



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

**REPORT TO THE 17th SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND
SECURITY**

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JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM

Implementation of the justice system reform

Focus on

Independence: implementation of justice reform, application of principles of integrity, merit and transparency in the functioning of the self-governing bodies of the judiciary.

Albania continues to advance the consolidation of the thorough and comprehensive justice reform, which remains at the core of the country's democratic development and European integration processes. Now in its ninth year of implementation, the justice reform is in its consolidation phase, focused on strengthening institutional performance, addressing implementation gaps identified in practice, and ensuring the sustainability of the reform's outcomes.

Experience gained from the application of the key justice reform laws, in particular **Law No. 96/2016 “On the Status of Judges and Prosecutors”** and **Law No. 115/2016 “On the Governance Bodies of the Justice System,”** has revealed a number of legal, procedural, and institutional challenges. These challenges relate to the effective functioning of justice institutions as independent bodies, the exercise of constitutional competences, the governance and management of courts and prosecution offices, the integrity and transparency of appointment processes, and the coordination among justice governance institutions. Such issues have also been identified in the European Commission's reports.

In response, targeted legislative amendments have been adopted as part of a second phase of consolidation of the justice reform, aimed at further consolidating the governance framework of the justice system and implementing the interim benchmarks of the EU common position. The amendments to **Law No. 115/2016** strengthen the functioning of the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and other justice governance bodies by addressing legal ambiguities and practical shortcomings identified during implementation. They improve procedures for the selection and integrity verification of members of justice governance bodies, including non-magistrate members, through clearer rules, standardized self-declaration requirements, and strengthened inter-institutional cooperation.

In this context, the revised framework reinforces mandatory cooperation among the institutions responsible for integrity verification, including the **High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflicts of Interest (HIDAACI)**, the People's Advocate, and other competent authorities. These measures aim to improve predictability, legal certainty, and the overall quality of integrity assessments, while reducing delays and inconsistencies observed in practice. Transitional arrangements are also introduced to address challenges in the management of courts and prosecution offices, particularly in light of the implementation of the new judicial map.

Amendments to **Law No. 96/2016** focus on strengthening the framework governing the status, career, and discipline of judges and prosecutors. In particular, they enhance the

functionality and effectiveness of the High Judicial Inspectorate, enabling it to fully exercise its constitutional and legal competences. Additional measures increase transparency in the work of the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council, especially with regard to decisions affecting the status of magistrates and civil servants, while ensuring compliance with personal data protection standards.

Overall, these legislative developments mark a shift from the initial establishment of the justice reform framework towards a phase of institutional consolidation and performance-oriented implementation. They contribute to strengthening transparency, integrity, accountability, and public trust in the justice system, and further align Albania's justice reform with European standards in the context of EU accession.

Accountability: completion of the vetting process, resilience of the judicial system to attempts of undue internal and external influence, merit-based appointments, promotions of judges and prosecutors, strengthened capacity of the High Justice Inspector, the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council for evaluation and verification of asset declarations.

Completion of the vetting process

Due to the maximum commitment to speeding up the pace of the trials, taking all necessary organizational, structural, and procedural measures, in addition to the productive cooperation with the International Monitoring Operation, the Special Appeal Chamber will be able to conclude the consideration of all Re-evaluation Jurisdiction cases before the end of the constitutional mandate, June 2026, maintaining the standards and quality of the trial, in accordance as well with the Chamber's consolidated jurisprudence.

As of 19.01.2026, the Special Appeal Chamber has announced 397 decisions of the Re-evaluation Jurisdiction. During 2025, the Chamber registered the highest number of cases of the Re-evaluation Jurisdiction reviewed and concluded with a decision: 97 cases, compared to 66 decisions announced during 2024.

There are 21 cases that need to be decided by June 2026. All of these cases are under trial (12 in public hearing and 9 in camera), publicly announced in the Chamber's trials schedule in January, February, and March of the same year.

While the consideration of cases draws to a close, the Chamber is concentrating concurrently on implementing a work program involving all of its structures in order to speed up the pace of reasoning of decisions. By January 19, 2026, there will be 96 decisions to be reasoned, for which the decision with summary reasoning has been announced. There are 21 additional decisions on cases that are "under trial" expected to be announced by March 2026. The Chamber expects to finish 40 of all these decisions in the first quarter of 2026 and the other ones in the second, with the goal of finishing the complete reasoning of all decisions within the constitutional mandate.

Resilience of the judicial system to attempts of undue internal and external influence

High Judicial Council

Pursuant to legal provisions, the HJC either on its own initiative or based on requests submitted by judges, may issue public statements in defense of individual judges when it considers that their human rights are at risk of being violated due to the performance of their duties, or that the exercise of their legal functions is being threatened or may be threatened as a result of actions or attitudes of any public or private entity. Specifically, during 2025, one 3 public statements¹ were issued in defence of judges.

Moreover, HJC has taken an initiative concerning measures to curb the use of inappropriate language against judges on social media, online platforms, and in the media, by requesting the adoption of concrete measures by the competent authorities, namely the Authority for Electronic and Postal Communications and the Audiovisual Media Authority.

High Prosecutorial Council

During 2025, HPC received information from the media about intimidating and denigrating attacks on figures of prosecutors by politicians, media attacks have been from all sides of politics, both from the opposition and the majority, that the HPC estimates that are unrealistic both for magistrates and for judicial bodies such as: the HPC, the HJC, the HJI, etc.

There have also been serious threats of physical harm to prosecutors of the entire system, to SPAK Prosecutors, Head Prosecutors, Prosecutors and former Prosecutors, as well as to the former head of HPC. For these reasons, special protection has been established. As a result, they fortunately have not been able to hinder their activity and attempts to damage their lives, health and property as well as their family members have been neutralized. For these cases, criminal proceedings have been registered and are being pursued by the respective prosecutions according to the case from which the threats came.

The measures taken in the cases ascertained by the media or by request addressed to the HPC, consist in public statements and institutional positions in defense of the magistrate, in providing special physical protection to magistrates and their family members.

In 2025, the HPC made five public statements, in defence of prosecutor's independence. HPC expressed its support to prosecutors, on their independence, impartiality and in exercising their functions in compliance with the law. Moreover, HPC expressed the value of independent media, which on the other hand, should respect human dignity, family and private life of each prosecutor.

The Committee on Prosecutors' Protection is duly in place and carried out its duties in evaluating that a prosecutor should be placed under protection, because of attacks, threats,

¹ <https://klgj.al/njoftimepershtyp/deklarate-per-shtyp-date-12-02-2025/>
<https://klgj.al/njoftimepershtyp/deklarate-e-keshillit-te-larte-gjyqesor/>
<https://klgj.al/njoftimepershtyp/deklarate-per-shtyp-date-29-gusht-2025/>

physical harm, undue attempted internal and external interference, the committee takes a decision to physically protect the prosecutor. Upon being put under protection the prosecutor is physically protected by the State Police, for a period of time, which can be extended if the prosecutor requests it and the committee assesses that he/she still needs protection.

During 2025, 13 Decisions have been taken by the Committee on Prosecutors' Protection, of which 12 Decisions of approval for special physical protection for Prosecutors and their family members and one decision to refuse the request and termination of the special physical protection for the former head of the HPC.

During 2025, 8 (eight) prosecutors were placed under protection from 6 months to 1 (one) year.

During 2025, the request for continuation of special physical protection for the former head of the HPC, Mr. Alfred Balla, was rejected. The Committee found that there was no longer a situation of threat or real risk for him.

From July to December 2025 (after the publication of Rule of Law Report), 6 (six) decisions have been taken to grant special physical protection to various prosecutors and former prosecutors. The decisions taken by the Committee on Prosecutors' Protection have been implemented by the State Police Directorate throughout 2025. Institutional cooperation in this regard is worth mentioning for a good job without events

Merit-based appointments

Merit-based appointments and promotions of judges

Merit-based appointments and promotions of judges remain a consistent practice, ensured through transparent and objective procedures. Since the very beginning, in addition to the legal provisions foreseen in the Law Status for the promotion procedure, the HJC has paid attention to:

- fully implemented the recommendation of the Venice Commission (successfully passed the vetting process with a final decision)
- undergo two consecutive ethic and professional evaluations for candidates under promotion procedure. Part of this process is also handling complaints against judges submitted to the High Inspector of Justice, as long as the results of this process, according to the law, are considered a source of evaluation.
- Rights of candidates to appeal the Council decision.

Consequently, due to the complexity and interdependence of various processes involved in promotion procedures, the Council has been very vigilant.

Appointment of judges

The HJC has continued the process of filling vacancies in the judicial system by appointing and assigning to positions 42 new judges² who graduated from the SoM for the 2024–2025 academic year.

Transfer of judges

The transfer of judges has been another mechanism applied by the HJC to fill vacant positions. During the reporting period, it is noted that 20 judges were transferred with consent through the parallel movement procedure, while 4 judges were transferred without consent due to the elimination of their positions in the courts where they were serving. In addition, 14 judges were temporarily transferred with consent, 5 of whom had their temporary transfer renewed for an additional one-year period.

With regard to court presidents, currently only the High Court has an appointed president, while in the other 19 courts this function is exercised by the vice-president. Most recently, the HJC has also approved the rules on the criteria and procedure for appointment to the position of president of first- and second-instance courts.

Merit-based appointments and promotions of prosecutors

Appointment

On 25.07.2025, the HPC appointed 26 new prosecutors (as magistrates, graduated at SoM for the academic year 2024-2025), and on 30.07.2025 decided to assign them to Prosecution Offices (near the First Instance Courts of General Jurisdiction of Fier, Lezhë, Vlorë, Berat, Shkodër, Dibër, Kukës, Saranda).

