

**Albanian Statement**  
**On the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards**

Thank you Mr Chairman!

It is with great pleasure that I present Albania's development efforts and follow up reforms to the UNECE study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Albania conducted in 2016.

The study identified a number of behind and at the border trade barriers, and showed that these barriers are mainly due to the insufficient institutional capacity to implement the intensive legislative reforms, including those associated with fulfilling the EU *Acquis* requirements.

In addition to the latter, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee on the EU Commission recommendation to the Council for opening the access negotiations with Albania, and we are of the hope that will be done in the next Council meeting, in June, in Sofia. Those recent developments show the reforms in Albania are in good track including some of the main recommendations of the UNECE Study.

And, on the ground, this Study also shows that enterprises, especially some of the SMEs, were operating in inadequate market support services, so that they were not well placed to reap the expected benefits from reforms. The surveyed SMEs exhibited a preoccupation with satisfying local demand and those of export-oriented constituted still a limited segment in the market. The enterprises' efforts to venture into new markets are also facing with some difficulties related to rules and procedures.

Thus as the Government forged ahead in implementing reforms in this area, it was advised to place more emphasis on consolidating the rule of law and adapting measures to local capacities, both in terms of substance and sequencing. Priority should be given to building the required institutions for successful implementation and to helping enterprises improve their productive capacity based on broad public-private sector consultations

The Government has implemented a number of the ECE recommendations in the areas of customs modernization, cross border trade and conformity assessment. We would like to request the secretariat to integrate the remaining recommendations into the country's national plan for the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

As above mentioned, the recommendations remain also useful as Albania is in process of accession to EU.

Thank you!