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**Statement by Ambassador Gilbert Galanxhi  
- Permanent Representative of Albania -  
At the 777<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council  
22 October 2009**

Thank you Madame Chairperson,

The Albanian Delegation would also like to warmly welcome Ambassador Bosch to the Permanent Council and thank him personally, as well as his whole team in Albania, for the comprehensive and well-structured report, which objectively reflects Albania's developments for the reporting period.

The report identifies fairly and properly Albania's unquestionable achievements, and highlights certain fields where further improvement is needed for the country to fulfil all its OSCE commitments.

We commend the important role and contribution of the OSCE Presence to the democratic development and institutional consolidation in Albania.

We are particularly pleased with the constantly improved cooperation and coordination between the Presence and the Albanian authorities. We reiterate the readiness of the Albanian Government to further strengthen this cooperation and put it in the function of Albania's most ambitious goal of full EU integration and membership. Working together, we believe we can supplement each other in justly and realistically analyse the concerns raised by all speakers today, in a very open, transparent and constructive way, and be able to draft a common strategy which will merge in one the goals of the Presence and those of Albania, as a logical follow-up of Albania's NATO accession (1 April 2009) and application for EU membership (28 April 2009).

Since the last report (in October 2008) Albania has recorded remarkable progress in several areas. I believe it is worth mentioning the last Parliamentary Elections of June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. I would like to thank the OSCE, the Presence in Albania and ODIHR as well, for their assistance and contribution during the whole process. The ODIHR Final Report on these parliamentary elections recommends further improvements, and in this context, the Albanian Government has expressed in several occasions its readiness to work closely with the OSCE/ODIHR, as well as with all interested factors, so that all these recommendations become part of an Action Plan, designed to ensure that upcoming elections would reach higher standards and fully meet all OSCE commitments.

We are conscious for the challenges we face today and will face tomorrow, but we wish to assure all participating states that the

Government of Albania continues to remain strongly committed in fighting with zero tolerance against crime and corruption. We know this is a very difficult task, but taking into consideration the good results achieved so far, as well as the excellent cooperation with our neighbours and specialized international agencies, we are confident that further progress will be achieved.

With regards to the Judicial Reform, we are fully aware of its complexity, as well as that its successful completion is a crucial benchmark on our way towards EU integration. Significant steps have already been taken, yet its implementation requires more efforts and quite frequently more resources. I wish to bring to your attention that continuous and daily cooperation between the EU Mission, namely EURALIUS, and the Albanian Ministry of Justice and Parliament is greatly appreciated and is a meaningful assistance for drafting relevant laws according to the EU best practices.

Madame Chair,

We very much appreciate the tendency of the Presence to prioritize and focus on the strategic needs of Albania, and we believe it is the right time to start implementing a gradual hand-over of activities and competences to the local institutions and authorities. To our understanding, the first steps in this direction have proven to be successful.

Finally, Madam Chair, please allow me to wish Ambassador Bosch and his Team in Albania the very best of success for the next reporting period which, I am fully confident, will witness further

progress in all areas and will make Ambassador Bosch feel prouder than today.

Thank you Madame Chairperson!