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MISIONI I PËRHERSHËM
I REPUBLIKËS SË SHQIPËRISË
PRANË ORGANIZATAVE
NDËRKOMBËTARE
VJENË

PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

Ref. 166

NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna presents its compliments to all Permanent Delegations and Missions of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, and in accordance with the Decision 02/09 of the Forum for Security Co-operation, has the honour to submit the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Permanent Delegations and Missions of the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, the assurances of its highest consideration. E. GJ.



To:
All Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE
OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre
VIENNA

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

Information Exchange on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security

for the year 2022

Part 1: Interstate elements

1. Measures for prevention and fighting against terrorism

1.1 In what agreements (international, regional, bilateral) related to preventing and fighting against terrorism is your country a Party in?

Protocol between the Ministry of the Interior of Albania and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Italy “On strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism and trafficking in human beings”, signed on 03 November 2017 in Tirana, entered into force on the date of signature.

In the framework of regional cooperation against terrorism, the Protocol between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Macedonia, “On cooperation to fight against terrorism”, on 03.02.2018, in Ohrid, Macedonia.

Other bilateral agreements between the Republic of Albania and:

1. Slovenia - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and organised crime”, signed on 24.11.1993, in Tirana.
2. Croatia - “On police cooperation” 14.12.1993.
3. Egypt - “Protocol on cooperation to fight against terrorism”, signed in Cairo, on 24.10.1995”.
4. Hungary - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime”, signed in February 1999 and ratified by law no. 8623, dated 15.06.2000;
5. Romania - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, organised crime, illegal trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances, as well as other illegal activities”, signed on 07.06.2002, in Bucharest.
6. Montenegro - “On cooperation to fight against organised crime, terrorism, illegal trafficking and other illegal activities”, signed in Podgorica, Montenegro, on 31.12. 2003.
7. North Macedonia - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, organised crime, illegal trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, illegal migration and other illegal activities”, signed in February, in the Republic of North Macedonia 17.06.2004.
8. Bulgaria - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, organised crime, illegal trafficking and other illegal activities”, signed in Tirana, signed on 29.12.07.
9. France - “On cooperation in the area of domestic security, signed in Paris, on 15.05.2008 “, signed in Paris, on 15.05.2008.
10. Germany - “On cooperation in the area of security”, signed on 31 May 2013 and ratified by law on 23 January 2014.

11. Bosnia-Herzegovina - “On cooperation to fight against crime, especially terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and organised crime”, signed on 24.03.2009, and entered into force on 4.3.2010.
12. Kosovo - “On mutual cooperation in the area of security”, approved by DCM no. 429, dated 20.05.2015.
13. Slovakia - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, organised crime, illegal trafficking of narcotic, psychotropic substances and drug precursors, and other crimes”, approved by DCM no. 485, dated 10.06.2015.
14. USA - “Cooperation agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the USA Government “On exchange of terrorism screening information”, as well as the Operational Protocol ratified by law no. 72 dated 7.7.2016 “Memorandum of Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania “On strengthening of cooperation to interdict terrorist travel and fight illegal migration and related serious crimes” approved in principle by DCM no.153 dated 1.3.2017.
15. Serbia - “On cooperation to fight against organized crime, international illegal drug trafficking and international terrorism”, signed on 11.03.2010, and entered into force on 01.03.2012.
16. Latvia - “On cooperation to fight against terrorism, organized crime, illegal trafficking of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors”, signed on 16.12.2009

1.2 What national legislation is approved in your country for the implementation of mentioned agreements?

- On 17.12.2020 the Parliament of Albania adopted the Law no. 152 on some amendments and additions to the law no. 74/2014 "On Weapons".
By order of the GDPS, the Work Program of the State Police was approved "On the implementation of the Objectives of the Strategy for the Control of Small Arms, Small Arms, Ammunition and Explosives 2019-2024 and the Action Plan 2019-2021".
- The law No. 112/2020, “On beneficial owners register” entered in force by September 2020. It is drafted by the National Business Centre (NBC) with the support of Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE). The law stipulates that the NBC will handle the registration process of the beneficial owners of the reporting entities in the beneficial owner register.
- The Parliament of Albania approved law no. 154/2020 dated 17.12.2020 "On the central register of bank accounts". This legal initiative is in line with Article 32 / a of the EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive (Directive 2015/849 as amended by the directive 2018/843).
- The central register of bank accounts will be established as a state database, where information will be collected and stored electronically. The register keeps records of individual bank account holders and security deposit boxes; data on the natural person, legal person or legal agreement for the bank account holder or the lessee of a security deposit, including the information of the beneficial owner. The information stored in the Register is not available to the public.

GDPML in the framework of the ToC findings, in regard to Law no 9917 /2008 “*On the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism*” prepared the legal amendments for the full alignment of this law with EU AML Directives (2015/849 as amended by 2018/843). Albanian parliament approved the legal amendments with the law 120/2021 dated 02.12.2021

Albania has a significant legal framework for preventing and combating terrorism, but legislation in this area is still considered partially aligned, respectively 52% of the acquis in this area being fully aligned, 38% partially aligned, 5% of acts are unapproved and 5% are not relevant for harmonization. Some of the main shortcomings identified during the screening process in this area are: the lack of a provision in Albanian legislation regarding assistance and support especially for victims of terrorism. Regarding the rules for compensation of victims, there is no definition in Albanian legislation of how victims of terrorist acts will be compensated and there is still no provision on measures against the content of online public provocation. Regarding critical infrastructure, Albanian legislation has a law on civil protection, which in fact has not yet provided a Security Plan for each facility, as recommended in the relevant Directive on Critical Infrastructure.

Albania approved in December 2020 the new Cross-Cutting Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2021-2025 and its Action Plan 2021-2023. The Cross-Cutting Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2021-2025 represents the basic national strategic document on the fight against terrorism that combines the European Union integration agenda in relation to the fulfilment of the obligations of Chapter 24 as regards counter-terrorism, with the sustainable economic and social development of the country, including the interconnection with the Sustainable Development Goals. This document is drafted for the purpose of policy orientation and enhancing the comprehensive approach of prevention, protection, prosecution and response to terrorism. The drafting of this strategy, which is based on the EU counter-terrorism strategy¹, aims at harmonizing the activity of structures, agencies and institutions that are responsible for the fight against terrorism. Prevention of and fight against terrorism continue to be the main strategic priorities of the Albanian Government.

1.3 Which are the roles and missions of military, paramilitary, security forces and police forces in preventing and fighting against terrorism in your country?

By Order of the MoI, No. 548/7 dated 17.10.2014 there was created the Antiterrorism Directorate in the General Directorate of the State Police, with a force of 72 police officers.

The mission of the Antiterrorism Directorate is to detect, prevent and fight possible terrorist actions, and every other activity connected with it within the country.

Police intelligence is the main component of the antiterrorism structures in preventing terrorism. This includes the gathering, assessing, analysing and usage of information on extremist tendencies.

¹ EC Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2005 and CoE Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2018-2022

To prevent and tackle the phenomenon of the involvement of Albanian citizens in armed conflicts abroad:

1. Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania; through law 98/2014, qualifying criminal offenses as follows:
 - a. Participation in combat actions in a foreign country; Article 265/a.
 - b. Organization to participate in combat actions in a foreign country; Article 265/b.
 - c. Call to participate in violent combat actions in a foreign country; Article 265/c.

2. Antiterrorism Directorate cooperates with:
 - a. State Informative Service.
 - b. Prosecutors Office on Serious Crimes.
 - c. Office against Terrorism on the Defense Intelligence Agency; under the Ministry of Defense;
 - d. Inter-institutional Operational Maritime Center; responsible for blue border in Albania.
 - e. General Directorate for Prevention of Money Laundering;
 - f. Partner services, FBI, CIA, Europol, Interpol.

Institutions that are tasked with monitoring and combating terrorist acts are:

- Counter-Terrorism Directorate at the General Directorate of State Police;

The CT Directorate was established by Order no. 548/7 of the Minister of Internal Affairs, date 17.10.2014 and its responsibility is defined by Order no. 677 of the General Director of the State Police, date 09.07.2018. The CT Directorate has a separate budget line. Head of the Directorate is appointed based on the State Police regulation and is directly dependent to the General Director of the State Police.

For the year 2022, the Counter-Terrorism Directorate had in its structure 79 employees, out of which 74 police officers and 5 are civil employees. Also, the structure is organized at central level as follows:

- Sector of Investigation and Coordination; (1 head of unit + 4 specialists at central level)
- Sector of Analysis and Archive; (1 head of unit + 5 specialists at central level)
 - Sector of Logistic Services; (1 head of unit + 4 specialists at central level)
 - Counter-terrorism Operational Unit; (1 head of unit + 14 specialists at central level)
 - Verification of Terrorism and Security Unit; (1 head of unit + 9 specialists at central level)
 - 1 Specialist for Coordination with State Intelligence Service.
 - Financing of Terrorism Investigation Unit (1 head of unit + 2 specialists at central level) was established on February 7th, 2019 by Order of the General Director No. 159, of the State Police.

At local level, 4 Investigation Units operate with 36 specialists and 3 assistant specialists as follows:

- Unit of Tirana, Kavaja and Durrës; (1 head of unit + 12 police employees at local level)

- Unit of Elbasan, Korçë, Dibër; (1 head of unit + 7 specialists at local level)

- Unit of Fier, Vlorë, Lushnje, Gjirokastrë, Berat; (1 head of unit + 5 specialists at local level)
- Unit of Shkodër, Kukës, Lezhë. (1 head of unit + 4 specialists at local level)

1.4 Providing any additional relevant information on national efforts to prevent and countering terrorism.

Legislative framework

There is a new joint Cross - Cutting Strategy for the prevention of Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism 2023-2025 and 2 respective Action Plans, that were approved in February 2023.

Status of the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism for the Western Balkans

In the fight against terrorism, Albania has concluded the implementation of the measures envisaged in the Joint Action Plan on Counter Terrorism for the Western Balkans signed with the European Commission in 2019. In the light of the progress made in the implementation of the initial priority actions included in the bilateral arrangement signed on 9 October 2019, the relevant authorities of the Republic of Albania, on one side, and the European Commission, on the other side, agreed to further priority actions, to be implemented in the course of 2023 and 2024 still within the objectives of the Joint Action Plan. Therefore, on December 9th, 2022, the European Commission and the authorities of the Republic of Albania signed the Arrangement for the Implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans. The Albanian authorities should report to the EU on the implementation of the measures every six months. The new measures agreed by both parties under the main 5 objectives have addressed the recommendations given for the fight against terrorism: transposition of the national law in accordance with the EU Acquis, protection of critical infrastructure and public spaces, terrorist content online, drafting of the law on explosives precursors and developing strategic communications campaigns to counter violent extremism.

Investigations

During 2022, Counter Terrorism Directorate (CTD) structures referred 30 criminal offences in the Special Prosecution Office Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) and the Judicial District Prosecutions, of which 6 offences for terrorist purposes, as provided for by the Articles 230, 232, 232/a, 234/a, of the Criminal Code.

There were 2 international operations conducted during 2022.

Regarding the situation of FTF, in order to gather evidence for some Albanian citizens suspected to have left the Albanian territory and reached Syria, to join the terrorist organization "ISIS", the CTD has registered a case to the Serious Crime Prosecution Office in November 2017 and the Criminal Procedure No. 333/2017 was registered. This proceeding was also registered by SPAK, with case No. 46, 2019, related to the criminal offenses of "Terrorist organization", Organizing the involvement in military operations in a foreign state", "Involvement in military operations in a foreign state", "Financing of Terrorism", as provided for in Articles 234/a, 265/a, 265/b and 230/a of the Criminal Code.

FTF - Cooperation with Europol and partners

The CT Directorate has continuously carried out exchange information with the specialized services of EU, EUROPOL, SELEC, CEPOL, Member States and EU agencies, partner services and the Security Offices accredited in Tirana.

Counter Terrorism Directorate is user of the European Counter Terrorism Center's products and services and cooperates with the Internet Referral Unit of Europol. have periodically shared information with the focal point "Travellers", "Hydra" and "Dolphin" and have sent the information provided by the project "Check the web", through the dedicated SIENA channel on CT matters, that addresses the terrorist content online.

Information exchange

During 2021, the monitoring of Albanian and foreign citizens suspected of actions with terrorist background, and the exchange of information with partners/international organization are as follow:

- A total of 32130 e-mails received in the communication channel with T.S.C. were duly processed.
- A total of 515 verifications were performed over "Inconclusive" status subjects, of which 34 responses were sent for cases requested by TSC Office.
- Lists of entities that result in "Positive" status, sent by SC-UN, were periodically updated in 82 cases.
- In connection with the Vennling -Hamah, 125 practices have been processed for the identification of persons arrested in countries of armed conflict in Syria / Iraq.
- A total of 762 e-mails received were processed, and 286 responses were replied over the Europol SIENA Channel following information and intelligence exchange.

General information (statistics) on FTF-s:

Based on the up-to-date data on the involvement of Albanian citizens in the armed conflict zones in Syria and Iraq (years 2012-2015), the statistics on FTF's are as follows:

- 91 individuals are in the conflict zones (51 men. 15 women and 25 children);
- 10 men believed to be in the Syrian territory;
- 10 men are imprisoned (1 believed dead in prison);
- 25 individuals (7 women, 18 children) are held in camps administered by the Kurd Forces;
- 15 individuals (8 women and 7 children) believed that have lost their lives in the conflict zones;
- 31 men believed to have been killed during the conflict;
- 38 citizens (9 women and 28 children) have been repatriated in 4 extraction operations.

During 2022, pursuant to the Additional Inter-Institutional Action Plan "On the Reception and Treatment of Albanian Citizens Returning from the Conflict Zone in Syria and Iraq", the authorities repatriated 13 Albanian Citizens (Operation Extraction 4) from the Al Hol and Al Roj camps in Syria: 9 children and 4 women.

They are being treated in accordance with the Decision of the Council of Ministers (confidential) no. 826, dated 26.11.2020 no. 826, dated 26.10.2020 "On the provision of

services for the reception and accommodation of unaccompanied children returned from Syria and Iraq" as amended, has been engaged in coordinating and monitoring the work with central, local institutions and international partners during the process of receiving and accommodating returned citizens as well as implementing rehabilitation and reintegration plans. All relevant information is shared with Europol.

The Counter -Terrorism Directorate (CTD), through the Terrorism and Security Verification Unit, conducts the monitoring of social networks for the purpose of investigating and providing evidence related to the FTF and individuals involved in activities in the field of terrorism. During 2022 there were carried out 287 procedural actions and monitoring profiles on social networks and there were performed 19 profiles on subjects.

Monitoring of returned citizens and their family members, as well as other citizens suspected of involvement in terrorist activities, is also carried out by placing them on the checklist in the section "Border notifications".

Pursuant to the annual Plan of Measures (restricted) No. 74, dated 15.01.2021 "On monitoring citizens returned from countries in conflict such as Syria / Iraq and other countries, identifying and controlling the activity of all individuals or groups with radical extremist tendencies, Albanian or foreign citizens", the Counter-terrorism staff has assisted in handling 247 cases for the interview of 389 foreign citizens of different nationalities, mainly from M.E.N.A. Countries, apprehended by the border and migration and local police trying to cross through Albania to the EU countries.

Convictions

During 2022 an Iranian citizen was convicted with 10 years in prison for the offences "Terrorist organization" art. 234/a and "Performance of services and actions with enlisted persons", art. 230/ç.

Periodic updating of lists for 82 cases resulting in "Positive" status, sent by the UNSC.

In point I.O.9, Objective: Investigating Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL's Recommendation)

In February 2020, Albania completed the post-ICGR / FAFT monitoring period and the Joint Monitoring Group concluded that Albania **has made significant progress** on the four IO9 (Immediate Outcome) recommendations. The key recommendations in the fight against terrorist financing had to do with understanding the risks posed by FT, parallel investigations, the systematic approach to investigating FT-related offenses and terrorism. Given this assessment, the FT investigation was not included in the recommendations and measures that Albania had to implement during the enhanced follow up period (grey list).

