



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

NEWSLETTER

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Empowering SPAK Task Force against electoral crimes

As part of its efforts to support the Special Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK), on 9 April, the OSCE Presence donated over two dozen sets of IT equipment to enhance SPAK's newly-established Task Force's capacities in preventing and investigating electoral crimes in the 11 May parliamentary elections. The equipment – consisting of 25 laptops, 25 printers/scanners and accessories – will be used by the 13 mobile investigation units as well as the co-ordinating unit in Tirana.

Ambassador Tarran meets Ambassador Zannier, gives interview on elections

On 3 April, Ambassador Tarran met with the Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the 11 May parliamentary elections, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier. The EOM, which operates separately from the OSCE Presence, will assess the election for its compliance with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as with national legislation. Also, on 19 March, Ambassador Tarran gave an extensive [interview](#) to the public broadcaster RTSH focused on the 11 May elections.



Intensive training for Alpine Units of Albanian State Police

Thirty police officers from the alpine units of Tirana, Fier and Shkodra participated in a specialized training in the mountains of Korça from 10 to 13 March. Organized by the Presence, with trainers from the Austrian Federal Police, the training aimed to enhance police ability to operate in challenging alpine environments, ensuring the safety and security of both local communities and tourists. The training – part of a Presence project funded by Austria – precedes a training-of-trainers programme, which will make alpine preparation an integral part of the work of Albania's police.



Joining forces against human trafficking

During March, together with the Ministry of the Interior and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child, the Presence addressed challenges of human trafficking, with a special focus on the exploitation of children and foreign citizens. In meetings in Shkodra, Vlora, and Durrës, child protection workers, anti-trafficking police officers and representatives of prefectures discussed strengthening co-ordination mechanisms among local institutions to improve the identification and referral of potential victims of trafficking.

Supporting prosecutors against electoral crimes



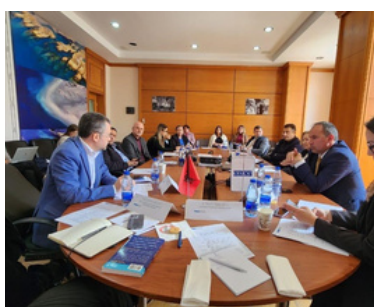
Strengthening the role of prosecutors in combating electoral crimes was the focus of a workshop that the Presence organized with the General Prosecutor's Office on 10 April. The event – addressed by Ambassador Tarran and General Prosecutor Çela – was part of the Presence project in support of electoral reform and processes, which is funded by Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S. Mission to the OSCE and Poland. Another workshop focused on strengthening the investigation and prosecution of electoral crimes was organized on 16 April, in close co-operation with the General Prosecution Office, SPAK and the *EU4Justice* project.

Training prisons' staff on prisoners' right to vote

3,027 people in detention are expected to vote in the 11 May parliamentary elections in Albania. To ensure the protection and facilitation of this right, the OSCE Presence and the General Directorate of Prisons organized a training session for around 45 senior-level prison staff. The programme covered a broad range of issues, from the legal framework governing prisoners' voting rights, practical measures for facilitating voting in prisons to best practices and lessons learned from previous elections. The training also addressed logistical and legal challenges faced by prison administration during elections.



Workshop on national minorities' voting rights



Together with the CEC, the Presence organized a series of voter information and education activities to promote the participation of underrepresented groups – youth, women and national minorities – in the 11 May elections. The first workshop took place at the Committee for National Minorities with the participation of representatives of the Committee and civil society organizations, on 4 April. Discussions focused on recent changes in the Electoral Code, OSCE/ODIHR recommendations on national minority voting rights, E-voting and out-of-country voting, as well as preventing election violations and vote-buying.

Certified trainers' training for 11 May elections

On 5 and 6 April, the Central Election Commission, with the Presence's support, conducted training for the certified trainers who will be involved in the electoral process. The trainers will be responsible for training the electoral administration and the operators of the electronic voter identification system (PEI). The training served as a reminder on key issues related to the functioning of the electoral administration and the role of PEI operators, as well as to familiarize the trainers with the upcoming training schedule for Voting Centres Commissions and PEI personnel.



Fostering judicial dialogue on fundamental rights



On 7 March, Administrative Courts' judges, High Court legal advisors and officers of the State Advocate's Office gathered for a workshop hosted by the Presence, the School of Magistrates and the Association of European Administrative Judges (AEAJ). The focus? Navigating the intersection of national law, EU law and international human rights standards. Deputy Head of Presence Clarisse Pasztory, School of Magistrates Director Arben Rakipi and AEAJ President Sylvain Mérenne underscored the vital role judges play in upholding legal certainty, judicial independence and fundamental rights.

