

**REMARKS BY HEAD OF PRESENCE, AMBASSADOR FLORIAN RAUNIG,
AT FORUM ON JUSTICE REFORM**

Durrës, 25 November 2015

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to see so many students joining in these important discussions, to study the proposed amendments to the Constitution and their importance for your future.

I congratulate the Assembly on calling these meetings, as part of a second round of consultation on the justice system reform now underway in the Assembly. I met many of you when I was here in July to introduce the Analysis of the Justice System in Albania which was the product of the first phase of this reform.

Since then, we have continued to work for an inclusive, comprehensive reform which meets international standards. By “we”, I mean the Assembly and its Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on Justice Reform, the experts and the international partners, such as the OSCE Presence– and you, the citizens of Albania. Because the reform will certainly achieve those outcomes better if it represents the shared vision of Albanians for a 21st century justice system.

I must recognize the work of the experts and their personal commitment to citizen participation in justice reform. It is an honour for me to share this podium with these prominent Albanian legal scholars and their international colleagues. They are visiting this month the main cities in Albania to hear from you and some of your fellow citizens.

Why is this discussion so important? Because it is important to you. Any change to the Constitution affects the lives of citizens. But now we are talking about 53 proposed amendments which affect the entire judicial system.

These amendments should provide a foundation for a renewed justice system that will better serve Albanian citizens. They will have to be followed by intensive legislative activity and by an array of implementation measures, including new regulations, procedures, software and management systems, and training. In this university and others, the lawyers of the future will learn new ways of doing justice.

This is the ideal setting to talk about starting a new chapter in Albanian constitutional history, here among young professionals who are starting a new career as the legal experts. I do hope the legislative changes will make for better justice. But, in the end, that is up to you.

As jurists, you will follow the legal changes with great professional interest. You should also participate actively in the implementation of practical, systematic measures for the administration of justice which are essential to judicial efficiency and integrity. Justice reform cannot be completed in the Assembly; it must be done in each and every district court from Tropoja to Saranda.

This is the idea behind the OSCE Presence's partnership with court chairs, judges, and court users to implement the active case management system which has been such a success in reducing trial delays in Kruja and Korca – bringing *Justice without Delays*. Implementing a modern, transparent administration will require the full engagement of your generation of jurists.

Speaking here in July, I said:

Consultation is not just the job of government or the Parliament. Although it is the job of public authorities to open the door to citizens' participation, it is equally your job, our job, to be knocking on that door.

Well, that door is now open. It can lead, if you have the will, to better rule of law, under the Constitution, to judicial governance in keeping with international standards and OSCE commitments. It is the door to your future.