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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 of the OSCE's Representative  
on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatovic

As delivered by Counsellor, DCM, Xhodi Sakiqi  
at the 933<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council  
29 November 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Albania warmly welcomes Representative Mijatovic, back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for a thorough and documented report.

Albania fully supports the mandate of the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media and appreciates the professional and balanced fashion in which Ms. Mijatovic implements it. We commend her determination to monitor violations of freedom of expression wherever they occur and to promote full compliance with the OSCE press freedom commitments in all participating states without distinctions.

I would also like to refer to the successful visit that Representative Mijatovic conducted in Albania last June, with a view to assess the situation of media freedom in my country. We recall with pleasure that Ms. Mijatovic welcomed the statement of the Government of Albania that strengthening media freedom is a priority and the recent decision to exclude prison sentences for defamation offences from Albania's Penal Code. The Government of Albania is committed to continue along this path and is studying the recommendations made by Representative Mijatovic following this visit.

In connection to the two cases mentioned by Representative Mijatovic in her report, please allow me to provide the following clarifications, which were also conveyed to the Office of the Representative by our Mission.

On the case criminal lawsuit filed by journalist Dashamir Biçaku against a private citizen, Mr. Ylli Koxhaj:

The office of the District Attorney of Tirana has ceased the case against the presumed aggressor of Mr. Biçaku arguing that, according to Art. 90 of the Criminal Code and

Art.59 and 60 of the Code of Criminal Procedures, cases such as criminal battery are classified as misdemeanors and thus not treated by the District Attorney's office. The accuser, in this case Mr. Biçaku, has the right to file a request for judgment in the secretariat of the Court, which will then appoint a prosecutor who will sit in court and follow the proceedings.

On the case of journalist Lindita Çela:

Ms. Lindita Çela has been summoned to Court as a result of lawsuit filed by a private company, after the article appeared on National Paper "Shekulli" on 27 July 2012. The hearing has been postponed to 3 December 2012 on the grounds of the absence of the court prosecutor. The most recent information in our possession suggests that the case against journalist Lindita Çela will be dropped in the coming days, most likely on 3 December 2012. We will keep the Office of Representative Mijatovic informed about future developments related to this case.

I wish to conclude by wishing Representative Mijatovic and her team every success in their work.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson.