



**OSCE Presence hands over SALW
Deactivation Centre**

To strengthen Albania's capacities against the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW), the OSCE Presence carried out retrofitting of the firearms deactivation centre in Mullet and equipped it with specialized machinery. "This is an important step in our joint work to support public safety in Albania," Ambassador Michel Tarran said at the handover ceremony, on 29 May, attended by Minister of Interior Besfort Lamallari and General Director of the State Police Skënder Hita. The activity is part of the Presence's SALW project funded by the EU, Germany and France.

**OSCE regional media conference convenes
in Tirana**

On 18 and 19 May, Tirana hosted the 11th South East Europe Media Conference, organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) together with the Presence and other OSCE field operations in the region. "Strengthening journalism is essential for democratic resilience, accountability and public trust," said OSCE RFoM Ambassador Jan Braathu. Ambassador Tarran also addressed the event. Afterwards, he met with journalism students from Albania and Serbia as a follow up to their engagement with OSCE projects earlier in the year.



**Albania, North Macedonia discuss
climate and environment security**

On 13 May, the OSCE convened the first multi-stakeholder exchange between members of parliament and national stakeholders from Albania and North Macedonia. Parliamentarians, government agencies, civil society and academia explored opportunities for strengthening cross-border co-operation and joint action on climate and environmental security. The meeting was supported by the OSCE Presence in Albania, the OSCE Mission to Skopje and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.



**Strengthening regional co-operation
on drug threats**

"Synthetic opioids and cannabis diversion in South-Eastern Europe" was the topic of a two-day regional workshop, on 21-22 May, organized by the Presence in co-operation with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the U.S. ICITAP. Senior officials from SPAK, NBI and State Police and police services and prosecutors from across the region, EU member states, EU and UN agencies, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration addressed the proliferation of synthetic drugs and the diversion of legally cultivated cannabis into illicit markets.



BRIDGE training strengthens electoral expertise



Five days. Two modules. Two newly accredited facilitators. 40 certified participants. From 18 to 22 May, the OSCE Presence, the Central Election Commission (CEC), the Council of Europe Office in Tirana and the Academy of Political Studies brought together CEC staff and representatives of civil society and partner organizations for an intensive Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) training. The event was organized under the OSCE Presence's project "Support to electoral reform and processes in Albania", which is supported by Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S. Mission to the OSCE and Poland.

Presence supports review of election training

The OSCE Presence supported a two-day analysis on election administration training, organized by the Central Election Commission in co-operation with the Council of Europe Office in Tirana, on 30 and 31 May. The event brought together certified trainers to assess current training methodologies, challenges and practical solutions identified during the 11 May 2025 elections. The discussions focused on improving effectiveness and professional standards in electoral administration. The Presence also facilitated a specialized expert with ODIHR mission experience to support the simplification of future field training materials.



Civil society shares views on electoral reform



In a meeting with Ambassador Michel Tarran, on 22 May, a group of civil society representatives shared their observations regarding the ongoing electoral reform process. He took note of the issues and concerns raised regarding the pace of work of the parliamentary ad hoc committee, as well as the importance of ensuring an effective and meaningful consultation process with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations. Tarran said the OSCE Presence will continue to encourage the Committee and political representatives to address OSCE/ODIHR recommendations in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Equal access to political finance for women

"Women's empowerment in politics: Challenges, barriers & solutions for equal access to political finance" was the focus of a technical workshop organized by the OSCE Presence together with UN Women Albania and Women's Network Equality in Decision Making on 25 May. Political parties' representatives, women councillors, civil society, international partners and electoral experts discussed ways to strengthen gender-responsive provisions in the new Draft Law on Financing of Political Parties which is under discussion as part of the ongoing electoral reform process in parliament.



Promoting gender equality in security sector



The OSCE Presence supported the Annual Conference of the Association of Women in the Albanian Police, held on 12 May under the theme "Women in Policing: Experiences, Well-being and Professional Perspectives." Organized in partnership with UN Women, the event brought together around 180 participants from law enforcement institutions, government bodies, international partners and women's organizations. Discussions focused on professional challenges, gender stereotypes, work-life balance, leadership, mentoring and mental well-being, while highlighting initiatives for gender equality in the security sector.

OSCE launches guidelines for Roma integration



On 20 May, the OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Presence in Albania launched Guidelines to help human rights and equality institutions strengthen their work on Roma and Sinti issues. The event gathered institutions, civil society and international partners to discuss practical ways to promote equality and improve responses to discrimination affecting Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. The Guidelines provide practical recommendations and examples to help institutions strengthen inclusion, accountability and co-operation with affected communities.

Boosting co-operation for local development

Together with the University of Gjirokastra, on 4 May, the OSCE Presence convened the first meeting of the Municipal - University Working Group, bringing together representatives from Gjirokastra, Tepelena and Përmet municipalities, professors and local stakeholders. This initiative aims to strengthen co-operation between municipalities and the University's Research Centre. The Working Group will contribute to data-driven analysis and policy recommendations to support municipalities in addressing local challenges and advancing sustainable development.



Ambassador Tarran visits Këlcyra



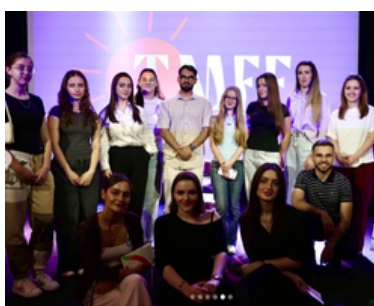
On 8 May, Ambassador Michel Tarran visited Këlcyra municipality, where he met with mayor, local police, teachers and students of the high school and representatives of Gjirokastra University. He pointed out the Presence's interest to implement its project on establishing close collaboration between the municipalities of Gjirokastra region, the University of Gjirokastra, private business and other local actors in improving local governance. He reiterated the Presence's aim to support efforts of Albanian institutions and local actors to improve governance at local level.

Youth engage on transitional justice issues

Young people from the University of Tirana and the OSCE Presence's Youth Advisory Group gathered at a forum organized by the Presence, on 26 May, to learn more about the compensation process for former politically persecuted persons. Representatives from the Authority for Information on the Documents of the Former State Security Service and the National Association of Former Political Prisoners also took part in the forum, where a Presence-supported study was presented. On 25 May, the Presence brought Elbasan University students to visit the BunkArt1 museum to encourage learning about Albania's totalitarian past.



Highlights of Youth Advisory Group activities



Members of the OSCE Presence Youth Advisory Group (YAG) took part in two youth engagement activities in May. On 21 May, they joined a networking event with the U.S. Embassy Youth Council and Young European Ambassadors to exchange views on youth participation, community initiatives and regional co-operation. On 29 May, YAG members facilitated a panel at the Tirana Mediterranean Film Festival on freedom of expression and countering hate speech narratives. Young participants proposed solutions for creating safer and more constructive spaces, both online and offline.