

**REMARKS BY DEPUTY HEAD OF PRESENCE ROBERT WILTON AT
GRADUATION CEREMONY OF SCHOOL OF MAGISTRATES**

Tirana, 5 October 2015

Justice systems, like justice careers, are a journey. In my country, the UK, we have just celebrated the 800 year anniversary of one of our greatest justice system milestones. And we're still reforming. So if Albania's justice sector reform isn't finished by the end of the year, don't worry. Getting it right is more important than getting it fast.

Meaningful justice sector reform is, simply, the future stability and sustainability of this country. Its success will be decided not in laws on paper, but in the daily experiences of citizens in courtrooms all across Albania. You, today, by graduating, are going to the front line of the future of your country.

We all know that impartiality is the essential quality of a judge. Well, there is currently a dispute underway in Albania, which is larger than any case you will ever try, and in it you cannot be impartial.

This dispute is the contest between integrity and corruption. In this dispute, there is no impartiality: you cannot stand aside and say "this is not my fight". You must take sides. Choosing one side will certainly bring you some attractive short-term benefits, as a solitary individual. Choosing that side will also destroy your reputation, the integrity of your Courtroom and everything you have worked for so far, the faith of your citizens in their own country, and in the end it will destroy the reputation of the country and the country itself. You must decide if you care about that.

The details of the justice sector reform are becoming clearer. There will be a vetting of judges. Those who fail will lose their careers and their reputations. Some will go to jail.

For those who choose the winning side in this contest between integrity and corruption, the rewards will be great, and lasting. In a fair system, you will succeed because of your own talent, not because of how much money someone is paying someone else. The best of you can advance rapidly. Your profession will finally have the prestige it enjoys in other countries. International investors will want to come to Albania. Your citizens will have a country they believe in, and they will look up to you as the guardians of it. Do you care?

I urge you, as future judges and prosecutors, to take an interest in what is going on in the Assembly and to play your part. Events in the Assembly will affect you, and you must also affect them.

Your greatest sustainable impact on your society will be in helping to establish and to protect a rule of law culture. If there is not a rule of law culture, there is no trust in society and without trust there is no society, and there is no country. If you establish and protect a rule of law culture, you make everything else possible for your country's progress and integration.

You have chosen justice as your vocation at a critical moment in the history of the country. With your choice come great responsibility and great opportunity. By taking up your vocation

at this critical moment, you have an opportunity unique to your generation to shape the future. You will decide if this country fails or if it succeeds.

I commend you for taking this responsibility, and I would like to join you in celebrating the opportunity. I am proud that the OSCE has been active behind the scenes in supporting the School of Magistrates and remains active at every level of the justice sector, from the strategic discussions about reform through to our work to help individual judges in individual courtrooms deliver justice more effectively. I look forward to our continued partnership with you all.

Let us start by celebrating your graduation from the School of Magistrates: I congratulate you, and I wish that you will always make wise judgements.