



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

HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON ANTI-CORRUPTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

Tirana, 9 December 2016

Dear Minister Çuçi,
dear Ambassadors,
distinguished guests!

It is my pleasure to address this forum on the International Anticorruption Day. Since the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003, December 9th is a day to shed lights on the importance of the fight against corruption and its detrimental effects to human development, democracy and rule of law.

No country is free of corruption, but it affects us all negatively. Corruption in Albania, as elsewhere is a complex and multifaceted problem. A corrupt environment raises the costs of doing business, discourages foreign investors, distorts the markets and investment priorities and damages trust in the public administration. It is a pervasive threat that, in its ugliest manifestation, condemns already vulnerable groups to poverty and increases inequality by diverting funds from healthcare, education and other essential services while weakens the state. Corruption is not merely a financial issue; it can lead to significant social instability and conflicts. There is therefore a clear link between eliminating corruption and ensuring security, rule of law and long-term stability.

During the last few years, the government of Albania has made significant efforts to address the issue of corruption in the country - the policy and legislative framework improvement is notable, but more needs to be done: corruption remains a serious problem for the country. The independence and effectiveness of institutions which are supposed to fight corruption continues to be limited by political pressure and weak administrative capacity.. Sustained progress on implementation of laws and good governance policy should be preserved, combined with the expected visible change in the judiciary. Often low wages, the social acceptance of bribery and narrow social networks make the fight against corruption a difficult task. We should dedicate more efforts to ensure elected officials' integrity, and to build a reliable, functional and transparent public administration. However, different anti-corruption measures should be combined with appropriate economic incentives to public officials.

The OSCE has made a long-term commitment to assist Albania in its modernization efforts. However, this cannot be solved by governments or other institutions acting alone. A deeper engagement of civil society, media and the business community is needed.

The OSCE Presence is engaged long-term in fighting corruption and promoting good governance at all levels. We are continuously cooperating with the Albanian institutions in activities such as policy monitoring and legal revisions, capacity-building through knowledge-transfer activities, providing tools that promote anti-bribery and good conduct among businesses, conducting awareness and education activities to youth, as well as

encourage a higher engagement of civil society in policy consultative processes. I believe that restoring citizens' trust in institutions should be a priority.

The OSCE Presence in Albania is always available to support the Albanian authorities in their daily efforts to fight corruption and build a professional public administration according to international standards. In this remarkable day, I would like to encourage all actors to embrace integrity, accountability and transparency - above all the young people, who have a fundamental role in developing this country so that their future is built on a solid and honest foundation.

Thank you very much!