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PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS

VJENË

VIENNA

Response to the Chairmanship-in Office's
Three Personal Representatives for Tolerance

Statement of the Delegation of Albania
As delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi
At the 930th Meeting of the Permanent Council
15 of November 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

The Albanian Delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Cyprus on behalf of the European Union. On a national capacity I would like to make the following remarks.

We join other delegations in warmly welcoming the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson in Office and thank them for their interventions. Combating religious intolerance, anti-Semitism and discrimination, racism and xenophobia should remain a matter of priority for this organization and its work. Therefore, we appreciate the valuable work carried out by the three Personal Representatives, which has become ever more important considering the current economic hardship imposed on governments and large number of citizens by the ongoing financial crisis. We welcome their recommendations to address persisting challenges and we will study them with attention.

As a country which cherishes a lasting tradition of interfaith harmony and tolerance Albania is striving to promote these fundamental values of our society. We also attach great importance to the work of international organizations, in particular the OSCE and the Council of Europe, in the fight against intolerant, discriminatory and extremist phenomena.

In this spirit, the Albanian Presidency of the Council of Europe conveyed the message of openness, interreligious harmony and intercultural dialogue. Guided by the motto “United in diversity - strength for Europe” we convened last week in Tirana an international conference, which marked the end of our Presidency and the handover to the incoming Andorran Chair. During his intervention at the conference the MFA of Albania touched upon the crucial role of the OSCE in guaranteeing security and stability through promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination. Indeed this is a topical issue of the human dimension of this Organization and we endorse the efforts of the Irish chair to adopt a decision in Dublin aimed at strengthening efforts to fight racism and xenophobia. We are also supportive of the idea to pursue the well-established tradition of holding a High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non Discrimination at regular frequencies to discuss the state of play of the implementation of our commitments, including in the field of racism and xenophobia.

In this connection, I wish to reiterate our readiness, should consensus be reached, to host such a conference next spring in Tirana, Albania. My authorities would be very pleased to provide the venue for the event and facilitate its smooth organization. We stand ready to cooperate with all delegation, in particular with the incoming OSCE Chair to make this event happen.

By way of conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me wish to the three Personal Representatives every success in their future endeavours.

Thank you.