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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 Statement of the Russian Federation at the
872nd meeting of the Permanent Council”

As delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi at the
meeting of the Permanent Council
22 July 2011

Thank you Chair,

Mr. Chairman, during the proceedings of the 872nd meeting of the Permanent Council, on July 4th (the special PC with Foreign Minister of Serbia, Jeremic), I reserved the right to respond to the digressions of the distinguished Ambassador of the Russian Federation on the so called “Greater Albania”. Today, I want to make use of that right.

For the sake of brevity, I intend to limit myself to a couple of main points. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I could have responded to the Russian Ambassador’s considerations on the spot and at length. Yes, at length, just as the Russian Ambassador, does on regular bases during the meetings of this distinguished forum.

However, I deliberately chose not to do so in order to avoid entering into a prolonged discussion with the Russian Ambassador. It was my strong belief that such a discussion would have been completely out of place and irrelevant to the topics being discussed at that special PC meeting. I also find long and useless excursions very exhausting for my colleagues and a real test for their kind patience.

The second point I would like to touch upon today relates to the substance of the comments of the Russian Ambassador on the so called “Greater Albania”. In this regard, I wish to strongly emphasize that no relevant factor of the political and social life of Albania has or is planning to develop projects that have as their ultimate goal the creation of the so called “Greater Albania”. This has never been an idea espoused by the Albanian people. This is indeed an argument coming always from abroad, for obvious reasons.

21 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism in my country, the strategic goal of our political class and civil society at large continues to be the European Integration of Albania.

And let me be very clear on this, European Integration is the only political objective and rallying idea that unites all Albanians wherever they live: in Albania proper, in the Western Balkans or elsewhere around the world.

May I also add at this point that the persistence of the Russian Ambassador and very few other people in his headquarter in flagging up the non issue of the “Greater Albania” is indeed singular and surprising. In this connection, we feel to convey him the friendly suggestion to remove his prejudiced lenses, to take a hard and sincere look at the reality of the Albanian world, and try to understand it better. He might also want to understand why the countries of the Western Balkans who have a vital interest in the security and stability of our region, do not perceive that the so called “Greater Albania” idea is in the making. Perhaps, Mr. Ambassador, because none of these countries believes that this idea is in the agenda of the Albanian political class.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by highlighting a blatant paradox in the political discourse of the Russian Ambassador. While continuing to search the needle in the haystack, he deliberately turns a blind eye to the repeated calls for exchange of territories in the Western Balkans that come from some other corners of the region.

We often hear the Russian Ambassador speaking out against the double standards that allegedly this Organization uses. To our great regret in this case he has missed an opportunity to lead by example.

Thank you Mr. Chair.