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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 H.E. Frank-
Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of Germany,**

**as delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi at the 1061st Meeting of
the OSCE Permanent Council,**

Vienna, 2 July 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Albania joins other delegations in extending a warm welcome to Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier to the OSCE Permanent Council. We wish to thank him for his forward looking and comprehensive statement today.

We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to make some additional remarks on a national capacity.

Albania and Germany entertain excellent bilateral relations, grounded on shared values, mutual interests and a common vision for a stable and prosperous Western Balkans. We are grateful to Germany for supporting the EU integration process of Albania and of our region as a whole.

The Berlin Process launched a year ago by Chancellor Merkel has been instrumental in unleashing a positive dynamic in regional cooperation. It also stands out as a clear indicator of Germany's continued commitment to advance the integration processes of the region in the face of ongoing economic and political uncertainty in Europe. We look forward to Chancellor Merkel's forthcoming visit in Tirana on 8 July, and believe that it will further strengthen the bond of friendship between the two nations.

The German Chairmanship of the OSCE comes at a defining moment for Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian security. We highly appreciate its readiness to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2016. The crises in and around Ukraine resulting from blatant disrespect for the principles we have agreed upon in Helsinki, and elsewhere, is the ultimate consequence of a broader European Security crisis.

In the current geopolitical context, Germany's OSCE Chairmanship provides an opportunity that the OSCE community must seize. With its unique position in Europe and its network of co-operative relations with key states around this table, Germany can lay the groundwork for renewing an earnest dialogue in the OSCE in order to rebuild trust and re-launch the European Security as a common project.

We fully share the plans of the German Chairmanship to strengthen the OSCE capacities for conflict prevention, reaction and management. The Ukrainian crisis has showed that the OSCE is perfectly able to conduct substantial operations if there is consensus by the participating States. Although the Organization was not able to prevent the conflict, it has performed remarkably in its efforts to build confidence and avert an escalation to fully-blown war. And it has done so in face of limited resources, insufficient planning capacities and a highly polarized political environment.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister,

We strongly believe that the OSCE should remain the main European forum for political dialogue. A prime venue to discuss on weekly bases, in an open and transparent manner, their key security concerns. However, rebuilding trust cannot be achieved to the detriment of our fundamental commitments and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

While the consensus rule is clearly recognized as one of the OSCE's main assets, it cannot be a straightjacket or an alibi for inaction in cases of crises. Empowering the CiO and the Secretariat to launch temporary, ad-hoc, fact-finding missions in cases of emerging crises could be a way to forward.

The Human Dimension should remain at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. As the gap between the human dimension commitments and their implementation grows bigger, we consider that the role of the three autonomous institutions and OSCE's Field Offices has become even more relevant. We are grateful that fostering people-to-people exchanges and especially connecting the young people, is among Germany's priorities. We, in the WB region, have already started to work on it, also with the OSCE's assistance and its continued support is most welcomed.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister,

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the critical contribution of the OSCE for peace and security in the Western Balkans. While the region will continue to benefit from the OSCE's support for the years to come, it has already demonstrated to be perfectly able to provide tangible contribution to

European Security. In this context, we look forward to see all countries of the Western Balkans, without exception, be included in the work of our Organization during Germany`s Chairmanship.

Mr. Minister, let me thank you once again for being with us today, reassure you of Albania`s full support to your priorities and wish every success in your future endeavors.

I thank you for the attention.