



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

**In response to the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth of Albania, H.E. Erion Veliaj
(987th Meeting of the Permanent Council, 6 March 2014)**

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

I join the previous speakers in warmly Minister Veliaj to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his informative address, in which he highlighted the Albanian Government's determined stance on promoting gender equality and combating domestic violence.

In Albania recent years have witnessed considerable strides in democratization and the development of democratic institutions. ODIHR's final report on the June 2013 parliamentary elections bears testimony to the degree of political maturity achieved in Albania.

In this respect, the fruitful cooperation between Albania and the OSCE via the OSCE Presence in Albania is encouraging. All sides should engage further for the continuation of this process and the assistance being provided to the commendable reform process in Albania.

The deep-rooted ties between our countries, which emanate from a common history and culture, provide us with a similar vision regarding the future of our region and allow further steps to deepen and enhance our bilateral cooperation.

Madam. Chairperson,

Like Albania, Turkey recognizes and honors the crucial role that women play in our societies. Thus, ever since its inception, my country has been committed to the improvement of women's rights with the aim of ensuring women's full and equal participation in all walks of life.

Gender equality is doomed to remain a half-truth at best, however, while women continue to be subjected to violence. Thus Turkey's policy on violence against women can be summarized as zero tolerance. Minister Veliaj emphasized that Albania was the second state to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Being the first state to do so, we commend Albania's commitment to preventing domestic violence, as well as its efforts to ensure the Convention's implementation. For our part, the Turkish Parliament adopted a new law in 2012 on "Protection of the Family and Elimination of Violence Against Women", which transposed the provisions of the Istanbul Convention into our national legislation. Furthermore, I'm gratified to state that our "National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence Against Women" was revised for the years 2012-2016.

Madam Chairperson,

As we mark the tenth anniversary of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, there is no doubt that every single one of the 57 participating States still has progress to make in empowering women. We can allow our Organization to more effectively support our national efforts in this field by equipping it with strengthened tools. This, in fact, is precisely the reasoning behind the draft OSCE-wide Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security co-sponsored by Austria, Finland, Kazakhstan and Turkey.

On the other hand, we believe that there are ample synergies that can be created between the conflict cycle and gender issues. In particular, mediation is an area where we can make focused efforts. In this respect, the guidebook on Enhancing Gender-Responsive Mediation, which was launched in Istanbul last year by the OSCE Gender Section, is certainly a useful instrument at our disposal. Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite you all once again to the Friends of Mediation meeting that will be co-organized by Finland, Turkey and Switzerland this afternoon.

Last but certainly not least, let me also underscore that all I have just said about gender issues also constitutes a homage to the International Women's Day that we will be celebrating this Saturday.

In concluding, let me thank Minister Veliaj once again for sharing his country's experiences with us today. We wish him every success in his future endeavors.

Thank you.