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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 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, H.E. Mr. Nikola Poposki and Special Representative of CiO for the Western Balkans, H.E. Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, as delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi at the 1059th Meeting of the Permanent Council, Vienna, 11th of June, 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Albania joins others in warmly welcoming Foreign Minister Poposki to the OSCE Permanent Council and thanks him for the presentation. We would also like to thank Special Representative Stoudmann for joining in today and express our appreciation for his valuable support to the region.

Albanian Delegation aligns itself with the EU statement. In my national capacity I would make the following remarks:

Today's Permanent Council meeting comes at a time when the European Union and other international partners are actively engaged in brokering a lasting political settlement to the current crisis in Macedonia. Albania strongly supports these efforts and welcomes the 7 point agreement reached on June 2-nd. We urge the political leaders to capitalize on the momentum and continue their dialogue in order to iron out the remaining outstanding issues.

We very much appreciate the opportunity for the Permanent Council to discuss the current state of affairs in Macedonia and explore avenues for more OSCE support. Albania believes that the OSCE has an important role to play in helping the local political parties overcome the current impasse and preserve the long-term stability of the country.

Through its Mission to Skopje and the three autonomous Institutions our Organization is perfectly able to provide much-needed assistance in monitoring the situation on the ground and court proceedings, building political and interethnic confidence, providing electoral support and addressing issues pertaining to media freedom. Making full use of the OSCE toolbox and its unmatched expertise in many areas should not be seen as a stigma but rather as an opportunity to address key issues related to the rule of law in Macedonia.

Mr. Chairperson,

Regarding the tragic events in Kumanovo, we would like to use this occasion to reiterate our unequivocal condemnation for all acts of violence and call upon all

sides to exercise calm and utmost restraint. Turning them or political crisis into an interethnic conflict serves the interests of nobody and risks undermining the long-term stability of Macedonia.

We continue to urge for a fast and thorough investigation to shed light on the events in Kumanovo. For such an investigation to be credible and impartial, we would encourage the relevant Macedonian authorities to cooperate with specialized international agencies.

Ensuring the truth and full transparency is the only way to restore people's confidence in the institutions and avoid the repetition of events of this kind. It is also crucial that the international community and the OSCE in particular closely monitor the situation.

We also expect that local authorities show a clear commitment to transparency when it comes to the treatment of those arrested following the operation in Kumanovo. Their fundamental rights should be duly guaranteed, in line with the humanitarian law and the stipulation of international conventions which Macedonia is a party to.

Building interethnic trust and confidence between the major communities is of a paramount importance for Macedonia. The full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, as the main building block to ensure its long-term stability and prosperity, is a must. The international community, including the OSCE, as guarantors of the implementation of this landmark Agreement, have a crucial role to play in this regard.

In conclusion, **Mr. Minister**, I thank you very much for being with us today. Wishing you every success, let me emphasize once again Albania's unwavering commitment to Macedonia's stability and our willingness to develop good-neighbourly relations in line with the European integration objectives of both countries and the region as a whole. I would like to thank you also for the excellent cooperation and friendly relations we enjoy with your able team here in Vienna.

I thank you for the attention.