



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1068th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
17 September 2015**

in response to the report by the head of the OSCE Presence in Albania

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan warmly welcomes the Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania Ambassador Florian Raunig to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive report.

We took due note of the operational environment, within which the OSCE Presence in Albania discharges its mandate. In particular, as the report notes, several areas, such as fight against corruption and organized crimes, reforms in the judiciary and public administration, elimination of discrimination against vulnerable groups, improvement of conditions in prisons and treatment of detainees, requires strong engagement and systematic reforms by authorities and to that end the assistance of the OSCE field presence makes significant contribution.

We took note of the fact that proper and efficient prosecutions of the cases of illicit enrichment, corruption and organized crime remains a serious concern in the country and urge the OSCE Presence to continue to pay close attention to this issue.

Moreover, effective and efficient handling of complaints of the citizens is still a problem, mainly due to “negligible responses” from governmental bodies. We share the concern that the People’s Advocate Institution national human rights institution continues to experience problems in gathering information from state bodies and often ends up with no responses to its requests.

Discrimination against vulnerable groups is another area that needs focused attention of the Albanian authorities, especially in light of obstacles to providing minority language education in schools, as well as allegations regarding failure by the authorities to follow proper procedures in cases of evictions, such as failure to properly notify families of impending demolitions and lack of consultations.

In light of above-mentioned, we call on Albania comply with its OSCE commitments, in particular in the areas of fight against corruption, elimination of discrimination against minorities, as well as to improve the delivery of public services, including handling of the complaints from the citizens. In this regard, we encourage host-nation authorities to take advantage of the assistance offered by the OSCE field presence and executive structures and take practical steps to rectify the situation.

In conclusion, we wish every success to Ambassador Raunig in his future activities.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.