

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia expresses its strong protest against the Statement of the Government of Albania on the dislocation of the monument in Presevo, on 20 January 2013.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers that the language used in the said Statement directly incites further activities aimed at destabilizing the situation in southern Serbia and in the wider region, in the neighbouring countries inhabited by the ethnic Albanian minority.

The labelling and accusations laid at the door of the Government of Serbia are below the level of any dignified communication whatsoever and are absolutely contrary to the assurances given by Albanian Prime Minister Berisha, in person, during the recent visit of Foreign Minister Ivan Mrkic to Tirana, that Albania stands ready to turn over a new leaf in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Explaining the inflammatory rhetoric by the concern for the status of the Albanian ethnic minority in southern Serbia is a gross manipulation, in view of the fact that the protection of the Albanian and any other national minorities in Serbia is in line with the highest international standards, much higher than those applied to the national minorities living in Albania itself.

Precisely because of the lack of any legal framework that would ensure the protection of Serbian and other national minorities in Albania, we believe that the Albanian authorities should take urgent and serious steps to ensure that all the communities are protected according to the applicable international standards.

Albania, as a state which highlights as its priority recognition of European values and EU membership, is expected to truly live up to its proclaimed priorities and prevent its actions from destabilizing the situation in neighbouring countries.