Reappointment as head prosecutor and promotion as head prosecutor

The Council, with decisions no.119, of 23.06.2025, no.307, of 10.10.2025, no. 279, and of 11.09.2025, reappointed three prosecutors as head prosecutors in the Prosecution Offices near the First Instance Courts of General Jurisdiction in Korçë, Shkodër and Elbasan, as well as two other procedures are ongoing for promotion to the position of Head Prosecution Offices of Durrës and Lezhë.

Transfer through lateral procedure

² 3 (three) – Berat District Court, General Jurisdiction
7 (seven) – Elbasan District Court, General Jurisdiction
7 (seven) – Fieri District Court, General Jurisdiction
2 (two) – Gjirokastra District Court, General Jurisdiction
2 (two) – Korca District Court, General Jurisdiction
2 (two) – Kukes District Court, General Jurisdiction
4 (four) – Lezha District Court, General Jurisdiction
1 (one) – Saranda District Court, General Jurisdiction
5 (five) – Shkodra District Court, General Jurisdiction
2 (two) – Vlora District Court, General Jurisdiction
7 (seven) positions – Lushnja Administrative Court

During 2025, 24 transfer procedures have been completed through lateral transfer (the announcement of these vacancies was published in the years 2023-2025) through which prosecutors have been transferred respectively to the Prosecution Offices of Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Shkodra and Elbasan. These procedures are complex because they are also related to conducting the ethical and professional evaluation of candidates

Promotion as Head of SPAK and NBI Director

With the decision no.374, of 11.12.2025, the Council elected the new Head of the Special Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organized Crime.

With the decision no.370, of 09.12.2025, the Council appointed in duty the Director of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Transfer with consent

During this period, the HPC has approved 6 decisions for temporary transfer with consent, following all legal steps according to the provisions of the "Regulation on the criteria and procedure for the temporary transfer of prosecutors", and has appointed:

- four prosecutors at the Prosecution Office near the First Instance Court of General Jurisdiction of Tirana and,
- two prosecutors at the Prosecution Office near the First Instance Court of General Jurisdiction of Elbasan, finalizing the transfer with consent.

Promotions of judges and prosecutors

Promotion of judges

The HJC has also continued the procedures for the promotion of judges to the courts of appeal, in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Status as well as the recommendations of the Venice Commission, according to which the successful completion of the vetting process is a mandatory prerequisite for these procedures. During the reporting period³, 12 judges were promoted (with one proposal for appointment), specifically:

- 1 judge to the High Court;
- 8 judges to the General Appeal Court;
- 3 Administrative Court of Appeal.

Furthermore, during the reporting period, the HJC assigned 11 judges under a delegation scheme, specifically:

- 6 to the General Appeal Court;
- 1 to the Administrative Court of Appeal;
- 4 to the Special Court of First Instance for Corruption and Organized Crime.

³ July 2025- December 2025

The transfer of judges has been another mechanism applied by the HJC to fill vacant positions. During 2025, it is noted that 34 judges were transferred with consent through the parallel movement procedure, while 4 judges were transferred without consent due to the elimination of their positions in the courts where they were serving. In addition, 17 judges were temporarily transferred with consent

Promotion of Prosecutors

Regarding the promotion procedures, 3 procedures are ongoing at the Prosecution Office near the Appeal Court of General Jurisdiction, announced by decision No.27, of 14.02.2025, and 3 procedures at the General Prosecutor's Office, announced by decision No.35, of 03.03.2025. The promotion procedures are transparent, published on the institution's website from the moment of announcement, expression of interest of candidates, legal conditions, verification of assets, etc. These procedures are still in process near the Ethical and Evaluation Committee, for verification of assets and background check (waiting for HIDAACI reports).

The HPC's individual administrative acts on the status of prosecutors are made public on the official website, as reasoned decisions. The HPC has an approach of sustained transparency towards the public. The HPC has assessed in line with the requirements of the law, on a case-by-case basis, the decisions that should be anonymized (especially decisions related to discipline, except for decisions associated with the disciplinary measure "public reprimand"), and the decisions that should be public (career and evaluation decisions).

Strengthened capacity of the High Justice Inspector, the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council for evaluation and verification of asset declarations

As part of consolidating the justice reform, on 27 January 2025 Albanian Assembly has approved the amendments on the Law No. 96/2016 "On the Status of Judges and Prosecutors in the Republic of Albania".

Through these amendments the law aims to improve and clarify the procedural framework for the selection, declaration and vetting of assets and character of candidates for the bodies governing the justice system. The objective is to ensure transparency, accountability and to increase public confidence in this system.

Moreover, on 10 July 2025, during the second joint meeting between the HPC and HJC, the Councils approved the joint regulation on standard procedures for asset and background verification of magistrates in the context re-evaluation process. This regulation was approved by HPC Decision No.169, of 16.07.202 and HJC Decision no. 409, date 16.07.2025.

It is important to emphasise that both councils apply vetting standards during the verification of the integrity of candidates for magistrates, which is carried out both before

the commencement of the SoM and upon its completion, as well as in the promotion of judges and prosecutions.

This process includes the verification of assets and personal integrity for each candidate, and the burden of proof, unlike the vetting process, lies with the HJC.

For the purposes of this process, the Councils requests reports from the competent institutions for the verification of assets and integrity, including the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflicts of Interest, the prosecution, the courts, the tax and customs administration bodies, the National Bureau of Investigation, state intelligence services, any disciplinary body that has supervised discipline in the candidate's employment relationships, as well as any public body, natural person, or legal entity that possesses relevant data for the purposes of verification.

Furthermore, the organizational structure the of councils related to the staff in charged with the internal procedures regarding vetting is presented as follows:

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HJC has two Economic Advisors⁴, out of three (3) positions allocated for this role.

In compliance with the 2026 Budget Law, five additional positions have been added to the HPC structure, including one financial counselor and two legal counselors. The HPC will initiate the restructuring process, after which the three new councilors will also be positioned. Subsequently the recruitment process will start according to the legislation on civil servants.

During August–September 2025, a questionnaire has been circulated by International Monitoring Operation to the HJC, HPC and HJI in order to initiate effective cooperation and dialogue.

The HJC has been completed and submitted the questionnaire, reflecting the cooperation between the HJC and the IMO in relation to the proper conduct of the process and the safeguarding of vetting standards. It should be emphasized that, pursuant to the applicable legal framework, the issues cited in the questionnaire have already been addressed and exhausted by the HJC.

The HPC replied to the questionnaire circulated by the IMO to initiate effective cooperation and dialogue, in view of amending the sub-legal acts regarding the assets and background check in line with vetting standards. It is expected to organize a meeting between parties to discuss the results of the information processed by IMO and its feedback

⁴ <https://klgj.al/vendevakanteklgj/vende-vakante-klgj-dt-05-12-2025-keshilltar-ekonomik/>

HJI, by letter no. 2137 prot, dated 10.07.2025, addressed the International Monitoring Operation (IMO) and the EU4Justice Project, requesting technical assistance for the review of the methodology or internal work processes regarding background and asset checks according to vetting standards, in the investigation procedures and recruitment of non-magistrate inspectors by the High Inspector of Justice.

Following the letter sent by the High Inspector of Justice, IMO has sent a detailed questionnaire with technical questions, which has been completed by HIJ and re-sent to the International Monitoring Operation. Currently, the High Inspector of Justice is awaiting feedback from IMO.

Following the request for technical assistance addressed to the EU4Justice Project, HIJ has held three meetings, where an expert has been appointed by the project, who, through electronic communication dated 17.12.2025, has presented a draft methodology regarding the verification of assets. On the other hand, within the framework of the submitted draft methodology, a two-day training is expected to be organized by EU4Justice project with the participation of inspectors and assistant inspectors, for a detailed discussion of the content of the draft methodology for the verification of assets. At the end of the training, this document will undergo internal content analysis and will be discussed soon at the General Meeting of Inspectors.

On 21 January 2026, a workshop on the methodology of the transitional re-evaluation bodies for the verification of assets and integrity of magistrates was held on the premises of the High Judicial Council, with the support of the “EU4Justice” Project and international experts of the International Monitoring Operation.⁵ The workshop was attended by members of the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council, as well as members of the administrative staff of both institutions.

Key aspects of the investigation and administrative activity of the transitional re-evaluation bodies were addressed, with a focus on the preparation of case files, financial analysis, and the assessment of income. Particular attention was also paid to the best practices of these bodies, as well as to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

The organization of this workshop will contribute positively to strengthening the capacities of the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council in exercising their constitutional function of verifying the assets and integrity of magistrates, following the completion of the mandate of the Independent Qualification Commission.

Pursuant to requests submitted by the HIJ to the High Prosecutorial Council in October 2025, one magistrate prosecutor was seconded to the HIJ for a term of five (5) years in the position of “magistrate inspector at the High Inspector of Justice Office, meanwhile on 29 January 2026 four inspectors were re- seconded to HJI.

⁵ <https://klgj.al/aktivitete/trajnim-me-eksperte-nderkombetare-i-klgj-dhe-klp-ne-lidhje-procesin-e-vleresimit-te-pasurise-dhe-te-figures-per-magjistratet-dhe-kandidatet-per-magjistrate/>

***Quality:** reduction of evaluation backlog, timely publication of reasoned decisions, efforts to improve the security and well-being of judges through improved infrastructure and better working conditions, initial and continuous training, entry exam of the School of Magistrates.*

Reduction of evaluation backlog

Evaluations for judges

In comparative terms the evaluations for judges:

- 2024: The HJC evaluated 31 judges.
- 2025: The HJC evaluated 50 judges, reflecting a significant increase in evaluation output.