Significant activities concluded during 2022, in terms of the fight against financing of terrorism are as follows:

- General Directorate of Tax in cooperation with Partners Albanian and with the financial support of GIZ, finished the report on “Risk Assessment of Financing of Terrorism in the NGO Sector”. The report was concluded with the contribution of the relevant institution of public and private sector: GDT, FIU, ASP, NGOs etc.
- ASP has access in the national bank account registry.
- During 26 - 30 September 2022 Albania had a TAIEX “Peer Review Assessment Expert Mission on Capacities in the areas of Counterterrorism (CT) and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)”. They conducted face to face meetings with all the relevant institutions involved in countering terrorism, financing of terrorism and violent extremism. The objective of this peer-review mission was to provide the European Commission and the beneficiary country with an assessment of the country’s capacity to effectively address challenges posed by terrorism and violent extremism, including strategic and institutional framework, legislation, sub-legal acts, as well as operational capacities of judiciary, intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The conclusion on financing of terrorism matter “Albania has an extensive and complete AML/CFT legal framework. There is a good cooperation between FIU, State Police, General Prosecutor’s Office and Special Prosecutor’s Office. Also on the international level, there seems to be a smooth cooperation with FIU partners and the Egmont Group. Albania’s legislation is designed to align with EU AML Directives 4 and 5. The establishment of a Commercial Register of Beneficial Owners is another asset in the fight against ML/TF.”
 - Since 2016, the State Police, through implementing the law 157/2013, “For the measures against the financing of terrorism” has proposed and approved by Government Decision the placement of 18 individuals, in the “Internal list” suspected for activities connected to terrorism and terrorism financing.

Prevention (Anti-Radicalization Measures): Updates on the Center for the Fight against Violent Extremism, including its activities.

Capacity building

- The Counter Terrorism Directorate staff, with the support of international partners has participated/attended in 54 training sessions, meetings, and conferences.
- The Financing of Terrorism Investigation Unit in the Counter Terrorism Directorate has attended 9 specific trainings on financing of terrorism, organized by OSCE, UNODC, CEPOL and ICITAP.

In July 2018, the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Measures against Money Laundering (ML), Terrorist Financing (TF) and Weapons of Mass Destruction (known as the MONEYVAL Committee), in the Council of Europe published the Round 5 report, Albania's assessment of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing measures, based on the Methodology and Recommendations of the International Action Group Against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (known as FATF-GAFI), 2012.

On the implementation of MONEYVAL recommendations, in the 5th Round of evaluation of measures against money laundering (PP), terrorist financing (FT) and weapons of mass destruction (ADM), for Albania, the Ministry of Interior and the State Police were part of the

actions for the drafting and implementation of the action plan for the fulfilment of the Recommendations of the Moneyval Committee of the Council of Europe, materialized in Decision no. 01, dated 04.09.2018, approved by the National Committee for the Coordination of the Fight against Money Laundering, in the meeting of September 2018.

Pursuant to this action plan with decision no. 1, dated 19.02.2020, an inter-institutional working group was set up to follow and fulfil the recommendations of the FATF, a group chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and composed of the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Defense, Deputy Minister of Interior, Deputy Minister of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office, Special Prosecutor's Office, Bank of Albania, Financial Supervision Authority, State Intelligence Service, HIDAACI, National Bureau of Investigation and General Directorate of State Police. The meetings of this group are conducted every month for the reporting on the implementation of the tasks of the action plan. In the framework of this plan, a weekly report is submitted to the Prime Minister office set up for this reporting (email address: moneyval.kryeministria.al), to the Deputy Minister of Interior and the Director of the General Directorate for the Prevention of Money Laundering.

In June 2020, it was drafted calendar Plan 650, dated 04.06.2020, signed by the Head of the Criminal Police Department and the Director of the General Directorate for the Prevention of Money Laundering, based on which Joint Inspection Groups (GDPL, GDPML and the General Prosecutor's Office), during the period June-September 2020 organized joint analysis of criminal proceedings with high expectations for sequestration in the Prosecutions of Tirana, Durrës, Lezha, Shkodra, Elbasan, Korça, Berat, Fier, Vlora, which led to the advancement of investigations, trial, seizure and confiscation of a set of assets of the subjects in criminal proceedings.

In July 2020, it was drafted the Memorandum of Cooperation no. 14124/1 dated 27.07.2020 "On increasing the effectiveness of investigations related to ML / FT, economic and financial crimes, sequestration and confiscation of criminal assets".

The General Prosecutor issued Instruction no. 10, dated 17.07.2020 "Administrative and procedural measures" to increase the effectiveness of investigations related to ML/ TF, economic and financial crimes, sequestration and confiscation of criminal assets".

The Special Prosecutor, the Special Money Laundering Investigation Sections in the Judicial District Prosecution Offices were appointed, the prosecutors who will lead these investigations, and in response, Economic and Financial Crime Investigation Specialists were appointed to the Local Police Directorates and Commissariats of Police in Judicial Districts that will deal specifically with the investigation of criminal offenses related to money laundering.

The Contact Points of the General Prosecution with the GDML, the Judicial District Prosecution with the Local Police Directorates and the Police Commissariat of Judicial District and the and Police Commissariat of Judicial District with the Special Section of the Judicial District Prosecution were appointed. The contact points will meet with each other every weekend and exchange the necessary information relating to referrals, investigations, convictions, seizure and confiscation of criminal or money laundering assets.

In October 2020, the Inspection Plan no. 1907, dated 15.10.2020 "On the evaluation of the work and realization of the objectives of the structures of investigation of Economic and Financial Crime in Local "On the prevention and crackdown on criminal offenses of Money Laundering, etc.".

In October 2020, the Order of the Minister of Interior no. 346, dated 22.10.2020 “On the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation no. 5270, dated 16.07.2020 to increase the effectiveness of investigations related to ML / FT, economic and financial crimes, sequestration and confiscation of criminal assets.

In November 2020, the Measures Program of the GDPR no. 2074, dated 11.11.2020 “On the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation no. 5270, dated 16.07.2020 to increase the effectiveness of investigations related to ML / FT, economic and financial crimes, sequestration and confiscation of criminal assets, in order to meet the Recommendations of the SAC and the ICRG / FATF Action Plan ”.

In cooperation with the General Prosecutor's Office, a statement/register of Track Records was drafted that will be kept and completed by the Special Sections in the Judicial District Prosecutions, the Money Laundering Investigation Sections/Specialists in the LPD and the KP Judicial Districts, for criminal offenses of money laundering.

In February 2020 Albania completed the post-ICGR / FAFT monitoring period and the Joint Monitoring Group concluded that Albania has made significant progress on the four IO9 (Immediate Outcome) recommendations. The key recommendations in the fight against terrorist financing had to do with understanding the risks posed by FT, parallel investigations, the systematic approach to investigating FT-related offenses and terrorism. Given this assessment, the FT investigation was not included in the recommendations and measures that Albania should implement with the ICGR / FAFT Action Plan by October 2021.

The last report² of the FAFT Joint Group was released in 24 February 2023 that has stated: “Since February 2020, when Albanian made a high-level commitment to work with FAFT and MoneyVal to strengthen the effectiveness of its AML/CTF regime, Albania has taken steps toward improving its AML/CTF regime. The FAFT has made the initial determination that Albania has substantially completed its action plan and appreciates Albania’s work to address its strategic deficiencies.

CTD have a very good cooperation with the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) regarding the implementation of the measures set in the Action Plan on the recommendation of the MoneyVal and FAFT.

In point I.O.9, Objective; Investigating Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL’s Recommendation).

Department of Criminal Police/Sector against Money Laundering

Pursuant to the tasks set up during the meeting of the 21 of December 2022 and its Action Plan for the year 2023 “On excluding the Republic of Albania from the grey list”, the General Directorate of Albanian State Police did undertake the following measures:

1. In the beginning of January 2023, for the implementation of the Action Plan “On excluding the Republic of Albania from the grey list” the conclusions achieved during the meeting are sent to the Central Investigative Directorate, the Counter Terrorism Directorate and to the all district police units in order to

² <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/High-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/Increased-monitoring-february-2023.html>

undertake the respective measures to prevent and fight the Money laundering illegal activities and counter the financing of terrorism.

2. On January 2023, General Directorate of ASP informed the Coordinated Committee on the Fight against Money Laundering for the achieved results made for the seizure, confiscation and reclamation of criminal assets.
3. On April 2023 General Directorate of ASP informed in writing form the Coordinated Committee on the Fight against Money Laundering “On the actions and achieved results of ASP during the first quarter 2023 against money laundering activities for the searching, finding, seizing and reclamation of criminal assets”.
4. During March – April 2023, ASP has informed the General Directorate of Prevention of Money Laundering on the number of requests received and replied to the counterpart structures on the money laundering activities (for the years 2019 – 2022) under the implementation of the National Assessment of the Risk associated with the Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism.
5. After a detailed analysis during 2022, the General Directorate of ASP has intensified the police actions for the prevention and counter of money laundering illicit activities and financing of terrorism.

The Coordination Centre for Countering Violent Extremism is running the process of drafting the National Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 2022-2026 and the Action Plan. The strategic document is being drafted aiming to reflect all the dynamics of the development of the phenomenon in our society in accordance with the new challenges of the process of rehabilitation and reintegration, strategic communication and combating online radicalism and violent extremism, with concrete objectives that are associated with measurable measures and indicators for effective implementation through a comprehensive and community-based approach.

The CVE Centre, during 2021, has conducted numerous trainings for first line practitioners and actors involved in detecting, preventing and addressing violent extremism at central and local levels in close cooperation with the central and local institutions as well as the non-governmental actors and partners. Due to COVID-19, many trainings, workshops, and meetings are held online or in hybrid mode via online platforms.

With the first repatriation of 5 (five) returnees from conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, the CVE Center has been actively engaged with awareness/informative sessions, and capacity building for front-liners. CVE Center has been working in the field to coordinate work with line ministries as well as with national and international partners, in order to facilitate the process of rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration of 19 (nineteen) Albanian citizens returned from Al-Hol and Roj camps in Syria on August 1, 2021. The group of returnees consists of 5 (five) women and 14 (fourteen) children, which through the coordination of the CVE Center are accommodated in the premises of the Hosting Rehabilitation Center. This process was accompanied by daily coordination and physical presence of the CVE Center staff in the premises of the Hosting Rehabilitation Center. CVE Center, after providing and coordinating the transportation to the Hosting Rehabilitation Center through the support of partner UNICEF-Albania, has coordinated the work with all actors of the line ministries.

For the group of 5 repatriates (1 woman and 4 children) in October 2020, the CVE Center has continued working in the community in order to support them to successfully reintegrate. As the 1-year support program for these families ended in November 2021, the CVE Center has coordinated the process of providing social housing for one of the returned families who does

not own a home of its own. The provision of a social housing by the Municipality of Tirana will be able to contribute to a sustainable reintegration process where the family is supported by all local government structures, educational, health, social structures, within the area where the family lives. After-school support is provided for two minors who are attending compulsory 9-year education. Since April 2021, the two juveniles are being supported by a part-time teacher, according to individual needs and plans approved by the responsible Albanian institutions. After-school education takes place every day of the week, according to the time bands agreed between children, legal guardians, Child Protection Officer (CPO) and partner organization Terre des Hommes (TdH). Through a collaboration between the CVE Center, the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the school, both children are enrolled in public schools near their place of residence.

Technical support/Ongoing mentoring as needed for CPOs, Municipality of Tirana, as well as members of the Cross-Cutting Technical Group in case management processes. The CPOs of Administrative Units, Municipality of Tirana coordinate and monitor the provision of services, as agreed in the Individual Child Protection Plans. While members from public institutions and NGOs, part of the cross-sectoral group are continuing their support such as legal assistance (registration of children, legal documents, court proceedings for custody, etc.), ongoing assistance of psychological sessions, etc. TdH Case Managers have provided technical assistance regarding the process followed by the case management and monitoring of the services provided.

During the reporting time period, the CVE Center has followed the implementation of the Red Button to report illegal content (for more click <https://cve.gov.al/report/?lang=en>), created in cooperation with NAECCS (National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security) and Academy of Political Studies. The purpose of this portal is to create a secure online space and prevent the further spread of violent extremism. Also, this service will help children and young people to report illegal/harmful content encountered while surfing the Internet. Reports will be treated with complete confidentiality by the responsible authorities to assess the case, as well as to take immediate action against these contents.

Meanwhile, the CVE Center has participated in numerous meetings that aim protection of minors through the introduction of the Guide to the Signalling Portal of Illegally Content Websites, including cases of violent extremism in Albania.

Overall, a total of 73 (seventy-three) conferences, webinars, and workshops were held for P/CVE with national, regional and international partners.

The CVE Center has conducted the following activities as described for the period January-June 2021:

Awareness raising: 14 meetings with 187 participants in total, 80 third-party meetings with 361 participants in total, 1 (one) video-conference, 1 (one) online roundtable with General Directorate of Prisons/ARSIS, and 4 (four) articles on media. 97 media coverage, including: 9 (nine) interviews conducted within the reporting cycle that is being conducted by the "Active Media Center".

The above numbers are indicators of the dynamics of the institutional activities of the CVE Center, which has given great attention to information and awareness raising on issues of violent extremism for all social groups and employees belonging to different professional sectors such as: psychologist child protection agency / school, social workers, teachers, students, school security officers and youth community police officers, Local Public Security Councils, CSO representatives and representatives of religious communities. Awareness is a very important element which is considered effective in the framework of the soft comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of violent extremism. As such, CVE has aimed

to conducting continuous and sustainable awareness raising campaigns throughout the Albanian society, with state and non-state actors, on the consequences caused by this phenomenon, in order to preserve our strong values of peace, religious tolerance and democracy.

The forum organized by the CVE Center and IANS was supported by the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE) through the program “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey 2012-2022”.

Capacity building: 64 training sessions were conducted at local and central level and 9 conferences/videoconferences with 2018 participants in total, 1 cooperation agreement (MOU), while another draft agreement on the prevention of radicalism and violent extremism is in the process of being finalized (CVE Center with the Rectorate of the University “Aleksandër Moisiu” in Durrës)

The CVE Center in cooperation with its partners, conducted the Movi EQ methodology for the first time in Albania, by training 10 (ten) front-line professionals in two training phases in critical thinking and emotional intelligence. For the first time in Albania, was created a pool of Trainer of Trainers (ToT) regarding this methodology.

Rehabilitation and reintegration: 70 (seventy) meetings and 5 (five) training sessions were held at local and central level with 419 (four hundred and nineteen) participants on total, and 5 (five) training sessions with 150 (one hundred and fifty) school safety officers.

Capacity building, accompanied by the awareness raising, along with the implementation of two reintegration programs for frontline professionals or other state officials involved, as well as various civil society actors, are among the main stakeholders and a priority group for our institution.

Capacity raising in the health institutions: 4 (four) training sessions in local and central level with 70 (seventy) participants in total.

The CVE Center in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) as well as with partners IOM and IASC (The Institute for Activism and Social Change) conducted trainings on: “What makes us vulnerable to radicalism and violent extremism” and “The process of rehabilitation and reintegration of "Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Their Families - Case of Cerrik”.

Capacity raising in the education system: 10 (ten) meetings with 487 (four hundred and eighty-seven) participants in total, 11 (eleven) training sessions with 220 (two hundred and twenty) participants in 11 (eleven) municipalities across Albania, 5 (five) training sessions for 150 (one hundred and fifty) officers of security in schools. These activities were conducted in Durrës, Lezha, Fier, and Korça cities.

During this reporting period, the CVE Center has realized:

Cooperation at national, regional and international level includes:

- participation in 8 (eight) events/conferences at all levels mentioned above;
- 40 (forty) cooperation roundtables (onsite and online) in the framework of cooperation at all levels.

