



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

# OSCE PRESENCE IN ALBANIA

The OSCE Presence in Albania works in partnership with the host country to strengthen the main state institutions, to underpin a democratic system of 'checks and balances' and to foster cross-party dialogue in order to build confidence in these institutions.

### Overview

In carrying out its overall goal, the Presence focuses particularly on: legislative and judicial reform, including property reform; regional administrative reform; electoral reform; parliamentary capacity-building; anti-trafficking and anti-corruption; development of effective laws and regulations on the independent media; promotion of good governance and management of targeted projects to strengthen civil society; and police assistance in co-operation with its international partners.

### How we work

The Presence is led by the Head of Presence, who has overall responsibility for all policy and operational matters. The Presence's thematic activities are implemented by four thematic departments: Democratization; Rule of Law and Human Rights; Governance in Economic and Environmental Issues; and Security Co-operation. A Project Office Co-ordination Unit acts as the link between the Presence's headquarters in Tirana and its four project offices (in Shkodra, Kukes, Vlora and Gjirokastra), which help co-ordinate the Presence's project activities and maintain contacts with key local partners.

### Presence programmes

#### Democratization

The main aim is to provide assistance on: electoral and civil registry reform; gender; civil society; media and parliamentary reform.

#### Electoral reform

In co-operation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the state institutions, political parties and civil society were assisted in further developing the electoral legal framework. The Central Election Commission was supported in the preparations for the 2009 parliamentary elections, in line with OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, through increasing its training capacities and providing other technical assistance. Copies of the new Electoral Code were published and disseminated to national and international electors.

#### Parliamentary support

The Parliamentary Support Project works with parliamentary committees on the further strengthening of their outreach activities; in improving the transparency of the Parliament; in modernizing the Parliament's research capacities; the modernization of the Parliament's library and archive; the creation of an internal computer network and a legislation data base; and the capacity building of Parliamentary staff, including the creation of a student internship programme. The project is carried out in co-operation with similar projects in other OSCE missions in order to facilitate information-sharing. The Project is funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

#### Modernization of civil registration and address systems

With funding from the European Commission, technical assistance is being provided to the Government in creating a modern civil registration, address and data protection system to improve the work of public administration and, in turn, the quality of public services. The creation of a computerized National Register of Civil Status has provided the basis for a



voters list for the 2009 parliamentary elections and the data for ID cards. The Ministry of Interior was assisted in creating sustainable structures in the General Directorate of Civil Status. Support was also provided on procedures and software solutions concerning the management of the National Register. Work continues with central and local government on establishing a computerized National Register of Addresses. In co-operation with the Council of Europe, work continues in enhancing the capacities of the newly created data protection authority in order to secure the protection of the personal data of citizens.

### Civil society

The participation of civil society in decision making is supported by facilitating co-operation with state actors at a central and local level in drafting, implementing and monitoring national and local strategies. With the support of the OSCE/ODIHR, the consultation of the draft law on the Albanian Agency for the Support of Civil Society was facilitated. The Presence helped create three Civil Society Development Centres, which are now working independently. Funded by the Government of Germany, and in co-operation with the Municipality of Korça and the Civil Society Development Centre, a local civil society development fund was created in the Municipality to support local NGOs in carrying out local civic activism.

### Gender

In co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and international partners, the Government and local NGOs were supported in promoting gender equality and, in particular, the implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy. As a result of these efforts, a gender quota was included in the Electoral Code. In order to further stimulate gender quotas and to promote women's participation in public life, a three-year-project to enhance women's role in governance was launched, funded by the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden.

### Media development

The national media and relevant media institutions were

assisted in aligning national media legislation and regulations with international standards. Funded by the Government of Austria, a broad consultation process was supported to assist in the drafting of a strategy for the digitalisation of national television. Activities also focused on promoting media independence and freedom of expression, professionalism of journalists, self-regulation and access to information. A project funded by the European Union and implemented in co-operation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, promotes the creation of an Albanian Media Club as self-regulatory body for journalists and media owners. In all media activities, the Presence works closely with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and other relevant international partners.

## RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The main goal is to assist the host country in developing a sound legal system. The Presence also promotes respect for human rights and the creation and functioning of state institutions based on rule of law principles.

### Legislative reform

Providing legal and technical expertise to state institutions is one of the key activities. It also assists judicial bodies to improve transparency and public participation in the legislative process. It helps establish guidelines for consultations with interest groups and other interested actors prior to the passing of legislation, and trains civil society in techniques for commenting on legislative drafts. The Presence has also commented on key pieces of draft legislation.