Measures taken to address challenges and improve timeliness and quality:

- HJC has adopted two key regulatory decisions aimed at strengthening the quality, consistency, and efficiency of judicial performance evaluations:
- Decision No. 433, dated 22 July 2025, “On the determination of minimum standard time limits and minimum quantitative standards for the adjudication of cases”; and
- Decision No. 434, dated 22 July 2025, “On the approval of standard models for judicial decisions”.

Despite the complexity, workload, and multiple factors affecting the ethical and professional evaluation process, the HJC remains fully committed to ensuring the continuity and completion of evaluation procedures for judges whose assessments have commenced, while continuously improving the timeliness and quality of magistrates’ performance evaluations.

Evaluation process for prosecutors

Currently, the number of approved ethical and professional evaluation reports is 50 reports. The HPC is continuing the ethical and professional evaluation of prosecutors according to the approved methodology and the relevant amendments, based on clear and objective criteria to enable the increase of their number.

The number of evaluations is significant, although the expectations were that by the end of this year, more evaluations would be concluded by the HPC.

In May 2025, the Ethical and Professional Evaluation Committee led the working groups of the prosecution offices, tasked with the compilation of statistical data (14 tables for the prosecution offices near the first instance court of general jurisdiction and 5 tables for the Prosecution Office near the Appeal Court of General Jurisdiction), in the implementation of the rules for simplifying the completion of statistical tables, in accordance with the obligations set out in the amendments to the Evaluation Regulation in 2024.

This work was carried out in view of the reflection of the administrative obstacles and hinderances that were affecting this process, such as the lack of a prosecution electronic system generating prosecutors' decision-making, and therefore all statistical data must be processed manually, leading to difficulties in their timely processing and compilation, as well as quality assurance towards verifying statistical accuracy.

The process of collecting statistics on prosecutors to be evaluated in the last draw of April 2025, has progressed relatively faster than the previous periods, mainly due to the rules on simplifying their completion.

Amendments to the evaluation methodology

As regards the evaluation methodology, with decision No.265, of 30.07.2025, the HPC approved some amendments to the decision No.95, of 09.05.2022, "On the approval of the Regulation on the Ethical and Professional Evaluation of Prosecutors", as amended, of the Council. These changes consist in the evaluation methodology of the prosecutors of the Prosecution Office near the Appeal Court of General Jurisdiction.

On 27.10.2025, with the Decision No.330, the HPC approved some amendments to 2 (two) sub-criteria related to the Scoring Methodology for the Prosecution Office near the Appeal Court of General Jurisdiction and the General Prosecutor's Office, in the regulation "On the approval of the regulation on the ethical and professional evaluation of prosecutors".

On 23.12.2025, with the Decision No.381, the HPC approved some amendments to the Regulation on ethical and professional evaluation of Head Prosecution Office, previously approved by Decision No.380, of 30.11.2023.

The HPC's evaluation program for 2026

With the decision No. 364, of 02.12.2025, the HPC approved some amendments were to the Decision No. 256, of 27.11.2024, "On the approval of the program that determines the list of prosecutors and presidents, for whom the ethical and professional evaluation will be carried out during 2025".

On 12.12.2025, with the decision No. 375, the Council approved the program that determines the list of prosecutors and head prosecutors, for whom the Ethical and Professional Evaluation will be carried out during 2026, a total of 42 prosecutors.

Timely publication of reasoned decisions

All courts regularly publish their decisions on the gjykata.gov.al portal, in accordance with the Law on Personal Data Protection.

During 2025, the High Judicial Council (HJC) continued its efforts to ensure the generation and publication of court decisions and related information through the gjykata.gov.al portal.

Moreover, the HJC adopted the Roadmap for the Efficiency of the Judicial Power in Albania 2025–2027, in which one of the main objectives is the timely adjudication of cases and the improvement of the quality of judicial decision-making.

In this regard, under Strategic Objective 1.5 – Increasing efficiency through the use of standardized decision formats and timely reasoning of decisions, the following measure is planned:

Expected Result 1.5.4: Four periodic reports per year submitted by courts as part of their regular reporting framework, focusing on compliance with statutory deadlines for the reasoning of decisions.

Periodic reporting on compliance with deadlines for the reasoning of decisions will begin in December 2026, with four reports to be submitted annually.

The Supreme Court also has maximised its efforts to publish in real time all disposition of judgements. The latter are published in the court's website by the end of the day the chamber has adjudicated the matter.

With regard to the publication of the full decision the Court regularly follows statutory time limits prescribed by the procedural codes. As an exception unifying practice take rather longer to be issued in full, this due to the highly important matter under adjudication and its greater span over case law. In this context however, the delayed publication of full judgments remains isolated as the Court has advanced with their timely publication.

In order to address also a greater access to the judgments and decisions of the Supreme Court, the latter has created another public platform (database) named JUDIX. The database enables the search of judicial decisions by title, keywords, legal basis, reporting judge, judicial panel, parties, date of decision, decision number, legal maxim, and summary. The JUDIX database is populated with decisions on a continuous basis and is currently used by both internal and external users of the court.

As of the end of 2025, approximately 2,000 decisions of the Supreme Court have been uploaded to the database, representing a significant increase compared to 2024, which concluded with approximately 600 published decisions. The objective of the Documentation Centre is to further increase this number to around 3,000 decisions by the end of 2026, with a view to making database searches more comprehensive and exhaustive, both for the needs of the institution and for external users who may remain continuously engaged with selected Supreme Court case-law over the years.

With regard to further dissemination of jurisprudence, the Supreme Court has continued to issue its periodic newsletter throughout 2025. In this manner, legal practitioners and

the general public are afforded the opportunity to become acquainted with the most recent selected case-law of the Supreme Court and of the European Court of Human Rights in cases against Albania, as well as with the most significant activities of the institution. During 2025, the Documentation Centre prepared and disseminated to readers eight (8) Periodic Bulletins and three (3) Thematic Bulletins.

It is worth noting that, in total, forty-one (41) bulletin issues were published during the period 2022–2025. Currently, the number of subscribers to the electronic bulletin stands at 2,820, and a total of 1,047 judicial decisions have been circulated to readers, of which 926 are decisions of the Supreme Court and 121 are judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against Albania.

Efforts to improve the security and well-being of judges through improved infrastructure and better working conditions

Referring to the Security and well-being of judges, during 2025 the Albanian judicial system was confronted with a serious criminal incident in which a judge of the General Appeal Court, was killed. In response, and with a view to strengthening security measures in courts, the HJC adopted a series of administrative measures⁶, including the establishment of Working Groups tasked with assessing court security measures, with the ultimate objective of approving a Strategic Plan and an Action Plan to ensure security in all courts. In parallel, the HJC established an inter-institutional working group to prepare legislative amendments, including changes to the current legal and sub-legal framework governing court security.

In regards to infrastructure, during 2025, the HJC has allocated funds for the drafting of the implementation project for the reconstruction of the former "Large Taxpayers Branch" building, which has been put into use for the General Appeal Court and for the drafting of the implementation project for an additional building next to the existing building of the Administrative Court of First Instance of Tirana, which provides a solution to the needs for premises of this court. On the other hand, during 2025, financial resources have been allocated, and several improvements have been made to the existing infrastructure for the Dibra, Elbasan, Korca, Kukes, Vlora District Courts, General Jurisdiction and the Special Court Against Corruption and Organized Crime.

Following the approval of the state budget for 2026⁷, the HJC has secured all the funds needed for the reconstruction of the former "Large Taxpayers' Branch" building, which has been put into use by the General Appeal Court. This building provides a temporary solution to the court's needs for premises, until a new building is built. In the meantime, discussions on the land for the new building are ongoing with the Municipality of Tirana and the Ministry of Justice. On the other hand, financial resources have been allocated for some improvements to the existing infrastructure for the High Court, the Kukes, Fieri, Gjirokastra District Courts, General Jurisdiction and the Administrative Court of Appeal

⁶ <https://klgj.al/njoftimepershtyp/njoftim-per-shtyp-date-12-tetor-2025/>

⁷ Dated on 12/12/2025

Initial and continuous training, entry exam of the School of Magistrates

The new initial training program for candidates for magistrates, was approved by the Steering Council of the School of Magistrates in September 2025 and begun implementation in October for the academic year 2025-2026.

In October 2025, the implementation of the new Initial Training Program approved by the Governing Council began. The new program contains 9 new teaching subjects designed in cooperation with the expertise of the Judicial Training Center of the Netherlands, within the framework of the Twinning Project with the EU.

The Initial Training Program in the School of Magistrates for the main lines, is based on and regulated by laws 115/2016 “On the governing bodies of the justice system” (law 115/2026), 96/2016 “On the status of judges and prosecutors in the Republic of Albania” (law no. 96/2016) and 98/2016 “On the organization of the judicial power in the Republic of Albania” (law 98/2026), drafted in cooperation with EC and OPDAT experts. According to article 263 of law 115/2016, the Initial Training Program, for candidates for judges/prosecutors, is three-year: in the first year, which takes place at school, the focus is on deepening and developing legal knowledge; in the second year, pre-professional practice is carried out, under the guidance of a highly qualified judge/prosecutor, as well as practical courses at school; in the third year, full professional practice is carried out and is organized in the manner provided for by Law No. 96/2016, Article 33 (the candidate is involved in aspects of the work of the lead magistrate: explanations and discussions on unfinished cases; participates in hearings or interrogations; in the management of cases and files as well as in the administration of the court/prosecutor's office; in the preparation and discussion of draft decisions; develops and is trained in ethical standards and rules of conduct.

