

Programme of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship 2020

Foreword



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2020 marks the 45th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. These documents laid the foundation for the dialogue and cooperation through the OSCE that helped to bridge the deep rifts of the Cold War. They unite us behind the shared democratic values and principles that are vital to building trust and fostering lasting peace and stability in our region.

Albania did not join the OSCE at its outset. For our cruel dictatorship at the time, the values enshrined in the Organization's founding documents posed a direct threat. But in the years since the fall of communism, these same values have been embedded as the cornerstones of our young, aspirational democracy.

Our modern Republic therefore has a deep affinity for the mission, achievements and work of the OSCE. As a small state that has undergone a major transition, we have drawn outsized strength and stability from being part of this values-based security community, including through the 22 years of expertise and assistance from the OSCE Presence in Albania. Now it is our turn to step up and give back to the Organization.

It is therefore a privilege to assume responsibility for the Chairmanship of the OSCE for 2020, and have an opportunity to work hard for stability, peace and democracy for over a billion people in our region. As the world's largest regional security organization, offering all participating states an equal status in dialogue and exchange, this is best place to begin rebuilding trust between us and sounding out solutions to our shared challenges.

These are particularly testing times for our regional security. The challenges we face continue to evolve and entwine – whether it is military confrontation, the malign use of information and communication technology, extremism and radicalisation, or the blurred line between state and non-state activity.

They are posing new tests for our governments and communities and placing new pressures on the rules-based international system that underpins our security and prosperity.

In the face of such challenges, the OSCE participating States have a political duty to protect and continue the legacy of the Helsinki Final Act, Charter of Paris for a New Europe, and subsequent OSCE commitments, for the benefit of citizens across our region.

We must not look inwards, nor depart from the promotion and protection of the values that connect us.

Instead, we must embrace multilateralism with renewed vigour and resolve. A more interconnected world calls for more international, inclusive and comprehensive solutions. We need patience and perseverance.

This programme sets out the priorities of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship. We will focus on doing the basics well and will be guided by three key objectives:

- **Making a difference on the ground;**
- **Implementing our commitments;**
- **Building stability through dialogue.**

In our approach as Chair, we will be open, transparent and inclusive. We will seek to provide continuity with the work of recent OSCE Chairmanships wherever we can, sustaining their efforts and consolidating their achievements.

We are aware that there will be difficulties and complexities ahead. But we are confident that—with the perseverance of the OSCE participating States, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Executive Structures—we can secure sustainable achievements for the common good of the OSCE area in 2020.

We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the continued success and relevance of the OSCE.

We owe it to our people.



Photo Credit: OSCE/Evgeniy Maloletka

Making a difference on the ground

The OSCE has proven its ability to deploy quickly and make a difference on the ground, be it through preventing the escalation of a conflict, observing elections, or supporting reforms. The practical work of our Organization is a significant asset, delivering tangible improvements in the security and prosperity of our region.

The Albanian Chairmanship will promote the work of the OSCE where it is closest to our people.

The crisis in and around Ukraine remains the most pressing security challenge in Europe. We will promote the unique contribution to peace and stability given by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine; its work is vital both to inform efforts to prevent further escalation and to contribute to a lasting peace.

The Albanian Chairmanship will work towards a peaceful resolution to the crisis and will encourage the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, in line with the efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group and the political process of the Normandy Format, and on the basis of OSCE principles and commitments.

Our Chairmanship will continue to reinforce the OSCE's conflict resolution engagement, through the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Geneva International Discussions and related mechanisms, and the Transdniestrian Settlement Process. We will emphasise measures that prevent further escalation and improve the living conditions of those affected by conflicts. While visiting conflict-affected areas, the Albanian Chairmanship will endeavour to create the necessary political space to advance peace efforts.

Women continue to be disproportionately affected by conflicts across the world, and it is proven that solutions are more effective and sustainable when they involve the representation and active participation of women. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, Albania will inject new momentum in the work of the OSCE in promoting the role of women in conflict resolution and in peace processes. More needs to be done both within and by the OSCE to support the pivotal contribution of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction. On this and other dossiers, the Albanian Chairmanship will encourage increased cooperation with the United Nations.

Given that one of the principal issues fuelling instability in our region relates to small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, Albania will continue efforts towards the destruction of surplus stockpiles of conventional ammunition and the strengthening of frameworks for arms control. This is an area where expertise from South East Europe can be shared to the advantage of all 57 OSCE States.

Our Chairmanship will also promote the efforts of all OSCE field operations. Albania has hosted and benefitted from an OSCE Presence for over two decades, so knows first-hand how the OSCE's efforts can foster stability, aid reforms and transform the prospects of citizens.

We will encourage longer-term strategic planning that encompasses the political activities of the OSCE in Vienna and its practical activities in the field, to ensure that all areas of our work are aligned and mutually reinforcing. This will help field operations to support their host countries in implementing commitments in all three dimensions, translating our words into action.



Photo Credit: Albanian MEFA

Building stability through dialogue

The OSCE is a unique platform for dialogue.

Its success stories are rooted in mutual understanding and consensus built up among participating States over time.

The Albanian Chairmanship, inspired by the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, will prioritize the revitalisation of dialogue within the Organization.

The Albanian Chairmanship will be committed to ensuring that the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are enjoyed throughout the OSCE region. It remains imperative that all OSCE principles and commitments are met in good faith, in particular those set out in the Copenhagen Document, which will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2020.