Main activities of ASP (Public Security Department) in the field:

The ASP activities on the matter during January- June 2021 are as follows:

- On the 28th of January 2021, an on-line meeting took place in working table with the topic “A strategic approach to the dissemination of messages and narratives for the prevention of Violent Extremism in Albania”.
 - On the 5th of February 2021, in the premises of the CVE Center, a technical level meeting took place, organized by the Center against Violent Extremism and Radicalism (CVE), with the participation of representatives of the National Agency for Child Protection and representatives of The Directorate of Public Order in the GDPR and the Directorate of Counter-Terrorism in the GDPL, for citizens returned from Syria.
 - On the 8th of February 2021, following the first meeting, the CVE Center, near its premises, held a second meeting at the technical level with representatives of the Directorate of Public Order in the GDPR (KP Sector), representatives of the Tirana DVP and police stations covering administrative units no. 8 and no. 11 (NSPK/SPZ), representatives of the Counter-Terrorism Directorate in the GDPS, representatives from the Reception and Treatment Center and representatives of the Child Protection Agency.
 - On the 11th of March 2021, was approved the Countering Violent Extremism project IPA-III 2020, funded by the European Union “Technical Assistance in Support of the Fight against Violent Extremism” .
 - On the 24th of March 2021, an on-line meeting was held, organized by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Conference on “Status of Violent Extremism in Albania 2021 - National assessment of drivers and the way forward for communities of sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees”. On the 27th of March 2021, an on-line meeting was held, organized by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), Group Discussion=Impact Measurement of P/LKEDH Projects, with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, AKCESK as well as representatives of municipalities.
 - On the 19th of May 2021, a training was held on “The right to information and protection of personal data in relation to the issues of P/CVE - the basic legal standard and cases of their restrictions”, organized by the CVE Center in cooperation and support of the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Personal Data Protection.
 - On the 26th of May 2021, the Department of Public Safety contributed to the standard action protocol (SOP)/guide on the process of rehabilitation/reintegration of citizens repatriated from the conflict zones in Syria/Iraq.
 - On the 31st of May 2021, an on-line meeting was organized by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), on the status of violent extremism in Albania. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the findings of the national assessment on the factors and instigators of violent extremism with institutions that are directly engaged in the fight against violent extremism.
 - On November 22 - 23, 2021, at the Security Academy, Tirana, training was held with the participation of 47 heads of community policing sections in police stations on the topic: "The fight against violent extremism and radicalism. The method of identifying risk factors and specific indicators for violent extremism in Albania".
- In cooperation with the CVE Center, the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (NPO), the Manual "Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict areas, through community policing" was drafted. The manual will serve all police leaders as well as community policing officers in police stations to plan and

build the work for the prevention of radicalism and violent extremism, as well as for the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict areas.

During 2022

- During the period February 1 - March 10, 2022, training was held at the police stations for familiarization with the Manual "Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, rehabilitation and re-integration of returnees from conflict areas, through community policing", where 630 assistant community policing specialists participated in the police stations.
- On March 24, 2022, the Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance in cooperation with the CVE Center is implementing the project "Supporting the CVE Center in spreading strategic communication for P/LKEDH through capacity building and research", which is supported by the US Embassy in Tirana, a one-day training was held.
- On March 24, 2022, in the premises of the "Tirana International" Hotel, the Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance "CSDG" held a Workshop on the topic; "Strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation and Strategic Communication mechanisms in the function of Prevention/Fight against Violent Extremism".
- On 18.05.2022 in the premises of the Hotel "Xheko-Imperial" the Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance "CSDG", in cooperation with the Embassy of the United States, in Tirana, organized training sessions for strategic communication in the framework of the fight against violent extremism, which was a "Table Top Exercise". The table top exercises were simulations of a real-life situation involving key personnel analysing a scenario in an informal setting.
- Several meetings were held in the premises of the CVE Center as part of the Cross-Cutting Technical Group, for the handling of the cases of Albanian citizens returned from the conflict zone, who are expected to leave the Rehabilitation Center and the drafting of their Individual Protection Plans.
- Participation on 29.09.2022 in the premises of the CVE, to inform (as a contact point of the ASP structures), the members of the Monitoring/Evaluation Group of the European Commission, on the work done by the police structures in the community, for prevention of radicalism and violent extremism in our country.
- Participation on 11.10.2022 in the training held at the premises of the Security Academy by an expert from the Norwegian Police, based on the Order of the Vice ASP Director, no. 1/1162, dated 07.10.2022, on the subject: "Lessons learned, for the first reactions in incidents with firearms, related to terrorism".

Year 2023

- Opinion on 17.01.2023 for the Draft Decision of the Council of Ministers, proposed by the National Center against Violent Extremism (CVE), "On the creation, organization and functioning of the Agency against Terrorism and Extremism", (AKTE).
- On February 14, 2023, in the premises of the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) it was organized a meeting with the support of the Global Community Engagement and Sustainability Fund (GCERF) and in partnership with the Center of Coordination Against Violent Extremism (CVE) with the topic "Implementing the program "Sustainable re-integration into the community of Albanian citizens returned from Syria". This meeting took place in the framework of a monitoring mission on the activities and achievements of the program, in which two high representatives of the

GCERF office also participate to conduct some informal meetings with the beneficiaries of the program.

- Pursuant to the Order of the ASP, no. 166, dated 19.01.2023, participation in the regional Seminar for improving the national contributions of the countries of the Western Balkans, for the EUROPOL Report, regarding the Terrorist Tendency and Situation (TESAT), which took place on February 22 - 23 2023, in The Hague, Holland attended by three Albanian police officers.
- Pursuant to the Order of Deputy General Director, no. 73/B, dated 21.03.2023, a training held on March 23 - 24, 2023, at the Mak Albania Hotel in Tirana, with the topic: "Key points of strategic communications", was organized by RAN, Support Policies for the Western Balkans, (Network for Awareness of Radicalism).

Border control

- In terms of implementing the National Integrated Border Management Strategy 2014-2020, laws and acts on border have been adopted:

Law no. 71/2016 "On border control".

For the purpose of implementing this law, following acts have been adopted:

Decision No.745, dated 26.10.2016, "On the performance of joint actions".

Decision No. 729, dated 20.10.2016, "On the designation of tables and symbols at border crossing points and border checkpoints".

Decision no. 824, dated 23.11.2016, "On defining format and technical samples of border check stamps and the rules for their placement on travel documents at entry and exit at the state border".

Decision no. 806, dated 16.11.2016, "On Defining Border Verification Rules Applied for Certain Categories of Persons and Assets".

Joint Instruction No. 515, dated 27.09.2016, "On the processing of personal data by border guards".

Guideline No.579, dated 20.10.2016, "On the information to be provided to persons who are subject to second line checkpoints of border crossing points".

Instruction no. 469, dated 22.08.2016, "On the list of border crossing points and transit areas in the Republic of Albania".

During 2022, the following legal acts have been adopted:

Pursuant to the Law "On Foreigners", 79/2021, with the participation of the Inter-Institutional Working Group composed of a group of experts, have drafted and adopted 15 sub laws, broken down as below:

- DCM No. 450, date 30.06.2022 "On the approval of form and content of the residence permit of foreigners";
- Instruction No. 174, date 12.09.2022 of the Minister of Interior "On procedures on the treatment of the foreigners with irregular residence in the territory of the Republic of Albania"
- Instruction No. 186, date 28.09.2022 of the Minister of Interior "On the procedures for providing the necessary assistance in transit area, with the view of returns by air";

- Instruction No. 18, Date 22.06.2022 of the Minister of Finance and Economy “On the approval of the procedures for the inter-institutional cooperation on the determination of the annual quotes of the employment”.
- Order No. 185, date 28.09.2022 of the Minister of Interior “On the determination of the procedures to monitor the residence permits and unique permissions”.
- Order No. 180, date 22.06.2022 of the Minister of Finance and Economy “On the establishment, composition and functioning of the assessment commission for the fulfillment of the conditions to receive a unique permission as an investor”.
- Order No. 178, date 22.06.2022 of the Minister of Finance and Economy “On the establishment, composition and functioning of the assessment commission for the fulfillment of the conditions to receive a unique permission as a self-employee”.
- Joint Order No. 176, date 15.09.2022 (between the Ministry of Interior – Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs-State Informative Service) “On the procedures for the declaration of a foreign citizen as non grata and the approval of the standard order for this purpose”
- Joint Order No. 219, date 08.11.2022 (between Ministry of Interior and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) “On the procedures for the organization of the return operations and joint return operations by air”;
- Joint Order No 220, date 08.11.2022 (between Ministry of Interior and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) “On the procedures for prolonging the duration of the residence, the cases of a special importance and the document that the foreigner is supplied with”;
- Joint Order No. 228, date 25.11.2022 (between Ministry of Interior and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) “On the procedures for the registration of the foreigners at the local competent authority of border and migration”;
- Joint Order No. 227, date 25.11.2022 (between Ministry of Interior and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs) “On the collaboration of the counterpart structures of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs for the procedures to supply the foreigners with and pre advanced invitation”;
- Joint Order No. 240, date 16.12.2022 (between Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance and Economy) “On the assessment of the investment value to provide the unique permission to the investor”;
- Joint Order No. 242, date 20.12.2022 (between the Ministry of Interior – Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs-State Informative Service) “On the collaboration of counterpart structures of the Ministry of Interior – Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs-State Informative Service for the procedures of issuing the visas for foreigners”;
- Order No. 234, date 13.12.2022 of the Ministry of Interior “On the approval of the form and content of the unique permission for special categories”;

Different Working Groups are established for the drafting and adoption of the following agreements:

- DCM No 67, date 02.02.2022 “On the approval of the Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo, on the alleviation of the procedures and conditions for receiving the temporary residence permits;
- DCM No 69, date 02.02.2022 “On the approval of the Agreement for the interconnection of the schemes for the Electronic Identification of the citizens within the Western Balkan area”;
- DCM No 70, date 02.02.2022 “On the approval of the Agreement for the conditions for Free Access in the market labor in the Western Balkan area”.

1. Law no. 22/2020 for some additions to Law no. 71/2016 “On border control”. This law is partially aligned with:

- *Directive 2004/82 EC of the Council of Europe of 29 April 2004 on the obligation to transmit passenger data. CELEX number 32004L0082, Official Journal of the European Union, series L, no. 261, dated 6.8.2004, pages 24–27;*

- *EU Directive 2016/681 of the Parliament and of the Council, dated 27.4.2016, on the use of passenger name record (PNR) data in order to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute acts with terrorist intent and serious crimes. CELEX number 32016L0681, Official Journal of the European Union, series L, no. 119, dated 4.5.2016, pages 132–149.*

2. Decision no. 954, dated 2.12.2020 "On the approval of the Regulation on the processing of passenger data". The regulation for the processing of passenger booking register data is in line with Council Directive 2004/82 / EC of 29 April 2004 (API) and Council Directive 2016/681 / EC (PNR).

3. Joint Instruction of the Minister of Interior with the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Personal Data Protection no. 464 dated 10.12.2020. "For the transmission of passenger data to the passenger information unit."

4. On December 2020, the Integrated Border Management Strategy was approved with DCM no. 1117, dated 16.12.2020, "On the approval of the cross-sectoral strategy of integrated border management 2021-2027 and the action plan 2021-2023".

During 2021, Ministry of Interior and Albania State Police, have drafted and approved the following legal acts:

- Law no. 79/2021 “On Foreigners”. On 24 June 2021, the Albanian Parliament adopted the Law no. 79/2021 on “Foreigners” (the “Law”). The Law was published in the official gazette no.162, dated 18 October 2021 and shall enter into force on 02 November 2021. The Law, which partially approximated with EU acquis, governs the regime of entry, stay, employment and exit of the foreigners in/from the Republic of Albania. It determines the functions and competences of state authorities as well as of other public and private entities in relation to entry, stay, working and exit of foreigners in/from the Republic of Albania. In addition, it introduces new definitions, concepts, obligations to be fulfilled by foreigners or employers hiring foreign employees, types of residence permits and respective procedures to be followed to obtain such permits.

Single permit

This is a new type of permit introduced by the Law that shall comprise both the residence permit and work permit which previously were issued as two separate documents. It shall allow foreigners to reside legally in Albania for working purposes. That means that one application procedure, shall be followed either by the employer or foreign employee, to obtain the Single Permit. The Law provides an exhausted list of working purposes for which the foreigners shall be eligible to the Single Permit. As a general rule the Single Permit is issued by the Immigration Authorities upon receipt of a prior approval from the National Employment Agency. Under the Law the foreigner is obliged to notify authorities in case of changes of the terms which the permit is been issued for.

New categories of foreigners eligible to reside in Albania and obtain residence permits are introduced by the Law such as:

Single permit for digital workers

According to the Law, digital worker is considered a foreigner who works in different places, not in an office or head office of the entity and whose work is movable and the IT equipment are main working equipment.

Residence permit for “au pairs”

The Law, in compliance with the EU Directive 2016/801, defines as “au pair” a foreigner who is admitted to Albania to be temporarily received by a family, in order to improve his linguistic skills and knowledge of Albania in exchange for light housework and taking care of children.

Residence permit for use of immovable property

Such type of residence permit is issued to a foreigner for purposes of use and disposal of an immovable property located in Albania. The main condition to be met by a foreigner for obtaining this permit is providing evidence of owning at least ½ of the immovable property located in Albania throughout the validity of residence permit.

Residence permit for retiree

This new type of permit introduced by the Law, enables to the foreigner who are retired in their country to apply and stay in Albania.

New term for residence permit issued to EU, US and Kosovo citizens

According to the Law, the first residence permit issued to citizens of EU members states, USA and Kosovo shall be for five years.

Transitory provisions for current work and residence permits

Unless otherwise provided by the Law, residence permits issued to foreigners, pursuant to the provisions of the legislation in force, before the date of entry into force of this Law, are valid until the end of their expiration date, as long as they are not revoked by the responsible state authorities or become invalid, pursuant to the provisions of the Law and sub-legal acts applicable to it.

Work permits, issued to employees or self-employed, or exemptions from the obligation to obtain a work permit, pursuant to the provisions of applicable law, before the date of entry into force of the Law and sub-legal acts applicable to it, are valid until their expiration date, as long as they are not revoked by the responsible state authorities or become invalid, pursuant to the provisions of the Law.

- Law no. 10/2021 "On Asylum in the Republic of Albania" for the implementation of which 12 bylaws have been adopted.
- VKM no. 858, dated 29.12.2021, "On determining the criteria of procedures and documentation for entry, stay and treatment of foreigners in the Republic of Albania";
- VKM no. 857, dated 29.12.2021 "On the establishment and functioning of the National Electronic Register for foreigners in the Republic of Albania";
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Hellenic Republic on the establishment and operation of a police and customs cooperation centre, in Kakavija, at the premises of the Greek Border Crossing Point, signed on 18.01.2021 by Deputy Minister of Interior and Greek counterpart.
- Agreement with Northern Macedonia "On the establishment of Joint Border Crossing Points between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Northern Macedonia";
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, "On the regulation of the local border traffic regime";

- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo "On the facilitation of procedures and conditions for obtaining a temporary residence permit";
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, "On the opening of the Joint Border Crossing Point Shishtavec (Kukës) - Dragash (Kosovo)";
- Implementation of the Protocol for the opening of PPKK Grabom in August 2021;
- Readmission Agreements with countries of origin such as: Egypt, Bangladesh and Tunisia have been drafted and submitted for follow-up procedures;
- Implementing Protocols for the Common Points with the Republic of Northern Macedonia, for PPKK Zogaj / Skje, Ckla, Montenegro, for PPKK Morinë / Vërmicë, Republic of Kosovo have been drafted and sent to follow the foreseen procedures;
- "Regulation on cooperation for conducting joint procedures and actions of the Police Authorities and Customs Authorities" has been drafted and is ready for finalization.
- In the framework of the development and improvement of Standard Work Procedures (PSP), and their approximation with the standards of the SCHENGEN borders, a Working Group "On the drafting and review of Standard Work Procedures" has been set up. In collaboration with SEESAC program experts, two new SOPs have been drafted and approved and 5 SOPs are under review.

Implementing international standards in this area;

During January – December 2022, under JO “Sea Albania 2022”, 17 border guards from Frontex are engaged and deployed (from Croatia, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta and Romania) as follows:

- Three at ICC Warsaw in Frontex Headquarters, two border guards in LCC Durres, two police officers in BCP Durrws, 3 police officers in BCP Vlorw, eight police officers in the airport of Taranto –Grottaglie/Italy (part of the crew of the helicopter GDF).
- Border and Migration Department has deployed three Albanian border guards at the JO Albania Sea 2022.

From air domain, Frontex has carried out in total 148 missions including 460 flight hours for the controlling and surveillance of Albanian maritime area.

During these missions, also additional equipment’s are involved such as: helicopters and aircrafts of GDF/Italy, an aircraft of Frontex, which on different time periods have carried out and completed the missions of surveillance of maritime area.

During the JO Albania Sea 2022, the achieved results are as follows:

- 176 vessels out of which 55 sailing ships;

- 19 yachts;
- 79 fishing boats;
- 8 merchant ships, 6 dinghies and 9 speedboats are identified and monitored.

