



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Presence in Albania

NEWSLETTER

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Himara to pilot Environmental Partnership Forum

On 24 June, the Presence visited Himara to introduce the Environmental Partnership Forum to be piloted in the municipality this year. The Forum gathers local institutions, civil society, businesses and community to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. It is part of the Presence's project "Strengthening local government capacities and improving environmental governance in Albania", implemented in co-ordination with the Ministry of State for Local Government and the Agency for the Support of Local Self-Government. After meeting at the townhall, Amb. Tarran and Mayor Tavo visited the Himara Water Management System.

OSCE Presence, Labour Inspectorate launch campaign against labour exploitation

Strengthening workplace protection mechanisms and preventing labour exploitation is the objective of an awareness-raising campaign launched by the OSCE Presence and the State Labour Inspectorate on 26 June. The campaign has a particular focus on foreign workers, thus responding to the evolving profile of Albania's labour market. The campaign runs under a Presence's project funded by the United Kingdom, Norway, Ireland and Italy. It is part of its broader efforts to strengthen Albania's response to labour exploitation and trafficking in human beings.



Albania explores Swiss experience on referendums

To learn from Switzerland's experience with referendums and direct democracy, the OSCE Presence supported a high-level Albanian delegation visit to Bern on 8-9 June. The delegation included Members of Parliament, members of the Central Election Commission and representatives of the Constitutional Court. The draft law on referendums was also discussed during a meeting between Deputy Head of Presence Clarisse Pasztory and Chair of the Socialist Party Parliamentary Group Taulant Balla on 5 June.



Ambassador Tarran, SG Gjoncaj discuss parliamentary modernization

On 6 July, Ambassador Tarran met with Assembly Secretary General Genci Gjoncaj to discuss progress in modernizing parliamentary services, including the Assembly's strategic plans, bringing Parliament closer to citizens and advancing the implementation of the e-Legislation process. "We are proud to have the OSCE as a strategic partner. Everything we have achieved in Parliament has been achieved together," said Secretary General Gjoncaj. Tarran and Gjoncaj visited the E-Legislation Unit, the Archive and Library and a civic education programme for children.

Justice and human rights in focus



On 12 June, Ambassador Tarran met with the new Director General of Prisons Adriatik Kupi to discuss continued co-operation on penitentiary reform. The discussion focused on strengthening correctional capacities, protecting human rights and advancing a more effective and humane penitentiary system, including through reducing excessive use of pre-trial detention. On 6 July, Ambassador Tarran met with Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination Genta Tafa to discuss further co-operation on preventing hate speech, promoting equality and supporting awareness-raising activities on non-discrimination across Albania.

Peer learning strengthens municipal co-operation

Twenty-five representatives from the municipalities of Berat, Lushnja, Dibra and Memaliaj got together in Lushnja and Berat, on 17 and 18 June, to exchange experiences and explore practical responses to local environmental and development challenges. The study visit was organized under the OSCE Presence's peer-to-peer initiative, through which Lushnja and Berat provide mentoring support to Memaliaj and Dibra. During the visit to Berat, Ambassador Tarran also had meetings with Mayor Ervin Ceca and representatives of civil society from Berat region. In Lushnja, he met with Mayor Eriselda Sefa and together participated at a youth empowerment event.



Specialized workshop for Travel Intelligence Sector



On 25 June, the OSCE Presence organized a technical workshop to strengthen the operational capacity and expertise of the Travel Intelligence Sector (SIU-TIS) within the Albanian State Police. The event brought together SIU-TIS personnel and representatives from integrated border and security agencies. Led by two senior experts from Greece, the workshop provided practical methodologies and case studies on applying EU data protection regulations in the law enforcement sector, with a focus on safeguarding personal information during anti-trafficking and counter-terrorism operations.

Supporting cross-border customs co-operation

On 1-3 July, the OSCE Presence and the OSCE Mission to Skopje supported a joint visit of representatives of Albania and North Macedonia Customs Administration to the Qafë-Thanë/Qafasan Border Crossing Point. Led by Customs Directors Besmir Beja and Boban Nikolovski, the delegations reviewed the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Joint Border Controls and discussed the finalization of a new protocol for its implementation. The proposed protocol aims to harmonize customs procedures, enhance joint border control, reduce waiting times at the border, and facilitate trade and the movement of travellers.



Study visit on media freedom and standards



Representatives of Albanian media organizations and journalists travelled to Warsaw, Poland, from 23 to 26 July, for a study visit on media freedom and journalistic standards. The visit was organized by the OSCE Presence under its project "Enhancing media literacy, legal frameworks and journalistic standards in Albania", funded by Helsinki 50+ fund and Norway. The programme included visits and discussions with the Society of Journalists, Polish public TV and OKO.press. Participants exchanged experiences on media freedom, journalistic standards, fact-checking practices and the challenges affecting contemporary journalism.