Taking the three-year program as a whole, 50% of this training program takes place in the magistrate's work environment, i.e. in the court and prosecutor's office through mentoring.

The reconceptualization of the Initial Training curricula, within the scope and model imposed by law, brought about changes, mainly for the first year. These changes are a reflection of a long analysis developed by the school in cooperation with international partners, taking into account the recommendations in the EC progress reports, reports of justice institutions, judicial practice/jurisprudence and good practices for the training of magistrates in the EU.

For first year curricula

Concept and premises:

- The review of the Initial Training curricula has been reconceptualized based on several premises:

- The content of the curriculum is guided and oriented by the competencies that the judge/prosecutor, state attorney/legal assistant must possess to exercise the respective function;
- The content of the curriculum is guided and oriented by the concrete tasks that the judge/prosecutor/state attorney/legal assistant performs in practice;
- The content of the curriculum is guided and oriented by the procedure and stages of the process for setting the court in motion, trial and decision-making;
- The content of the curriculum is adapted according to the profile of the judge/prosecutor/legal assistant, within the limits allowed by the law;
- The content of the curriculum of each subject in the first year also includes the treatment of ethical issues and the development of non-legal skills. Non-legal skills in the Initial Training Program are developed according to teaching activities throughout the three years, and at progressive levels.

Changes in content:

- Out of the 20 subjects contained in the previous program, 9 subjects/directions oriented towards the trial have currently been approved and divided into separate modules;
- Subjects of a substantive nature have been merged with subjects of a procedural nature (e.g. - Criminal law + criminal procedural law = criminal trial);

Specifically, the School has determined, in cooperation with these institutions, the obligation to draft and submit files of court practice acts prepared by candidates for legal advisors in the prosecution office and candidates for legal assistants at the end of the practice period as follows

CONTENTS OF THE FILE (PORTFOLIO) OF THE CANDIDATE FOR LEGAL ADVISOR AND LEGAL ASSISTANT

Based on the Curriculum for the initial training of legal advisors and legal assistants, the academic year 2025-2026, during the internship in court (for legal assistants) and in the General Prosecutor's Office (for legal advisors), the candidates must submit:

For legal assistants

3 (three) individual files, which must contain 1 (one) legal memo and 1 (one) act, as products drafted on concrete issues pursued during the internship.

For legal advisors

1 (one) individual file, which must contain 3 (three) reports and 3 (three) draft decisions, as products drafted on concrete issues pursued during the internship.

Please note! Candidates may draft more acts than they are required to due to the assessment. In this case they will select which acts they wish to be assessed on.

SOME EXPLANATIONS ON THE LEGAL MEMO

Legal memos are drafted by the candidate regarding specific cases (procedural/substantive) that are being tried/investigated by the judge/prosecutor who is leading them.

The writing for the legal memo must be up to 2500 words long, while the writing for (A4, Times New Roman 12, line spacing-single, paragraph spacing-double).

The file will be submitted physically and by e-mail. The files must be separated from each other and easily identifiable.

I.II GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MEMO EVALUATION

The evaluation must be independent and impartial, based solely on the quality of the submitted product.

The candidate's analytical and argumentative skills and accurate legal orientation must be evaluated.

The memo is not only a theoretical exercise, but also a test of the practical application of knowledge, which reflects the candidate's professional potential.

I.III EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUB-CRITERIA (with maximum points for each)

1. STRUCTURE – 4 points

The formal and logical organization of the memo is evaluated:

Existence of an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Being easy to follow; division into subchapters when necessary.

Clear presentation of facts, identification of problems, and logical order of analysis.

Evaluation:

4 points – very clear, orderly and systematic structure;

3 points – generally good structure with some minor inaccuracies;

2 points – lack of coherence in division or ordering;

1 point – poor structure;

0 points – lack of structure.

2. FLUENCY – 3 points

The cohesion of the text and the logical connection between parts are assessed.

Natural transitions between paragraphs

Thematic connections between issues

Smooth and uninterrupted flow in presentation course planning to be optimized. Digitizing evaluations ensure more transparent and accessible management of results, contributing to a collaborative and quality-oriented learning environment.

Monitoring the impact of training: advanced IT tools integrated with the Web Portal for monitoring knowledge retention and training impact.

Statistics: a section of the Portal dedicated to the collection of participation data and to the analysis of the data contained in the different sections of the Portal web.

Register of lecturers and experts: a computerized register of lecturers established within the Web Portal to manage selection, appointments and course assignments. This system facilitates consultation of information, promote transparent management of assignments, and enable analysis of faculty performance, ensuring continuous improvement of teaching quality.

Automatic generation of certificates: a computerized system adopted for the automatic generation and digital signature of attendance and teaching certificates within the Portal. This system ensures efficient and secure management of certificate issuance, preserving the integrity and authenticity of the documents.

Personal digital file for magistrates and lecturers: a personal digital file for magistrates and lecturers is created in the portal, accessible in a restricted area. This file contains detailed information on the teaching career and the lectures given, allowing efficient and secure management of educational and professional data.

Publication of training programs and teaching materials: a section for posting and cataloguing training programs and teaching materials in the web portal to improve accessibility and consultation for teachers and students. This allows content to be updated according to needs and feedback, thus promoting continuous and efficient learning.

Attendance tracking: to ensure accurate and transparent tracking of course attendance, a dedicated section of the Portal using advanced technologies such as electronic badge readers or mobile applications.

Management of all types of training: Comprehensive management of all types of training through the implementation of separate sections of the Portal for efficient and integrated management of all types of training organized by SoM. This system supports the planning, organization and evaluation of training activities, ensuring optimal management of resources and greater transparency in processes. It also facilitates communication between the different actors involved, allowing for more effective collaboration and continuous monitoring of progress and results achieved.

Efficiency: shorter disposition times, backlog reduction, filling judicial vacancies, adequate human and financial resources, promotion of alternative dispute resolution and effective integrated case management system.

Shorter disposition times

During 2025, the High Judicial Council (HJC) continued the implementation of the National Strategy for the Reduction of Case Backlogs in Courts 2024–2027, in line with the previous reporting period.

In fulfilling its constitutional competences and the obligations arising from the European integration process, the HJC engaged in the preparation of the Roadmap for the Efficiency of the Judicial System of Albania 2025–2027, which was approved by HJC Decision No. 407, dated 15 July 2025.

In furtherance of Strategic Objective 1.3 – Increasing efficiency through the implementation of time and quantitative standards, as set out in the Roadmap, the HJC adopted the relevant secondary legislation establishing time and quantitative standards by Decision No. 433, dated 22 July 2025, entitled “On the Determination of Minimum Standard Time Limits and Minimum Quantitative Standards for the Adjudication of Cases”.

It is also important to note that human resources represent a key factor with a direct impact on backlog. In this regard, the HJC continued the process of filling vacancies in the judicial system by appointing and assigning 42 new judges, graduates of the School of Magistrates, for the 2024–2025 academic year.

As regards statistical data for 2025, these are collected on an annual basis and processed in March of the following year, as previously reported.

Backlog reduction

HJC during 2025 continued the implementation of the National Strategy for the Reduction of Case Backlogs in Courts 2024–2027, in line with the previous reporting period as well as the Roadmap for the Efficiency of the Judicial System of Albania 2025–2027.

Following its adoption, the HJC established monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Roadmap, including the creation of an Ad Hoc Commission, as well as a Technical Secretariat to support its activities. In addition, the HJC approved the regulation “On the Establishment, Organization and Functioning of the Ad Hoc Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the Roadmap for the Efficiency of the Judicial Power in Albania 2025–2027”.

During the reporting period, the Ad Hoc Commission held a series of meetings aimed at monitoring and advancing the implementation of each strategic objective. The HJC’s focus has been on achieving the objectives in accordance with the established timelines, prioritizing those measures envisaged to be completed within 2025.

In line with the Roadmap, the HJC has adopted the relevant secondary legislation and regulatory acts, including:

- the determination of time and quantitative standards for the adjudication of cases;
- rules on the selection of court presidents;

- rules on the organization and functioning of meetings of court presidents.

The implementation of these acts will continue in the upcoming period. At the same time, a significant number of measures primarily those involving legislative initiatives or the drafting of normative acts are designed to be carried out through working groups, which will operate in cooperation with judges, representatives of other justice system institutions, and international partners. In regard to statistical data, the backlog at the end of 2024 amounted to 137,101 cases, or approximately 2% lower compared to the previous year. Although the improvement is at a modest level, it represents an encouraging indicator of the performance of the judicial system. Furthermore, the continuous filling of vacancies and the implementation of the strategy for reducing the number of pending cases is expected to have a positive impact in this regard.

As per statistical data referring to the data of 2025, these are collected on an annual basis and processed within the month of March of each year, as previously reported.

High Court

With regard to the reduction of the backlog before the Supreme Court, according to the latest statistics recorded on 31.12.2025⁸, the Supreme Court has maintained a steady control over the reduction of the backlog despite the limitations in judicial capacities as well as supporting staff. Since 2021, a downward trend in the number of carried-over cases has been observed, a trend which continues to persist in 2025. Carried-over cases comprise all cases registered with the court up to 31 December 2025 that have not yet been adjudicated. Not all carried-over cases are considered backlog cases.

