honor this significant milestone would be a fitting tribute to the bequest left by NAM's founders.

Excellencies,

Sixty-five years have passed since the ultimate victory over fascism in the Second World War. The Serbian nation will seek to take an active role in commemorating this glorious moment in history.

We will do so as a strong champion of the universal values and rights that the uniquely brutal and aggressive ideology sought to erase from human consciousness.

Together with millions of others, a great number of our valiant men and women lost their lives in this triumph over evil. Their heroism will always be remembered. Thanks to their sacrifice, our nation stood up proudly again.

In conclusion, I want to repeat Serbia's fundamental commitment to fulfilling its European destiny. Our central strategic priority continues to be the rapid attainment of membership in the European Union.

We do not seek to join the EU merely for reasons of geography and heritage—or just because the Union is seen as a guarantor of stability and a foundation for long-term, sustainable prosperity through the Common Market.

We also do so as a proud and resolute nation deserving of its place at the European table, certain of its capacity to promote the core values we hold in common—such as peace, democracy, human rights, and social justice.

George Papandreou was the first to speak of Serbia's journey to Europe on that historic day in October 2000 in Belgrade.

Close to a decade later, his vision has never been closer to realization, his words never less in doubt.

We have worked incredibly hard to get to where we are now, and we will work even harder to get to the finish line as soon as we can. We can be sure that the strategically bold Agenda 2014 will be there, unmistakably pointing the way to our ultimate destination.

Whatever comes along, whatever obstacles we may encounter on the final stretch of our approach to Brussels, I want to make it absolutely clear that Serbia will not waiver. We will not be distracted.

In a few years' time, Serbia will join the European Union. This is the pledge we make, and the promise we intend to keep.

Thank you for your attention.

