

**SIGNATURE OF THE PROTOCOL CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE ODIHR RECOMMENDATIONS**

OSCE/COUNCIL OF EUROPE HEADQUARTERS, TIRANA: 5 APRIL 2002

Speech by Ambassador Geert Ahrens, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania

I am extremely pleased to welcome the chairmen of the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party to our HQ today for the signing of this protocol which represents an agreement between their two parties. I congratulate them on reaching agreement on this document. A great deal of work went into its preparation. It is an important step towards the implementation of ODIHR's recommendations.

Some of the key points of the protocol are:-

- that they will now contact other political parties represented in Parliament to familiarise them with the protocol and seek their opinion of it.
- that the two parties give their full commitment to the implementation of ODIHR's recommendations
- that the parliamentary committee shall be formed on the basis of majority-opposition parity
- that they will work towards a system that provides for only one round of voting

There is much ground still to be covered. In particular, I would invite the other political parties, who have such an important role to play, to cooperate fully and positively in this process.

Let me be quite frank. There has not been full agreement between the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party on the question of "investigate" or "enquire". But I am convinced that this problem can be overcome if all concerned stay as close as possible to the spirit and the letter of the ODIHR recommendations.

OSCE/ODIHR remain ready to help with advice whenever any of the political parties represented in parliament wish. However, I do see this essentially as an Albanian process and for that reason we will now send a copy of the signed Protocol to Speaker Namik Dokle.

May I repeat my congratulations to both chairmen on this significant achievement. We now look forward to the rapid formation of the committee and an early start to its work with the full participation of all political parties represented in parliament. The progress made on this will be welcomed at the forthcoming Friends of Albania conference I also have no doubt that it will be appreciated in the EU's deliberations on its relationship with Albania.

Tirana
5 April 2002