



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

Political and Public Affairs Unit

## MORNING MEDIA REVIEW

Monday, 22 November 2021

### OSCE IN THE NEWS

- OSCE Presence joins events on gender equality and water organized by Slovenian Embassy in Korça
- HSA Head Arben Shehu meets Italian ANAC delegation
- OSCE Presence works with Berat and Korça young people to strengthen communities' security at local level
- OSCE Presence in Albania assists Public Broadcaster for archive's digitization

### POLITICAL AFFAIRS

- DP Chair Basha defends 18 December National Convention; blames President Meta for defeat in 25 April elections
- Berisha calls on Basha and his supporters to resign over electoral losses, says U.S. Ambassador will not be welcome in his office

### RULE OF LAW / SECURITY

- IMO supports extension of mandate of judicial vetting bodies
- Oil entrepreneur Taçi to hand himself to Albanian law enforcement

### REGIONAL / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / EU INTEGRATION

- Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs pays official visit to Albania
- Kosovo and Albanian Governments to hold joint meeting on 26 November
- Acting Director for Western Balkans at European Commission visits Albania
- Greek Embassy lodges official complaint over photo exhibition opened outside President's Office

### ECONOMY / ENVIRONMENT

- Prime Minister Rama warns high fines for polluters, unpacks budgets for agriculture and fisheries

### OSCE IN THE NEWS

**OSCE Presence joins events on gender equality and water organized by Slovenian Embassy in Korça**

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

The OSCE Presence in Albania announced on Friday that its officials had had the pleasure to be part of the Gender Equality and Water event organized by the Slovenian Embassy in Tirana and the Economic Intelligence Center, with the support of the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Youth and Balkan Center for Co-operation and Development. “During the two-day event, discussions focused on waste in Albania, recycling, air and water pollution, and gender equality. The Presence delivered a presentation on support to Albania’s longstanding efforts for gender equality and women’s empowerment at the national and local level. Further, the Presence presented its support and level of engagement with national authorities on environmental governance, through parliamentary oversight, inter-agency co-operation, transfer of expertise at local level, the Consultative Group of Civil Society and youth awareness,” the OSCE Presence wrote on its social media channels.

The Slovenian Embassy commented also on the same event on its official social media channels. “Roundtable and Workshops on Gender Equality and Water that took place in Korça on 18 and 19 November concluded with discussion among students who are participating in the project “Tackling the Root Causes of Discrimination against Women in Albania”. Students presented their views on water impact on the life of women and underlined the importance of access to safe water,” the Embassy wrote on its official Facebook page. (*Facebook, Facebook, Twitter, Twitter, Instagram*)

### **HSA Head Arben Shehu meets Italian ANAC delegation**

Head of the High State Audit (HSA) Arben Shehu met on Friday with two experts of the Italian National Anticorruption Authority (ANAC), Filippo Romano and Alex di Staso, electronic media report. According to the media, the meeting was held as part of the ongoing co-operation between the HSA, the OSCE Presence in Albania, and the ANAC with the aim of strengthening the professional capacities of the HSA auditors in auditing public procurement procedures and public-private partnerships. Shehu thanked the experts for sharing their valuable experience in the trainings with the HSA auditors that took place from 15 to 17 November and emphasized that the HSA was committed to a high-quality co-operation with the justice bodies in referring to them the violations in public procurement procedures enhancing their quality in relation to diagnosing and assessing corruption risks. He said that the HSA considers valuable any information related to cases of abuse of public funds, calling attention to the media’s reporting on cases of public procurements and concessionary licenses. HSA Head Shehu was highly appreciative of the ongoing co-operation with the ANAC, saying that it was of added value for the boosting of professional capacities of the HSA personnel, in an effort to engage in tangible audits that aim at deepening the uncompromising fight against corruption. The Italian experts praised the HAS’s approach and efforts to be an active institution in referring to the law enforcement agencies corruption with public funds, saying that the HSA had a good core group of auditors have in depth knowledge of the public procurement procedures. They said that the last week’s trainings had helped the exchange of experiences related to the law on public procurements, its most critical points and processes, the corruption risks, and the inquiry modalities employed by the ANAC, the issuance and execution of contracts, the economic damage caused by procurement procedures, and planned and effective costs for the contracts’ implementation, etc. The three-day training held last week in Tirana with the ANAC experts was attended by a total of 50 HSA auditors. The HAS-ANAC co-operation, made possible

