



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

HEAD OF PRESENCE REMARKS AT ROUNDTABLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY WITH SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF OSCE CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE ON COMBATING CORRUPTION

15 October 2018

Dear Prof. Severino, Dear General Director, Dear representatives of Civil Society, Dear Ambassador, dear Elsa Ballauri.

First of all, a warm welcome. I attend this meeting here with great interest, keen to encourage Civil Society Organizations here in Albania to learn from our distinguished guest speaker, Prof. Paola Severino, the OSCE's first Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Corruption.

We all know about the relevance of fighting corruption in Albania, so this visit was highly timely and very important for us.

I salute Prof. Severino's contribution to the international fight against corruption, equally to her openness to share her experience and expertise with Albanian institutions and civil society.

You know the role that Prof. Severino has played in the fight against corruption in Italy, so we as OSCE are particularly proud to have her on board in this field.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank also the Italian Embassy for organizing the visit, part of the commendable effort of the Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE to advance the cause of anti-corruption fight.

We all know, corruption is a plague that affects the proper functioning of public institutions to the benefit of citizens they are supposed to serve. Democracy cannot flourish in cleptocratic states. This is as easy as that.

I know that the Albanian Government improved the legal framework and institutional set-up in the area of corruption. That has been recognized by international organizations like Transparency International over the last five years. But has enough been done? I think the challenges remain very high.

Last year, Albania dropped several places in the rating of the Corruption Perception Index of the Transparency International. This was reinforced by a UNDP survey, which indicated that more people were affected by corruption in 2017 than in 2016.

Recently the discussion is focusing on the fact that about one third of public procurement is carried out through negotiated procedures and without competition. We can continue on that.

The chain of specialized anti-corruption bodies, including what is planned in the framework of the justice reform – a special prosecutor’s office and a National Bureau of Investigation – has so far failed to be established.

This shows: Stronger efforts of the government and also of the civil society, and that is why we invited you, are needed.

You can make a strong contribution to preventing and fighting corruption. You can exert pressure. I must say quite openly that my own experience, I served here as German Ambassador from 2007 to 2010, is a bit disappointing concerning civil society. You have been much more vocal in the past. I still remember very recent photographs when I arrived from big demonstrations against corruption. Where are these demonstrations today? It is certainly not only that Albania improved from a low of 2.9 at Transparency International when I arrived in 2007 or 3.1 in 2013 to 3.8 now. This is an improvement, I admit that. But this is certainly not enough.

I hope that today’s visit and the discussion with Prof. Severino will inspire you to get more active on that.

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