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I REPUBLIKËS SË SHQIPËRISË
PRANË ORGANIZATAVE
NDËRKOMBËTARE
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PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

S T A T E M E N T

by Ambassador Gilbert Galanxhi
at the 748th meeting of the Permanent Council

Vienna, 29 January 2009

Madam Chairperson,

The Albanian Delegation joins the other Delegations in warmly welcoming to the Permanent Council His Excellency, Minister Karel Schwarzenberg. It is with great pleasure that Albania notices a persistent commitment of the Czech Presidency towards the further advancement of the EU integration process for the countries of the Western Balkans, as well as for the enlargement process of the EU. We strongly believe that this approach is a precious contribution for long-term peace and stability, as well as social and economic development in our region.

Please, allow me Your Excellency, to point out that, while the 1st of May 2009 marks the 5th anniversary of the courageous and successful enlargement of the EU, Albania remains optimistic and a strong believer in the integration processes. There are no losers in these processes, but only winners. The first phase of the EU enlargement five years ago should logically have a follow-up, not because we like or dislike it, but because it is a must for strengthening the roots and the body of *cooperation* and *collective security*, of *human rights* and *democracy*, which justly remain the subject of every international and domestic fora. Viewed under this perspective, we believe that 2009 will bring qualitative positive developments for Albania, especially with regard to visa-liberalisation and the application to become a EU member.

Distinguished Mr. Minister Schwarzenberg,

Albania has formulated its short-term, mid-term and long-term goals and objectives based on the positive 'track record' achieved so far, and it is ready to undertake all its responsibilities and commitments as one of the players in our region which aspires full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. At the same time, Albania fully supports all the priorities of the Czech Presidency, as clearly stated today by You, Mr. Minister, and we are confident that your performance will meet the challenges you are going to face.

Furthermore, I take advantage of this opportunity to re-express our readiness to chair our organization, the OSCE, in 2012.

Finally, allow me to state that Kosova's independence and sovereignty is a historical event, which marks the most important development in our region. Independence translates into progressive stability and prosperity for the Kosovar multi-ethnic society; translates into a clearer perspective of integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, and what's more important, a more peaceful and secure region finally free of conflict anxieties.

We share the same opinion that the EULEX mission, extended on the entire territory of Kosova, and based on the Ahtisaari Plan, must be functional, up and running, and cooperate closely with the legitimate institutions of the Republic of Kosova, which have constantly shown their maturity and good will in overcoming obstacles on their way of building a democratic and multi-ethnic state. We are confident that the EU will successfully and fully accomplish the undertaken responsibilities in the areas of security, justice and economic development of the country.

Allow me Mr. Minister to wish You personally, as well as your country, a very successful Presidency.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.