



MISIONI I PËRHERSHËM  
I REPUBLIKËS SË SHQIPËRISË PRANË  
ORGANIZATAVE  
NDËRKOMBËTARE  
VJENË

PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANIZATIONS  
VIENNA

Statement of the Delegation of Albania

In response to the PC Statements of H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter,  
Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,  
and H.E. Mr. Ivan Mrkić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia,

As delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi  
at the 958<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
02 July 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Albania warmly welcomes the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, H.E. Mr. Ivan Mrkić to the OSCE Permanent Council today. We wish to thank them for their insightful presentations and the comprehensive Joint Workplan circulated earlier by the respective delegations here in Vienna.

While sharing the views expressed by the EU, Albania wishes to use this occasion to register our national position on some issues of particular importance to us.

We are delighted to note that the Joint Workplan of Switzerland and Serbia at the helm of the OSCE in the coming two years will be guided by the Principles of Cooperation and the Joint Statement agreed upon by Foreign Ministers Calmy-Ray and Jeremić in December 2011. Sticking faithfully to the contents of these documents will certainly help fulfil the goal of conducting the consecutive chairmanships in a transparent and cooperative manner, as set out in the Joint Workplan.

The focus of the incoming Swiss Chairmanship on the improvement of people's lives is a timely development, particularly in light of the additional hardship that the current economic crises has placed on some social categories, including the youth, depriving them from socio-economic opportunities. Improving the conditions for people to prosper and live a life in dignity is a noble objective which will bring the OSCE closer to the needs of our citizens and societies. We therefore wish to voice our strong support to the approach adopted by the Swiss Chairmanship.

Broadening the scope of the OSCE's engagement with civil society organizations is crucial to its efforts to help participating States honor their commitments in the field of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law. NGOs play an essential role in holding our Governments accountable to the people and in monitoring the implementation of our Human Dimension commitments. This role was recognized in the Helsinki Final Act and reiterated by the Astana

Commemorative Declaration. Hence, Albania welcomes the intention of the Swiss Chairmanship to enable a regular and more systematic involvement of the civil society to the work of our organization. We look forward to hearing from the incoming Swiss Chairmanship concrete proposals on how to translate this ambitious objective into practice.

Mr. Chairperson,

As Foreign Minister Mrkić rightly emphasized in his statement today the European perspective of the Western Balkans is very firm. Croatia's deserved EU accession and the recent decision of the European Council to open accession talks with Serbia and start negotiations with Kosovo on a Stabilization and Association Agreement indicate plainly that the EU integration process of the region is gathering new momentum. We congratulate Serbia on this achievement, and sincerely hope that the incoming chairmanships, with their declared focus on regional cooperation, will help further accelerate the EU integration process of the region.

As we have reiterated time and again the OSCE has played and continues to play a significant role in fostering security and stability in the region. The implementation of the Brussels agreement between Kosovo and Serbia provides ample opportunities for the OSCE to extend the scope of activities in support of the ongoing normalization process between the two countries. We therefore see merit in the OSCE's engagement to assist the organization of the forthcoming local elections in Kosovo and the establishment of the rule of law in northern Kosovo. The OSCE has both the authority and the expertise to deliver on these issues, as demonstrated by the respect it enjoys among all interlocutors on the ground and the facilitation of Serbia's presidential and parliamentary elections in Kosovo last year.

We do also believe that the activities of the forthcoming chairmanships in the Western Balkans should be planned against a realistic background, one which is characterized by a climate of increased stability, steady progress in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes and shrinking budgets of the OSCE field operations in the region.

Mr. Chairperson,

Albania commends the intention of Switzerland and Serbia to include regional cooperation and reconciliation in the list of priorities of their consecutive chairmanships. These themes are very dear to us. As we see it, Serbia is well-positioned to lead by example and undertake concrete steps aimed at implementing the above-mentioned priorities. The full and good-faith implementation of all legal obligations stemming from the agreements reached between Kosovo and Serbia in the framework of the EU facilitated dialogue is a case in point. Another instance would be to ensure increased participation of Kosovo in the OSCE.

The OSCE has deployed its largest Mission in Kosovo. In this context, we strongly believe that the participation of the Kosovo's institutions in various OSCE's meetings, either formal or informal, would serve, *inter alia*, to the efficient implementation of the OMiK's mandate. These and other steps designed to achieve genuine reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia as well as increase the efficiency of our Organization, would surely be consistent with the legitimate expectations placed on a country preparing to chair the OSCE.

By way of conclusion, allow me to express our confidence that Serbia's OSCE Chairmanship will consolidate the image of the Western Balkans as a security provider, which contributes substantially to the agenda of the organization and the common security of the OSCE space.

Finally, let me thank again both Ministers for their presentations. We wish them and their able teams here in Vienna and in the respective capitals every success in this challenging and highly responsible joint endeavour.

Mr. Ministers, rest assured of Albania's full support to your priorities and of our readiness to closely cooperate with you in the two coming years.

I thank you for your attention.