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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 H.E. Mr. Sebastian Kurz, Minister for European and
International Affairs of Austria, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the
Council of Europe

As delivered by the Permanent Representative, Ambassador Spiro Koçi,
at the 982nd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
30 January 2014

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Albania joins others in warmly welcoming H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the Permanent Council today. We would like to thank His Excellency for the insightful address and wish him every success in his new very important political assignment as well as at the helm of the CoE.

While fully aligning ourselves to the EU statement, I would like to make a couple of remarks on my national capacity.

Albania and Austria enjoy excellent bilateral relations, which are deeply rooted in history. Our bond of friendship has been cemented by Austria's unwavering support and sympathy for the Albanian people, their independence and progress.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge Austria's outspoken advocacy for the European Integration of Albania and the Western Balkans as a whole. In this framework, we are thankful to Minister Kurz for his personal commitment and efforts to further advance this process.

Mr. Chairperson,

Protecting freedom of expression, ensuring human rights in the internet and fighting trafficking in human beings are indeed some of the challenges of our time. We are glad to see that Austria has put these issues in the list of their priorities maintaining a coordinated approach with the outgoing and incoming Presidencies. This is a successful example which ensures continuity and coherence in the work of the Council of Europe and can serve as a model also for the OSCE.

We would like to assure you, Minister Kurz, of our full support in the implementation of Austria's priorities at the helm of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE.

In conclusion, let me thank you Mr. Minister for the gracious hospitality Austria provides to our Organisation here in Vienna and for the excellent cooperation we enjoy with your able team in the OSCE headed by Ambassador Strohal.

I thank you