



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

7th March 2021, Kyoto Japan (on-line)

14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice, and Rule of Law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Honorable organizers of this Congress,

Honorable representatives of participating states,

Honorable colleagues!

It is an outmost privilege and delight, in my capacity as the Minister of Justice of a country under a substantial transformation in the justice sector, to be part of the 14th Congress of United Nations, to convey Albania's advancement in crime prevention, criminal justice and rule of law, towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development!

Criminal justice is one of the pillars of overarching and unprecedented justice reform launched in 2016, which has laid a solid foundation to save the judiciary once for all from corruption and build a justice system worthy for every Albanian citizen.

It is an acknowledged fact that Albania's approach to strengthening criminal justice and rule of law is **sustainable, long-term** and in line with **the standards** set by the **United Nations Conventions against Transnational Crime, Illegal Trafficking and Corruption** (UNCTOC, UNCAC), as well as in line with the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

Recalling the Doha Declaration adopted in its 13th Congress, this congress serves as a platform for Albania to reaffirm the engagement it has undertaken and integrated in its legal order.

Key-steps were undertaken in the fight against corruption, including the establishment of the **Anti-Corruption Network in 17 service-providing agencies**.

A decentralized Prosecution is already functional, with vetted prosecutors; we have established a special prosecution, a **National Bureau of Investigation**, which constitutes the best practice in the fight against organized crime and corruption.

We have re-designed criminal justice in the framework of sustainable development, with a new and modern criminal code, harmonized with European Directives, that reflects our engagements in the

stabilization and association agreement with the European Union and the ratified international agreements.

We are already working on **a package of laws providing** for efficient procedures reflected in the criminal procedure code.

Our focus on children and youth in crime prevention is reflected in the Juvenile Justice Code, which for the first time separated the adults from juvenile justice. The establishment of the **Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Center** helps juveniles in conflict with law with rehabilitation and re-integration programs.

A comprehensive penitentiary reform is concluded, with modern infrastructure, increased security in prisons, elimination of the overcrowding in prisons resulting in a -21% reduction, as one of the achievements acknowledged in the European Commission's yearly report 2020 for Albania; continued and dedicated health services have proven to rise at the level of the Covid-19 pandemic challenge;

Increased **access to justice** for the most vulnerable categories is fully achieved through a system of free legal aid that is operational since 2018, where 20% of the cases are criminal cases.

Fight against corruption combined with measures to **prevent money laundering and organized crime**, resulted in successful legal and digitalization initiatives: online registers for beneficiary owners, civil society organizations and electronic systems for notaries and real estate agents.

An effective system of confiscation of illegally acquired assets is created, which reallocates assets to the state budget, and reinvests parts thereof in social enterprises.

Multiplied international cooperation in criminal matters is strengthened through the electronic case management system for the systematic prioritization of letters rogatory.

The 2030 Agenda for Albania envisages enhanced social justice, efficient compensation for victims of organized crime and trafficking, networked juvenile rehabilitation institutes, a penitentiary academy, a strengthened gender component in access to justice, digital liaison of law enforcement agencies that further facilitate international cooperation and fight against organized crime, guaranteeing the protection of rights, access to justice and well-being of every member of the society.

The commitments undertaken in the Kyoto Declaration will be taken one step further every day by Albania, thanks to the mutual support with you, our partners.

Wishing success to this congress,

Thank You!

MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF ALBANIA

ETILDA GJONAJ (SALIU)