Violence must have no space in our societies. Mindful of recent OSCE commitments and the concerning prevalence of the issue highlighted in a 2019 OSCE-led survey, the Albanian Chairmanship will prioritize action on combating violence against women and girls, with a view to the effective implementation of legislation and action plans to tackle, reduce and ultimately end this unacceptable phenomenon. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media are fundamental to democratic and stable societies. Unfortunately, in recent years democratic processes have been challenged by disinformation campaigns and journalists have often become targets for their resolute efforts to inform the public. Albania will support the central role the OSCE plays in monitoring and supporting media freedom in participating States and we will maintain the impetus on ensuring the safety of journalists.

To effectively deliver on our shared commitments in these areas, we will ensure that the activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of Media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities are empowered and properly funded. Their expert contribution throughout the region offers invaluable support and guidance.

Corruption is a major obstacle to economic growth in the OSCE area and fuels inequality, impunity, and instability. In 2020, we will promote the OSCE's action to foster good governance and combat corruption, in particular by considering responses made possible by digital public services, as well as the links between corruption and money laundering, terrorism and environmental degradation. A high-level conference on this topic will be held in 2020.

Many of our contemporary security challenges will continue for the foreseeable future. Others will evolve and new ones will emerge. This requires participating States to reflect on how to employ and adapt OSCE instruments to our changing context, while continuing to protect and promote rights and freedoms.

The Albanian Chairmanship will prioritize work to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism. We will pay particular attention to the web of partnerships needed between and within the public sector, private sector, religious and civil society groups to prevent terrorism and radicalisation and implement effective national and regional crisis management processes. We will also support efforts to focus on the challenges posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters.

We will initiate a series of cross-dimensional activities relating to organised crime in the OSCE region. We will take a holistic approach to address the drivers and manifestations of organised crime, strengthen law enforcement capacities and promote sustainable regional approaches to tackle cross-border crime.

Albania will strengthen our fight against trafficking in human beings, a challenge felt throughout the OSCE area. Building upon existing instruments, the Albanian Chairmanship will support the development of cutting-edge practices to prevent and combat human trafficking. Future success in eradicating human trafficking will depend in part on how countries and societies harness technology to fight this crime. We will maintain the OSCE's focus on border security and management, encouraging the relevant authorities and stakeholders to bolster their cooperation on cross-border challenges such as Small Arms and Light Weapons, drugs, and illicit finance.

In response to calls for stronger regional action on the security implications of environmental issues, Albania will support projects and initiatives in areas such as disaster risk reduction, hazardous waste management, and the protection of the environment in conflict zones.



Photo Credit: OSCE/Juraj Nosal

Implementing our commitments

Our regional security and stability depend on respectful compliance with the principles and commitments the OSCE has developed since the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. Where participating States choose not to fully implement their existing commitments, it damages the integrity of the OSCE, weakens our democracies and shared security, and raises grave and unacceptable risks to citizens.

The Albanian Chairmanship will, at every turn, encourage participating States to take responsibility for what they have undertaken to implement.

Experience shows that confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and military-to-military contacts can make a substantial contribution to security in Europe. These instruments reduce risks and misunderstandings and ultimately contribute towards increased transparency and trust between OSCE participating States. In coordination with the Chairmanships of the Forum for Security Co-operation in 2020, Albania will promote full implementation of existing CSBMs and arms control regimes.

The Structured Dialogue remains an innovative and complementary forum for exchanges among participating States. The Albanian Chairmanship intends to use its potential as part of the OSCE's political-military toolbox to identify areas of convergence and lay the ground for further achievements.

We will also encourage further debate on new challenges, such as cyber security and the use of information and communication technologies, emphasising the need for cooperation between technical experts and policymakers. This is an area where the OSCE can further develop its tools and confidence- and security- building measures.

Inspired by Albania's religious and social harmony, we will back OSCE initiatives promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and those which invest in youth and religious dialogue in the OSCE region.

Additionally, as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, we will also intensify efforts to promote human dignity and confront hate and hate speech, whenever and wherever it occurs.

Given the reach of our Organization, we should promote and foster exchanges within and between all groups in our societies.

The consideration, representation and participation of women must be encouraged in all of our work. Our Chairmanship will lead by example. We will strive to appoint more women to positions of responsibility

within the OSCE and we commit to have no all-male panels at events arranged by our Chairmanship.

The Albanian Chairmanship will also continue to promote dialogue, trust and partnership between governments and civil society organisations. They play a central role in the monitoring and promotion of rights and fundamental freedoms in our region.

Similarly, as one of the youngest regions in the OSCE, we will draw on the experiences of South East Europe to prioritize action in support of youth in peace and security. Their engagement is essential for a culture of dialogue, justice, peaceful coexistence, trust and reconciliation, and their active political participation is a precondition for a sound democratic process. We will pay particular attention to the economic empowerment of young people in rural areas.

Security in the OSCE area is not only determined by our internal relations, but is also inextricably linked to that of our neighbours. Albania will therefore promote dialogue with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation and foster exchanges with other international actors, in particular with the European Union and the United Nations.

Last, but not least, to boost political engagement with OSCE activities, we will continue to endorse inter-parliamentary dialogue and the fundamental contribution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.



ALBANIA 2020 SHQIPËRIA