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

with the help of the OSCE Presence in Albania, will continue in early 2022 with training sessions focusing on the frequency analysis of the violations in public procurement procedures and recommendations for contracting authorities. (*syri.net, balkanweb.com, panorama.com.al*)

### **OSCE Presence works with Berat and Korça young people to strengthen communities' security at local level**

The OSCE Presence in Albania informed on Friday over social media on a workshop they had conducted this week in Korça with young people to empower them to identify and address safety and security challenges in the community level. During this year, the OSCE Presence, with the support of external expert Enri Hide, informed, raised awareness, and built capacities of about 50 young people from Berat and Korça on: new security challenges for young people; various forms of violence in the daily lives of young people; building resilience of young people and local communities; domestic violence and gender-based violence; mediation and conflict resolution skills; the role of young people in the Local Safety Council – exploring new ways of engaging young people; and stereotypes in our society and communities – how to deal with them. “The energy, activism, and interest expressed by young people in security issues, gives us hope and optimism that they will be one of the most active voices to promote co-operation and co-ordination between institutions and the community, to improve safety and security in their communities. This activity is part of a wider initiative by the OSCE Presence in Albania to strengthen the security of communities at the local level. Support for youth in different regions of the country will continue during 2022, aiming to raise awareness and empower them to address security of concern for the new generations,” the OSCE Presence said over social media. (*Facebook, Twitter*)

### **OSCE Presence in Albania assists Public Broadcaster for archive's digitization**

The archives of the Public Broadcasting Service (RTSH) are a national asset, the OSCE Presence in Albania said on Friday over social media. To preserve it, the OSCE Presence in Albania and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) are working to increase RTSH's capacities and to develop a roadmap for the digitization of the archive. Earlier this week, the Presence and the EBU organized a fact-finding mission on archive digitization and capacity building. EBU expert Éric Rault, Head of Consulting and Expertise Service at the National Audio-visual Institute of France, held several meetings with the director of RTSH archive, Devis Xhaja, and other executives, visited the archive premises, and was briefed on the situation. (*Facebook, Twitter, Instagram*)

## **POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

### **DP Chair Basha defends 18 December National Convention; blames President Meta for defeat in 25 April elections**

Democratic Party (DP) Chair Lulzim Basha said on Friday that holding the party's National Convention on 18 December, as announced, was the right thing to do in the face of what he considered the division caused by former DP Chair Sali Berisha. Interviewed by the *Voice of America*, Basha stated he had had no dilemma when deciding to leave Berisha out of the DP

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

parliamentary group following his designation as persona non-grata by the United States. “My only regret in these last two months is that, in the meantime, Edi Rama has found an oxygen tube in the irresponsible action of Sali Berisha, to whom he has made available the same criminals we faced in 25 April and that now, suddenly, we see activated in Edi Rama’s efforts and Sali Berisha’s actions to divide the DP,” Basha said, adding none of the two would succeed. “The DP will hold its National Convention on 18 December as a convention of unity and, above all, determination to present ourselves again to Albanians in the same manner as in the first day and first weeks of the party’s establishment – as the party of hope, the party of change in front of this outdated political class that is only interested to keep in the hands of a few economic power, political power, and perhaps media power unjustly taken from Albanians,” Basha said. He continued his accusations with the inclusion of President of the Republic Ilir Meta in what he called the “Bermuda Triangle” alongside Rama and Berisha. “When I mention the “Bermuda Triangle”, I mention Ilir Meta as the person, the politician, not the institution of the President whom we have supported anytime he supported the Constitution,” Basha said, adding that “in the last two weeks of the [25 April electoral] campaign, he [Meta] has been Edi Rama’s biggest asset, destroyer of the campaign of the Socialist Movement for Integration, especially in some electoral areas in Vlora and Elbasan and especially in the last weeks [of the campaign], advantaging Edi Rama with his stances.”

