

**HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS AT LAUNCHING OF MASTER'S PROGRAMME
IN CRIMINOLOGY**

14 December 2020

Madam Minister, Dear Rector, distinguished Deans and participants,

Though in difficult times, I take note with satisfaction of the solid co-operation with the OSCE Presence as reflected today in the launching of the first Master's Programme in Criminology.

I attach a very genuine importance to this exercise, for a number of reasons. In the first place, I would like to express my highest respect for the academic world. Professors make of their entire lives an act of love to their country through their teaching, investing in at least two fundamental assets for any society: education and young people. The University of Tirana is a cradle of culture, it a fantastic hotbed for mature citizenship, for young people to become responsible and active members of their national community, for citizens to expand their knowledge and make it available to their fellow nationals.

In this spirit, I would like to thank the Minister of Education of Albania Ms. Evis Kushi for her presence here today, attesting to the priority the national authorities recognize to education, to international co-operation, and of course to an ever more effective fight against crime, that is the purpose of this Master's programme.

Let me add that I am proud of being here today on behalf of this extraordinary Organization, the OSCE. I cherish the fact that we are contributing to the educational efforts put in place by the University of Tirana, hand-in-hand with the US and of the British Governments.

Coming to the specific subject-matter of this training course, let me highlight the following points. Crime is obviously a complex social phenomenon. Tackling it can be significantly improved by a scientific grounding of all measures around it: prevention, investigation, prosecution, treatment and reintegration of offenders, protection of victims and society.

It clearly requires a co-ordinated approach, and therefore I am happy to say that when the OSCE joins efforts with the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana, the results can only be substantial to the benefit of society overall.

Today, we are harvesting our efforts following more than two years of intensive work. Over this period, the project entailed the development of the structure and curricula for the Master's Programme, as well as building capacities and resources of the University of Tirana to deliver and manage the programme.

This Executive Master Programme in Criminology, the first of its kind in Albania, has the potential to be ground breaking for the country, departing from a classic approach to crime, based on investigation and punishment, switching the focus and effort to a more encompassing approach. Most likely, an increasingly large number of Albanian law enforcing professionals will improve their skills and ability to make use of empirical data in order to efficiently tackle crime through a modern, scientifically based perspective.

We trust this Programme will be a success, in order to provide tools for those who are promoting the community-based treatment of former offenders, which will in turn reduce social exclusion and promote social inclusion.

At the same time, let us not forget that it is crucial to mobilise and enhance the ability of civil society and of the community as a whole to take responsibility for crime and social disorder, and for the development of collective positive responses to the problems faced by communities and individuals.

There is actually clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again the US Mission to the OSCE and the British Embassy in Tirana for funding this ground breaking project, while also praising the level of interest and involvement of all project partners.

I look forward to seeing the Master Programme producing results and wish all project partners a successful cooperation to the benefit of the Albanian society.

Thank you very much and let me wish success to all those implementing the Master's Programme and in particular to all its future students.

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