As of 31 December 2025, a total of 16,498 carried-over cases remain pending for adjudication, of which 4,416 are administrative cases, 11,606 are civil cases, and 476 are criminal cases. For the purposes of calculating backlog cases, 14,081 cases are classified as backlog as of December 2025, namely those cases which, as of 31 December 2025, are older than 24 months for civil and administrative matters and older than 12 months for criminal matters. Backlog cases account for 85% of the total volume of carried-over cases.

Starting from July 2020, the stock of backlog cases began to decline, decreasing by 5% in July 2021, by a further 5% in December 2021, by 8% in December 2022, by 18% in 2023, and by 22% in 2024. In 2025, the number of backlog cases continues to demonstrate stability in the downward trend, with a reduction of 24% compared to the same indicator in 2024. Taken together, from July 2020 when the highest level of backlog cases was recorded through December 2025, the total number of backlog cases has decreased by 60%. By type of proceedings, backlog cases are distributed as follows: 75% civil, 24% administrative, and 1% criminal.

Filling judicial vacancies

⁸ will be available in the yearly report shortly this January

High Judicial Council

During 2025, HJC has continued the process of filling vacancies in the judicial system by appointing and assigning to positions 42 new judges who graduated from the SoM for the 2024–2025 academic year.

The number of judges expected to graduate from the School of Magistrates by 2027, based on the vacancies announced to date, is as follows:

Year	Number
2026	38
2027	20 + 3
2028	11
Total	72

In total, by 2028, 72 judge candidates are expected to graduate, in accordance with the quotas announced by the Council up to 2028. These graduates are expected to fill the current permanent vacancies, which amount to 69 judges.

Regarding the quotas for magistrates and legal assistants, the HJC has decided⁹:

The determination of the number of magistrate candidates/judge profile and legal assistant candidates who will be admitted to the initial training program at the School of Magistrates for the academic year 2026–2027, as follows:

a. The number of magistrate candidates/judge profile, who, after passing the professional examination, will be admitted to the initial training program at the School of Magistrates for the academic year 2026–2027, is 10 (ten).

b. The number of legal assistant candidates in the courts of appeal, who, after passing the professional examination, will be admitted to attend the nine-month initial training program at the School of Magistrates for the academic year 2026–2027, is 6 (six) legal assistant candidates.

c. The number of legal assistant candidates in the courts of first instance, who, after passing the professional examination, will be admitted to attend the nine-month initial training program at the School of Magistrates for the academic year 2026–2027, is 35 (thirty-five) legal assistant candidates.”

High Prosecutorial Council

During 2025, the Council has carried out with significant intensity its activity to fill the vacancies in the prosecution system for the implementation of transfer procedures

⁹ Decision No. 29, dated 30.01.2026, “On the number of candidates to be admitted to the initial training program at the School of Magistrates for the academic year 2026–2027,”

through lateral procedure and promotion of prosecutors. Despite the significant vetting decisions of dismissals of prosecutors, the current vacancies in the system are projected to be filled in the next two years. Meanwhile, the Council is responding in real time to the newly created needs for filling vacancies with Prosecutors, both in the Prosecution Offices near the First Instance Court of General Jurisdiction and for filling the vacancies as Chief Prosecutors in these Prosecution Offices. In July 2025, 26 new prosecutors graduated and were appointed, filling more than half of the reported permanent vacancies set as a baseline on the interim benchmarks. While the admission quota for the School of Magistrates for 2025–2026 has been set at 12 candidates, calculated in line with long-term needs, expected retirements, and the return of SPAK magistrates at the end of their mandates.

On 25.07.2025, the Council, with the relevant decisions, appointed 26 new prosecutors as magistrates, graduated at SoM for the academic year 2024-2025, and on 30.07.2025 decided to assign them to the position of prosecutor at the Prosecution Offices near the Courts of General Jurisdiction of Fier, Lezhë, Vlorë, Berat, Shkodër, Dibër, Kukës, Saranda.

Meanwhile, in November 2025, discussions started in the Career Committee if it is possible to increase the number of students for the academic year 2026-2027, taking into consideration the SoM capacities and infrastructure for more students. The HPC is open for discussions in this matter.

Moreover, the Article 29/1, of the Status Law “Call for applications”, stipulates that: During January of each calendar year, the Councils shall, following a needs analysis, determine and publish the maximum number of candidate magistrates for admission to the initial training for the next academic year.

New calculations and projections are to be coming on February 2026, with the decision on determining the quotas for SoM for the academic year 2026-2027.

In the next three years, 58 students are going to graduate:

25 candidates in the third year of SoM;

25 candidates in the second year of SoM;

8 candidates in the first year of SoM.

It is crucial for HPC to make a study on the general number of prosecutors needed in the system. The HPC has requested to Eu4Justice project and to SEJ IV, to assist us in making this study, precising the number of prosecutors for 100.000 inhabitants.

The number of vacancies in the system in 1st of January 2025 was:

53 permanent vacancies.

70 temporary vacancies from which:

Vetting and HPC dismissals decisions

50 decisions.

13 seconded prosecutors, from whom:
 5 prosecutors are seconded near HJI
 1 prosecutor is seconded near Eurojust
 4 prosecutors are seconded near HPC as legal councilors
 2 prosecutors are seconded near GPO
 1 prosecutor is seconded near SoM

Adequate human and financial resources

Regarding the procedures for needs analysis and planning in 2026 compared to 2025 by the High Judicial Council:

	2025	2026
Budget Request (EUR)	87,238,332	96,413,176
Budget Approved (EUR)	61,596,734	70,716,895
HR Requested (Employees)	272	219
HR Approved (Employees)	133	100

With the approval of the state budget with Law No. 87/2025, "On the 2026 Budget¹⁰," 100 additional employees for the judicial system were approved out of 219 requested. This number will be further detailed by the HJC at the beginning of 2026.

It should be noted that, despite the approved budget for 2026 being 14.8% higher than the 2025 budget, the ratio between the approved and the requested budget is still only 71.8%. Of the portion not approved, the main unmet requests were largely related to judicial investments.

Regarding the procedures for needs analysis and planning in 2026 compared to 2025 by the General Prosecution Office

During 2025, the General Prosecutor undertook a series of administrative and organizational measures aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of prosecutors' work, while ensuring impartiality and a balanced distribution of workload. These measures included the reorganization of structures, the strengthening of human and professional capacities, the exercise of effective oversight over the activities of judicial police officers, the safeguarding of staff security, as well as the advancement of digitalization through the implementation of the CMS (Case Management System).

¹⁰ 12.12.2025

In this context, the Prosecution Service, at all levels, rigorously applies the legal and sub-legal framework governing the recruitment, appointment, and promotion of civil servants and judicial police officers. By Decision no. 05, dated 09.01.2025, the General Prosecutor established the rules and procedures for granting civil servant status within the prosecution service to staff already in office, procedures which have begun to be implemented by the prosecution offices of general jurisdiction in coordination with the General Prosecutor's Office. In parallel, the recruitment and career development of judicial police officers are carried out in accordance with Law no. 25/2019 and the acts of the Judicial Police Commission, ensuring compliance with legal standards, a clear division of competences, and institutional cooperation. With regard to human resources management, periodic analyses of administrative staff needs are conducted based on workload and approved organizational structures, serving as a basis for short- and medium-term budget planning.

Particular attention has been paid to strengthening security within prosecution premises, as a key element for ensuring the normal functioning of the institution and the protection of all staff and the public. In this regard, following an assessment of existing service conditions and security infrastructure, including the provision of scanners, metal detectors, security cameras, and other technical equipment, concrete procurement procedures were undertaken during 2025, and all prosecution offices are now equipped with these security tools.

In order to further improve the legal framework and strengthen institutional cooperation in the field of security, the General Prosecutor's Office is part of the working group established with the order no. 178, dated 05.12.2025, as amended, by the High Judicial Council, with the participation of the High Prosecutorial Council, the Ministry of Interior, and the General Directorate of the State Police. The purpose of this working group is to improve the legal and sub-legal framework with a view to increasing and ensuring security in prosecution offices and courts. Furthermore, for 2026, the State Budget approved the request of the General Prosecutor's Office to increase by 17 the number of positions for staff responsible for physical security in all prosecution offices of general jurisdiction, a process which has begun to be implemented since January through the relevant recruitment procedures.

The proper management of archival documentation continues to be a priority for the Prosecution Service. In this context, it was deemed necessary for the archive service within the General Prosecutor's Office to operate as a separate sector which, in cooperation with the structures of the General Directorate of Archives and the Archives of the Justice System, will also serve as a methodological guide for prosecution offices at other levels. For this purpose, the General Prosecutor approved Order no. 105, dated 24.10.2025.

With regard to infrastructure, in 2025 the State Budget has approved the requests of the General Prosecutor's Office for the improvement of the buildings of several prosecution of First Instance of General Jurisdiction. Funds were approved and allocated for the reconstruction and expansion of working premises for seven first-instance prosecution

offices, namely in Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Korçë, Vlorë, Gjirokastrë, and Sarandë, investments which have been fully implemented. In addition, Juvenile Interview Rooms were constructed and fully completed within the first-instance prosecution offices in Tirana, Elbasan, and Kukës. At the same time, funds were secured and fully implemented for the maintenance of the Interception System, the renewal of relevant equipment, and its installation and operation, within the General Prosecutor's Office, as well as for investments in cybersecurity, including firewalls, monitoring systems, and disaster recovery mechanisms.

