

**ADDRESS OF THE HEAD OF OSCE PRESENCE IN ALBANIA, AMBASSADOR
EUGEN WOLLFARTH**

Roundtable on New Voting Technologies and Election Administration
Tirana, 26-27 March 2012

Madam Speaker,
Co-Chairs,
Honoured Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning.

As the OSCE Head of Presence, I am delighted to be with you today at the start of this two-day roundtable.

An event where political actors, civil society and international experts, all fine professionals in their fields, will discuss issues relating to electoral code reform.

The OSCE Presence is pleased to have assisted the Assembly in this process.

As you may know, the OSCE Presence is facilitating the OSCE/ODIHR's technical assistance to the electoral reform, through a project with a financial support from the British Embassy.

I would especially like to thank the United Kingdom for helping to fund this event

The Presence has facilitated OSCE/ODIHR's visits to Albania to keep regular contacts with the respective stakeholders as well as provision of expertise to the drafts discussed so far at the Committee on their compliance with OSCE/ODIHR recommendations.

I believe we all know that electoral code reform constitutes one of the crucial reforms for furthering democratic developments in Albania as well as greatly assisting all international strategic policy objectives.

It is a complex process that requires comprehensive debate at a political and technical level.

Electoral code reform is needed, it is wanted and, I might add, it is also deliverable.

It deserves noting, not least in this distinguished circle, that the reform is ongoing and that progress has been made.

However, there are some very key topics that remain to be discussed.

That is why there is an absolute need to intensify the work allowing the Committee to move forward at a faster pace.

All efforts should be undertaken to make good use of the already extended timeframe so that the deadline is not missed again.

It is also important for any reform to be finalized well before parliamentary elections.

However, while time is an important factor, content is what matters most.

Let us be clear that a quality outcome is more important than any hastily agreed process. Some last-minute *quick fix* solution can no longer be an option.

I urge all sides to focus their energies in achieving a full, thorough and complete reform.

The existence of a political will and mutual trust is essential.

I look forward to see timely and lasting solutions from the Committee which has to come as a result of a constructive work from all sides.

The key word also here is: trust!

Madam Speaker,
Co-Chairs,
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Ladies and gentlemen,

Any finally agreed Electoral Code has to address OSCE/ODIHR recommendations and is closer in line with the OSCE commitments and other international standards.

It is up to Albanian political parties to do their best in finding solutions to the different issues in order to deliver the best to their people, their voters.

Let me say that it is absolutely fundamental to place a maximum level of good will and trust in the process for the reform to result in success.

I urge all the sides to engage into a fruitful process based fully on cross party dialogue, mutual respect and unconditioned co-operation.

Finally, I want to emphasize that this is an Albanian-owned process and it is up to Albanian political class to move ahead with the reform and do their best in finding solutions to the different issues in order to deliver the best to their people.

I am confident that these two days will provide an excellent opportunity for a positive and constructive discussion and a fruitful exchange of experiences.

As a next step then, I believe that this event will help the ad hoc Committee, hence the Assembly, to come forward with very good proposals and adopt them in due time.

Finally, I wish us all a very successful two days.

Thank you very much!

E.o.T.