



# Overview on the project “Establishment of a Master’s Programme in Criminology”

2019-2024

Implemented by the OSCE Presence in Albania

Financially supported by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), U.S. Mission to the OSCE, British Embassy in Tirana and Government of Italy

The project objective was to establish a sustainable structure of multi-disciplinary research and teaching in Criminology in Albania, thereby enhancing the capacities and resources of the country’s criminal justice professionals, academics and policy-makers in preventing and combating crime, and responding to the needs of victims of crime, in line with Human Rights standards and OSCE commitments.

The project was implemented in close co-operation with the Faculty of Law of the University of Tirana, with the support of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior.

The master programme in Criminology is the first Executive Master Programme in Albania included in the third cycle of studies, established at the University of Tirana, Faculty of Law.

Through the Master’s programme, the Presence aimed at improving the research capacities of professionals, academics and policy-makers in Albania to identify root causes of crime. Criminological research lies at the heart of criminological theory, influences social, public and security policy development, as well as informs criminal justice practice.

The Executive Master in Criminology is designed to improve the research capacity of the country’s criminal justice professionals, academics and policymakers in preventing and combating crime, as well as responding to the needs of crime victims, in line with the standards of Human Rights. The Project supported an increased co-operation between academia and law enforcement agencies, thus how research could contribute to practitioners’ work, which is also one of the aims of the project.

The establishment of this master programme is a success story as there is an increasing high interest of law practitioners in the programme. Students enrolled in the programme come from a variety of backgrounds, mostly from law enforcement agencies, including judicial police officers, police officers, defense lawyers, Security Academy lecturers, NGO representatives, criminal justice experts, etc.



Following more than five years of intensive work, the OSCE's involvement entailed the development of the structure and curricula for the Master's Programme, training academic staff, building links with partner institutions, as well as building capacities and resources of the University of Tirana to deliver and manage such a complex, and ultimately successful programme. Some of the key achievements of the Master's Programme include:

### Setting up the structure of a Master's Programme on Criminology

- The structure of the Master's Programme in Criminology was established.
- An academic Steering and Policy Board of the Master's Programme in Criminology was established in 2019.
- A detailed curriculum for each module was developed based on similar international models for such master programmes. In total there are 20 modules (120 ECTS).
- Working group meetings on the development and implementation of the Master's Programme, involving academic partners, experts, Faculty of Law, and other relevant actors.
- The Master's curriculum was revised.

### Building capacities

- Building the capacities of the University of Tirana to manage the programme, through training courses for academic staff, exchange opportunities for lecturers and participation in thematic meetings/conferences, such as at the University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, University of New Haven, John Jay College in New York, LUISS University in Rome, University of Pavia, Democritus University of Thrace, University of Sassari, Centro Studio, Alta Formazione e Ricerca Italo-Albanese del CEMAS Sapienza University of Rome, and others.
- Provision of necessary literature, translated and reading materials for the master programme, including online access to international libraries, benefiting lecturers and students altogether for teaching and studying purposes.
- Organization of several international and national academic conferences, workshops and seminars.

### Raising awareness

- Raising awareness of the targeted beneficiaries on the master programme.
- The project supported outreach to the target region and community to raise awareness of key aspects of the programme.

### Research Centre in Criminology

- A milestone of this project is the establishment of a Research Centre in Criminology with the goal of developing academic and research connections and building UoT's teaching and research capacities.
- The Project contributed in setting up the infrastructure and equipped the Research Centre with office equipment and IT equipment needed for the functioning of the Centre.
- To fully support the capacities of the Research Centre, the project facilitated about 30 research papers in the field of Criminology. The research conducted will be used by the academic staff and students of the MPC. In addition, they will assist the Research Centre in Criminology as the research conducted will be used in guiding the criminal justice policy in Albania.
- Through this centre, the research conducted will be subject to quality control and compliance with the legal framework in order to provide adequate analyses on root causes, patterns, drivers of crime and crime prevention as well.

### Fellowship programme

- Establishing a fellowship programme to support Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs in research related areas.
- The research papers on topics such as social media's impact on criminal policies, maternal imprisonment, criminological profiles, surrogacy and human trafficking, and parricide in Albanian society.

The master programme was launched in December 2020, when the first generation of students began their studies.

52 students have successfully graduated until December 2024.

Overall, about 1,000 participants from courts, prosecution offices, law enforcement agencies, local government, students, and other institutions took part in these awareness-raising events. During the events, there was strong interest among participants in registering for this Master's programme.

Since the beginning of the programme in December 2020, a total of 190 students have been registered for the Master.

The programme was accredited by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth in 2023.