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

**Statement of the Delegation of Albania,
On the Parliamentary Elections in Albania,
held on 25 June 2017**

**As delivered by the Head of Mission, Ms. Ravesa Lleshi, at the
1152nd Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, 6 July 2017**

Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to inform the Permanent Council on the parliamentary elections that were held in the Republic of Albania on 25 June 2017.

In accordance with international commitments, the Albanian authorities had extended invitations to a number of international partners to observe the electoral process. We wish to express our appreciation to all international observers, and in particular to OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE participating States and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for responding positively to the invitation of the Albanian Government.

18 political parties and 2,666 candidates, including 1073 women (40%) were registered for the 25 June 2017 elections. Contestants campaigned freely and fundamental freedoms of assembly and expression were respected. The campaign marked a departure from the political polarization and mutual accusations between the two largest parties that have been a feature of elections past. This is largely attributed to an internationally mediated political agreement reached between the leaders of the Socialist Party and Democratic Party on 18 May 2017, which put an end to a three-month political deadlock in the country and enabled all political parties to participate in the electoral process.

Elections took place in a calm and orderly manner. The Central Election Commission puts voter turnout at 46.72 per cent, while preliminary results indicate that of the 140 seats in Parliament the ruling Socialist Party will hold 74 seats, 43 seats will go

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to the Democratic Party, 19 to the Socialist Movement for Integration and 4 seats are to be divided between two smaller parties (3 to the Party for Justice, Integration and Unity and 1 to the Social-Democratic Party). The Central Election Commission is expected to announce final results in the coming days, upon completion of the complaints and appeals procedures.

The 18 May political agreement enabled the adoption of a number of measures to foster public confidence in the electoral process and to address some of the shortcomings identified in previous OSCE/ODIHR reports, including the criminalization of vote-buying, the strengthening of transparency in relation to party campaign finances, the use of the public administration in electoral campaigning, and the media coverage of the candidates' campaign. Importantly, the agreement includes a commitment of the Socialist Party and Democratic Party leaders to continue the process of judicial and electoral reform, with the ultimate aim of strengthening the rule of law in Albania. They have the overwhelming support of the Albanian people for key reforms that demand cooperation across party lines.

The Albanian authorities look forward to the Final Report of the OSCE/ODIHR and potential recommendations for attaining the highest standards for democratic elections. We reiterate our wish to work with OSCE/ODIHR and other partners on the electoral reform.

I am also pleased to inform that women will be better represented in the new parliament, with 38 seats compared to the 25 in the previous parliament.

Thank you.