In related news, President of the Republic Ilir Meta reacted on Saturday to Basha’s statements, considering them a provocation attempt on the part of Basha with the intent of “justifying himself of all precipices where he led the opposition from 17 May 2017 to 25 April 2021.” The statement was shared by the President’s Spokesperson over social media, adding that Basha “miserably searched for salvation by shifting attention from another grave crisis he has again pushed the opposition in.” ([albaniandailynews.com](http://albaniandailynews.com), [albaniandailynews.com](http://albaniandailynews.com), [top-channel.tv](http://top-channel.tv), [albanianpost.com](http://albanianpost.com), [zeriamerikes.com](http://zeriamerikes.com), [abcnews.al](http://abcnews.al), [sot.com.al](http://sot.com.al), [euronews.al](http://euronews.al), [shekulli.com.al](http://shekulli.com.al), [Panorama](http://Panorama), pp. 2,3, *Albanian Daily News*, p. 3, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, pp. 4,5, *Dita*, pp. 2,3, *Sot*, p. 3, *Telegraf*, p. 4, *Liberale*, pp. 4,5, *Fjala*, pp. 2,3, *Sat*, *Panorama*, p. 6, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, p. 2, *Dita*, p. 2, *Tema*, p. 3, *Liberale*, pp. 2,3, *Sot*, pp. 2,3, *Telegraf*, p. 3, *Mon*)

### **Berisha calls on Basha and his supporters to resign over electoral losses, says U.S. Ambassador will not be welcome in his office**

Former Democratic Party (DP) Sali Berisha held on Friday and Sunday meetings with the Librazhd democrats and the women affiliated with the DP Women’s League, as part of his tour of consultations ahead of an extraordinary DP National Convention (Assembly) he has summoned on 11 December, print and electronic media report. “The DP will be re-established and will go back to its original values. We will draft a new political programme that will have at its centre the Albanian family,” Berisha told the Librazhd DP members and supporters. He also commented on the controversy surrounding the signatures collected by the delegates for the holding of an extraordinary DP National Convention. He said that there were nearly 5,000 signatures that had been collected and that they were not being made public due to three reasons: “The need to protect the privacy and personal data of the signers, the Constitutional Court rulings for this purpose, and the European Human Rights Convention’s provisions for this purpose,” he said. In the meeting held with DP women members on Sunday, Berisha said that DP Chair Lulzim Basha must leave the party due to his huge electoral defeats in the last four years. He also said that Basha’s departure should be

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

followed by that of his supporters, including DP Secretary General Gazment Bardhi and DP Deputy Chairs Alfred Rushaj, Enkelejda Alibeaj, Grida Duma, and Jorida Tabaku. He also accused them of allegedly holding their posts unlawfully. According to Berisha, the DP Statute says that not only Basha but also all the above-mentioned senior DP officials hold their posts unlawfully. The media also highlight Berisha's remarks in regards to United States Ambassador to Albania Yuri Kim. He reportedly said that she would not be allowed to his office unless she apologized first to Albanian democrats.

On Sunday, DP Chair Lulzim Basha responded through his *Twitter* account to the accusations levelled against him by his predecessor. He said that it was really sad to listen to Berisha's allegations. "No invention, lie or gossip will transform the DP into a shield protecting his personal interests," he further tweeted. (*albaniandailynews.com, albaniandailynews.com, albaniandailynews.com, euronews.al, tvklan.al, abcnews.al, balkanweb.com, oranews.tv, syri.net, lapsi.al, Panorama, p. 2, Gazeta Shqiptare, p. 3, Tema, pp. 3,5, Sot, p. 2,4, Telegraf, pp. 4,6, Fjala, p. 4, Sat, Panorama, p. 6, Albanian Daily News, pp. 2,3, Gazeta Shqiptare, p. 3, Dita, p. 2, Tema, pp. 4,5, Liberale, pp. 2,3, Fjala, p. 4, Mon*)

