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

**Statement of the Delegation of Albania,
In response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo,
Ambassador Jean-Claude Schlumberger**

**As delivered by the Head of Mission, Ms. Ravesa Lleshi, at the 1112th
Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, 8 September 2016**

The Albanian delegation wishes to join others in extending a warm welcome to the Head of the OSCE Mission to Kosovo, Ambassador Schlumberger, in his last appearance before the Permanent Council. We thank him for his report. My Delegation aligns with the statement of the European Union, but I would like to make few remarks in a national capacity.

Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Schlumberger for the extraordinary work carried out at the helm of OMiK in the last four years. Under his able leadership OMiK has successfully implemented its mandate, providing tangible support to the genuine efforts of the Government of Kosovo to build a multi-ethnic democratic society. The internal review process undertaken by the Mission – and its premise to streamline the Mission's work – will undoubtedly contribute towards ensuring that OMiK remains a trusted and reliable partner to institutions, communities, and the international community in Kosovo.

While the reporting period was marred by disagreements of the Kosovar political class – which, regrettably, turned violent at times – we believe it is important to acknowledge Kosovo's remarkable achievements in the consolidation of its democratic institutions, good governance, multi-ethnic and multi-religious coexistence.

The security situation in the country remains stable. The situation pertaining to non-Albanian communities remains stable. Significant data reflect the increased efforts of the Kosovo institutions to tackle organized crime and corruption. The cases of investigation and adjudication of foreign terrorist fighters provide encouraging evidence that fighting the phenomenon with determination, as is the case in Kosovo, can yield tangible results.

Albania strongly supports the EU-facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia and has consistently encouraged its efficient and result-oriented continuation. We appreciate the European Union's commitment to re-energize the Dialogue and

would welcome OMiK's continued contribution to the implementation of the agreements reached in Brussels.

My Delegation also appreciates the attention OMiK pays to the position and role of women in Kosovo, whether in encouraging dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia through the "Follow Us" initiative, in empowering women through gender quota policies and gender responsive budgeting, in strengthening their role in addressing the challenges of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization.

We also commend OMiK for its engagement with youth in Kosovo and strongly encourage the Mission to explore ways of supporting the newly established Regional Youth Cooperative Office (RYCO), as a platform to build bridges between youth in the Western Balkans, improve on cooperation trends, promote dialogue, understanding and reconciliation.

I would like to make two points by way of conclusion.

The first relates to the structure of the report, which provides a very detailed account of the most important developments in Kosovo and a broad overview of the various Mission activities during the reporting period. This delegation would welcome seeing more details about the Mission's work and achievements in future reports. We appreciate Ambassador Schlumberger's reference in his presentation today to the two visits that the President of Kosovo, Mr. Hashim Thaçi, paid at two memorials honoring Serbian civilians killed in Kosovo after 1999. We believe that the message of the President that "[e]very crime must be uncovered and punished, [because] crime is crime, whoever it is committed against or whoever committed it", is a powerful, and in no way easy step towards reconciliation and establishing trust among communities in Kosovo. We would have liked to have seen this information included in the report.

My second point concerns the deeply regrettable situation where this honorable forum discusses about Kosovo, but not with Kosovo. We strongly believe that it is in the interest of this Organization to hear the authorities of Kosovo express their views on the work of the Mission, the impact of its activities, the level and quality of the cooperation, the concerns raised by the Mission and the participating States. My Government strongly believes that Kosovo's membership to all international organizations, including the OSCE, would serve not only the best interests of its citizens, but would also be an important contribution to peace and stability in the region and wider Europe.

I wish Ambassador Schlumberger every success in his future endeavors.

I thank you for your kind attention.