



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

HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON 101st ANNIVERSARY OF ADOPTION OF FIRST RULES OF PROCEDURES OF ALBANIA'S PARLIAMENT

Dear Deputy Speaker Madam Hysi,
Dear Rector, Prof Hoxha,
Dear special guests,
Dear participants,

Thank you for giving me this privilege of addressing such a high level and distinguished audience. I am most pleased to greet the opening of this International Research Conference on the 101st anniversary of the Adoption of the First Rules of Procedures of the Assembly – The Role of Parliaments in Public Decision-Making in Past and Present Times in Albania.

While I would have wished to have the opportunity to have this Research Conference in person, still I am happy that today we are using technology to be together and maintain this opportunity.

Milestone years give us the opportunity to stop and have a retrospective view on the happenings, to have the opportunity to celebrate achievements, and reenergize our vision. It is visible from the agenda of this conference and from the guests that in the heart of the Assembly there is the work of political leaders, of lawyers, and of the academia. The Assembly has successfully embraced the principles and values of participation, openness, transparency, gender, lessons-learned, expertise from other Parliaments. This is indeed a great value that deserves a special celebration.

Let me extend my special thanks to the Board of Conference and the guests for coming up with such an important program for the conference. Its inclusivity and its multi-dimensional approach are very much what the OSCE has in its core for achieving comprehensive development, peace and ultimately security.

Allow me to share my gratitude to the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, Hon. Vasilika Hysi, for our co-operation and for her very successful presentation to the OSCE Participating States in November 2020. As you might all know, in November last I had decided to bring to the attention of the 57 participating States our flagship activities with the Albanian Assembly.

In fact, there are strong bonds between the OSCE Presence and the Assembly. Albania's parliamentary life is a key priority for the OSCE Presence. Since 2003 when we joined forces in supporting the process of developing the Rules of Procedures of the Assembly. The Rules of Procedure approved in December 2004 are still in force, of course with necessary adaptations throughout the years. Reflecting on the process of almost two decades ago, the convinced engagement of MPs from all the parliamentary political forces created a product that was adopted with full consensus. A process that consulted with major parliamentary practices of the time, drawing inspiration from the Italian, Austrian and French models, and features from other European and regional models adapted to the Albanian context. Those Rules still represent a living and fundamental working document for the normal functioning of parliamentary processes.

The changes made to the Rules of Procedure in 2019 further enriched the document. Just few to point: integration of gender perspectives, of sustainable development goals, as well as the accent on parliamentary control and oversight, are indeed important steps to have a main parliamentary work document that reflects the democratic values in its core and that includes the needs of the society.

In 2020, Covid-19 pandemic posed a challenge to many spheres of life and work around the globe. But the Assembly of Albania was one of the first parliaments in Europe and in the region that showed resilience and promptly adapted to the new needs and to the new challenges. Proudly, we worked together with the Assembly to provide the technical support that enabled the organization of meetings of parliamentary committees and other bodies through the electronic communication means. This quick approach towards digital equipment was valued as a best practice also by the European Commission in its 2020 Annual Report, as well as by the report of the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Challenges of 2020 were transformed into opportunities, with an increased transparency and civil empowerment.

With April elections approaching we look forward to the next phase with the upcoming legislative period once in place.

Today's works offer me the opportunity to underscore the importance of the "*e-legislation*" activity that soon will come to life. An important effort to increase efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the Assembly while providing an integrated approach to legislative systems and contribute to the consolidation of the parliamentary documentation.

A key partner in these very important endeavours with the Assembly is the Swiss Development Agency. Let me avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate my special

gratitude to my colleague the Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation in Albania, H.E. Adrian Maître, and to his fantastic team for the continuous support provided in the framework of 4-year project “Support to Parliament and Civic Education in Albania”. A project that is being implemented in close collaboration with the Albanian Assembly.

Without further due, allow me to once again to reiterate that it has been a privilege for the OSCE Presence to work with academia, civil society, media, different state institutions and the Assembly together. It is been a privilege to see an ever growing interaction and joint action in building democratic societies and institutions.

Allow me also on behalf of Ambassador of Switzerland in Albania, to wish you a very successful conference.

Thank you!