Building media literacy skills in classrooms



On 8 June, Ambassador Tarran visited Kostandin Kristoforidhi high school in Elbasan, where the Presence, in partnership with the Albanian Media Institute and the Ministry of Education, is supporting teacher training sessions to strengthen media and information literacy (MIL) education. The initiative contributes to the integration of MIL into the national education system by building the capacity of certified teachers to deliver MIL in classrooms. The Presence will expand the programme to high schools across Albania during the upcoming academic year, strengthening teachers' ability to promote critical thinking and resilience to disinformation among students nationwide.

Presence promotes courts public communication

How courts communicate with the media and the public was the focus of a roundtable organized by the OSCE Presence and the High Judicial Council (HJC) on 2-3 July. The event brought together media judges from First Instance, Administrative and Appellate courts, alongside communication and media experts. They exchanged experiences on promoting clear and credible institutional communication to enhance transparency and public confidence in the judiciary. HJC Chair Ilir Rusi and Ambassador Michel Tarran highlighted the importance of continued co-operation in supporting the role of media judges.



Presenting manual on public procurement offences



Together with the School of Magistrates, the OSCE Presence presented the "Manual on investigation and adjudication of public procurement offences" to judges of the Special Courts and prosecutors from the Special Prosecution against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) at a roundtable on 20 July. Developed in 2025 with the Presence's support, the manual provides practical guidance on identifying, investigating and adjudicating procurement-related offences. The roundtable forms part of the OSCE Presence's broader efforts to strengthen integrity, accountability and institutional oversight in public procurement.

Improving enforcement of executive titles

On 1 July, together with the Ministry of Justice and the Bailiff Service, the OSCE Presence brought together key institutions to discuss ways to improve the enforcement of executive titles through stronger interinstitutional co-operation and amendments to the legal framework. The roundtable provided a platform to identify practical solutions for increasing the efficiency, transparency and consistency of enforcement proceedings, contributing to a more effective justice system. D/Head of Presence Pasztory, D/Minister Hoxha and Bailiffs Service General Director Qirici emphasized the importance of effective implementation.



Legal staff strengthen skills in research and writing



On 24 June, the School of Magistrates, in co-operation with the OSCE Presence and the EU-funded project JUSTAL, organized a specialized course for legal staff of the High Judicial Council and other justice institutions. The programme focused on strengthening skills in legal research, legal reasoning and legal writing, with the aim of supporting clear, consistent and well-reasoned legal documents. The training forms part of the OSCE Presence's ongoing support to justice reform in Albania and efforts to promote integrity, efficiency and transparency within judicial institutions.

Implementing new law on violence against women



Representatives of key institutions gathered at a roundtable organized by the OSCE Presence and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, on 21 July, to discuss the implementation of the new law “On the prevention and protection from violence against women and domestic violence”. Key topics included the role of the judiciary, progress achieved and challenges in applying the new legal framework, as well as the need to raise public awareness, build capacities and develop specialized training on technology-facilitated gender-based violence. D/Minister Seferi and D/Head of Presence Pasztory addressed the roundtable.

Addressing barriers to women's representation

At its 24 July meeting, the Working Group on Gender Equality and Women in Decision-Making discussed legal and practical measures to prevent fictitious candidacies and the resignation of women elected to municipal councils. Participants also explored ways to strengthen gender-responsive political finance within the ongoing electoral reform process. Since 2017, the OSCE Presence and UN Women Albania have co-hosted the platform, convening local and international actors to promote equal opportunities for women in political and public decision-making in Albania.



Roundtable discusses voting of national minorities



On 3 July, the OSCE Presence and the Central Election Commission (CEC) organized a roundtable on the exercise of voting rights by national minorities, bringing together members of the Committee on National Minorities and civil society organizations. Participants discussed the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, lessons from the 2025 parliamentary elections and ways to strengthen the participation of national minorities in electoral processes. Earlier, on 1 July, the Presence held a periodical meeting of the International Election Working Group, which gathers representatives of the OSCE participating States, international organizations and the CEC.

Information sessions promote cyber hygiene

As part of its broader support to Local Safety Councils and engagement in the field of cybersecurity, the OSCE Presence, in co-operation with the National Cyber Security Authority, organized information sessions for Local Safety Councils at Berat and Dibra municipalities on 12 and 30 June. The programme focused on cyber hygiene, the responsible use of artificial intelligence and strengthening cybersecurity in public institutions. The events brought together 49 participants from local institutions and civil society, including the mayors and prefects of the two municipalities, and helped raise awareness of online safety.



Youth voices matter



On 17 June, the OSCE Presence organized the outreach event Youth Voices Matter: Empowering Youth Participation in Lushnja, bringing together members of the Municipal Youth Council, youth activists and representatives of local youth organizations. Attended by Ambassador Michel Tarran and Lushnja Mayor Eriselda Sefa, the event provided a platform for young people to discuss freedom of expression, online hate speech and the risks of youth recruitment into criminal activities through social media. Participants also explored the #SkaShkurt campaign, which highlights that there are no shortcuts to success and that everyday choices shape the path ahead.