

HEAD OF PRESENCE'S INTERVIEW WITH ORA NEWS TV
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Ora News: Mr. Ambassador, yesterday Mr. Adriatik Llalla took office as General Prosecutor after he was voted only by the majority in parliament, with the opposition abstaining. What is your opinion of him?

Ambassador WollfARTH: “First, let me congratulate Mr. Adriatik Llalla for this high and very important office. He took office, as you said, yesterday. Today is his first full day in office and on this occasion I want to wish him a lot of success in this high task. It is a challenging task. He got the confidence from the parliament; the majority of the votes voted for him. He has an excellent background, he also has experience in fighting corruption, which in many cases is liaised also with organized crime and other wrongdoing. This is a basis that should allow excellent work in the future. The position is a very special one. It needs at all times to be independent, based on the rule of law, starting with the Constitution and all the legislation in place in an environment where many challenges come from almost all sides. So, let me especially wish him a lot of success, because this task is also crucial for any further integration process.”

Ora News: Mr. Ambassador, you mentioned the issue of the independence of this institution. The outgoing prosecutor Ina Rama said yesterday she hoped that the institution remained independent with Mr. Llalla at the top. Do you think that Mr. Llalla, who has been praised for his performance at the top of the High Institute for the Declaration and Audit of Assets, will manage to keep this institution independent and unaffected by politics?

Ambassador WollfARTH: “I am pretty confident, yes, but the future will tell. A big task is lying ahead, but again, I am confident that he will be able to do this demanding job.”

Ora News: Mr. Ambassador, the appointment of Mr. Adriatik Llalla at the top of the General Prosecutor’s Office was accompanied by debates, especially among experts and politicians on the issue of the expiration of the mandate of Ms. Ina Rama. You were also part of the debate and several media criticized you for changing your stand: first you said that the mandate would expire in May 2013, then you stated that the time was not important, but the appointment of the right person was. Now that we have a new prosecutor, when do you think the replacement should have taken place? Was the replacement of Ms. Ina Rama at this time a violation of the law? Another related question: how do you evaluate the five-year work of Ms. Ina Rama at the top of the General Prosecutor’s Office, given the fact that she led it during specific moments, such as the 21 January case?

Ambassador WollfARTH: “Let me start with the latter one, 21 January. I am among those who would like to see a speedy development based on the law in this important case and have the necessary clarifications. That is very important for the families of the ones that died on 21 January and also for the other part of the country that we have all clarity on this. On the nomination process, it was according to, what we saw, what is in the legislation. There was a committee hearing on the new prosecutor and that followed by decisions in the plenary of the Assembly. So, in that respect it was following clearly the rules – a very important fact.

On the reading, since when the regulation was changed for the mandate and the expiration of the mandate of the General Prosecutor and not making it clear when the exact date of change would take place, I said that there are very good arguments for May 2013, but as often in legal affairs, there are also other possible readings, among them November this year. This is what apparently prevailed among the personalities that are decisive in this country for these nominations. This is acceptable, in law that happens not only occasionally but this is a normal process, and therefore it is also good to have a discussion, a public discussion also based on the readings, and convey that. So I did not see any oscillation on that point. While finding arguments for the different positions, one was chosen, and now the country should look ahead and support also the General Prosecutor in his independent position to do the best possible job for a maximum of rule of law in Albania, because that is extremely important for the integration process and the reform process.”

Ora News: How do you evaluate the work performed by Ms. Ina Rama?

Ambassador Wolfarth: “This is not necessarily up to me, but overall I have a positive impression, and I have a lot of respect for her when performing to the last day, and also make a very dignified hand-over to the successor. After several years in office, successfully in office, this is certainly not the easiest moment, but she did perfectly, and the dignified process and hand-over. This is what the country should have seen, and what the country saw, and I can only commend that.”

Ora News: Mr. Ambassador, this interview with you takes place at a very critical moment for Albania, as it was refused the EU candidate status for the third time, because the ruling majority and the opposition failed to reach a compromise on the approval of the three laws requiring a qualified majority. Now that we have been refused the status for three times, in your opinion, which party should feel more responsible for the damage caused to Albania and Albanians on the integration path?

Ambassador Wolfarth: “For Albania and for the politicians, the political class - be the leaderships of the parties or the Members of Parliament – it is important to understand that only when Albania is playing by a team, team Albania, jointly to reach the qualified majority which is necessary to take these reform steps that are required by the European Union Commission, then it can succeed. So, team play, playing together, doing the reform process properly. The OSCE Presence here helps when it comes to the rule of law; when it comes to strengthening the democratic institutions like the parliament, but all the other authorities as well; when it comes to the election process - this is another milestone oncoming next year in 2013; and these fundamental things. Some of them are very political, others are very technical. When these are done, wherever possible, as a team Albania, then I see big chances to make the necessary progress. When this does not happen, when there is a blockade, then you have a stagnation and that is what apparently is happening these days. It is not the end of the world, but it is definitely not good news. I would like to see a good, a quality integration and for that, I repeat, team play would be the name of the game and I hope to see that hopefully – to be very daring I would like to see that even before elections in 2013. Maybe we have to wait until after the elections, but I would like to see it that as early as possible and I have the impression I am not alone in this.”

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