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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA TO
THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

Albanian Response to the 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Session 2: Freedom of the Media

**As delivered by Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Igli Hasani,
to the HDIM, Warsaw
September 11, 2018**

I take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the Italian Chairmanship decision to make this year's HDIM happen. The discussions we have had so far, demonstrate the significant importance and the need for continued dialogue among all participating States and members of civil society.

Albania considers civil society an indispensable part for fulfilling our joint Human Dimension commitments and for that you have our full support.

Albania appreciates the close and constructive cooperation between the Albanian institutions and the RFoM Office during recent years, and hold in high regard the support and advice that the office has given to our institutions in improving legal basis, implementing our shared commitments and in promoting an open and free media in Albania.

Free media, human rights issues, safety of journalists, access to information and freedom of expression in the digital age are crucial to an open, free and democratic society. As such, freedom of the media plays a crucial role in promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability.

While the sweeping availability of internet, blogs, portals, discussion forums, new media and new technologies have certainly provided more opportunities for freedom of expression, media diversification, civic and sometimes non-professional journalism, as well as for enhancement of democracy in general, this newly found freedom and journalistic availability has also given rise to new concerns, such as the spreading of *fake news, gossip, undue criticism, libel, innuendo and baseless accusations and in more extreme cases, propagation of hate speech and cyber-nationalism.*

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Hence, it is imperative that together we undertake legitimate steps in addressing this new challenge. Political influence in the editorial policies of some media can still be seen throughout the region, while political pressure on numerous editors and journalists remains a matter of significant concern. In this regard, we see the role of RFoM as irreplaceable in tackling these concerns and problems.

We thank also the OSCE Presence in Albania to assist on the self-regulation of the press, the discussions on the reform of public broadcasting, support for the National Council of Radio and Television and the Commission for Media to the Parliament, etc.

In closing,

the Albanian authorities, media and the public opinion have strongly condemned the shooting at the family home of the journalist ***Klodiana Lala***, on August 30-th, 2018, and have asked for a thorough and over-all investigation of the motives behind the assault and send the perpetrators before justice. An investigation process has already been started.

Thank you.