### Judicial reform and fair trial development

Several major reports on the legal sector were issued that included recommendations for reform and how the Presence can assist in further developing legal institutions. A number of targeted projects have been launched to improve the understanding and enforceability of judicial ethics standards. The Court observation project analyses trials in criminal and civil cases. The analysis is made from the perspective of both



domestic and international fair trial standards and is published in periodic reports, containing recommendations on how to increase efficiency and transparency. Training is also provided to enhance the professionalism of judges and to improve their knowledge of due process standards. The Presence has been active in encouraging alternative sentences to imprisonment, working with the Ministry of Justice to develop legislation and training standards for the probation services.

#### Human rights

Human rights are part of the overarching aims of the Presence's mandate. Project activities include strengthening the rights of vulnerable minorities; protecting workers' rights; improving the protection of civil servants; improving conditions in pre-trial detention facilities; and developing systematic protection for minors who come into contact with the legal system. A project has been launched to increase access to justice for women victims of domestic violence and to raise awareness about the Domestic Violence Law among justice professionals and civil society. The Presence has worked with local NGOs to draft anti-discrimination legislation. It will provide further assistance in order to ensure its full implementation.

## GOVERNANCE IN ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The main aim is to support the Government and civil society on initiatives to: promote economic and Environmental well being and good governance; fight corruption; support property reform; and prevent trafficking in human beings.

#### Economy and environment

In order to foster economic development and to strengthen weak institutions that hinder economic expansion, the Government is supported to further develop a more effective institutional framework, to co-ordinate, monitor and implement all anti-corruption policies with different stakeholders. Greater dialogue is facilitated between the

Government and the private sector to promote aspects of corporate social and environmental responsibility and public-private partnerships in order to involve a wider range of institutions in boosting compliance with relevant international conventions.

#### Fighting Corruption

In co-operation with the Council of Europe, capacity-building support is provided to territorial reform and the Government's decentralization strategy through promoting aspects of good governance, including transparency, inclusiveness, and local public service delivery. The Government is also supported in its fight against corruption by increasing the capacity of national actors to detect and prevent money laundering and training public officials on the "Conflict of Interest" legal framework. A current project aims at further strengthening the effectiveness of civil society in the fight against corruption in local government.

#### Property reform

The Government is being assisted with the registration of immovable property, the restitution and compensation process, and with relevant aspects of the process of legalization of informal constructions. This includes assistance to the agencies responsible for these inter-related areas of property reform. Support is also provided in completing the first registration of immovable property in priority coastal areas and in providing secure property titles through offering expertise on the systemic and legal aspects of property reform.

#### Anti-trafficking reform

The focus of work is on: the protection of the rights of trafficked persons, the development of policies to prevent human trafficking, as well as addressing all forms of labour exploitation. To support the Government's commitment to improving the identification and protection of trafficked and exploited persons, further capacity building support is provided to law-enforcement authorities, the Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees and labour inspectorates. The improvement of cross-border co-operation on anti-trafficking





matters is enhanced by supporting the National Anti-trafficking Co-ordinator in organizing meetings with neighbouring countries on improving cross-border co-operation for the protection and aid of victims of trafficking. In tackling child labour, a child protection unit was established as a result of co-operation with the NGO Terre des Hommes and local authorities in Vlora.

In co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR, a project is being implemented to further strengthen trafficked persons access to justice and rights by monitoring, free legal assistance, and raising awareness of rights. The protection of street children who are at risk of trafficking or exploitation is supported through outreach activities to Roma and Egyptian communities.

In co-operation with the OSCE/OCEEA, the economic empowerment of women in northern Albania was supported. The Presence supported a local implementing partner to offer vocational and entrepreneurship training coupled with business advisory services and provision of micro-loans. Some 40 women have benefited from access to micro-loans used either to start a business or expand an existing business.

## SECURITY CO-OPERATION

The Presence provides support to the State Police and Border and Migration Police. The work of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) is supported in providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Defence in the effort to dispose of surplus conventional ammunition.

### Integrated border management

To assist the state authorities with integrated border management issues, the Presence supports cross-border

co-operation meetings, which bring together police of the neighbouring States to discuss border and security issues. To help improve security on the borders, specialized technical equipment, biometric passport readers, and back-up power supply systems have all been provided.

### Police assistance

Technical assistance is provided to the police, which includes training on election policing, advanced police instructor methodology, internal control service investigation techniques, democratic and community policing as well as fighting organized crime.

### Surplus ammunition disposal

To help facilitate the work of the FSC, the Presence assists the Ministry of Defence in their effort to dispose of surplus conventional ammunition. The Presence has assisted with the disposal of all stocks of toxic Mélange rocket fuel and is now assisting with the disposal of large calibre ammunition with funding from the Governments of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Greece.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

In addition to the core budget of 3,296,200 Euros, the Presence also manages extra-budgetary funds provided by OSCE participating States, totalling 2,223,100 Euros in extra budgetary funds in 2010. Staff: 109 (international: 25; national professionals: 17; general service staff: 67)