It is the policy of the State Police to facilitate the entry/exit into/out of the Republic of Albania through the BCP, based on the Albanian legislation and the two or more multilateral conventions and agreements recognized and signed by our country, as part of the Law 71/2016, "On Border Control", "Work Procedures for Facilitating Border Verifications", to manage massive and / or uncontrolled movement of people.

Increasing its control and efficiency in BCP on entry/exit controls to achieve "Open borders but controlled and safe".

In the framework of improving the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and their approximation to the SCHENGEN border standards in cooperation with SEESAC program experts, two new SOPs have been drafted and approved and 5 more SOPs are in the process of being reviewed. The approved procedures are as follows:

- "On Risk Analysis, Assessment and Management in the Border and Migration Police", approved by order no. 1211, dated 6.12.2021;
- "Action in cases of detection of weapons / ammunition / explosives that pose significant risks to Security and Defense", approved by order no. 1214, dated 6.12.2021.

Statutory Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the European Union "On the actions taken by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) in Albania", ratified by Law no. 6/2019, dated 07.02.2019, includes all aspects of the implementation of the activities of the Agency that can take place in the territory of the Republic of Albania. This means the development of joint operations in the territory of the Republic of Albania, such as Operation NO FOA Western Balkan, in Albania, which began its implementation on 22 May 2019. This is the first operation that the European Border and Coast Guard Agency conducted in a third place, which is considered a success story. Pursuant to the Statute Agreement with the European Union and the Operational Plan "Multipurpose Operational Activities in Albania", on 24.03.2021 began the Joint Operation with the State Police and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) NO Albania Sea 2021 "at the sea border. This cooperation will be further strengthened and expanded with the development of similar Operations at the maritime border.

During the period March 24, 2021 - December 31, 2021, 17 officers from Frontex and Albania were engaged in the operation "NO Albania Sea". During the operation "NO Albania Sea 2021", 130 vessels were reported, of which 34 sailboats, 22 yachts, 29 merchant ships and 52 fishing vessels. The vessels were kept under observation and were positively identified.

In the framework of the implementation of the integrated tariff management system (ITMS), transit according to standards and approximation with European legislation, the General Directorate of Customs has conducted online meetings to adapt the systems. In this aspect, the installations for the hardware devices in the Data Centre at AKSHI have been performed. Further development of the integrated border management system, improving border control and protection will continue to be a major challenge in the process of Albania's accession to the European Union, mainly through the approximation of the legislation with that of the EU

in this area, as well as the effective cooperation of the competent authorities to protect the borders and at the same time guarantee security for the citizens.

Changes in institutional agreements;

Department for Border and Migration, pursuant to the Law on Foreigners No. 108/2013 (amended), No.74 / 2016 and Law 71/2016 "On Border Control" and for its implementation, Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 745, dated 26.10.2016, "On the performance of joint border operations", which sets out the rules of joint border activity with other law enforcement agencies, is part of the obligations to combat the respective threats.

Joint Instruction No. 515, dated 27.09.2016, "On the processing of personal data by border guards".

A Draft Agreement has been drafted between the General Directorate of Customs and the General Directorate of State Police. A Working Group has been established with representatives of the ASP and the GDC, to draft a regulation on cooperation with the GDC. Currently, the Regulation "On cooperation for the implementation of procedures and joint actions of the Police Authorities and Customs Authorities" has been drafted and is ready for approval. After the working group has completed the final draft, approval is expected from the two heads of the General Directorate of State Police and the General Directorate of Customs.

Technology usage (x-rays, body scanning) for not problematic travellers and baggage checks;

- a. The Department for Border and Migration has at his disposal devices for protection against radioactive materials. This type of device is a pager and is carried by the frontier police officers in the belt when performing the service. The distribution was carried out according to the workload of the Local Border and Migration Departments as well as the Border and Police Stations for Migration.
- b. Regarding chemical and bacteriological materials we are cooperating with the Unit of the Ministry of Defence.
- c. With regard to radioactive and nuclear materials, the Department for Border and Migration cooperates with the Institute of Nuclear Physics, which has capacities in this field. The Border Police has at his disposal equipment's that can only detect this kind of materials.
- d. In order to modernize the structure of the Border and Migration, during 2021, the border and migration police has been equipped with special tools and equipment: portable passport readers; video endoscope; a GPS set for topographic surveying; video scope, portable papillon device; control equipment, rechargeable flashlight, thermal cameras, GPS, binoculars, digital thermal cameras, laptops, network cameras, video projectors, computers, printers, telephones, electronic kits, GPS for geodetic measurements, magnifying glass for examining documents for the Airport of Kukës.

Awareness raising with trade companies (international airlines);

The Department for Border and Migration is monitoring the process of citizens' movement as part of visa liberalization, cooperating with "FRONTEX" in data analysis.

Regarding the travel of Albanian citizens to all Schengen / EU countries during this period, Albanian border police and migration authorities at Border Crossing Points:

- a. Specific interviews are being applied to citizens travelling for the first time or rely on profiling the person to travel.

- b. At Border Crossing Points, border police officers apply guidelines for the use of interviewing techniques to identify potential asylum seekers at the moment of departure from Albania.

The Department for Border and Migration has established a clear mechanism to monitor the situation of Albanian citizens by addressing cases of their refusal by police authorities of Schengen countries for:

- a. Registration in the SIS or in the national system;
- b. Lack of financial means;
- c. Other reasons;

The Border and Migration Police implements the State Police Action Plan no. 1011, dated 10.06.2015, "On the prevention of the asylum-seeking phenomenon of Albanian citizens in the EU countries.

- a) For the implementation of this plan, massive interviews of passengers at BMP stations have been and are being conducted in order to identify the itineraries used by them, to detect persons who may have promoted, assisted, provided false documents, trafficked etc.
- b) During interviews, we have asked these citizens to give on their own free will interviews in order to raise awareness for other potential asylum seekers. This kind of interview have been conducted not only by direct lines to countries of European Union, but also during free movement of citizens to neighbouring countries
- c) All Albanian citizens whose entry has been denied or who are deported to Albania from EU / Schengen countries but also from other countries are interviewed at the border by the Border and Migration Police. Their data is registered in the TIMS system specifying the reasons why their entry or return was denied.
- d) These data entered in the system and if this citizen wishes to travel from Albania again, the border police and migration officers create a clear profile of the person, pursuant to the State Police Action Plan, the approved Order of the General Director of State Police No. 805, dated 01.08.2017, "On strengthening the control of Albanian citizens crossing the border".

Conducting awareness campaigns on the obligations of state and private entities to save lives at sea.

During 2021, leaflets were prepared and distributed to all local Directorates of Border and Migration for the implementation of the rules for the use of vessels and water spaces by local and foreign vacationers. In this context, official correspondence was held with all local government units that have in their jurisdiction maritime space for the implementation of obligations to protect the lives of citizens in maritime spaces. Meanwhile, campaigns have been conducted with private entities that carry out entertainment activities with floating means in each sector of the maritime border where the floating means of entertainment are based. This campaign has also been coordinated with the local government as well as with beach rescue observers.

Organizing of an informative campaign of high level on the rights and obligations of visa-free traveling, with a target on the areas affected by illegal migration.

- a) Raising awareness through media campaigns regarding the rules of free movement.

- b) In the official site of State Police and Ministry of Interior are reflected the additional rules regarding movement in the Schengen area, for adults and minors.
- c) Advertising spots with information on rights and obligations during movement in the Schengen area, as well as penalties in cases of violations of obligations.
- c) IOM with the support of the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, SPF Interior Belgium and Ministry of Justice, The Netherlands, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Albanian State Police, implemented during period 2021-2022 the project "Awareness Raising and Information for Safety and Empowerment for All – Albania/ARISE ALL". The project aimed to influence the change of behavior of the groups with high potential to migrate irregularly as well as key "enablers" in Albania and promote the decrease of those using irregular channels and explore local development alternatives or regular migration.

Similar projects, tackling issues of irregular migration and promoting regular alternatives, have been implemented, with the support and cooperation of IOM Albania in 2015, 2017-2018 and 2020, and the current project was a continuity of these initiatives.

The Project engaged on a regular manner all project stakeholders in key outputs, which enabled to contribute to the ownership and buy-in of all stakeholders involved.

The MigApp application and "Migration Destination Guide" are sustainable tools for information dissemination.

During the campaign:

- 38,268 copies of leaflets, bags, masks, umbrellas, caps, Roller Up Banner, branded folders, notebooks, pens, T-shirts were distributed in 12 regions to all structures involved with implementation of the campaign from state social service, child protection, employment offices, migration booths, health offices, education, state police, border police.
- 32 audio/video were produced (28 Videos produced by the 14 selected influencers; 1 TVC of the project; 1 Radio spot of the project; 1 Video of the UN week; 1 Video recap of the project); 3 TV programs participation; 4 PR Articles for the Press Release & 4 PR Articles for the thematic articles; 11 Local TV Chronicles.
- A significant promotional tool for the visibility of "ShqipëriaJETI!" campaign was the branded van. The vehicle followed IOM Albania throughout the cities being there as an additional campaign tool.
- Campaign reached: + 1,089,271 unique people on Facebook. The social media (58%) seem to be the first and most important channel used to take information about regular migration, and the second more efficient tool the TV with 43%. Therefore, the online distribution of the leaflets and video spot, was a very good approach.

International co-operation/technical assistance activities;

- a. An Agreement with FRONTEX was signed, a Work Agreement on Establishing Operational Cooperation between the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the Union

European (Frontex) and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania. The contact point with FRONTEX is designated and operates using the JORA system for reporting. Through this system we receive a daily report from FRONTEX on the migration situation in the Balkan region.

- b.** On January 18, 2021, the agreement "On the establishment of the Centre for Police and Customs Cooperation with Greece in Kakavija" was signed, as well as the agreements for the establishment of Joint Border Crossing Points with Northern Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo. These agreements aim to strengthen cooperation to increase efficiency in the fight against organized crime and its links, illegal migration, drug trafficking, violent extremism, radicalism, and serious crime.
- c.** Also, in the framework of strengthening the cooperation with neighbouring countries, the functioning of the Joint Border Crossing Points with Kosovo and Montenegro has been realized, which has given the right impact in facilitating the safe, controlled border crossing. The establishment of the JCBP has made it possible to significantly increase cross-border traffic between countries in the region, and has enabled the shortening of the stay at the border of citizens, thus giving a significant increase in the number of citizens aiming for our country for tourist purposes.
- d.** In this context, the cooperation with Kosovo is pursuant to Law no. 24/2019, dated 18.04.2019 "On the ratification of the Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on the establishment of joint border crossing points between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo and the implementation of joint actions of border control". Pursuant to Article 14 of this law, a draft protocol has been prepared between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Kosovo "On the implementation of Joint Border Control and payment of expenses during works performed at the joint point of Morinë / Kukës border crossing (Vërmicë / Prizren)".
- e.** Cross-border cooperation with neighbouring countries has also been strengthened in the implementation of Agreements and Protocols on joint border patrols with the border police of neighbouring countries. In this context, during the period January-December 2021, regular meetings were held with the leading police authorities of neighbouring countries, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece. During the meetings, common problems and concerns were addressed, while emphasis was placed on strengthening border surveillance to prevent and crack down on cross-border crime and irregular immigration from third countries. Albania has continuously requested the strengthening of the control of Albanian citizens traveling from neighbouring countries to EU countries, with the aim of abusive asylum.

In the framework of the implementation of protocols for joint patrols during 2021, joint patrols were carried out with the Border Police employees of neighbouring countries. These joint patrols for the green border take place with all neighbouring countries, except Greece, with which we have no agreement for this purpose.

- f.** In the process, the approval of the draft "On the drafting of the regulatory framework for the improvement and facilitation of navigation / yacht cruising procedures throughout the tourist season in Albania's territorial waters, as well as the locating of tourist moles along the Albanian coastline and facilitating procedures for tourist yachts in our ports".
- g.** The draft strategy document on "Monitoring and Controlling the Maritime Space of the Republic of Albania" and for the revision of the document on "Policies and Procedures

for the Operation of the Inter-Institutional Operational Maritime Center (QNOD) is being drafted".

- h.** Approval of the Agreement with the Republic of Kosovo for the establishment of the MCPM Morina, signed in December by the Minister of Interior.
- i.** Regarding the activity and technical assistance, the Department for Border and Migration has been assisted by various Agencies:
 - OSCE, FRONTEX, EXBS, PAMECA-5, ICITAP, The German Embassy, IOM, UNHCR, CARITAS – Albania, DCAF, Switzerland Training Center, The Foundation Hanns Seidel, etc.
 - With Law enforcement agencies such as FRONTEX, DCAF, have been organized joint border control operations.

On March 17, 2021, it was signed the Working Agreement between the Ministry of Interior and FRONTEX. Pursuant to the Statute Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the European Union "On the actions taken by the Coast Guard Agency and the European Border in the Republic of Albania", ratified by law no. 6/2019 and the Operational Plan "Multipurpose Operational Activities in Albania", on 24.03.2021 the implementation of the Joint Operation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency FRONTEX, '70 Albania Sea 2021 "at the sea border began. The operation aims to manage the situation of irregular immigration and prevention and fight against transnational crime.

The General Directorate of Customs has participated in the preparatory meetings "Joint Customs Action" as well as in the activity of building joint risk profiles with the countries of the region, which are part of the CEFTA agreement.

In order to improve the system of exchange of preliminary information with the customs administrations of CEFTA member countries and between agencies operating at the border through the SEED + platform, Albania together with other countries participating in "Open Balkan" have addressed the CEFTA secretariat by a joint letter where all parties request the implementation of the SEED + platform as soon as possible, preferably within the first 6 months of 2022. The implementation of this system will bring other benefits which are not offered through the existing SEED platform as for example: exchange of customs information and data with other non-border countries; Exchange of phyto-sanitary certificates.

- Border security, residence permits (including immigration and refugees);

Regarding residence permits it's established the central data base, Module E-Permit, at the Electronic register for foreigners.

Regarding the permit of stay it is ongoing the production of biometric document (permit of stay), in cooperation with ALEAT Ltd.

- Air security, maritime security;

Cooperation with all agencies operating in ports and airports that have legal obligations in the exchange of various information, pursuant to the Albanian and international legislation, due to which these agencies have respective obligations, expressed in Decision No. 745, date 26.10.2016, "On Performing Joint Actions".

- Real time access at the Interpol database on border controls;
- With regard to the real-time access to the Interpol database on border control, each border police officer in the post of assistant, Task Force Officer, Head of Station, during the Border Verification has a legal obligation to consult and exchange data with The Central Office of Interpol Tirana.
- Use of the advantages offered by electronic travel documents in border control (by electronic / chip validation through the ICAO (Central Civil Aviation Organization), biometric verification, approach to one counter, list controls, etc.).

TRAVEL DOCUMENT SAFETY:

Albanian travel documents are according to standards:

- Implementing the international standards (ICAO/EU) in this area;
- Travel documents of Albanian citizens - Biometric passports and Biometric ID, in compliance with the standards ICAP and the EU
- Participation in the Public Main Platform (PQP) of ICAO;
- Usage of new Biometric technology: (face, fingerprints, iris);
- Reporting of lost and stolen documents at the Interpol database (DHVU);
- In our TIMS system, an automatic search is conducted at this Interpol database.
- Border police has various trainings for detecting forged documents.

CONTAINER'S SECURITY

Risk analysis for goods and containers is handled by General Directorate of Customs.

Border Police conducts joint controls with customs' authorities, implementing Decision No. 745, dated 26.10.2016 "On conducting joint activities".

The joint control unit of the containers works based on the Joint Order of the General Directorate of the State Police and General Directorate of Customs "on the establishment, activities and SOP's of the joint unit for container control.

Technologies/scanners on goods checks are on property of the General Directorate of Customs.

USING THE INTERNET AND OTHER INFORMATION NETWORKS FOR TERRORIST GOALS:

In 2017, at the Antiterrorism Directorate was established and functions the Unit for Verifying Terrorism and Security. Among other duties this Unit monitors 24/7 the media and the social networks for the persons or groups that propagandize terrorist actions.

- LEGAL COOPERATION AND EXTRADITION:

1. Europol

a. Legal cooperation

- It was amended the law 28/2014 "Agreement on Operational Cooperation between the Republic of Albania and Europol". This amendment follows the new Regulation of Europol, dated 1 May 2016, where new criminal offenses were added.
- On 31 July 2018 was signed "The agreement between the Republic of Albania and Europol, on placing a liaison officer in Albania". Ratified by Law 77/2018.

b. Information exchange.