By official letter no. 1050/17 prot., dated 29.08.2025, the Mid-Term Budget Plan for the period 2026–2028 was submitted to the Ministry of Finance. This programme provides for the reconstruction of working premises at the Gjirokastrë District Prosecution Office, as well as the possibility of constructing new buildings or adding additional floors for the prosecution offices in Tirana, Fier, Sarandë, and Durrës. Discussions with the respective municipalities regarding the provision of land for construction are ongoing, along with a review of the need for additional funding beyond that approved to date.

The General Prosecutor considers the role of Heads of prosecution offices to be essential in the effective use of legal and administrative mechanisms for monitoring procedural activities, managing work processes, and ensuring the efficient functioning of prosecution structures. In this context, and with a view to strengthening capacities at all levels of the prosecution service, the General Prosecutor's Office, by official letter no. 853, dated 03.06.2025, proposed to the School of Magistrates the training module topics for the 2025–2026 academic year, based on the strategic objectives of the prosecution service and the needs identified by several prosecution offices. Among the proposed topics are areas requiring deeper knowledge for heads of prosecution offices and prosecutors, particularly in procedural leadership and strategic management of prosecution offices, including the role of management in analysing and processing statistical data for the supervision of prosecutorial activities and decision-making based on data and analysis. These measures aim to strengthen managerial and monitoring capacities, in support of the effective exercise of the monitoring role of the General Prosecutor and heads of prosecution offices, and to improve the performance of procedural activities. In addition to topics of an organisational and administrative nature, the other proposed thematic areas include cybercrime investigation techniques and computer evidence, trafficking in human beings and victim protection, domestic and gender-based violence including hate-based violence, online sexual exploitation of minors and related investigative methods, money-laundering investigation techniques, and proactive investigations into corruption, public procurement offences, tax- and duty-related crimes, as well as associated asset investigations.

Furthermore, on 30 October 2025, the General Prosecutor's Office, the School of Magistrates and the High Prosecutorial Council signed a Cooperation Agreement on the implementation of the Initial Training Programme for candidates for legal advisors/assistants, aimed at strengthening institutional cooperation and professional capacities.

Promotion of alternative dispute

During the reporting period, the National Chamber of Mediation (NChM) made measurable progress in promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), with a particular focus on strengthening institutional capacities, enhancing inter-institutional cooperation, raising public awareness, and improving the quality and accessibility of mediation services.

To reinforce the systematic use of mediation within the justice system, the NChM actively participated in a working group together with the High Judicial Council for the drafting of the Guidelines for Courts on the Referral of Cases to Mediation. The working group held its inaugural meeting on 23 December 2025. In parallel, the group is preparing a cooperation agreement between the National Chamber of Mediation and the National Bar Association aimed at increasing the use of ADR mechanisms in judicial and extra-judicial proceedings.

In support of improved governance and service quality, the NChM developed a Communication Strategy to strengthen engagement with mediation users and to regulate mediator–client relations. The strategy establishes standards for professional communication, conflict-of-interest management, and compliance with Law No. 124/2024 on the Protection of Personal Data, thereby aligning mediation practices with EU data protection principles.

Inter-institutional cooperation was further strengthened through the conclusion of four Memorandums of Cooperation with key stakeholders, including Rotary Croatia, the High Prosecutorial Council, the General Prosecutor’s Office, and CARITAS. These partnerships contribute to the broader institutional framework supporting ADR and its promotion across sectors.

At regional level, following the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Unification of Licences between the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Albania, the NChM approved and signed, in July 2025, a Technical Agreement for the Practice of the Mediation Profession with the Kosovo Mediation Chamber. This agreement facilitates cross-border recognition of mediators and supports regional alignment with European ADR standards.

Awareness-raising activities remained a priority. The NChM conducted 10 outreach meetings with high schools in Tirana and Elbasan, distributed approximately 1,000 informational leaflets, and participated in podcasts, social media campaigns, and local and national television programmes. These initiatives reached an estimated audience of 2,456,099 people and contributed to increased public understanding of ADR and mediation as effective dispute resolution tools.

Capacity building continued to underpin the promotion of ADR. The NChM delivered 1,791 days of continuous professional training to enhance the competencies and professionalism of licensed mediators. Initial training programmes were completed, and 56 new mediators were successfully tested at the Ministry of Justice. In addition, six targeted workshops were organised for judges and prosecutors, in cooperation with the Supreme Court and the Chamber of Public Prosecutors, with the aim of strengthening judicial confidence in mediation and increasing referrals to ADR.

Effective integrated case management system

Regarding the Integrated Judicial Case Management System in accordance with the contract with the objective “Implementation of the New Integrated Judicial Case Management System” and the activity calendar planned for 2025, the HJC successfully completed all project phases within 2025. These included the project initiation phase, the analysis of work processes to be incorporated into the digitalization and automation framework, as well as the implementation of the physical hardware infrastructure hosting the new integrated judicial case management system.

During these phases, several coordination meetings were held with institutions that will interact with the new judicial case management system. These interactions are conducted in accordance with the interoperability protocols approved by the Information Technology Center for the Justice System, ensuring institutional alignment and secure data exchange.

Within the broader framework of reforming and modernizing the justice system, the new judicial case management system Juronix provides for electronic notification of parties through the e-Albania platform, applicable to both legal entities and individuals. Through this electronic portal, each individual will have access to a dedicated space for their case, ensuring secure, traceable, and standardized notifications. This approach significantly enhances access to justice, transparency, and procedural efficiency.

The General Prosecutor’s Office has placed institutional efficiency at the center of its priorities through the development and operationalization of an integrated case management system, aimed at fully digitalizing work processes, ensuring accurate and reliable statistics, distributing cases via electronic lot in compliance with the legal framework, and linking with databases and other functionalities necessary for a modern system meeting international standards.

The establishment of the new Case Management System (CMS) is funded by the European Union and is being developed by UNOPS in close cooperation with the General Prosecutor’s Office (GPO). Implementation began in 2024 and is expected to be completed by early 2028, starting with the collection of the necessary information within the prosecution system.

The expert support group, established by the General Prosecutor with the Order no. 04, dated 04.01.2024 for the case management system, closely collaborated in 2025 with the

team of EU4Justice experts at the UNOPS office in Albania, preparing analyses and technical requirements for the establishment of the new CMS, reflecting institutional needs and contributing to the definition of the platform's key functionalities.

At the same time, the Information Technology Directorate, in the General Prosecution Office, in cooperation with EU4Justice experts, assessed the infrastructure and cybersecurity requirements, identifying the necessary equipment and systems to ensure the stable and secure operation of the system.

To gain knowledge of and adopt best international practices, study visits were conducted to prosecution offices in European Union countries, including Italy and Estonia.

Simultaneously, cooperation continues with the Center for Justice Technology to develop the interoperability framework for new justice systems, including CMS, with the aim of ensuring efficient and secure interconnection between electronic systems and state databases.

During 2025, the GPO Working Group held a series of intensive meetings to review and approve the Needs Assessment Document, prepared by UNOPS for the General Prosecutor's Office. The Needs Assessment document was finalized and officially approved by the Working Group at the end of June 2025.

Currently, the working group approved the Business Requirements Document (BRD), which defines the functional and technical specifications for the system, defining the specifications for the development of the case management system. The document will be submitted to the Information Technology Center (QTI) for final endorsement by the QTI Board. This document will serve as the basis for tender processes, and the subsequent phases of CMS design, development, and implementation.

Regarding other institutional measures, the General Prosecutor has established a working group for the review and completion of criminal procedural documents, issuing for this purpose the order no. 24, dated 16.12.2025, "On the Establishment of the Expert Group for the Review and Completion of Criminal Procedural Act Templates". This expert group within the General Prosecutor's Office is tasked with reviewing, standardizing, and updating the criminal procedural act templates in accordance with national legislation and best international practices for prosecutorial bodies, as well as ensuring their functional integration into the new Case Management System that is going to be implemented soon in all the prosecution offices.

ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY

Prevention and repression of corruption

Focus on:

Capacity: operational capacities and financial and human resources of the specialised anti-corruption bodies and ordinary judicial institutions to fight corruption, financial investigations.

SPAK

SPAK has made notable progress in addressing challenges related to administrative staffing and case management.

During 2025, investigators and administrative staff were recruited within the Special Prosecution Office, contributing to addressing the increasing workload, as follows:

- a) 1 (one) Director of the National Bureau of Investigation;
- b) 4 (four) Financial Investigators in the Financial Investigation Sector (currently in the final stage of the recruitment process, namely the verification of assets and integrity);
- c) 10 (ten) Judicial Police Officers at the National Bureau of Investigation (currently in the second stage of the recruitment process, namely the structured oral interview);
- d) 1 (one) Protocol Specialist in the Protocol/Archive Sector, within the Directorate of Human Resources, Documentation and Services;
- e) 1 (one) Statistics Specialist in the Registers and Statistics Sector, within the Directorate of Human Resources, Documentation and Services;
- f) 2 (two) Specialists in the Administrative Secretariat;
- g) 1 (one) IT Specialist in the Systems Sector, within the Directorate of Information Technology.

This increase in human resource capacities, particularly administrative staff, is expected to provide enhanced procedural support in managing the growing workload of the Special Prosecution Office. Throughout 2025, all staff of the Special Prosecution Office participated in various training activities, which contributed to strengthening institutional capacities and professional development.

