

Check against delivery

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**Statement by H. E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania
at the review of Albania
28 April 2014**

Mr. President,

Lithuania welcomes the esteemed delegation of Albania and thanks for the informative National Report.

Lithuania welcomes a number of positive developments in strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the protection of human rights since the first UPR, notably the adoption of the Law on Protection from Discrimination and the election of the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination.

We are also pleased to note the normative framework for the protection of the rights of women and prevention and reduction of gender based and domestic violence. In this regard, we welcome the National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence 2011-2015 as well as the implementation of the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations, including the setup of the National Treating Centre for Victims of Domestic Violence. Lithuania recommends to the Government of Albania: 1) to ensure that all reports of domestic violence are thoroughly investigated and that the perpetrators are brought to justice, 2) to provide the necessary assistance to the victims of domestic violence, including through adoption of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

Albania is still a significant country of origin and transit for trafficking in human beings. We commend national measures in combatting human trafficking, however, more needs to be done, in particular in terms of victims' protection. In this regard, we recommend to Albania 1) to continue efforts in combatting human trafficking and 2) to implement the normative framework in order to ensure protection of the victims of trafficking.

In the field of freedom of expression and media we note the recent adoption of the Law on Audio-visual Media in compliance with the recommendations of the CoE. At the same time, we remain concerned about the reported cases of violence against journalists. In this regard, we recommend Albania 1) to guarantee freedom of expression and media in line with international standards; 2) to continue ensuring that impartial and effective investigation of attacks against journalists takes place and that those responsible are brought to justice; 3) to take measures to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference.

I thank you.