



Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe  
Presence in Albania

## **HEAD OF PRESENCE REMARKS AT RECEPTION ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

*12 December 2011*

Madame Speaker Jozefina Topalli,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Edmond Haxhinasto,  
Dear friends of Human Rights and the OSCE,

Today we mark the International Human Rights Day. It has become a tradition in Tirana that the OSCE Presence does this in this solemn format.

Today, when living in Europe, reference to the protection and promotion of human rights has become very common. On human rights, everybody seems to agree. Are we not all committed to the protection of human rights? Yes, sure, but is agreement enough: true protection of human rights requires more than goodwill, more than detailed legal framework. Human rights have to be of our own individual life, starting in our own family.

Today, when speaking about Human Rights, first and foremost we speak about human dignity and the respect of human life. This respect begins in our homes, in the way we treat our children and other family members around us. Children and in particular orphans are the most vulnerable group in our society. If the individual fails, if the parents fail, if the family fails, the State has to step in. If a State repeatedly fails, especially at larger scale, or if a State is not in the position to protect, the International Community comes into play.

Today, this applies to more areas where individual rights deserve protection. One principle should be the basis of all our actions - the principle of equality and non-discrimination: full equality before the law, in all areas as diverse as access to justice or access to health care. Legal protection can be invoked from all sorts of discrimination, whether on the basis of race, age, gender or disability to name a few. Let us remember also in these cases, that the principle of equality needs to be respected by us, as persons, as citizens, at all times when we interact with each other.

Education on human rights issues is a noble and most needed duty, which is vital to building and stabilising a fair and socially inclusive society.

The OSCE Presence in Albania sees through its trustful work with the Albanian government that the protection of human rights is at the forefront of Albania's endeavours and that Albania is fully committed to guarantee that human rights principles are integral part of its policies in implementation of its modern and highly commendable legal framework.

Let me again invite us all to keep in our hearts and minds, very individually, that while we are entitled to our inalienable human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others at all times. We, as individual persons, can actively help to make a difference.

Today, marking Human Rights Day, let me finally invite you:  
Enjoy life and help others to enjoy their lives.

Thank you very much!