During 2025, work continued on the development of the case management system, which is a modular system, with a significant number of modules finalized and populated with data, thereby increasing its operational effectiveness and facilitating improved monitoring and management of cases. To date, the development teams have closely followed the system's performance among end users by analyzing its operation in the working environment across all end users (prosecutors, investigators and administrative staff), while also providing support and addressing any issues identified during its use. The Directorate of Information Technology has primarily supported the development team of this system throughout this period.

All users involved in the case management system have received dedicated training for the practical use of the electronic case management system, thereby optimising workflows and enhancing operational capabilities.

These steps demonstrate steady progress towards a fully integrated and functional system, capable of being used to its full capacity, improving operational efficiency and the overall

institutional capacity of SPAK, with the aim of effectively exercising its functions in accordance with its mandate and scope of activity.

NBI

Consolidation of the structure

The NBI organizational structure has been reformatted and approved by Joint Order of the NBI Director no. 98/7 dated on November 14, 2025 and the Head of the Special Prosecution no. 40232 dated on November 14, 2025 "On the approval of the structure of the National Bureau of Investigation". This sub law act determines 178 job positions, of which, 1 director position, 100 investigators, 50 judicial police service officers and 27 administrative staff positions.

Pursuant to the provisions of law no. 95/2016 (SPAK law), as amended, article 38, point 6 thereof, the Director of National Bureau of Investigation has organized the retesting process for 32 investigators of the second group of the National Bureau of Investigation. They were all reconfirmed in their duties in August 2025.

In December 2025, the High Prosecutorial Council appointed the new Director of the National Bureau of Investigation for a 5-year term, approving the proposed candidate by the Selection Commission, composed by the Chief Special Prosecutor and the two most experienced special prosecutors.

The recruitment process for 10 positions of judicial service officers was launched in October 2025. 67 candidates have applied and currently they are in evaluation process by the Selection Commission. Within February 2026, the qualified candidates would undergo the vetting process according to the sanctions of Article 6 of the SPAK law.

The recruitment process for new 40 positions "Investigator" would be conducted within 2026.

Regarding the recruitment and reappointment process, the National Bureau of Investigation has closely cooperated with the Special Prosecution Office and international partners (ICITAP and the EU Delegation), who have closely assisted and monitored these processes.

Regarding the European Commission request, from the last meeting of the subcommittee, to deploy a permanent NBI investigator to the EUROPOL headquarters, NBI has drafted the necessary sub law acts and is waiting for their approval by the Council of Ministers.

NBI investigators trainings

During 2025, the NBI investigators have participated in a total number of 44 trainings inside and outside the country, organized by ICITAP, EU4LEA, OPDAT, FBI, ILEA - Budapest, CEPOL, EUROPOL, etc.

The primary training topics has been focused as follows:

- Public corruption and public procurement procedures, violation of equality in public procurement procedures sanctioned by law and sub laws, criminal offenses provided by Criminal Code, Article 258;
- Operational training on covert entries and surveillance;
- Digital evidence;
- Cybercrime;
- Money laundering and financial crimes;
- Asset investigations that fall under criminal proceedings sanctioned by Anti-mafia law;
- Evidence searches tools according to the Criminal Code provisions.

Signed agreements

Throughout 2025, NBI has signed 2 new agreements:

1. Cooperation Agreement between Special Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organized Crime, National Bureau of Investigation and Tirana Water Supply and Sewerage Company “*On granting the right of access to the Al-Billing electronic system*”;
2. Cooperation Agreement between Special Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organized Crime, National Bureau of Investigation and Electricity Distribution Operator Group “*On granting the right of access to the Billing/CRM system*”.

Throughout January 2026, NBI has signed 2 new agreements as well:

- Cooperation Agreement between the Security Academy and the National Bureau of Investigation “*On Officer Training Processes*”;
- Cooperation Agreement between the Seized and Confiscated Assets Administration Agency and the National Bureau of Investigation “*On the Provision of Vehicle Use*”.

The total number of cooperation agreements between NBI and law enforcement agencies inside and outside the country has reached 17.

Systems accessibility

During 2025 the NBI investigators have increased the number of accesses to 22 domestic law enforcement systems (databases) and 3 foreign agency systems (total 25).

NBI Director is negotiating to increase the number of NBI accesses to the databases and registers of 15 new law enforcement agencies and institutions inside and outside the

country (EMPACT), in order to provide information and valid access for the criminal investigation process.

GPO

Regarding capacity building, the School of Magistrates organized the following training activities in this field:

- 24 February 2025: “Application of ECHR Jurisprudence in Corruption Investigations” – 31 prosecutors participated.
- 25 February 2025: “Application of ECHR Jurisprudence in Corruption Investigations” – 13 prosecutors participated.
- 10 March 2025: “Legal Provisions Related to Corruption Offenses” – 7 prosecutors and 7 judicial police officers participated.
- 11 March 2025: “Individualization of Corruption Offender Profiles” – 10 prosecutors and 5 judicial police officers participated.
- 17 March 2025: “Understanding and Implementing Cooperation in Corruption Cases; Judicial Practice” – 3 prosecutors and 7 judicial police officers participated.
- 18 March 2025: “Corruption, Abuse of Office, and Violations of Equality in Procurement” – 13 prosecutors and 10 judicial police officers participated.
- 25 March 2025: “Corruption, complementary penalties, and their enforcement” – 1 prosecutor and 1 judicial police officer participated.
- 23 May 2025: “Corruption and Public Procurement” – 8 prosecutors and 5 judicial police officers participated.
- 11 June 2025: “Corruption of High-Ranking State Officials and Local Elected Officials” – 5 prosecutors participated.
- 20 June 2025: “The Fight against Corruption in the EU and Albania” – 15 prosecutors participated.

Repression and Track record: track record of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions in corruption cases, in particular final convictions at high level, including seizure and confiscation of assets.

For more detailed information please refer to Annex No.1 Quantitative Overview AL - 2025

Prevention: efficiency of the corruption prevention framework, follow up to pending GRECO recommendations, effective verification of asset declarations, administrative investigations, including referral to prosecution and effective follow up, access to information and transparency programmes, implementation of 2024-2030 anti-corruption strategy, effectiveness of integrity plans at municipal level, risk assessment and dedicated measures for high-risk sectors.

Efficiency of the corruption prevention framework

The prevention of corruption constitutes one of the three core strategic objectives of the Intersectoral Strategy against Corruption 2024-2030 and occupies a central place in its overall architecture, with 9 out of 16 strategic objectives directly dedicated to strengthening preventive

mechanisms. This approach reflects a clear shift in public policy, from reactive responses after corruption has occurred towards proactive prevention, as the foundation of a sustainable public integrity system.

Within this framework, Albania has consolidated a unified, coherent and results-oriented corruption prevention framework, anchored in the Intersectoral Strategy against Corruption 2024-2030 as the central governance instrument. The Strategy serves as the main reference point for the planning, coordination and monitoring of all preventive activities and measures at government level, ensuring that corruption prevention is implemented as an integrated, structured and measurable approach, rather than as a set of fragmented interventions.

The Strategy translates national objectives into concrete actions, clearly defines institutional responsibilities, timelines and performance indicators, and establishes a clear chain of accountability for the implementation of preventive measures. This has enabled the development of a functional system in which progress is assessed not only on the basis of formal compliance, but also in terms of concrete results and preventive impact.

The efficiency of this framework is further strengthened through a standardised monitoring and reporting system, based on a unified methodology and mandatory electronic reporting tools applied by all responsible institutions. According to the 2024 Annual Monitoring Report, the overall implementation rate of the Strategy reached 87.5%, with particularly strong performance under the prevention pillar.

The first six-month monitoring report for 2025 recorded an implementation rate of 71.3%, reflecting not a decrease in commitment, but rather the significant expansion of the reform agenda and the increasing technical complexity of the preventive measures being implemented. These monitoring mechanisms enable performance to be measured over time, compared across institutions, and used as an evidence base for decision-making, facilitating the identification of gaps, the reprioritisation of measures, and the allocation of resources towards areas with the highest corruption risk and preventive impact.

A key factor that has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the preventive framework is the shift towards risk-based governance. At this stage of anti-corruption reform implementation, efforts have focused on a clear sectoral approach to addressing corruption risks in high-risk sectors such as property and land administration, taxation and customs, healthcare, public contracts (including procurement and concessions), and education. The objective is to transform these sectors into drivers of a healthy economy through the implementation of systemic preventive measures.

In this context, the adoption of the National Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology, together with the sector-specific methodology for public procurement, has introduced a harmonised, evidence-based approach for identifying vulnerabilities and prioritising preventive actions. Combined with systematic training of technical staff at all levels of governance, including both central and local institutions, this development marks a clear transition towards a new analytical, data-driven model of corruption prevention.

In parallel with the strengthening of coordination mechanisms, monitoring tools and the risk-based approach, 2025 was also characterised by substantial legislative delivery, as part of the “Anti-Corruption” Legal Package. During the year, the new Law “On Whistleblowing and the Protection of Whistleblowers” was prepared, consulted and adopted by Parliament in December 2025, ensuring full alignment with the EU acquis. At the same time, in December 2025, the Council of Ministers approved the draft Law “On Lobbying”, which was adopted by Parliament on 28.01.2026. The Law on Lobbying establishes, for the first time, a structured framework to promote transparency and accountability in public decision-making.

In addition, the new draft Law “On the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest” was adopted by the Parliament on 3.02.2026, while the draft Law “On Donations and Sponsorships in the Public Sector” has been prepared and published in the public consultation register. In parallel, work has also been undertaken to finalise the draft of the Law on the Financing of Political Parties. Taken together, these developments demonstrate that Albania’s corruption prevention framework is not only well-structured and closely monitored, but also capable of delivering complex and politically sensitive reforms, in line with a clear and long-term strategic vision.