- The Antiterrorism Directorate has access users of the Siena system, and has its own file in the system where exchanges information with all the offices of antiterrorism of the countries which have operational agreements with Europol.
- *On 10 February 2023, Albanian State Police, in cooperation with Europol, enabled the deployment of the second Liaison Officer at the Liaison Bureau in Albania at Europol Headquarters to Hague, to enhance capacity building in the field of information exchange.*

2. Interpol

Regarding extradition, Albania actually has bilateral agreements for extradition with Italy, USA, Kosovo and Great Britain.

In compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania it is forbidden the extradition of an Albanian citizen without a bilateral treaty. However, the Albanian legislation doesn't require a bilateral treaty when the person is not Albanian.

On the basis of the dispositions of the Criminal Procedural Code, the extradition is allowed on the basis of a request towards the Ministry of Justice.

2. Stationing of Armed Forces on foreign territory.

2.1 Provide information on stationing of your States Armed Forces on the territory of other participating States in accordance with freely negotiated agreements as well as in accordance with the international law.

Albania does not have Armed Forces permanently stationed in the territory of other OSCE participating States. As part of international operations Albania deploys on temporary bases military units in the framework of multinational military formations which carry out activities operations as part of the NATO, EU and UN. The temporary deployment of Albanian military personnel on the territory of other OSCE participating States in the context of training and exercises is governed by bilateral agreements with the respective countries or organizations.

With reference to the area of application of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the Albanian Armed Forces have participated as follows:

- EU Operation “EUFOR Althea” in Bosnia Herzegovina, with 1 (one) military personnel in the position “Training Staff Advisor and Albanian Senior Military Representative”;
- NATO “KFOR Mission in Kosovo with 60 military personnel (19 officers, 39 NCOs and 2 civilians). AAF military personnel are engaged in KFOR headquarters in Pristina, in KFOR ISR battalion in Peja and RCW kinetic battalion Peja. Starting from 02 October 2021, Albania contributed with one Military Police COY in support of operation “Allied Solace”, to run and manage a base where NATO Affiliated Afghan workers are situated, who are displaced from Afghanistan until they are preceded and sent to Allied countries. The presence was finished in March 2022.
- NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Latvia with 21 military EOD personnel (4 officers and 17 NCOs).
- NATO enhanced Vigilance Activity (eVA) in Bulgaria with 30 military infantry personnel (3 officers and 27 NCOs).

Outside the OSCE area of responsibility the Albanian Armed Forces have contributed as follows:

- NATO Mission Iraq, (NMI) with 1 (one) officer as Senior Advisor at Foreign Language School.
- United Nations Peace Keeping Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) with 2 (two) officers as Staff Officers.

The legal framework for the participation of the civilian and military personnel of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in international operations is regulated by law no. 9363, dated 24.05.2005, “On the means and procedures of deployment and transferring of foreign armed forces in the territory of the Republic of Albania and sending Albanian Armed Forces outside of the country”, as amended.

The Council of Ministers with the proposal of the Minister of Defense decides on the participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in international military operations organized, authorized or directed by the UN, NATO or the European Union, case

by case, by defining the mission, level of participation, duration of the mission, as well as any other necessary element to conduct military operations.

Participation of the Albanian military Units under these circumstances applies only to cases where there is a preliminarily international or bilateral agreement on the status of forces for the Albanian personnel with the country where the military operation is carried out.

For the participation of the AAF in the international operations, the Albanian government has approved the following decisions:

The Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) no. 822, dated 18.12.2019, "On amendment to the DCM no. 145, dated 20.2.2013, "On the participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania with representatives in the headquarters "EUFOR", within the framework of the European Union's "ALTHEA" military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as amended.

DCM no. 820, dated 18.12.2019 "For certain amendment in the DCM no. 910, dated 22.12.2014" On the participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in the International Military Operation KFOR, Kosovo".

DCM no. 475, dated 08.06.2017 "On the participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in the NATO International Military Operation (eFP), Latvia".

Law no.23/2019, approval of Normative Act no.1, dated 20.03.2019 of Council of Ministers. "For the participation of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)". DCM no. 270, dated 02.05.2019, "On the participation of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)".

3. Implementation of other international commitments related to the Code of Conduct.

3.1 Provide information on how your State ensures that commitments in the field of arms control, disarmament and confidence and security-building as an element of indivisible security are implemented in good faith.

The OSCE documents on arms control, disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures constitute an essential pillar of Europe's current security architecture. The faithful observation of the provisions contained therein and the implementation of existing commitments in the spirit of transparency and cooperation - as a tangible contribution to Europe's indivisible and cooperative security system is ensured in close cooperation with appropriate state structures, in particular with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense.

The Albanian Arms Control and Disarmament policy is based on the principle of undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armament. The Republic of Albania is continuously working towards the effective implementation of all international obligations, including the implementation of international treaties and conventions.

The Republic of Albania fully complies with the commitments and the spirit of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and the Vienna Document 2011 (VD-11).

For almost 2 years Albania did not organize neither held any Arms Control activities because of the unprecedented challenges imposed by COVID-19. Once the pandemic's conditions situation improved, in May 2022 Albania resumed the Arms Control activities for inspections/evaluation within and abroad.

In the provisions of Chapter IX of the VD-11 (Compliance and Verification) on inspections and evaluation during 2022 (as active quotas) Albania conducted an Inspection Visit in Armed Forces of Serbia, 03-06 October 2022, with one "guest inspector" from the US Verification Agency.

One Albanian inspector has been part of the Italian Inspection Team, which conducted inspection visit in Armed Forces of Georgia, 06 – 09 December 2022.

One Albanian inspector has been part of the United States Evaluation Team, which conducted evaluation visit in Armed Forces of Malta, 13-16 June 2022.

One Albanian inspector has been part of Luxembourgian Evaluation Team, which conducted evaluation visit in Armed Forces of Ireland, 08 – 11 November 2022. All those exchanging guest inspectors were within the framework of the bilateral agreements approved at the annual meeting with the partner countries.

Additional activities where Arms Control has participated during 2022 were:

- Visit to Air Bases and Military Facilities in Greece, 3-6 May 2022 with 2 (two) inspectors;
- Visit to Air Bases and Military Facilities in Montenegro, 17-20 May 2022 with 1 (one) inspector;
- Visit to Air Bases and Demonstration of New Types of major weapon and equipment systems in Serbia, 13-16 September 2022 with 2 (two) inspectors from Albanian Arm Control.

Furthermore, the Republic of Albania has already fulfilled all legal obligations stemming from Conventions on Chemical Weapons, Cluster Ammunitions and Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines. With respect to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, and on their Destruction, Albania has fulfilled all necessary obligations.

Albania exchanges military information, defense planning information and all data concerning all arms control agreements, presenting a good will for cooperation, transparency and openness among all OSCE participating States.

3.2 Provide information on how your State pursues arms control, disarmament and confidence and security-building measures with a view to enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area.

Disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and confidence and security-building measures, are key elements in enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area and beyond. Therefore, Albania has continuously supported initiatives and fulfilled obligation in these fields.

Albania is part of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). It supports and fully implements these two treaties.

The Republic of Albania does not possess any WMD, nor will it develop or support any activity that leads to their dissemination, but it will contribute with all the capacities to the establishment and improvement of national interoperable mechanisms with international ones, as well as an efficient and undivided system for preventing, stopping and controlling actions related to the proliferation of WMD.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on 22 January 2020, approved, The National Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Action Plan for its implementation (no. 33/2020).

This National Strategy outlines the overall framework of the measures, mechanisms and actions that the Republic of Albania will undertake for *Countering* WMD. The strategy defines the role of different institutions and structures in order to improve cooperation, coordination and exchange of information between state and public authorities and other legal entities in the Republic of Albania as well as with other states and security organizations. The Strategy is an integral part of the national strategy framework and complements the crisis management and emergency management response mechanisms.

During 2022, work on the revision and update of the Strategy Action Plan continued. This review is taking place as a result of:

- Completion of the 3-year term of the Plan (2020 – 2022)
- Some actions were affected during the pandemic.
- The request for a more resilient and simpler action plan in reporting by introducing the lessons learned identified during the Top Table Exercise (TTX) training.

Currently the directorates in the MoD are working to finish the setup of the new action plan 2023-2025 that must be submitted for signatures to the Council of Ministries within this year. The MoD has appointed the National Coordinator chairperson as responsible for the coordination and the implementation of the measures provided in the action plan of the Strategy, also the he/she leads the Technical Secretariat, which is composed of representatives from the General Directorate of the State Police, the General Directorate of Civil Protections, the General Directorate of Customs and the State Export Control Authority and the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

This National Strategy will enable fulfilment of our country's obligations as a NATO member and the obligations within the international organizations (UN and OSCE). Aspiring the EU membership, the Republic of Albania also agrees with the obligations deriving from it, which according to the European Security Strategy, consider proliferation of WMD to be one of the top five security threats.

The Ministry of Defense (MoD) supports fulfilling the objectives of this strategy through the National Civilian Protection Agency (NCPA), as well as expertise when requested through State Export Control Authority (SECA), which ensures that the licensing of individuals and business entities is conducted in accordance to the laws that are related with the export and import in the Republic of Albania of dual-use goods, military goods and dual-use technology goods. SECA, in cooperation with Customs and the Ministry of Interior (MoI), which are the main actors for C-WMD, will fully implement the legal framework and activities for the control of military and dual-use goods. Ministry of Defence (MoD) will be responsible for managing the knowledge, information and expertise of the AAF, as well as the development

of operational capacities that will address the incidents in case of proliferation or use of WMD.

Section II: Intra-State elements.

1. National planning and decision-making process.

1.1 What is the national planning and decision-making process in determining/approving military posture and defense expenditures in your State?

The basis for the Defense Planning system is laid down in the national legislation. The key institutions of defense planning include the Parliament, the Government's Working and Coordination Body. The MoD plays a crucial role in the overall management of Defense Planning and in coordination with measures ensuring the state's readiness for defense. The Defense Planning Process includes political objectives, and National Security Policy. MoD has assumed overall responsibility for conducting both the medium-term and yearly planning.

At the strategic level, the defense planning consists of long-term development plans and programs, which project the future of capability targets, as well as anticipate the main requirements and priorities of the AAF development.

The Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System is synchronized and is in line with the national Integrated Planning System (IPS) of the government. This system will better serve the purpose of coordination program with the resources, and provides a sound decision-making of the government regarding the defense budget.

The budgeting process starts with the Council of Ministers decision on budget limits. The Strategic Management Group in the Ministry of Defense sets the budget limits for the expenditure structures according to the Government's Annual Budget Law and their requests for extra funding. After the opposite discussions, the final draft is sent to the Ministry of Finance for approval. The Parliament, at the end of the parliamentary session, approves the Government's Annual Budget Law. This law includes all the governments' institutions expenditures for the next year.

1.2 How does your State ensure that its military capabilities take into account the legitimate security concerns of other States as well as the need to contribute to international security and stability?

Albania is a law abiding member of the international community of nations and acts in accordance with the international law.

The compilation and adoption of policy and planning documents that defines military capabilities of the Albanian Armed Forces, is being conducted in a transparent and open manner and all adopted documents are available to domestic and international public. In that way, all interested states have insight in the current situation and reasons for development of military capabilities.

Albania contributes to the international security and stability by engaging in dialogue and cooperation with countries throughout the world, as well as by providing contributions in peacekeeping and humanitarian aid.

In the framework of regional security environment and beyond there are approved a number of bilateral and/or multilateral agreements in order to contribute and increase the national and international security. Inter alia, emphasis is put in bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the defense field with countries of the region and beyond. In addition, there are approved different agreements as follows:

- Note of accession to participate in host nation support and other responsibilities set up within the Republic of Latvia (HN). Technical Agreement (TA) between the MoD of the Republic of Latvia and the Department of National Defence of Canada and Canadian Armed Forces concerning the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia and the Provision of Host Nation Support and other Responsibilities.
- TA between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Latvia and the Department of National Defense of Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces regarding the advanced and enhanced NATO presence in Latvia and the provision of support by the host country and the responsibilities of the others (Albania has become a party with an Acceptance Note).
- Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of France concerning the cooperation in the field of defence.
- Note of accession to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation as well as Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe regarding the provision of Host Nation Support for the execution of NATO military activities.
- Note of accession to participate in the agreement between the Government of Hungary and the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation HQ as well as the Supreme HQ Allied Powers Europe regarding the provision of Host Nation Support for the execution of NATO operations, exercises and similar Military activities.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among the MoD of the Republic of Italy, the MoD of the Republic of Albania and the MoD of the Republic of Slovenia as well as the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation HQ concerning the functional relationship regarding the NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence (NATO-SFA-CoE) and MoU among the MoD of the Republic of Italy, the MoD of the Republic of Albania and the MoD of the Republic of Slovenia concerning establishment, administration and operation of the NATO Security Forces Assistance Centre of Excellence (NATO-SFA-CoE).
- Note of Joining to participate in the MoU between the General Staff (GS) of the Republic of Turkey, the MoD of the Republic of Bulgaria, the MoD of the Federal Republic of Germany, the MoD of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Romania, the MoD of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the MoD of Hungary, the Department of Defense of the United States of America, and Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation concerning the Functional Relationship regarding the Centre of Excellence-Defence Against Terrorism, which entered in force on 20 July 2005 and Note of Joining to participate in the MoU between the GS of the Republic of Turkey, the MoD of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, the MoD of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Ministry of National Defence of Republic of

Romania, the MoD of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the MoD of Hungary and the Department of Defense of the United States of America concerning the Operation of the Centre of Excellence-Defence Against Terrorism, which entered in force on 28/07/05).

- Note of Joining Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) for Air Policing over the Airspace of the Republic of Albania's.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Poland and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of Romania and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.

- Note of Accession of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania to participate in the MoU between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe regarding the provision of host nation support for the execution of NATO operations and exercises.
- Note of Accession in the MoU between the Federal Ministry of Defense of the Federal Republic of Germany and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of NATO Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession in the MoU between the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic and Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) and Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation regarding the provisions of Host Nation Support for the Execution of North Atlantic Treaty Operations and Exercises.
- Note of Accession in the MoU to the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden and the Headquarters of the Supreme Allied Command for Transformation, as well as the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe, offering the provision of senior service military operations and exercises and military activities for the deployment of NATO” (DCM no. 672, dated 07.11.2018).
- Note of Accession in the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Finland and the Headquarters of the Supreme Allied Command for Transformation, as well as the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe, regarding the provision of state support for the host country. NATO's similar operations and exercises and military activities” (DCM no.271, dated 02.05.2019).
- MoU among the MoD of the Republic of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Communication and Information Agency of NATO (NCIA) regarding to the cooperation on implementation of extending the projects of Air Control and Commanding Systems (ACCS).
- Note of Accession in the MoU between the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the HQs of the Supreme Allied Command for Transformation, as well as the Supreme HQs of the Allied Powers in Europe regarding the provision of support to Host Nation for the execution of NATO Operations/Exercises/Similar Military Activities". (DCM no. 148, dated 11.3.2022).
- Note of Accession in the MoU between the Government of Montenegro and the HQs of the Supreme Allied Command for Transformation, as well as the Supreme HQs of the Allied Powers in Europe and the HQs of the Supreme Allied Command for Transformation in Connection with the Provision of Support to the Host Nation for the Execution of Operations/ Exercises of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization". (DCM no. 149, dated 11.3.2022).
- MoU between the MoD of Albania and the MoD of Latvia on cooperation in the field of defense. The signing was finalized on 16.6.2022 in Brussels by both ministers.

- MoU between the MoD of Albania and the MoD of North Macedonia for cooperation in the field of defense". Signed on 14.11.2022 in Skopje at the meeting between two governments.