## **RULE OF LAW / SECURITY**

### **IMO supports extension of mandate of judicial vetting bodies**

The Assembly's Council for Legislation and the Parliamentary Legal Affairs Committee held a hearing on Friday as part of its review of the Socialist Party-sponsored constitutional amendments aimed at expanding the mandate of the vetting bodies in the judiciary, print and electronic media report. The meeting was attended by Independent Qualification Commission (IQC) Chair Pamela Qirko and the IQC Commissioner Genta Tafa (Bungo), Public Commissioners Florian Ballhysa, Darjel Sina and Alketa Çeli, and also Maciej Popowski, Chair of the International Monitoring Operation (IMO) Steering Board, the later expressing esteem for the importance of the reform undertaken by Albania for the vetting of the judiciary. Popowski noted that this was not only in favour of Albania's European Union integration path, but also for fulfilling Albanian citizens' expectations in regards to the justice reform. He shared the IMO's support for the extension of the mandate of the judicial vetting bodies to 31 December 2024, in order for the vetting process to be concluded successfully. The stance was also shared by the other attendants in the meeting. (*Panorama, p. 5, Albanian Daily News, p. 2, Gazeta Shqiptare, p. 2, Sot, p. 6, Fjala, p. 4, Sat*)

### **Oil entrepreneur Taçi to hand himself to Albanian law enforcement**

Rezart Taçi, an oil entrepreneur and ex-media magnate wanted by Albanian authorities on charges of money laundering, has told the media he is ready to hand himself in and face the courts. Taçi has been declared "wanted", as the Special Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (SPAK) has issued an arrest warrant against him last week. The SPAK prosecutors claim he worked with two Italian citizens, connected to the mafia, to launder the money into Albanian banks while taking a cut. As noted by the media, it is also alleged he transferred money to Prva Bank in Montenegro, owned by the brother of Montenegrin President Milo Djukanović. Montenegrin prosecutors said they are investigating the matter. Speaking to *Top Channel TV* from Milan, where he is residing at present, Taçi said, "I will face Albanian justice, but in Albania, there is a lobby to attack entrepreneurs, I must say that." "But I will come back to

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

face [the courts]...I have no problems in Italy; I haven't committed any crime. I've lived in Italy for years," he said. (*exit.al, balkaninsight.com, top-channel.tv, Dita, p. 9, Sat*)

## **REGIONAL / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS / EU INTEGRATION**

### **Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs pays official visit to Albania**

Austrian Minister for European and Foreign Affairs Michael Linhart was in an official visit to Albania on Friday and over the weekend, print and electronic media report. He met on Friday with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) Olta Xhaçka, President of the Republic Ilir Meta, Prime Minister Edi Rama, and Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on European Union (EU) Integration Jorida Tabaku, and on Saturday with Democratic Party (DP) Chair Lulzim Basha.

In a joint press conference with MEFA Xhaçka, Minister Linhart said that Albania could count on Austria's support in terms of its EU integration process. Commenting on the Open Balkan regional co-operation initiative, he said that it should be open to the six countries in the region. According to him, it is the time now for the EU to extend its hand for numerous investments in the region. MEFA Xhaçka said that she had spoken with her counterpart on the reform processes in Albania, bilateral co-operation and the need to speed up EU integration processes. She said that Albania is extremely grateful to Austria for being a committed supporter of Albania's EU integration process. She said that the Open Balkan regional co-operation initiative was not a conspiracy aimed at keeping the region away from the EU, neither was it aimed at hindering the EU integration processes of the participating countries.

Commenting over *Twitter* on his meeting with the President of the Republic, the Austrian FM described it as an excellent conversation on the strong Albanian-Austrian relations. "We also discussed ways on how Austria can support Albania on its pathway towards European integration. The start of accession negotiations must be a top policy priority for the EU," Linhart tweeted. President of the Republic Ilir Meta said that he had praised the excellent co-operation and traditional friendship between the two countries, voicing his will for deeper ties in the sectors of tourism, education and culture and fore more Austrian direct investments in Albania. "I also thanked Minister Linhart for the sincere and important support Austria is offering to Albania in the framework of EU integration process," Meta wrote on social media.

A press statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office confirms that PM Rama and Austrian Minister for European and Foreign Affairs Linhart talked about the bilateral co-operation and the need to accelerate Albania's EU integration process. "Albania is ever grateful to Austria for being a staunch supporter on the country's EU integration path," the PM's Office said.

