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

Statement of the Delegation of Albania
On the agreement between Kosovo and Serbia on Principles
for Normalization of Relations

As delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi
at the 949th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
25 April 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Albania joins previous delegations in congratulating Kosovo and Serbia for reaching a ground-breaking and historical agreement in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue led by the EU's High Representative, Baroness Catherine Ashton. We wish to thank Baroness Ashton for her successful facilitating role and for her leadership, which were crucial in bringing about this agreement.

The Brussels agreement on Principles for Normalization of Relations between Kosovo and Serbia, initialed by Prime Minister Thaci and his counterpart Dacic, opens a new and promising chapter in the relations between Albanians and Serbs in the Western Balkans. As such, it will be instrumental in advancing their joint efforts for a common European future.

On behalf of the Government of Albania, Prime Minister Berisha welcomed the agreement as a major and extremely important achievement for Kosovo, Serbia and the Western Balkans as a whole. He added that it will surely contribute to regional peace and stability, accelerating the EU integration process of the Western Balkans. In this connection, Albania welcomes the recent decision of the EU Commission to recommend to the Council to open negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo and for Serbia's EU membership. This is yet another step confirming the EU's continued commitment to the enlargement process in the Western Balkans.

We believe that this agreement will also provide new momentum to the ongoing process of international recognition of Kosovo's statehood, speeding up Kosovo's membership in the United Nations and regional international organizations.

Albania applauds the courage and vision demonstrated by both sides, in particular by Prime Ministers Thaçi and Dacic, to make difficult choices and to compromise. We appreciate their commitment to use dialogue as a platform for solving outstanding problems between Kosovo and Serbia, so that the people of the two countries can build the peaceful and prosperous future they deserve.

We encourage both sides to show courage and commitment to fully implement this agreement and the previous ones reached in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue.

We also look forward to seeing the OSCE and the Mission to Kosovo take up a facilitating role in Kosovo's local elections that are scheduled to be held later this year, as envisaged in the agreement.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.