Through a steady and serious commitment, Albania has been very active in fostering constructive regional cooperation and enhancing connectivity by working closely with our neighbours, either in bilateral and as well in regional platforms. In this context, we highlight the key initiatives for cooperation in the region such as:

- US-Adriatic Charter (A-5). In this initiative Albania supports the policy of ‘open doors’, as well as the promotion of political dialogue and good neighbourliness, the increase of cooperation for joint representations, as well as the efforts against terrorism and radical extremism. MoU between the MoDs of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro and the Department of Defense of the United States of America on Joint Military Exercises in the Adriatic Charter
- South-East Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM). The SEDM Process has developed the security of South-East Europe by promoting regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, strengthening regional Defense capabilities as well as cooperation through collective efforts and establishing links facilitating integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The SEDM process is a successful confidence building mechanism in SEE, a platform that has strengthened the relations among our countries and has contributed to their proper efforts towards a common Euro-Atlantic future. The sixth Additional Protocol to the "Agreement on the Multinational Peace Force in Southeast Europe", is being implemented.
- Balkan Medical Task Force (MTF). The aim of BMTF is to enhance utilization of existing military medical capabilities in the Western Balkan region into the framework of a multinational medical Unit (MMU), facilitating deployment ability and sustainability for longer than one year period.
- Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Center (RACVIAC). Albania as a member country of this center has been active and plays a very important role and contribution increasing the security and cooperation in the region. With the new agreement, ratified in December 2011 by the member countries this center is called Centre for Security Cooperation. RACVIAC remains an important initiative in the South Eastern Europe contributing in enhancing trust, stability and security cooperation in the region. It's the leading regional security platform that supports its members in the EU and Euro-Atlantic accession processes and in overcoming the current and emerging security challenges through enhanced cooperation.

RACVIAC's Steering Group, Multinational Adviser Group (MAG) which includes all RACVIAC members and is the Political Decision Making Body, approved, "RACVIAC Strategy 2021-2026" (Oct. 2020). This Strategy (2021-2026), is a key document that frames the future development of RACVIAC and defines the main priority areas in which the Organization will focus, thus supporting the countries of the SEE region in their efforts to fulfill national, regional and global objectives.

- Technical agreement between the MoD of the Republic of Italian and the MoD of the Republic of Albania regarding the provision of logistical support in "Camp Villaggio Italy", KFOR, Kosovo.
- Memorandum of Understanding signed between the International Trust Fund (ITF) and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania, in the field of Conventional Weapons Destruction, dated 11 May 2017.

2. Existing structures and processes

2.1 What are the constitutionally established procedures for ensuring democratic political control of military, paramilitary and internal security forces, intelligence services and the police?

Military Forces

The Constitution of Albania and other legal acts on civil-military relations provide a clear delineation of authority and a system of subordination and command and the control on the echelons of defense structures in times of peace, crises and war. They provide for the civilian democratic control of the Armed Forces at the strategic level, whereas at the operational level the command and control is held by military authorities. Democratic political control of the Albanian Armed Forces is constitutionally guaranteed through article 12, paragraph 2, which stipulates that the armed forces are subject to civilian control.

Article 167 of the Constitution stipulates that military personnel in active duty cannot be elected or appointed in other state offices and cannot participate in political parties or other political activities. These constitutional principles are implemented through the provisions of the Law no. 64/2014 "On the authorities and powers of commanding and guidance of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania", Article 7 of the Law no. 64/2014, stipulates that authorities and powers of command authorities of the Armed Forces have the following hierarchical order: the Parliament, the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the Commanders of the Land, Navy and Air Forces, the Commanders of the supporting structures.

As this order defines, the Parliament is clearly vested with the oversight authority. It approves the National Security Strategy, the Defence Policy and Military Strategy, the Defence Laws and Budget and exerts parliamentary control over activities related to the armed forces. The oversight authority is exercised through the standing Security Committee. The competences of the Committee are foreseen in the internal regulations of the Parliament.

In line with the stipulations of the Constitution and above-mentioned law, the President of the Republic of Albania exercises the leadership of the Armed Forces through the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence in peacetime. In wartime the President of the Republic appoints and dismisses the Armed Forces Commander.

The Prime Minister is responsible for the leadership, development, and the state of the Armed Forces in peacetime. The Council of Ministers is the highest executive body. It proposes laws on defense, executes the laws approved by the Parliament, defines the main approaches of national policy, and issues normative acts with temporary legislative power. The Council of

Ministers manages the activity for the accomplishment of the tasks in the defense field, in accordance with the constitution, laws and decisions of the National Security Council.

The Minister of Defence is accountable before the Parliament, President and Prime Minister for the development and execution of defense policies. The Minister of Defence is a member of the Council of Ministers and the National Security Council. The Minister of Defence is responsible for the headship and control of the Armed Forces, the accomplishment of their mission, the management of the defense budget and the fulfilment of defense policy objectives.

National Intelligence Service

Law no. 8391, dated 28.10.1998 “On national intelligence service” and other bylaws constitute the legal framework for the activities of Albania’s National Intelligence Service. Article 4 of this law stipulates that the National Intelligence Service operates under the authority of the Prime Minister. In order to control the activities of the Intelligence Service, the Council of Ministers appoints a General Inspector who reports to the Prime Minister (article 12 of the, law).

Articles 7 and 8 of the law provide for the parliamentary control of the activities of National Intelligence Service. The control is exercised by the relevant standing parliamentary committee, which can also oversee the use of funds allocated to the National Intelligence Service. The director of the National Intelligence Service reports to the Committee at least once a year. The Director of the National Intelligence Service also reports to the Council of Ministers, as determined by the Prime Minister.

The Director of the National Intelligence Service is appointed by the President of the Republic of Albania upon proposal by the Prime Minister.

National Intelligence Service

The Albanian State Police

Civil and democratic control on the State Police is achieved through the Assembly of Albania, Ministry of Interior and the Ombudsman.

The activity of Albania’s State Police is governed by Law no. 9749, dated 04.06.2007 “On State Police”. The State Police is part of the Ministry of Interior and reports to the Minister of Interior (article 7 of the law). The budget of the State Police is approved by the Parliament.

The Minister of Interior reports to the Parliament and to the Standing Security Committee on regular bases.

The Parliament of Albania has established the Internal Control Service (ICS) in the Ministry of Interior (Law no. 10002, dated 6.10.2008). ICS mission is to guarantee to the community a responsible, democratic and transparent police service, in keeping with the relevant enforced legislation. The activities performed by the ICS aim at preventing, unveiling and investigating criminal offences committed by police officers. The ICS also inspects the activities of the State Police against the implementation of the legislation in place.

The law places the ICS under the direct authority of the Minister of Interior, who is responsible for its activity.

The Guard of the Republic of Albania

This is a structure with a special status in the Ministry of Interior, which has the mission of preserving and protecting the high state authorities and their residences, as defined by law. The Guard of the Republic of Albania is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Interior. The Guard of the Republic of Albania preserves and protects:

- a) The President of the Republic, the spokesperson of the Parliament, the Prime Minister, and their families.
- b) Foreign personalities who come into our country, in the rank of Albanian personalities under the letter "a" and "c".
- c) The Head of the Constitutional Court, the Deputy Spokespeople of the Parliament, members of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Director of the State Intelligence Service, the Head of the Supreme State Audit, the Governor of the Bank of Albania, the Ombudsman, the Chairperson of the Central Election Commission, the Leader of the Largest Majority Party, the Leader of the Opposition Party and the Mayor of Tirana.
- d) Presidential residences, the Assembly and Council of Ministers, and other residences defined by the Council of Ministers.
- d) Residences of the personalities mentioned in the letters "a", "b" and "c" of this article.

The structure of the Guard of the Republic of Albania consists of the Headquarter, the Director and other subordinate structures. The structure, organization, chain of command and the staff of the Guard of the Republic of Albania are determined by the Council of Ministers upon the proposal of the Minister of Interior.

The Guard Commander has the full authority of command and control of all activities of the Guard. He is accountable to the Minister of Interior for the training and readiness of the units of the Guard and for the fulfilment of its mission. The Commander of the Guard of the Republic of Albania shall be appointed by the Prime Minister, upon the proposal of the Minister of Interior Affairs. He is selected among senior officers of the Guard and State Police.

(Ministry of Interior)

2.2 How is the fulfilment of these procedures ensured, and which constitutionally established authorities/institutions are responsible for exercising these procedures?

The principle of democratic control over the security forces is enshrined and stems from the Constitution of Albania and other Constitutional principles. It is implemented by specific laws of the Governments and Authorities of Commanding and Strategic Guidance of the Albanian Armed Forces, State Police, and Nationals Intelligence Service.

One of the main purposes of Law no. 64/2014 "On the authorities and powers of commanding and guidance of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania" is the application of the democratic principle of civilian control over the Armed Forces.

The democratic control over the security forces is exercised by the Parliament of Albania, through its mechanisms for approving the state budget and performing oversight functions, in particular by the standing Security Committee.

According to article 80, paragraph 1 of the Albanian Constitution, the democratic control is exercised over the Ministers through hearing sessions or questions sessions. In its activities the committee is entitled to draw upon independent and professional expertise. In order to investigate its particular national and public interest the Parliament can also set up ad-hoc inquiry committees.

The constitution defines the main rules concerning the functioning and organization of the Parliament. The parliament regulation derives from this provision and is approved by the majority of the members. The Parliament, as the high legislative institution, exercises control over the executive and the constitutional institutions, to verify implementation of the legal framework adopted.

The Constitutional Provisions and the Regulation foresee the instruments to exercise this control. These instruments are as follow:

- Parliamentary motions. Art. 80, point 1 of the Constitution, Art. 96-97 of the regulation.
- Answering the questions in a written/oral/urgent way or in front of a commission. Art. 80, point 1 of the Constitution, Art. 91, 93-95 of the regulation.

The Parliament of Albania is the highest authority of the strategic command and control of the Armed Forces (Art. 8, Law no. 64/2014)

- a) The President of the Republic, according to the Constitutions and actual law, is the Commander in Chief of the Albanian Armed Forces. In peacetime he exercises the command of the Armed Forces through the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence (art. 9/2, Law no. 64/2014).
- b) The Council of Ministers on cases provided by the Constitution and the Law no. 64/2014.
- c) The Prime Minister on cases provided by the Constitution and the Law no. 64/2014.
- d) The Ministers of Defense and Minister of Interior, who, in their respective areas of activity, are accountable for and control the Armed Forces and the Police Forces. According to article 80 of the Constitution and article 19 of the Parliament's internal regulations, the Ministers report to the Security Committee and to the plenary session of the Parliament.
- e) The Minister of Defence is the authority who leads the Armed Forces activity in accomplishing the constitutional mission within the main direction to the State Police.
- f) The Chief of the General Staff, as the leader of the Armed Forces activity, responds (is accountable) to the President of the Republic of Albania, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. He is the highest military authority in rank and at the strategic command hierarchy of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania.

Albanian State Police

Civil and democratic control over the State Police is conducted through the Assembly of Albania, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ombudsman Office.

Law no. 108/2014, date 31.07.2014 regulates the activity of the State Police of Albania. "For the State Police", amended. The State Police is part of the Ministry of the Interior and answers to the Minister of the Interior (Article 7 of the law).

The Assembly approves the State Police budget.

The Minister of the Interior reports regularly for the Parliament and to the Permanent Security Committee.

The Assembly of Albania has created the Police Surveillance Agency (PSA) in the Ministry of Interior (Law no. 128/2021). The agency has the mission of supervising the subjects affected by the law, from the function of law enforcement and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, in compliance with the relevant legislation in force.

Activities led by PSA aim to prevent, clarify and investigate criminal offenses committed by the subjects of the law, examining and handling complaints against these subjects.

PSA also inspects the activity of the State Police against the implementation of the legislation and makes the transitory and periodic evaluation of the police employees.

The law places the PSA under the direct authority of the Minister of the Interior, who is responsible for PSA's activity.

(Parliament)

Legal Control of the Defence Intelligence and Security Agency.

This control is exercised through parliamentary oversight, administrative/financial/legal control in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and Law no. 65/2014 "On the Defence Intelligence and Security Agency". The authorities that exercise this control are as follow:

- The Parliament, which exercises parliamentary oversight of the activities of the Defence Intelligence and Security Agency.
- Prime Minister, who exercises control of the Defense Intelligence and Security Agency activities, as well as financial control of specific operational budget.
- Minister of Defense, who exercises directly administrative, financial, and operational control in the Defense Intelligence and Security Agency activities.
- General Director of the Defense Intelligence and Security Agency (DISA), controls the activity of the Agency personally or by other authorized persons.
- The Minister of Defense or the General Director of the Defense Intelligence and Security Agency (DISA) report on the activity of Defense Intelligence and Security Agency to the parliament commission or sub-commission for security cases and intelligence information at least once a year or whenever the Parliament so requires.

- The General Director of the Defense Intelligence and Security Agency submits to the Minister of Defense a yearly report regarding the agency's activity, and the execution of the tasks.
- Supervision, control and reports from the above mentioned authorities are carried out based on procedures for saving sources and classified information respecting the actual laws.

(Parliament)

2.3 What are the roles and missions of the military, paramilitary and security forces, and how does your State controls that such forces act solely within the constitutional framework?

Military forces

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, the mission of the Armed Forces is to:

- Defend the territorial integrity of the country.
- Protect the constitutional order as it is determined by law.
- Always be present in areas incurring menace.
- Assist the population in case of natural and industrial disasters and warn the risks of military and non-military nature.
- Participate in international operations as part of multinational forces.
- Prevention and management of environmental damage from military activities.

According to the Constitution, the Parliament, the President and the Council of the Ministers have responsibilities and rights, in regards to the national security and defense issues.

The Parliament of the Republic of Albania is the only entity that approves laws in the security and defense field of the country. The Parliament has the constitutional competencies to declare the war, emergency state, partial and general mobilization, ratification of the agreements and the scrutiny, management and approval of defense budget.

Parliamentary democratic control is exercised through legal means, directly from the Parliament and respective commissions. In this context, its activity is focused in laws, defense budget and policies execution in order to ensure that the Armed Forces act only within the constitutional framework. Members of the parliament can draw attention to acts of the Armed Forces, which in their view may be contrary to the Constitution.

The President of Republic has the constitutional authority as the Head of the State, who represents the unity of the nation. He is the Head of the National Security Council and the highest authority of the Albanian Armed Forces. All senior officers of the Albanian Armed Forces are appointed by the President who, at any time and as defined by law, can also dismiss them. The President of the Republic is Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and he appoints and dismisses the Commander of the Armed Forces.

The National Security Council is an advisory entity to the President and exercises its activity based on the Constitution, laws and obligations derived by international agreements ratified by the Parliament. This Council advises the President of the Republic for the issues concerning security and defense of the country.

The Council of Ministers is the highest entity of the executive power. It is responsible for the implementation of the National Security Strategy and the state and development of security instruments and national resources in accordance with the Constitution and laws.

3. Procedures related to different forces personnel.

3.1 What kind of procedures for recruitment and call-up of personnel for service in your military, paramilitary and internal security forces does your State have?

Military forces

Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) consists of military and civilian personnel employed in its structures. As of 1 January 2010 Albania has a volunteer military service system. Policies and practices for further career development of military personnel are based on their experiences, training and years in services.

The system of management and development of the human resources has at the center of gravity the training and education of the officers, NCOs, soldiers, and civilian personnel with the necessary experience and skills to serve within the country and abroad. This system includes the management of the entire life cycle of the personnel, from the identification of the needs, recruitment, education and training of the personnel in service, the economic and financial support, promotion and career development, until their final retirement and support and integration into the civilian society.

The policies and recruiting strategies based on modern marketing, which promotes the Albanian Armed Forces values, benefits and social guaranties of the personnel and their families, aim at the qualitative growth of the AAF.

The recruitment to become a soldier in the AAF offers equal opportunities, with no racial, ethnicity, color, gender, religious belief discrimination, as well as payment, profits, and other remuneration according to specific military services.

According to the Law nr. 59/2014, Art. 14, 15, the acceptance criteria are:

- *Nationality:* Albanian; *Age:* 18-27 years old (Except officers, soldiers, sailors who are planned to serve as medical personnel, must be under 32 years old);
- *Education:* High School /University degree (NCO/OF), 9 year mandatory education for soldiers (privates);
- *Height:* Males over 170 cm, Females over 165 cm;
- *Health certificate:* By the Military Medical Center in Tirana (in good health);
- *Free of law penalties:* not being under investigation;
- To have the right to exercise his/her profession/public administration activity by law;
- To successfully pass the physical and intelligence tests.

The AAF requires the recruited personnel to have the highest qualities for serving in the Armed Forces, as being a complete professional Force. The AAF will recruit soldiers with necessary knowledge in accordance to the work requirements, specific specialties, by improving the procedures and policies of admission, giving priority to individuals with high education, unique abilities, and qualities for specific branches.