DP Chair Lulzim Basha said after the meeting with the Austrian FM to have expressed to Minister Linhart the DP's and his own gratitude for Austria's precious and long-lasting support to Albania, and in particular in the framework of the EU integration process. He said to have shared with the senior Austrian officials the DP priorities for guaranteeing free and fair elections, the fight against organized crime and corruption, cutting off the ties between politics and crime that for a long time have obstacle and delayed Albania's EU journey. "I am happy that with the Minister and representative of a like-minded political party, such as the

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

Austrian People's Party, we share the same conviction that the EU is the only option for the region, and I assured him that the EU accession remains the DP's absolute priority, as a guarantee for building a better future for the Albanian citizens.

Chair of Parliamentary Committee on EU Integration Jorida Tabaku posted the following on *Twitter* after her meeting with the Austrian Minister for European and Foreign Affairs: "Glad to welcome in the EU Integration Committee the Austrian Minister for European and Foreign Affairs, Michael Linhart. EU Committee will monitor and control the integration process and push for the reforms still missing! We believe that Albanians deserve more and they are EU not only geographically! Let's move from words to deeds!" (*dosja.al*, *top-channel.tv*, *aa.com.tr*, *albaniandailynews.com*, *albaniandailynews.com*, *abcnews.al*, *balkanweb.com*, *oranews.tv*, *ata.gov.al*, *Panorama*, p. 4, *Albanian Daily News*, p. 3, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, p. 2, *Sot*, pp. 6,8,9, *Telegraf*, p. 3, *Sat*, *Albanian Daily News*, p. 3. Mon)

### **Kosovo and Albanian Governments to hold joint meeting on 26 November**

The governments of Albania and Kosovo will meet for the seventh time on Friday, 26 November, to discuss avenues for collaboration, print and electronic media report. The office of Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti confirmed the date following a visit by Minister of Interior Bledi Çuçi. Minister Çuçi was in Pristina on Friday where he met with Kurti and his counterpart Xhelal Sveçla to discuss borders and security. In a *Facebook* post, Çuçi confirmed that the two governments will sign agreements to facilitate the passage of people and goods at the Kosovo-Albania border. This will include creating an online system for residence permits, and removing border checks for those who hold them, and opening a new border crossing point in Shishtavec. (*exit.al*, *tvklan.al*, *syri.net*, *cna.al*, *dosja.al*, *aa.com.tr*, *Albanian Daily News*, p. 2, *Sat*)

### **Acting Director for Western Balkans at European Commission visits Albania**

Acting Director for Western Balkans at the European Commission Michela Matuella completed on Friday a three-day visit to Albania. As announced by the Delegation of European Union (EU) she had in Albania "Useful meetings with leadership, institutions and civil society". "We discussed how to keep focus on EU oriented reforms and gear up practical preparations for EU-Albania accession talks, the EU Delegation further said. As shown by pictures published on the EU Delegation's Facebook page, EC's Matuella met Deputy Prime Minister Arben Ahmetaj, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Olta Xhaçka, Minister of Interior Bledi Çuçi, Minister of Justice Ulsi Manja, Chair of Parliamentary Committee on EU integration Jorida Tabaku, Chief EU Negotiator Zef Mazi, the vetting bodies, and civil society representatives. "Great meeting with Michela Matuella and Ambassador Luigi Soreca for a great discussion on Albania EU path. Very conscious that we have homework to do and that we should deliver more. Time for Albanian government to change the pace on EU ascension path," tweeted Chair of Parliamentary Committee on EU Integration Tabaku after the meeting with the senior EU official.

