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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 July 2011

**In response to the statement by Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Minister,

We cordially welcome you to this meeting of the Permanent Council and thank you for your insightful statement.

We should like to express our general support for the start of Serbia's chairmanship of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII).

On the whole, we regard the development of multilateral initiatives and co-operation mechanisms in Central and South-Eastern Europe as positive and a powerful catalyst for cultivating really good-neighbourly relations and pooling the efforts of the countries in the region in the interests of resolving the tasks that they face together. We are convinced that strengthening co-operation among the countries of the Balkans has particular added value as an important element in the process of reconciliation and overcoming the legacy of the conflicts of the 1990s.

We believe that Russia can provide mutually beneficial assistance in the implementation of a number of regional projects, particularly in connection with fuel and energy and the infrastructure. In doing so, we shall continue to foster relations on an equal and mutually beneficial basis without any prior conditions or demands and without resorting to political or economic pressure.

We are convinced of the need to develop and co-ordinate co-operation by the OSCE with other multilateral structures operating in South-Eastern Europe in pursuit of the common goals of enhancing the stability and prosperity of the States in the region. It is important in this regard to comply strictly with existing mandates, avoid duplication of functions and not allow the use of the Organization's resources to further the agendas of other international institutions.

Particular attention needs to be paid to resolving the most critical problems in the region, above all the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes and the restoration of their rights, and also combating general global threats and challenges such as terrorism, crime, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings.

In this connection, we cannot avoid mentioning the cases described in the report by Mr. Dick Marty of the participation by high-level “leaders” in Priština in the unprecedented traffic in human organs. We call for an impartial and objective investigation of the facts that have come to light and support Serbia’s position in this regard. Less serious crimes are sometimes the object of international investigations. There is no place for double standards in this matter.

Distinguished Minister,

We are regretfully forced to note that the situation with Kosovo since the “self-proclaimed independence” of the territory continues to stagnate. There can be no doubt that this merely exacerbates an already complicated situation in the region and creates a fertile environment for extremist sentiments throughout the entire area of the Balkans.

The increasingly frequent recent attempts to advance the idea of a “Greater Albania” give cause for serious concern as they disrupt the internal political situation in a number of States and create a real threat that the boundaries in the Balkans will be redrawn again.

Russia supports the position of Serbia, which is based on the realities of international law set forth in United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. We firmly believe that under the current circumstances there is a need to continue the political process with a view to elaborating a legally just and equitable solution to the problem of the territory’s status.

We also take this approach to the dialogue undertaken by Belgrade and Priština in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted in September 2010.

In general, we believe that the international community and in particular the countries of the region themselves still need to make considerable efforts to strengthen stability and security in the Balkans and to overcome the lack of trust. We are confident that multilateral regional formats, including the ones mentioned today, and also the OSCE itself will be able to play a significant role in this regard.

Thank you for your attention.