



**Joint Statement
by the delegations of Albania and Croatia
at the 708th Permanent Council Meeting
10 April 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking on behalf of the delegations of Albania and Croatia, I would like to inform you that at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 3rd April 2008 in Bucharest the Heads of State and Governments of the NATO member States decided unanimously to invite Albania and Croatia to begin accession talks to join the Alliance.

This decision marks a historic achievement for our two countries; it meets the long-standing aspirations of our peoples to share the joint values and principles upon which the Alliance is founded. We are becoming an inalienable part of the democratic family of States, ready to protect freedom and contribute to common security. This invitation is also viewed as recognition of the internal reform processes which both our countries undertook after emerging from the horrors of war and a period of dictatorship.

This is a landmark decision for the region of South Eastern Europe as well. The invitation extended to us represents a significant step towards further consolidation of stability and security in the region and in the Euro-Atlantic area.

By joining NATO Albania and Croatia, will remain fully committed and dedicated members of the international community, ready to further demonstrate their determination to face up international security challenges.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.