"Proud to see how the EU is supporting Albania in rehabilitating one of its most known landmarks damaged by the November 2019 earthquake," said Acting Director for Western Balkans at the European Commission Michela Matuella, following her visit at the Mosaic of National History Museum in Tirana. As noted by the EU Delegation to Albania, EU4Culture

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*

is one of the largest cultural heritage programmes supported by the EU with a total budget of €40mln. Implemented by UNOPS, the programme will rehabilitate and revitalize a number of Albania's cultural heritage sites damaged by the November 2019 earthquake. (*Facebook, Instagram, Twitter*)

### **Greek Embassy lodges official complaint over photo exhibition opened outside President's Office**

The Greek Embassy in Tirana has lodged a note of protest with the President's Office in regards to a photo exhibition that was put on display outside the premises of the same, print and electronic media report. The exhibition, as noted by the Greek Embassy, made reference to the "Cham genocide" and the "Greek occupation of Albanian territory." In the note of protest, the Greek Embassy demanded "immediate explanations" from the office of Albanian President Ilir Meta, media report. President of the Republic Ilir Meta, as reported by the media, had visited the exhibition at the invitation of the organizers.

The President's Spokesperson responded on Saturday to the note of protest, saying that the President of the Republic had visited the exhibition placed outside the premises of his Office without undertaking to certify the veracity and/or interpret the pictures shown in it. "Each serious country should clearly understand that the President of the Albanian Republic, Ilir Meta, will not respond for his actions and stances to one of the Embassies accredited in Albania, but he rather responds only to the Assembly of Albania and to the Albanian people. Every foreign Embassy accredited in Tirana of the countries that adhere to the Vienna Convention for every concern or clarification in regards to the activities and stances of the President of the Republic should follow the official channels, through the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. As it is publicly known, the President of the Albanian Republic, Ilir Meta, staunchly opposes any changes of borders in the Balkans," the President's Spokesperson said. (*Shqiptarja.com, ekathimerini.com, albaniandaily.com, balkanweb.com, top-channel.tv, dosja.al, faxweb.al, shekulli.com.al, panorama.com.al, Panorama, p. 4, Albanian Daily News, p. 2, Gazeta Shqiptare, p. 6, Tema, p. 4, Sot, p. 8, Telegraf, p. 3, Liberale, p. 9, Sat*)

## **ECONOMY / ENVIRONMENT**

### **Prime Minister Rama warns high fines for polluters, unpacks budgets for agriculture and fisheries**

Prime Minister Edi Rama has warned that his government will impose high fines for those who litter and throw waste in public. On Saturday, PM Rama and Environment Minister Mirela Kumbaro met with Mayors from Albania's coastal cities to discuss the 2022 budget and the environment. He also told mayors that if their budgets did not include sufficient provisions for cleaning, waste collection, and environment protections, their budgets might not be approved.

On Sunday, Rama delivered a speech in front of the Durrës Port where he presented provisions of the 2022 budget regarding fishing. During his speech, Rama said that Albania lacked experienced fishermen, and the Ministry of Agriculture would ensure that a fisherman's monthly wage was at least ALL80,000 (roughly €650) to attract talent.

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*



On the same day, PM Rama, accompanied by Minister of Agriculture Frida Krifca, presented the 2022 state budget to the farming and livestock handling communities. Rama commented on the recent protests of farmers against the fiscal package, saying that while they were legitimate, the majority of protesters were ill-informed on the said legal package. Rama explained the reasons behind the government lifting the six-per-cent VAT reimbursement, arguing that it was a scheme that had never really worked out, because revenue had only been accumulated by several big collectors and wholesale traders, and had never had a direct impact on farmers themselves. In addition, Rama said that Albania was the first country in the region in terms of funding for farmers, which according to him serve to add up and make this year's budget unlike any previous year. The growth in the agricultural sector these past years, according to Rama, testifies to the agriculture's good progress, especially in terms of fruits' and vegetables' exports. (*exit.al*, *albaniandailynews.com*, *albaniandailynews.com*, *top-channel.tv*, *euronews.al*, *Panorama*, p. 4, *Albanian Daily News*, p. 5, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, pp. 4,5, *Dita*, p. 5, *Liberale*, p. 5, *Sot*, p. 8, *Telegraf*, p. 2, *Fjala*, p. 4, *Mon*)

**Prepared by Political and Public Affairs Unit  
E.o.T.**

*The OSCE Presence in Albania Media Review reflects the selection of topics of informational value to the Presence, as reported by the Albanian national media. We would like to make clear that the Presence is not responsible for the content and for any inaccuracies, misinterpretations or fabrications possibly contained in the media articles.*