



11th edition of Media Development Forum

On 29 October, the Presence brought together key decision-makers and media experts for its 11th annual Media Development Forum focused on transparency of media ownership and RTSH independence. Amb. Tarran stressed the importance of media pluralism, ownership transparency and independence from political or economic pressure. Through a video address, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Amb. Jan Braathu reaffirmed support for Albania in advancing media freedom and pluralism. In another event, on 28 October, the Presence and RTSH discussed media coverage of 11 May elections.

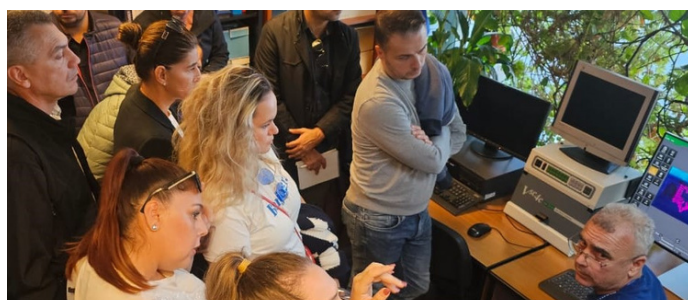
Presence launches YAG Alumni Network to boost youth engagement

On October 27, the Presence brought together current and former members of its Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for the first meeting of the YAG Alumni Network. The launching of the Network represents a bridge between experience and new ideas, offering a platform for former and current members to stay connected, exchange knowledge and inspire one another. The OSCE Presence established the Youth Advisory Group in 2018 to provide a youth perspective on its work.



Austrian judges visit Albania's justice institutions

A delegation of 29 Austrian judges - members of the European Association and the Austrian Association of Administrative Judges - visited Albania's justice institutions on 2-3 October. The Austrian judges met with the High Judicial Council, the School of Magistrates and the Administrative Court of Appeals in Tirana. They also participated at the roundtable "Administrative Justice: Comparative Perspectives from Albania and Austria", where they shared experiences with Albanian counterparts.



Regional Border Police training on detecting forged documents

Border police experts from Albania, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina came together for a regional training-of-trainers on detecting forged identity documents, from 6 to 10 October. Delivered by seasoned Greek border police trainers, the course focused on advanced detection techniques, practical case studies and harmonized regional approaches to border security. On the final day, participants visited the Port of Durrës to see document verification in action.

Preparing election trainers for 9 November by-elections



In view of 9 November mayoral by-elections in five municipalities, the OSCE Presence supported the Central Election Commission in organizing a training-of-trainers session to help certified trainers update their knowledge and refresh their procedural and operational skills, from 10 to 12 October. The programme session covered topics such as the organization and duties of election commissions, the vote counting and tabulation process, the use and operation of biometric identification equipment and the overall administration and documentation of the electoral process, including practical exercises on voter identification on E-day.

Past and upcoming elections in IEWG focus

Following the official conclusion of the 11 May parliamentary elections and the release of the OSCE/ODIHR Final Report, on 30 October, the Presence brought back together the International Election Working Group (IEWG) for a regular meeting on 30 October. International community and Central Election Commission (CEC) representatives discussed the main findings and recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR report, new electoral reform efforts and CEC preparations for the 9 November mayoral by-elections. They also shared plans for future international election assistance initiatives.



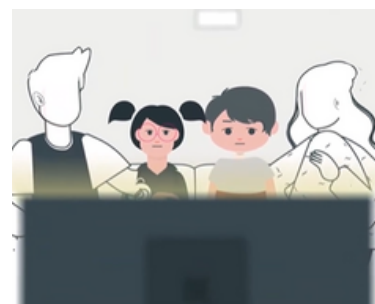
Albanian students explore Thessaloniki newsrooms



Journalism students from the University of Tirana and the University of Shkodra took part in a study visit to Thessaloniki, Greece, experiencing newsroom practices and innovation, from 30 September to 3 October. At *Makedonia* newspaper and *ANA-MPA*, students observed digital reporting and live radio broadcasts. *ERT3* and *VORIA.GR* offered insights into TV production, editorial processes and AI in journalism. The Peace Journalism Laboratory at Aristotle University explored ethics, innovation and regional co-operation. The OSCE Presence organized the visit with Greek Embassy's support.

Promoting responsible media together with AMA, RTSH

For Global Media and Information Literacy Week, the last week of October, the Presence partnered with the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) and RTSH to raise awareness on responsible media. Three short videos highlighted key principles: protecting children and minors, preventing hate speech and respecting privacy and dignity. The campaign underscored the importance of ethical journalism and public awareness of media responsibilities. Through this partnership, the Presence, AMA and RTSH aimed to promote compliance, accountability and safe media practices.



Fighting money laundering and corruption



Prosecutors, investigators and law enforcement officials from across Albania came together on 29–30 October for an anti-money laundering and anti-corruption training. Organized by the OSCE Presence, the course aimed to strengthen Albania's institutional and operational capacities to investigate complex financial crimes. Prosecutors from the Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime and district prosecution offices, investigators from the National Bureau of Investigation, State Police officers and representatives from the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and the Tax Investigation Unit shared experiences and practical methodologies.

Albanian, Montenegrin Police conduct hot pursuit drill



From 27 to 29 October, Albanian and Montenegrin border police carried out another successful simulation exercise on cross-border hot pursuit. Gathered in Shkodra, police officers exchanged lessons learned from previous simulations and conducted a new practical exercise at the Muriqan/Sukobin Border Crossing Point. The Head of the Shkodra Prosecutor's Office also took part. The OSCE Presence has initiated and supported the development of hot pursuit protocols between the border police of Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo, strengthening regional collaboration and operational readiness.

Data protection for safer borders

On 22 October, the Presence organized a data protection training for the Albanian Passenger Information Unit (PIU). The workshop gathered representatives from the PIU, the Office of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, Customs and Dutch experts to share best practices. The next day, participants visited Tirana International Airport to observe operational data protection in practice. This initiative supports Albania's ongoing efforts to strengthen border security while aligning national practices with international standards on privacy, information security and protection of fundamental rights.



Conservation of Divjaka-Karavasta National Park



Divjaka-Karavasta National Park – one of Albania's unique ecosystems – was the focus of a field visit of Amb. Michel Tarran and our colleagues on 3 October. The meetings with Divjaka Mayor Josif Gorrea, local NGOs like AOS-Albanian Ornithological Society and park authorities highlighted the importance of interinstitutional co-operation, youth engagement, eco-tourism and joint action for conserving the park. The OSCE Presence remains a committed partner in supporting environmental governance, local authorities and civil society participation in Albania.

Fostering dialogue on minority rights and inclusion

On 28 Oct., the Presence organized a consultation meeting with civil society organizations working on national minority issues to foster dialogue, share perspectives and strengthen co-operation. Representatives from Macedonian, Aromanian, Roma, Egyptian, Montenegrin, Bosniak, Serbian and Bulgarian communities shared their experiences, challenges and priorities in advancing minority rights and social inclusion. The discussion explored how the OSCE can continue supporting equal rights, inclusive participation and stronger protection mechanisms for all national minorities in Albania.



Bridging digital gap for seniors in Pogradec



To mark the International Day of Older Persons, on 1 October, around 25 representatives from central and local institutions met in Pogradec to discuss the findings of the OSCE Presence's monitoring on the elderly - their access to services and the impact of digitalization. Participants also learned about the newly adopted national strategy and shared their experiences in managing cases and securing funding for elderly services. Key recommendations: ensure diverse and equal access, especially in rural areas; address the digital divide for elderly populations; strengthen local capacities and co-ordination; explore funding opportunities to expand elderly service.