

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF MISSION

## TALKING POINTS

**Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad, Head of OSCE Mission to Serbia**

**Reception for the Women's Government**

**Belgrade, 1 September 2006**

- Ms. Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers, Dear Colleagues from European Movement and International Organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for accepting my invitation for this reception in honour of the newly “elected” first ever Serbian “Women's government”!
- Women's equal participation in decision-making represents the core of gender equality principles, as contributing to the political life of the country is a fundamental democratic right.
- Unfortunately, politics in Serbia is still largely dominated and defined by men. Moreover, women's work is often not exposed while men take the visible public positions. This campaign, like other OSCE gender equality related activities, aimed to correct this imbalance and improve the political representation of women.
- Women in Serbia already manage and lead various institutions, for example the process of European integration. This demonstrates that they have the potential to be the leaders of change, reforms, international cooperation, stability and tolerance.
- After establishing this "Women's Government" it should be difficult to argue that on Serbia “there are not enough competent women”, or even worse, that “women have no interest in politics”. I hope the political parties note this before they select candidates for the next elections.
- I welcome the public presentations of your political programs as well as the introduction of new arguments and a new perspective into the general political discourse.
- The aim of this project will have been reached when the number of women in the parliament and future governments has increased. I sincerely hope that will be the case already after the next elections.

- The OSCE Mission remains prepared to continue our promotion of gender equality, by supporting the process of further promotion of women's political capacities. Thank you!