



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

P r e s e n c e i n A l b a n i a

**Address by Ambassador Osmo Lipponen, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania,
at the opening of the
Regional Workshop on Co-operation in Combating Money Laundering and
Financing of Terrorism**

**Hotel Sheraton, Tirana, Albania
26-27 January 2004**

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, guests from regional Financial Intelligence Units,

Hearing Minister Bello's and Minister Malaj's substantial contributions, I will be short in welcoming you on behalf of the OSCE Presence in Albania, one of the organizers.

This conference is very important and timely. The fight against organized international crime and terrorism is of primary importance for growing economies and democracies in this region. We can make here an effort to deliver to the state institutions proper means and best practices and help the economy reach a fair code of conduct to combat this, in all terms, big criminal activity. The legal framework seems to be already there. Also in Albania, a recent progress with the legislation has been noticed.

Most emerging economies of today are ideal for money laundering. Majority of businesses is of small or medium size, economies are cash economies, but there is already enough banking and Information Technology infrastructure at reach of the criminals for their international transactions. On the other hand, those fighting against money laundering have usually had very weak resources. This is also true in the case of Albania.

I mentioned new Albanian legislation. Now it is time for implementation. It is obvious that besides the weak resources, slow implementation is due to lack of expertise and co-ordination among different structures. There also seems to be, in some cases, low motivation to act according to the law. This is why concrete results have not yet matched the expectations. Your insight and enhanced regional co-operation will be badly needed in this work. The commitment of the Government, from what we heard here today, is a promise of the needed change.

Having studied the programme of this event and the list of experts, I am convinced that this Regional Workshop on Co-operation in Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism will be a success.

I expect that you will manage to give further input to the regional co-operation and that the Ministry of Finance and the Albanian Financial Intelligence Unit will obtain recommendations necessary for their future work. The OSCE and the Presence in Albania will also try to find ways and means to support their implementation.

I wish you all an intensive and productive workshop.