Support to parliament services, e-Legislation



On 23 April, the Presence supported the Assembly's Directorate of Legislative Service of the Assembly to hold an evaluation and planning meeting. The 45 participants from the Legal, Plenary Sitting and Committee Service discussed organizational issues, analysed the 2024 work and set priorities for 2025 with insight for transitioning into the new legislature. In addition, on 30 April, as part of the Swiss-funded e-Legislation project, the Presence and the Assembly held a Demonstration Day for 50 staff members focusing on the e-Legislation workflow for the consolidation of laws within Parliament.

Against criminal offences in public procurement

The investigation and adjudication of criminal offences related to public procurement was the focus of a training session organized with the School of Magistrates on 4 April. The training aimed to enhance the capacities of SPAK prosecutors, Special Courts judges and district prosecutors to conduct criminal investigations including on high-level corruption and transnational organized crime groups. This activity was held as part of the Presence's support for Albania to further advance the implementation of the anti-corruption reform and consolidate rule of law, key justice institutions and civil society organizations.



Boosting environmental governance at local level



Throughout March, the Presence completed a series of thematic training sessions aimed at enhancing environmental inspection and control at the municipal level. Held in Tirana (4 March), Elbasan (11 March), Lezha (18 March), and Gjirokastra (25 March), the training sessions gathered around 120 municipal representatives, fostering dialogue with key national institutions. The training series was part of the Presence project on enhancing environmental governance and security in Albania funded by Norway, France and Italy. The project provides national and local authorities with knowledge and tools to improve environmental protection.

Towards a research centre at Gjirokastra University

On 4 April, the Presence held an initial meeting with the Rectorate of the University of Gjirokastra to introduce the concept for establishing a research centre for local Development. The meeting marked the start of a feasibility assessment to explore the potential and conditions for developing the centre. The study will assess the sustainability and the centre's potential to support local economic development in the region, identify local economic trends, assess community needs and inform strategies for inclusive and sustainable development.



Strengthening co-operation with Tirana University



On 9 April, Ambassador Tarran met with the Rector of the University of Tirana, Artan Hoxha, to discuss the ongoing collaboration with the University. The OSCE Presence has supported the University of Tirana in the development of curricula for journalism, transitional justice and criminology. Looking ahead, Tarran expressed the Presence's interest to further strengthening co-operation with the University, particularly in advancing civic education for students on topics such as voting and democracy, local governance, environmental protection and gender equality.

Protecting children's rights, safe child employment



Three Presence-organized local-level meetings to strengthen co-operation to address the protection of working children in Albania took place in Shkodra, Vlora and Durrës during March. The State Inspectorate of Labour and Social Services and the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of Children engaged in technical discussions with labour inspectors and child protection workers to: Improve the co-ordination of cases referral; strengthen local-level co-operation; and implement law in a best-interest-of-the-child approach. This series of meetings will be extended to other municipalities.

Week-long training on effective witness protection

From 7 to 11 April, 20 police officers delved into critical topics such as international relocation, the psychological impact of moving and cultural considerations in witness protection. Under the lead of an Austrian and a Croatian expert, they gained hands-on experience through simulated scenarios. The training followed a visit from Ambassador Tarran and Deputy Minister of Interior Lamallari to the Witness Protection Directorate, where they viewed specialized equipment donated by the OSCE. This initiative is part of our ongoing support for Albania's law enforcement agencies, funded by Norway.



Info sessions on covert sources management model



As part of its long-standing support to the Albanian State Police in implementing intelligence-led policing, the Presence organized a series of informative sessions on the new covert sources management model, from 7 to 11 April 2025. The sessions, led by British and Albanian experts, took place in Lezha, Fier, Elbasan and Tirana, gathering representatives from all 12 local police directorates across the country. The meetings marked the culmination of nearly a decade of support in this field, from the first assessments in 2016 to the creation of a dedicated unit in 2020 and the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures in 2023.

Advanced risk assessment training for police

Police analysts sharpened their skills in criminal risk assessment during a 5-day intensive training organized by the OSCE Presence from 7 to 11 April. The training brought together analysts from the Information Analysis Units at central and local levels, equipping them with advanced skills in risk assessment of criminal groups. Through hands-on exercises and expert guidance, participants learned how to better identify, assess and prioritize criminal threats, with a focus on organized crime networks. This training is part of our ongoing efforts to modernize police's analytical infrastructure and methods.



Albanian Women Police Association visit Kosovo



From 23 to 25 April, the Presence supported an exchange visit for 14 members of Albanian Women Police Association to Pristina, marking a significant step in advancing women's empowerment in the security sector. Highlights included meetings with Kosovo Police leadership, exchanges with the Kosovo Women Police Association, discussions on gender inclusion and UN Resolution 1325, a field visit to the South Police Station and a discussion with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. The visit strengthened regional co-operation, enhanced participants' leadership capacities and laid the groundwork for future joint initiatives.