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**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN ILDEM,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

***IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY H.E. EDMOND HAXHINASTO,  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ALBANIA***

**883<sup>RD</sup> (SPECIAL) PERMANENT COUNCIL  
14 October 2011**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Mr. Minister,

We consider your appearance before the Permanent Council today, as a clear indication of the importance attached by Albania to the contribution of the OSCE to cooperation and progress in South East Europe, as well as of its own valuable input in this respect. After a painful period with tragic suffering of peoples, we are pleased to observe that the political culture in South East Europe is now dominated by peace and stability. We appreciate the efforts of Albania in this regard, which plays a vital role in consolidating this culture in the region, in looking to the future rather than being hostage of the past. We also concur with the view that platforms for dialogue should be fully utilized as an opportunity for reconciliation in search for a common European future with confidence.

Recently, we have had the opportunity to receive first hand information from the Head of OSCE Presence in Albania, Amb. Wollfarth, on the considerable progress achieved in the country as well as the efforts needed in order to maintain this momentum in the period ahead.

Mr. Deputy Prime Minister,

Your visit to the Permanent Council today, has been instrumental in underlining the political determination of Albania and its people to vigorously continue with this process. These efforts will not only reinforce the integration of the country with Europe, but will also contribute to the consolidation of stability in the region. Albania has indeed proved its strategic orientation in this regard, by becoming a member of NATO in 2009.

In this context, we consider the commencement of the new legislative year with the participation of all political parties represented in the Parliament as a promising step. We hope that this will pave the way for the establishment of a more robust atmosphere, which will be conducive to the realization of the reform agenda. We firmly believe that all the stakeholders will act in conformity with the common aim of enhancing the prosperity and progress of the country.

We also note with pleasure the positive attitude of both the Government and the opposition with respect to the necessity of the electoral reforms and their expressed desire to cooperate with ODIHR throughout this process.

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey is one of the foremost supporters of Albania on its path towards democracy, stability and prosperity. We believe that Albania's progress in this regard will have positive repercussions for its people as well as for the region. Our support has also been reiterated at the highest level, during the visit of President Topi to Turkey at the beginning of this week, whereby the strong cultural and historical bonds as well as the exemplary relations between the two countries were once again underscored.

We agree with you, Mr. Minister, that Albania, with its established values of religious harmony, multicultural respect and understanding, is well-placed to offer its unique input to the tolerance and non-discrimination agenda of the OSCE, which, in our belief, deserves an equal attention as the other issues in human dimension. In the last few years, challenges to our common security have evolved and become even more complex. Besides the necessity of building and strengthening democratic institutions, civil society and good governance in our geography, we have become disturbingly aware of the need for addressing divisive perceptions within our own societies as manifested in racist and xenophobic trends. In this respect, we welcome your intention to host a High Level Conference on Tolerance and Non Discrimination in 2013.

In concluding, let me reiterate our willingness and readiness to cooperate with Albania in both bilateral level and multilateral fora, including in the OSCE. Albania can count on Turkey's support and solidarity in its efforts towards contributing to comprehensive security, including assumption of additional responsibilities within the OSCE in the future.

We would like to thank the distinguished Minister for being with us today and for sharing his views and vision on issues of common interest to the OSCE community.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.