

HEAD OF PRESENCE REMARKS AT A MEETING OF THE BUSINESS ALBANIA ASSOCIATION

30 September 2011

Thank you Mr. Bregasi and Business Albania for this invitation. It is a very important discussion, which you shared with us. I am here with Darcie Nielsen. She is the head of our Governance in Economic and Environmental Issues Department. The OSCE and – I think that is part of why you invited us – stands for assistance in even better rule of law, and this is helping competitive and free business to develop, to develop for profits, but also to help develop a country. You showed in your discussions and in your warm welcome, Mr. Bregasi, that you are very well aware of what stands behind being united, what value is in being united and being a valid discussion partner for government and parliament. And you also showed that you are fully aware that chambers of commerce, of course, are good actors, especially the bilateral chambers of commerce being present here in Albania or the respective embassies to be a contact for exchange, for better exports and for better international links in business. All of the nations that were mentioned are, by the way, participating States of the OSCE – and Albania is a very important one since it is our host country here – and all we do is support rule of law, which also allows good business. Besides, rules of law, while integrating into European structures, education is an important element. Let me remind us that education is not only something that is provided from outside, by the states. It is provided through the family, through the parents, through the peers, but it is also provided through enterprises. While integration into the global world and European integration are certainly key goals, as I understand it, for the Albanian nation, important steps need to be taken and administrative courts is certainly one of them. So, I am sure that for all of you here, or most of you here in Business Albania, steps ahead would help to facilitate business and to facilitate also - what is normal in business - solve open questions. What is extremely important also is compliance, compliance including a maximum working against corruption, making processes transparent. Public tenders is certainly an important example. Another important example, and I do not want to spell all out, is permits. Or concessions. The line is very long. It is very important that it is competitive, that it is a win-win situation. Like for an individual, it is very important for business, and I am sure you know that much better than I do, you have to make profit, you have to be profitable to survive, to be able to compete and that is, of course, the name of the game – being profitable. But, in the long run, the best profit is whether it is based on the rule of law. What I find very encouraging here is the track record of the development of the economy in Albania with free enterprises. I just come from discussions organized from a political foundation here, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and it had to do with the past in Germany and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that it is extremely important to always include free business in politics of a free country like Albania. That freedom, of course, is not an absolute freedom; it should and must be rules-based, and that is where the OSCE Presence in Albania is willing to assist. Through unity, but certainly through dialogue, as you practiced it here and allowed me to be present, you can organize that progress and I would like to invite you to continue that dialogue. It would bring your business forward, it would bring Business Albania forward, and certainly this country where I really like to work.

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