Soldiers' recruitment will be carried out in a concentrated way to complete the AF structures. The selection of the most suitable participants will be performed based on medical, physical and intelligence abilities, according to defined standards and procedures. The General Staff reviews the tests in November, every year and adapts them in accordance with the Force's needs for staff. Since 2012, the categories of the intellectual test have been prepared in order to test the supplementary individual abilities according to the requirements of each branch.

The candidates submit the necessary documentation at the Recruitment Center of the districts, fill in the application Form no. 1 and the Questionnaire regarding professional soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania. After a pre-check verification, the Recruitment Centre of the districts sends all documentations of the candidates to the National Personnel Recruitment Centre. If there are no problems in the application, the Recruitment Centre calls the candidates and informs them for the presentation date and continuation to take the intelligent and physical tests.

Physical and intellectual tests are organized in the National Personnel Recruitment Centre. The applicants are recruited as soldiers after passing the verification and testing process. In the Personnel Recruitment Centre, the candidate will take the intellectual and physical test and will also be interviewed.

Selection of the candidates

The interview is part of the selection procedures, where the Commission evaluates the motivation, experience and communication abilities of the candidates. The National Personnel Recruitment Centre is led by the motto "Recruiting the best individuals for a professional Force", and candidates are qualified according to the record. After the winners are announced and appointed in a unit of the AF, they start the Basic Training.

The training for the new recruits starts with the individual basic training. During this period the recruits get necessary knowledge on military regulation, national laws, military equipment and weapons, physical training, military tactics and practicing shooting infantry weapons.

At the end of this 9-week training, all the recruits have to pass the tests and get promoted to professional soldier, following the NCO military career.

Law No.152/2013, dated 20.05.2013, "On the status of civil servant". This law creates a stable, professional civil service, based on merit, moral integrity and political impartiality. It regulates the legal relationship between the state and the civil servant (hereinafter "civil service relationship") and determines the rules for the administration of the civil service. The civil service relationship is a legal relationship of an administrative nature.

Procedures of employment of civil servants in the Ministry of Defense are defined according to the above law and sub-laws and executed based on the principles of competition, transparency, impartiality and criteria of laws under observation of the Public Administration Department.

Paramilitary forces

The Republic of Albania has no paramilitary forces.

3.2 What kind of exemptions or alternatives to military service does your State have?

In the Republic of Albania there is no mandatory military service. Thus, as a consequence, there is no alternative military service. Unfulfilling the criteria's mentioned in (point 3.1) results in comports exemption/exclusion from military services.

3.3 What are the legal and administrative procedures to protect the rights of all forces personnel as well as conscripts?

Principles on the legal status of military personnel

The rights and limitations of the freedom of military personnel in Albania are defined by law. According to the Law on "Military Status", the military personnel serving in the Albanian Armed Forces enjoy special status and privileges stemming from the nature of their service to the country.

Military personnel enjoys the right to be informed, protection of personality, free medical care, health insurance in case of illness or injury while performing their duty, the right to vote and the right to exercise religion. Military Forces are neutral related to the political parties. Having a particular duty in service of homeland and society, the military personnel cannot be a member of any political party therefore cannot participate in political meetings and are forbidden to make political propaganda on behalf of any political party.

Active military personnel enjoys the following rights:

- a) His/her job in the Armed Forces is guaranteed in accordance to the applicable law;
- b) To get promotion in his/her rank (career), according to legal acts;
- c) To be protected by the state laws when performs the military duties;
- d) To be trained, qualified and to follow studies in military or civilian educational institutions within the country or abroad, only when receiving permission according to the legislation and in accordance with the profession;
- e) Practice his/her right of belief and religious event, outside of the unit or military institution without military uniform;
- f) To serve inside the territory of the Republic of Albania and abroad in various international operations, with the permission of the appropriate authority;
- g) To wear civilian clothes out of the working hours of service, or when it's required by type of duties;
- h) To be organized in associations, which are not political or syndicate

Military Personnel of the Armed Forces has the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) To recognize, respect, implement and act in compliance with the enforced Constitution and legislation;
- b) To keep up the honour and dignity of the military;
- c) To be ready to serve where the interests of the Republic of Albania demand;
- d) To be prepared as militarily, disciplined, for the sacrifice towards the defense of the Homeland;
- e) To provide for the general public, stakeholders and public institutions the required information, except when the information is classified, in accordance to the law;

- f) To respect with accuracy the working time schedule and use it efficiently;
- g) To enhance his/her professional skills and participate in training activities.
- h) To not accept any material benefit on the duties, except the salary and benefits defined by law and other legal acts;
- i) To hold his/her responsibility for the legal actions during the duty;
- j) To follow the rules of ethics.

Article 19 (law.9210, dt.23.03.2004) - “Detention because of duty or service” Military personnel are prohibited:

- a) To be a member of political parties, organizations or associations of a political nature, as well as participate in political activities organized by them;
- b) To organize or participate in strikes; protests and demonstrations;
- c) To use state's property for personal benefits;
- d) To go abroad without order by authorities as defined by law.

Summary list of decrees relating to legal assistance of military personnel

Law no. 173/2014, “For the discipline in the Armed Forces of Republic of Albania”, defines the norms and rules for the military personnel’ violations, penalties and responsible law enforcement authorities. Art 17. The rights of the military personnel during disciplinary proceeding process: In cases of proceeding for serious discipline violations the military personnel has the right to be listened, to submit evidence and facts by himself or by another person authorized by him. If he is not able to get a representative, he can make a written request and address it to the responsible authority or to the respective disciplinary commission which assigns a military jurist to advocate him.

The People's Advocate role

The People's Advocate is an independent constitutional institution, which plays an important role in ensuring respect for human rights and freedoms. The institution submits an annual report to the Parliament. The People's Advocate has the right to make recommendations and propose actions in cases of when violations of human rights and freedoms by the public administration.

The Office of the People's Advocate is divided into five specialized sections, one of which is the Section for Police, Secret Service, Prisons, Armed Forces and Judiciary.

By handling individual complaints, as well as through the review of thematic issues, The People's Advocate institution helps to prevent human rights abuses, eliminate bad practices and contribute to better governance in the security sector, including the police, secret service, prisons and the Armed Forces.

Complaints can be submitted by email, by mail or they can be presented at the Citizen’s Reception Office. Complainants can contact the expert following the case at any time to be informed about the progress of the investigation.

Complaints can be made by members of the police, secret service, prisons and the Armed Forces, as well as by veterans, family members, friends and members of associations that protect the rights of the above groups.

The grievance process contains a number of steps, including: determining the admissibility of the grievance, providing advice, prompt handling of the grievance, keeping the parties informed, and recommending that the infringing right be settled. The proceedings are confidential and the complainants' names are not made public without their consent. The People's Advocate institution does not replace the court but undoubtedly, in many situations, it may be more likable. The costs of pursuing a complaint in court can be high, while the services of the Ombudsman Institution are provided free of charge and are faster compared to court proceedings.

According to the organic law (Law no. 8454 dated 04.02.1999 "On the People's Advocate", amended), People's Advocate or any persons authorized by him have the right any time, without restriction or preliminary authorization, however having informed in advance the head of the institution, to enter any public administration institutions like prisons, places where the police and prosecution office keep the escorted, detained or arrested people (the detainees), in state units or institutions, and other places he is informed or deems that it is possible for human rights and freedoms to be violated. The access to all above-mentioned ambiances intends either the investigation of a complaint, request or a certain notification or an initiative taken by the People's Advocate to conduct an inspection or study. In such a case, the People's Advocate can meet or talk in confidentiality, without the presence of any official people, with any persons being present or kept in these facilities. Any correspondence between these persons and the People's Advocate shall not be obstructed or checked.

Due to the special nature of the duty and service, members of the Armed Forces or even their families may have disadvantages compared to other citizens. Therefore, the respective legal framework has provided some guarantees to reduce these disadvantages.

Respective laws:

- Actually, in the Albanian Legislation it applies the Law no. 9210, dated 23.3.2004, concerning the "Status of the military in the Albanian Armed Forces", (amended).
- Law no. 59/2014 "On military career in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania", (amended);
- Instead, in the disciplinary field it applies the Law no. 173/2014, concerning the "Discipline in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania", (amended).

The People's Advocate Institution, as an independent and impartial institution, plays an important role in ensuring that these rights are respected.

The People's Advocate

4. Implementation of other political norms, principles, decisions and international humanitarian law.

4.1 How does your State ensure that International Humanitarian Law and Law of War are made widely available, e.g., through military training programmes and regulations?

The Albanian Armed Forces are commanded, manned, trained and equipped in ways that are consistent with the provisions of International Humanitarian Law, obligations and commitments related to the use of Armed Forces in armed conflict, including The Hague Conventions of 1907 and 1954, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Additional Protocols of 1977, as well as the 1980 Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. Such provisions are included in different field manuals and regulations, published and distributed to all officers and NCOs.

The military education system in all levels of Armed Forces use the manual “Law of the Armed Conflict”, approved by order of General Chief of Staff, no. 747, dated 22.09.2009.

The Ministry of Defense in cooperation with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Committees have prepared published and delivered a training folder for the instructors. The military personnel before deployment on the mission get knowledge and train how the law on Armed Conflict is implemented. For this purpose, a brochure is prepared, published/printed and it is used as training and learning material titled “Essential Bases of Armed Conflict Law”, approved by the order of the General Chief of Staff, no. 226, dated 30.08.2001.

The Military Education System includes the curricula in all levels which contain topics regarding International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Law of War (LoW). The number of hours of training devoted to this subject for the military personnel is up to 400 training hours, spread out in official training courses.

Law no. 7864, dated 09.29.1994 “Albanian Red Cross”. Law no. 7865, dated 29.09.1994, “For the protection of the emblem and name of the Red Cross”

The Albanian Armed Forces personnel who are sent abroad in mission, besides usual tests have a special examination for IHL and LoW. After that, the military personnel for the mission is examined and certified for the acknowledgement of the above mentioned laws.

- Actually, the Republic of Albania has ratified different agreements related to this field. Specifically, the Republic of Albania adopted the Law no. 7531, date 11.12.1991 “For the ratification of the Convention for the rights of the children” signed in New York, on 26.01.1990;
- Moreover, the Republic of Albania has adopted the Law no. 9833, date 22.11.2007 “For the accession of the Republic of Albania in the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention “For the children rights”, concerning the involvement of the children in the Armed Conflicts” signed on 25.05.2000;
- After the implementation of the aforementioned agreements, the Albanian Armed Forces have adopted different texts in the Albanian Armed Forces Academy in order to prepare and train the troops for peacekeeping operations in the framework of the international operations led by UN, EU and NATO.
- These texts have been adopted in accordance with “NATO Standardization Agreement, STANAG 2449 Lo (Edition 1) (Ratification Draft 1) - Training in the Law of Armed

Conflict, 14 February 2003, NSA (ARMY) 0143-LO/2449” and have been updated with “STANAG 2449 Ed. 2 (2013)/ 20 March 2013”.

4.2 What has been done to ensure that Armed Forces personnel are aware of being individually accountable under national and international law for their actions?

The Albanian Armed Forces personnel who are vested with command authority are trained to exercise it in accordance with relevant national as well as international law and Rules of Engagement are made aware that they can be held individually accountable under those laws for the unlawful exercise of such authority and that orders contrary to national and international law must not be given.

The Albanian Armed Forces personnel is trained and instructed in the international humanitarian law, rules of engagement, conventions and commitments governing armed conflict and they are aware for their accountability under national and international law for their actions.

The Military training system consists of institutional and functional courses for individual and collective training for units or pre-deployment training of particular units and personnel. Provisions of International Humanitarian Law are included in the current general training programs.

The military education is centralized within the Armed Forces Academy (AFA). This institution provides appropriate education, including mandatory lectures of International Humanitarian Law to all commanders and members of their staffs. There is a significant amount of these lectures both in Bachelor’s curriculum and Master’s curriculum.

The International Humanitarian Law is applied through National Law, no. 8003, date 30.10.1995 “Military Penal Code” - Chapter VIII “Felony in Military Operations”.

4.3 How does your State ensure that Armed Forces are not used to limit the peaceful and lawful exercise of human and civil rights by persons as individuals or as representatives of groups nor to deprive them of national, religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic identity?

The mission and tasks of the Albanian Armed Forces are driven based on main documents according to the tasks in and outside of Albania.

According to strict limitation set forth in these documents, Armed Forces cannot perform other tasks. The activities of armed forces are under the control of constitutional authorities or authorities to whom such control is entrusted to, by a special article of the Constitution, thus in case of transgression of competences it is upon civilian authorities to act accordingly.

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania is the main document ensuring that Armed Forces are not used to limit the peaceful and lawful exercise of human and civil rights by persons as individuals or representatives of groups to deprive them of national, religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic identity. In this document are stated all procedures for usage of AAF and penalties for those who violate them.

Law no. 173/2014, "For discipline on the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania", in Article 13, some of the major discipline violations are:

- Supporting of the campaign of a party, political origination, member of the political party or independent candidate, contributing personally or financially.
- Supporting or participation in political, religious or non-profitable organizations activities, during working hours, in working place, military assets, or when he/she is wearing the uniform and military symbols.
- Permissions of persons from political, religions and non-profitable organizations to make propaganda in Albanian Armed Forces' areas.
- Usage, delivery, or displaying in the military areas and assets of symbols or advertisement of political and social organizations except when they have humanitarian character.

The Commissioner for protection from discrimination is an institute which exercises human and civil right by persons. The parliament has approved: - Law no. 10221, dated 04.02.2010 "On protection from discrimination"; - Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On gender equality on society".

Likewise, the free media contribute as an additional element to prevent Armed Forces actions which might serve to limit the exercise of human and political rights. The Human Rights are also part of training programs and curricula's in different courses. In case this action is on support of the Police Forces and the Armed Forces units, they are used for guarding and protecting the duties of critical infrastructure and constitutional order.

4.4 What has been done to provide for the individual service member's exercise of his or her civil rights and how does your State ensure that the country's Armed Forces are politically neutral?

The rights of the military personnel are embodied in Human Rights Charter no. 2/1993 Coll., (which is applicable for every person under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Albania and is part of its constitutional law). Limits of basic rights and freedoms may be imposed only by enacted law and based on conditions set forth in the Human Rights Charter. The military personnel represents a special group whose rights may be limited to fulfilling their tasks.

The Republic of Albania has institutionalized civilian democratic control over the Armed Forces in its Constitution. A Command and Control system at the strategic level is headed by the highest civilian authorities, whereas at the operational and tactical levels it is led by the highest military authorities. According to Article 12 of the Constitution, the Albanian Armed Forces are politically neutral.

Members of the Armed Forces are forbidden by Law to be a member of any political party and make propaganda in the interests of any political party.

Law no.9210, date 23.3.2004, "Military Status" (article 15 defines the rights for proposal and grievances of military personnel in Armed Forces). (Referred in point 3.3 subtitles "The ombudsman role").

4.5 How does your State ensure that its defense policy and doctrine are consistent with international law?

The Albanian Defense Policy and Doctrine are consistent with international law related to the use of Armed Forces, including in armed conflict and the relevant commitments of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. According to the Albanian Constitution any international obligation must be embodied into the Albanian legislation.

The Albanian Armed Forces respect the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) on June 1977 and the obligations under Article 82. Provisions of the international law which are included in the doctrines and different field manuals derive from these doctrines.

4.6 What has been done to integrate women into conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation through its activities?

I: Prevention

1. Measures to increase armed forces personnel understanding of the special needs and contributions of women in conflict.

The Albanian Military personnel before participating and being deployed in international Peace Support Operations conduct a specific training. Part of this specific training is to be well acquainted with the customs, traditions and culture of the country where they will serve and the issues related to the protection of the rights of girls and women in the conflict areas.

Gender issues, protection of women's rights, gender discrimination, sexual violence issues are included in the programs of education for the military personnel of the Armed Forces. There are also included the availability plans to address and gather information about the culture and customs from local women populations in areas at risk of conflicts. The inclusion of systematic analysis for gender in conflict areas includes gender-disaggregation, social-economic indicators and power over resources and decision-making process. Information collected in areas where Albanian troops are deployed, which include gender issues as well, is analyzed and processed through the chain of command of international HQ.

