

Head of Presence remarks to the media following the first meeting of the ad hoc committee on electoral reform, 30 November 2011

Wollfarth: “It was a very important and very good and very dignified start of the ad hoc committee. Madam Speaker was making it very clear that the full support of the Assembly, including the Secretariat is behind the work of the ad hoc committee starting its work today. The Co-chairs, the members of the ad hoc committee, the experts that have been nominated have to be congratulated for the trust they have from their parties, from the leadership and also from the followers to build what can lead to a consensus to develop the Electoral Code.

The OSCE Presence in Albania, including ODIHR, were looking forward to this important day of the constitution of the ad hoc committee. This is really an important starting point that comes in this important week having seen Independence Day and Liberation Day. Since elections are a core part of a democracy, it is very good to see this directly after these two important days for Albania. The important guideline has been set out I think best through the two OSCE/ODIHR reports on the parliamentary elections in 2009 and the local government elections this year. So there are good guidelines to work along, hopefully for results early next year.

On a personal note, I would like to add that I felt in the room today a spirit of willingness to co-operate and move forward to the benefit of Albania. The OSCE Presence in Albania and OSCE/ODIHR stand ready to support the process at a given stage, whenever needed, with additional expertise.

So let me summarize: an important start, making this an important and hopefully also a forward looking day for Albania. I wish the Co-chairs and the members of the ad hoc committee and the experts group a good hand in moving forward. I repeat, we stand ready to assist whenever needed.”

Question: You said they have the trust of their parties. Do you think they have the necessary trust in each other to move forward with important issues?

Wollfarth: The important thing is they talk to each other, that they build trust, and, as I have said, I saw the goodwill. And where there is goodwill, there is a way forward for consensus. Of course, that needs to be developed, the drafts have to be drafted, that work is ahead of us. I am confident that it will work.”