**Intervention by the Republic of Cyprus**

**Monday, 6 May 2019, 14:30 – 18:00**

**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

**33rd Session**

**Albania**

Mr. / Mrs. (Vice) President,

Cyprus welcomes the delegation of Albania and H.E. Ms. Artemis Drolo, Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania. We commend the Government of Albania for obtaining an open accession status with the EU; reminding that the promotion and respect of human rights is an integral part of the EU acquis.

Similarly, we welcome the efforts to implement the recommendations of the previous cycle of the UPR; notably the positive amendments of the Penal Code regarding gender violence and the National Strategy on Gender Equality. Likewise, we like to congratulate Albania’s commitment to improve the level of H/R by signing and ratifying, inter alia, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the CoE Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

 Cyprus would also like to submit the following recommendations:

* That Albania strengthens the protection of minorities’ rights by enhancing and improving access to education in minority languages.
* Prohibits corporal punishment at schools and public institutions.
* That Albania sets a minimum legal age of marriage to 18 years.
* Ensures independence of the judiciary system and address corruption at all levels.
* Adopts a national strategy to tackle extreme poverty.

We wish the Government of Albania a fruitful outcome of the 3rd cycle of UPR.

I thank you Mr. / Mrs. (Vice) President.