The military personnel that are contingent to participate in a peacekeeper mission have attended different courses, which are dealing with these training issues such as "Diversity and Inclusion in the Security Sector - Key Leadership Conference and Gender Training of the Trainers Course organized in and outside our country. The military academies have revised curricula which comprised topics on gender equality and all of them are involved in the training programs of Military personnel.

2. Measures to address the violation of the rights of women and girls, in line with international standards.

The basic document that protects fundamental individual rights and freedom is the Constitution of the Republic of Albania. It affirms the principle of equality as a fundamental

principle and pre-condition for the functioning of state entity and does not allow any form of discrimination against the individual (Constitution, Article 18, paragraph 1 and 2).

Another important document is the "Law on Gender Equality Society", no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008, based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination and other principles enshrined in the Constitution, the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, as well as all other international acts ratified by the Albanian Parliament (Article 3, paragraph 1).

The implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021-2030, which is approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 400, date 30.06.2021, the MoD and the AAF are drafting a Plan of Action 2022-2030.

The Council of Ministers in Albania has adopted the Inter Institutional Action Plan for the Resolution 1325, approved by DCM 524, dated 11.09.2018, published in the Official Journal 134/2018, an important step in ensuring the increasing of women's inclusion policies in the security field. It was prepared by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and other ministries, in consultation with of civil society organizations, national and international organizations which are working to achieve gender equality in Albania. The main policy of the AAF is to increase women's participation in Peace Keeping Operations, Conflict prevention and implementation of positive discrimination in this field requires up growth number of women in PKO Missions.

The program of the government has expressed the commitments for all public institutions in the fight against violence against women, reinforcement of the justice system for the prevention and support of victims of violence. In terms of the AAF, the main policy is to increase women's participation in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and resolution.

Application of positive discrimination in this area seeks to increase the number of women in the peacekeeping missions. These are accompanied with training of staff of peacekeeping missions on gender equality and awareness rising for the reduction of gender stereotyping in peacekeeping missions.

The National Council on Gender Equality was established with DCM no.3, dated 08.01.2009. This Council is chaired by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, and is composed of 9 (nine) ministries on Deputy Minister Level and three other members who come from the civilian society.

Law no. 173/2014, "For the discipline on the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania", in article 12, "Serious disciplinary violation", which classifies sexual harassment committed by military personnel during and after working hours or leisure time in the category of serious disciplinary violation is under implementation. The purpose of this law is to prohibit sexual harassment in order to defend human dignity, freedom and privacy and in order to promote equality.

During 2022, there were not reported cases on sexual harassment committed by military personnel. This issue is monitored closely in order to avoid the gender abuses during the military service.

II: Participation

1. Measures to increase the number of women in general and in decision-making positions in the armed forces and the Ministry of Defense.

Based on the "Human Resource Management Strategy in the Armed Forces, 2020-2024" and the Action Plan for its implementation, approved by Minister of Defense order, no. 246, dated 24.02.2020, the prior strategy (2016 - 2020) stated that 15% of personnel serving in AAF had to be female, but this condition has been omitted.

The total number of women (military + civilian) serving in the Albanian Armed Forces by the end of 2022 was 1552 or 19.9%. Meanwhile, the total number of military women serving in the Albanian Armed Forces by the end of 2022 was 895 or 14.3% of the total number of military personnel.

Female Military Officers by ranks: 1 (one) OF-7; 4 (four) OF-5; 50 (fifty) OF-4,; 106 (one hundred and six) OF-3; 77 (Seventy seven) OF-2; 56 (fifty six) OF-1; 65 (sixty five) OF-0. Whereas,

Female Noncommission Officers (NCO-s) by ranks: 2 (two) OR-9; 55 (fifty five) OR-8; 162 (one hundred and sixty two) OR-7; 74 (senevty four) OR-6; 57 (fifty seven) OR-5; and 186 (one hundred and eighty six) OR-4 – OR-1.

For 2022, 538 persons have been recruited, 62 of which are female or 11.5%. - From total 454 recruits as soldiers/sailors, 37 of which are female or 8.2%, and form 84 applicant selected for new cadets, 25 of which are females or 30%.

Current activities targeting potential female applicants range from local initiatives like spread of leaflets in universities and recruiting open days' seminars in MoD, and visits on local colleges of women in senior leadership position like Minister of Defense and other senior military position. They share their experience and provide the young female with important career information about AAF and highlight the significant contribution made by women in AAF and abroad. They also increase awareness of career opportunities for women and men in AAF.

Also, in order to attract greater number of qualified applicants from Albanian workforce the Personnel Recruitment Centre has undertaken the initiative for promotion of women and men participation in military throughout National Employment Office. The recruitment campaign was also spread on national/local media and official website of the Albanian Armed Forces.

The percentage of female personnel who are promoted and advanced in their ranks and career in 2022 is as follows: - Officer 20.1%; - NCOs 12.85% and Soldiers 10.3%.

During 2022, female officers in Ministry of Defence, General Staff and in Armed Forces continued to perform duties in command positions and with high responsibility, such as: - Deputy Chief of General Staff, - Military Attaché, - Deputy Chief of Staff of Logistic in KFOR, - Deputy Director, - Commander and Deputy Commander at different levels,

The participation of female military personnel in the institution courses in and abroad for 2022: Officers 20.6 % and NCO-s 9.16%.

The Albanian Armed Forces are working to obtain expertise in the field of gender equality and to strengthen our capacity in fully implementing the UNSCR 1325.

2. Measures to increase the number of women in peacekeeping forces.

There are no regulations in the Albanian Army Forces limiting the deployment of women. Deployment is tasked through the chain of command to subordinate organization. For additional positions, or capabilities not provided by an already-formed unit, personnel is selected for deployment positions based on their rank, occupation, and any required special skills sets, with no consideration of being a man or a woman.

Albania continues to contribute in UN Peacekeeping Operations in South Sudan with one female military officer, (RPF U2SO Collection) position.

III: Protection

1. Increased access to justice for women whose rights are violated.

The number and percentage of reported cases of exploitation and abuse allegedly perpetrated by uniformed peacekeepers are referred, investigated and acted upon.

For 2022, there was no case for Albanian peacekeepers women whose rights were violated.

IV: Other information.

Section III: Public access and contact information

1. Public access

1.1 How is the public informed about the provisions of the Code of Conduct?

Experts from various state institutions (MoD, MEFA, MoI, Parliament, etc.) in charge of the implementation of different sections of the Code of Conduct participate on a regular basis in international and regional events dedicated to the implementation and exchange of information on this document. However, further efforts are needed to improve public awareness on the aims of the Code and its provisions.

Public has the possibility to be informed about the parliamentary debates regarding military issues. National Recruitment Personnel Center organizes meetings and briefings at high schools and universities based on a detailed plan. The public can participate in these military events, open-door days, organized by military structures. Public access to information is available on the official web sites of the Ministry of Defense and General Staff.

1.2 What additional information related to the Code of Conduct, e.g., replies to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct, is made publicly available in your State?

As of now, no additional information related to the Code of Conduct nor even the replies to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct have been made public and available.

1.3 How does your State ensure public access to information related to your State's armed forces?

Public access to the information related to the Armed Forces is becoming easier. The Law on the Transparency and Access to Public Information that ensures the rules of public access to the information regarding the state administration in general includes, as well as, the Albanian Armed Forces.

The Ministry of Defense provides transparency and public access to information related to the Armed Forces. The information center is operational in the Ministry of Defense. The Albanian Parliament approves the defense expenditures and exercises constraints and limitations in military expenditures. All documents of strategic level such as: The National Security Strategy, the Defense Policy, the National Military Strategy, the Long Term Development Plan, etc., are open to the public. The Ministry of Defense offers a wide spectrum of information from military magazine which is published monthly and military newspaper which is weekly publication (electronic webpage).

Based on Law no. 119/2014 “On the right for information” anyone requires information on the activity of the public body without being obliged to explain reasons. Even when the decision is negative the subject has to be informed. The MoD has specific structure “Inspection and Anticorruption Directorate” (IAD), which is responsible for the enforcement of the above mentioned law (for the fulfillment of the right to information for the citizens).

2. Contact information

2.1 Provide information on the national point of contact for the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

The national point of contact for the implementation of the Code is:

MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

International Organizations Directorate

International Organizations Unit

Contact person: Mr. Kujtim MORINA

Phone: + 355 42 36 40 90 Ext. 165

Mobile: + 355 (0) 69 7636977

E-mail: kujtim.morina@mfa.gov.al

Address: Bulevardi “Gjergj Fishta”, nr. 6, Tiranë.

ANNEX 1

I. UNITED NATIONS

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (New York 14 December 1973); Ratified. Entered into force on 21.02.2002.
- International Convention against Taking of Hostages, (New York, 17 December 1979); Ratified. Entered into force on 21.02.2002.
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, (New York, 9 December 1999); Ratified. Entered into force on 10.05.2002.
- International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, (New York, 15 December 1997). Entered into force on 21.02.2002.
- International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (New York, 13 April 2005); Signed on 25 November 2005. Not ratified yet.

II. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)

- Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (Tokyo, 14 September 1963); Ratified on 06.03.1997, Entered into force on 01.03.1998.
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (The Hague, 16.12.1970); Ratified on 06.03.1997, Entered into force 20.11.1997.
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (Montreal, 23.09.1971); Ratified on 06.03.1997 Entered into force 20.11.1997
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the safety of Civil Aviation (Montreal, 24.02.1988). Ratified. Entered into force on 22.05.2002
- Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (Montreal on 01.03.1991), Ratified. Entered into force on 06.03. 2000.

III. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, (Vienna, 3 March 1980); Ratified on 5 March 2002; Entered into force on 4 April 2002
- II.1. Agreements between Albania and the IAEA - Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the Agency on the application of protective measures on all nuclear activities of Albania, signed on: 1 July 1986, Ratified on 28 January 1988, Entered into force on 25 March 1988.

IV. INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)

- Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (Rome, 10.03.1988); Ratified. Entered into force on 17.09. 2002.
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, (Ratified on 10.03.88). Entered into force on 17.09.2002.
- In 2009 it was established the Inter-institutional Maritime Operational Centre (IMOC), aiming to create a new inter-institutional cooperation platform in order to ensure the surveillance of the Albanian in planning, organizing and guiding all the maritime operations, in guaranteeing the law and sovereignty of the Albanian State in the sea.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

- European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (Strasbourg, 27.01.1977); Signed on 04.04.2000. Ratified on 21.09.2000. Entered into force on 22.12.2000.
- Protocol amending the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (Strasbourg, 15 May 2003); Signed on 9.10.2003. Ratified on 15.11.2004.
- European Convention on Extradition (Paris, 13.12.1957) and first and second Additional Protocols. Signed on 19.05.1998. Ratified on 19.5.1998. Entered into force on 17.08.1998
- European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Strasbourg, 20.04.1959) and first and second Additional Protocols. Signed on 19.05.1998. Ratified on 04.04.2000. Entered into force on 03.07.2000.
- European Convention on the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters (Strasbourg, 15.05.1972); Signed on 19.05.98. Ratified on 04.04.00. Entered into force on 03.07.2000.
- Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime (Strasbourg 1990). Signed on 4.4.00. Ratified on 31.10.01. Entered into force on 01.02.02
- Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest, 23.10.2001) Signed on 23.11.2001. Ratified on 20.06.2002. Entered into force on 01.07.2004.
- Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems. Signed on 26.05.2003. Ratified on 26.11.2004. Entered into force 1.3.2006.
- Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (Warsaw, 15.05.2005). Signed on 22.12.2005. Ratified on 06.02.2007. Entered into force on 01.06.2007.
- Council of Europe Convention on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism (Strasbourg, 15.05.2005). Signed on 22.12.2005. Ratified 6.2.2007. Entered into force on 01.05.2008.

V - OTHER AGREEMENTS

Albania is party to several bilateral and multilateral agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) aimed at countering organized crime, international trafficking and terrorism.

- MoU between the Ministry of Interior (MoI) of Albania and the MoI of the Federal Republic of Austria to strengthen cooperation in the area of internal security. Signed on 27.01.2010.
- Agreement between the Government of Albania (GoA) and the Government of the Kingdom of the Belgium on police cooperation. Signed on 22.05.2005. Entered into force on 01.05.2008.
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina on cooperation in the fight against trafficking, in particular terrorism, illegal drugs trafficking and organized crime. Signed on 24.03.2009. Entered into force on 04.03.2010.
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria in the fight trafficking and organized crime. Signed on 29.01.2007. Entered into force on 04.10. 2007.

- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Czech Republic on the fight against crime. Signed on 27.04.2009. Entered into force 01.01.2010.
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the French Republic on internal security cooperation. Signed on 15.05.2008. Ratified by law no. 9955, dated 17.07.2008.
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on cooperation in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. Signed on 12.02.1999. Entered into force on 24.08.1999.
- Agreement of cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Italy in the fight against crime. Signed in Tirana on 19.06.2007. Ratified by law no. 9799, dated 10.09.2007.
- Agreement of cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Latvia in the fight against terrorism, organized crime and illegal trafficking of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors. Signed on 16.12.09. Entered into force on 22.07.10 and ratified by law no. 10265, 26. 04. 2010
- Agreement of cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Malta in the fight against illegal trafficking of narcotics, psychotropic substances and organized crime. Signed on 19.02.2002. Entered into force.
- Agreement of cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, illegal trafficking of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors, illegal migration and other illegal activities. Signed on 17.06.2004. Entered into force on 20.05.2005.
- Agreement of cooperation between the GoA and the Government of the Republic of Rumania in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, illegal trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances and other illegal activities. Signed on 07.06.2002. Entered into force on 19.12.2002.
- Agreement of cooperation between the GoA and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in the fight against terrorism, illegal trafficking of narcotics and organized crime. Signed on 24.11.1993. Entered into force.
- Agreement of cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Montenegro in the fight against organized crime, illegal trafficking and other criminal activities. Signed on 31.10.2003. Entered into force.
- Agreement of cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the fight against organized crime, illegal international trafficking of narcotics and terrorism. Signed on 11.03.2010 and ratified by the Parliament.
- MoU between the Ministry of Treasury of the Republic of Albania and the Investigative Board against Financial Crime of the Republic of Turkey to exchange financial intelligence information regarding money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Signed in Ankara and Tirana respectively on 14.07.2008 and 21.07.2008. Entered into force upon signature.

- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on cooperation in the fight against crime. Signed on 27.05.2003. Entered into force.
- Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Federal Council of Switzerland on police cooperation in the fight against crime. Signed on 21.9.2005. Entered into force on 18.07.2007.
- "Convention on police cooperation in South East Europe. Signed in Vienna on 05.05.2006. Ratified by Albania in October 2007.
- Additional protocol on Combating Terrorism to the Agreement among the Governments of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Participating States in Combating Crime, in particular its Organized Forms. Signed on 03.12.2004. Ratified by law no. 9500, dated 03.04.2006. Entered into force.
- Since September 2009 Albania is part of the EU initiative, undertaken in cooperation with the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovenia, to exchange with the Western Balkans EU's counter-terrorism Best Practices.
- Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania, Nr. 452, dated on 16.06.2010 "On approval in principle of the" Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation and support for the Secretariat of the Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe, 21.05.2010"
- On 28 January 2011 in Ljubljana/Slovenia Albania signed the "Declaration on Police Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism", which is a continuation of International Police Cooperation Initiative in the fight against terrorism. By signing this declaration Albania becomes a member of this initiative, together with Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Austria and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- Memorandum of Understanding between Minister of Interior of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Interior of the Federal Republic of Austria on reinforcing the cooperation in the field of internal security, signed in Vienna on 27.01.2010.
- MoU between OSCE presence in Tirana and Albanian Ministry of Defense for the elimination of Chemical Stocks, 16.04.2012 and MoU data 10.10.2014.
- MoU between UNDP and Albanian MoD on bilateral cooperation in the implementation of the Albanian UXO Hotspots Clearance & Ammunition Disposal Programme, 01.01.2011
- MoU between United Nations Development Program and the Albanian Ministry of Defense in Support of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Control and Physical Security and Stockpile Management Activities in Albania, 2016.
- MoU between MoD of Republic of Albania and the United Nations Development Programme in support of the Small Arms and Light Weapons and Physical Security and Stockpile management Activities in Albania, 27.06 2019. This MoU is amended