

**HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT GRADUATION CEREMONY OF
MAGISTRATES' SCHOOL (14 November 2012)**

President Nishani,
Director Semini,
Distinguished authorities,
Dear graduates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

To be here with you today, in this meaningful ceremony, which gathers the finest of this country's legal profession is a great pleasure for me.

As Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, it is also an honour for me to participate in this really very distinguished panel of speakers.

Building on previous remarks, please allow me to also congratulate you on completing your studies at the School of Magistrates. I am sure that this has been a challenging endeavour and that it required a great deal of effort.

One of the responsibilities of the OSCE Presence, according to our mandate, is to provide assistance and expertise to the Albanian authorities in the area of judicial reform.

This has allowed us to work together with the School of Magistrates over the years, over different issues and on several occasions. For instance, we have closely cooperated with the School in providing professional trainings for the newly-established Probation Service and in the protection of children's rights.

And I am also very happy to report our successful event yesterday due to the great support of the Justice Minister Halimi here present and also supported by the Minister of Interior Mr. Noka.

This co-operation has always been a rewarding experience.

The School of Magistrates is a key institution for the future of the judiciary. We strongly believe that a high-quality legal education has a direct impact on improving the performance of the judiciary.

I am glad to say that the School's graduates have confirmed this belief over the years. Now it is up to you, the class of 2012, to continue this important positive trend.

We have long assisted the School in monitoring the entrance examination procedure and it is very encouraging to see such a strong competition for the limited number of places. The fact that so many law students show firm interest in studying at the School of Magistrates testifies to the quality of your institution.

It also ensures that only the best lawyers of this country are admitted to the School.

Dear graduates, I do not need to remind you of the importance of respect for human rights as part of the foundations of a democratic society.

Over the years, you have been well trained in human rights law. But these rights are not only applicable in legally complex cases before the Constitutional Court and in the European Court of Human Rights. Many international human rights instruments have been incorporated into domestic legislation, giving such rules a higher rank than other laws.

At bottom, these are not theoretical, but rather practical issues affecting the lives and futures of citizens of this society, including your personal lives and those of your family members.

Applying human rights in your daily work as judges and prosecutors is a paramount task.

It is a practical contribution to improving the human rights situation in your country and strengthening the rule of law.

You, the graduates, are now at the threshold to be part of the judicial system at an even more elevated level. This is a heavy responsibility. I am confident that you are well prepared for it. And it is a noble duty.

So, let me congratulate you again and wish you all the best in your future work and in your still young careers.

Good luck!

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