

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



# What we do

The mandate of the OSCE Presence in Albania is to promote democratization, the rule of law, and human rights, as well as to consolidate democratic institutions in line with OSCE principles, standards and commitments.

The OSCE Presence provides assistance and expertise, in close consultation and co-operation with the Government of Albania and other State institutions and organizations, to the Albanian authorities as well as to representatives of civil society.

The Presence was established in 1997, following the collapse of pyramid schemes, to help stabilise the country and co-ordinate international assistance.

Today, the Presence's activities concentrate on three key priority areas:

i) Strengthened support to fight against crime and corruption; ii) Enhanced rule of law, justice reform and human right; iii) Advanced democracy and governance [at both central and local levels], with an emphasis on the electoral reform, support to the parliament and to free and facts-based media. While applying its concept of comprehensive security, the Presence continuously enhances its work on gender equality, and brings a stronger voice of women, youth and civil society at large into its work across dimensions.



Over more than two decades, the Presence has participated actively in the country's most important reforms, including electoral, judicial, property and decentralization reforms.



The Presence works to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism in prisons and probation services, and to strengthen women's role against VERLT.



The Presence helps authorities better identify and protect victims of trafficking, fight against various forms of crime, and enhance community engagement in security and safety matters.

# How we work

To help achieve lasting change, the Presence uses its multinational in-house expertise, institutional knowledge and long-term relationships with stakeholders, focusing on the institutions and helping to shape policy and strategy. The Presence operates within a “whole-of-society” approach, adding wherever possible a cross border regional dimension to its programmes. This approach ensures the efficiency, coherence and impact of the Presence’s work, addressing challenges from different directions.

The OSCE Presence works in co-ordination and partnership with a wide range of Albanian and international actors, and also takes a strong regional approach and peer-to-peer exchange. The Presence does all this with the support of the 57 OSCE participating States, including Albania.

## Fostering sustainable change

Structures and laws are not enough. The Presence works towards:

- Meaningful and impartial implementation of the law;
- Effective and proper functioning of institutions;
- Creation of a relationship of trust between citizens and authorities, at both central and local level, as well as between political opponents.

The Presence facilitates consultation on development and reform, bringing together all the stakeholders in a process, applying a whole-of-society approach, and fostering relations between institutions.

Grounded in its Mandate, the ultimate goal of the Presence is Albania with strong institutions and practices of democracy, justice, the rule of law and security that operate effectively, accountably, and are trusted by citizens, in fulfilment of Albanian aspirations and the values and commitments of OSCE participating States.

## Implementing priority projects

At the request of national partners, the Presence has actively participated and continues to participate in many of the most important reform efforts of the past two decades, including electoral, judicial, property and decentralization reforms. It reviews and comments on draft legislation, promotes and facilitates public consultation, and advises on the design and implementation of new policies. The diverse mandate allows the Presence to answer local requests for expertise and technical assistance.

The Presence has led or contributed significantly to a large number of projects that have had a direct impact on the well-being of the Albanian population. This includes efforts to remove and destroy surpluses of conventional ammunition and dangerous chemicals, help authorities better identify and protect victims of trafficking, fight against various forms of crime, enhance community engagement – in particular of women and youth – in security and safety matters, improve the judicial efficiency and access to justice, advance media development and promote human rights.

## Building bridges

One of the Presence’s strengths is its ability to build bridges and bring people together – to co-operate from within the country and across borders, to address challenges or enhance reconciliation. The OSCE Presence’s work includes support to improve transparency, integrity and accountability and ensure inclusive citizen participation in decision-making processes. There is a focus on how citizens interact with their democracy, recognizing that citizens have a role in monitoring and setting standards for the proper functioning of their institutions. The Presence emphasizes responsibilities as well as rights.

## Activating citizen participation

By strengthening a sense of civic engagement, empowerment and responsibility among Albanian citizens, particularly women, young people and members of marginalized groups, the Presence is helping them to get their voices heard. In addition to strengthening the transparency and outreach of institutions towards citizens, the Presence works to enhance knowledge and skills among citizens at large.

# How we work

(continued)

## Activating citizen participation

The Presence's community focused civil society initiatives help these citizens understand better how their democracy works, and then give them the skills and experience to make it work for them. The Presence has stimulated the awareness and engagement of young people, minorities and people with disabilities, and has helped to increase the representation of women in politics. In the long-term, active citizens are the best monitors of their own democracy.

## The rule of law starts with you

The Presence is actively working to establish a rule of law environment in Albania in which laws are clear, fair, predictable and applied equally to everyone. A rule of law culture is the basis for progress across all three of the OSCE's dimensions - a precondition for security, sustainable economic development, a functioning democracy and protection of human rights. Through its message "The rule of law starts with you", the Presence encourages citizens to be not just passive 'recipients' of the rule of law, but active contributors, alongside official institutions – with every action of every citizen.



The Presence brings a stronger voice of women, youth and civil society at large into its work across dimensions.

It is not just about an impartial, reliable judicial system, but a rule of law culture in which every citizen participates.

# Facts and figures

(As of June 2023)

## Acting Head of Presence



Ambassador Bruce G. Berton  
of USA (since 12 June 2023)

## Staff



97 - across Unified Budget  
and Extra-Budgetary projects

## Annual Budget (2021)



EUR 2,891,200

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OSCE Presence in Albania  
Sheshi "Italia"  
Tiranë, Shqipëri  
Office: +35542240001