Follow up to pending GRECO recommendations:

Albania successfully completed, within the prescribed timeframe, the Fifth Round of GRECO evaluation on “*Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (persons entrusted with top executive functions - PTEFs) and law enforcement agencies (LEAs)*”. The Second Compliance Report on Albania was adopted by the GRECO Plenary on 19 March 2025, confirming substantial progress in the implementation of GRECO recommendations.

In its conclusions, GRECO noted that Albania has implemented satisfactorily or dealt with in a satisfactory manner 18 of the 24 recommendations contained in the Fifth Round Evaluation Report, corresponding to 75% of the recommendations being fully and successfully addressed. Of the remaining recommendations, five were assessed as partly implemented, while one was assessed as not implemented.

As a result, six recommendations remain pending, namely Recommendations iii), iv), vii), viii), ix) and xix) and continue to be subject to follow-up and targeted implementation measures by the Albanian authorities.

Recommendation iii): *GRECO recommended to harmonise and increase the inherent coherence of the legal and institutional framework on the fight against corruption and integrity of public officials, in particular as regards PTEFs, for instance by compiling the norms and regulations into a handbook and providing guidance on the obligations of each category and on the role of each responsible body.*

During 2025, Albania decisively advanced the consolidation and rationalisation of its integrity framework through the “Anti-Corruption” Legal Package. The adoption of the new Law on Whistleblower Protection, together with the approval by the Council of Ministers of the draft Law on Lobbying, thereby paving the way for its adoption by Parliament in January 2026, the launch of public consultation on the draft Law on Donations and Sponsorships, and the

advancement in Parliament of the new Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest have collectively addressed long-standing fragmentation and established clearer, more coherent and enforceable rules governing integrity, influence, transparency and accountability of senior public officials.

More specifically, the draft Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest has been approved on February 3-rd. This trajectory reflects a deliberate and structured approach to finalising one of the core pillars of the integrity framework.

Its adoption will enable the timely preparation and approval of the necessary secondary legislation, guidelines and practical manuals for public officials, ensuring uniform interpretation, legal certainty and effective application of integrity obligations in practice. Taken together, these developments demonstrate a proactive, sequenced and results-oriented approach to integrity reform, reinforcing the preventive dimension of Albania's anti-corruption framework and strengthening its overall credibility and sustainability.

Recommendation iv): *GRECO recommended that i) the existing Ministerial Code of Ethics be complemented with concrete guidance for its implementation regarding conflicts of interest and other integrity-related matters (e.g. gifts, third party contacts, lobbying etc); ii) the effective functioning of the Ethics Commission, or any other credible mechanism of supervision and sanctions, be ensured, including with respect to the Prime Minister, and iii) the ethical rules be complemented by illustrative examples and enforcement mechanisms for political advisors.*

During 2025, the Albanian authorities pursued a **deliberate and comprehensive approach** to addressing this recommendation, by prioritising the adoption of the new Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest as the core legal framework governing integrity, oversight and sanctions for persons entrusted with top executive functions (PTEFs). Rather than introducing isolated amendments to existing ethical instruments, the Government opted to anchor the implementation of Recommendation iv) in a clear, binding and enforceable statutory framework, ensuring consistency and legal certainty across the integrity system.

The Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest, approved on February 3-rd establishes a unified regime for integrity obligations, supervision and sanctions applicable to all PTEFs, including the Prime Minister. Its adoption will provide the necessary legal basis for the subsequent harmonisation and updating of the Ministerial Code of Ethics and related secondary legislation, in full alignment with the new statutory framework.

In this context, Recommendation iv) is addressed in a structured and sequenced manner, with its substantive elements reflected in Articles 40 and 41 of the draft law. The final adoption of the law will enable the completion of the ethical and accountability framework and ensure the full and sustainable implementation of Recommendation iv), supported by coherent secondary legislation, guidance and enforcement mechanisms.

Recommendation vii): *GRECO recommended that i) detailed rules on how persons entrusted with top executive functions engage in contacts with lobbyists and other third*

parties who seek to influence governmental legislative and other activities be established and that ii) sufficient transparency be ensured about the purpose of these contacts (formal and informal), the identity of the person(s) with whom (or on whose behalf) the contacts have been taken and the specific subject-matter(s) discussed.

During 2025, Albania took a decisive step towards the implementation of this recommendation through the approval by the Council of Ministers of the draft Law on Lobbying, which for the first time introduces a comprehensive, binding and enforceable framework for regulating and monitoring lobbying activities and contacts with decision-makers and paves the way for its adoption by Parliament.

First, the law clearly defines both the personal scope and material scope of lobbying, including contacts with members of the Government and other senior decision-makers (PTEFs) (Articles 3 and 4). Lobbying activities are permitted only when carried out by registered lobbyists (Article 5), thereby establishing a closed, transparent and controlled system of access to decision-makers.

Second, the law introduces full transparency with regard to the purpose, actors and subject matter of lobbying activities. Lobbyists are required to disclose the identity of their client, the objective of the lobbying, the financial arrangements and the institutions or public officials targeted, through a written contract that is registered and partially published in the Lobbying Register (Articles 12 and 13).

Third, the law establishes a dual reporting system for lobbying contacts. Every lobbyist is required to report, on a six-monthly basis, detailed information on:

- the institution or public official contacted;
- the date and form of the contact;
- the issue discussed; and
- the resources used (Article 18).

In parallel, every public official, including PTEFs, is legally obliged to report each contact with a registered lobbyist within ten working days, indicating the identity of the lobbyist, the date, the participants and the subject discussed (Article 23). These reports are recorded and published in the Lobbying Register, thereby ensuring full traceability of influence.

Taken together, these provisions establish precisely what GRECO called for: clear, detailed and enforceable rules governing interactions between PTEFs and lobbyists or third parties, combined with comprehensive transparency on who met whom, when, and for what purpose.

Recommendation viii): GRECO recommended that the abstention of a minister or deputy minister from taking part in a decision of the Council of Ministers because of a potential conflict of interest is actually recorded in the minutes of the Council of Ministers' meetings, as required by law.

During 2025, no new cases of abstention were registered, which means that no additional examples were available to further demonstrate the practical application of this rule.

But as noted by GRECO in the compliance report, the remaining challenge is therefore not the existence of the obligation to record abstentions, but the need for a more robust, verifiable and enforceable system for the identification and management of conflicts of interest at the highest executive level. For this reason, Albania has chosen to address this issue through the **new Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest**. This law will establish clearer legal duties for ministers and deputy ministers to declare and manage conflicts of interest, define institutional responsibilities for verification and oversight, and provide a stronger basis for ensuring that abstention and its recording are applied consistently and can be effectively monitored.

Recommendation ix): *GRECO recommended ensuring that explicit rules on post-employment restrictions apply both to members of the Council of Ministers and to political advisors and that an effective enforcement mechanism regarding these rules is implemented for all PTEFs.*

During 2025, Albania addressed post-employment restrictions through a sequenced and legally grounded approach, combining immediate regulatory measures with the preparation of a comprehensive statutory framework. In this context, post-employment restrictions for persons entrusted with top executive functions (PTEFs) have been explicitly introduced in the Law on Lobbying (Article 19), establishing binding cooling-off periods, clearly defined scope limitations and a designated enforcement authority.

These provisions represent a concrete and enforceable response to concerns related to revolving doors in the context of lobbying activities, ensuring that former PTEFs are subject to clear restrictions when engaging with decision-makers after leaving public office.

The remaining elements of the post-employment regime are being addressed through the new Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest, currently under parliamentary procedure. This law is designed to extend post-employment restrictions beyond lobbying activities, covering other forms of post-public employment and ensuring a coherent, comprehensive and legally binding framework applicable to all relevant situations.

Taken together, these measures reflect a progressive and integrated approach to regulating post-employment risks, whereby immediate safeguards are put in place through sector-specific legislation, while a broader and more systemic framework is finalised through primary legislation.

Recommendation xix): *GRECO recommended that the heads of department of the State Police be appointed by the General Director.*

During 2025, the legal and procedural framework governing appointments within the State Police remained unchanged. The Albanian authorities have taken note of the recommendation and of its underlying objective to further strengthen the professional and operational independence of the State Police.

The current appointment arrangements continue to apply. Any future consideration of this recommendation would require amendments to the relevant legal framework and would be

examined in the context of a broader assessment of law enforcement governance and institutional arrangements.

Effective verification of asset declarations:

Verification of private interest declarations of candidates for various positions in the institutions of the justice system

In the framework of the amendments to the Law No. 9049, dated 10.04.2003 "On the declaration and audit of assets, financial obligations of elected persons and certain public officials", the obligation to declare private interests to the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflicts of Interest rests, among others, with the subjects provided in Article 3/1, which refers to potential candidates for the institutions of the justice system, including candidates for judges and prosecutors.

The above-mentioned legal amendments have been introduced within the most recent justice reform in Albania. In this context, HIDAACI has played an important role in the process of establishing new judicial bodies, by conducting verification of asset declarations for all candidates and their related persons who have expressed an interest in being part of the new justice bodies, such as members of the Constitutional Court, High Court, Inspectors at the Office of the High Inspectorate of Justice, candidates for admission in the initial training of the School of Magistrates, as well as graduates that are candidates for magistrate, candidates for Investigator at the National Bureau of Investigation and administrative personnel of SPAK.

Importantly, HIDAACI continues to cooperate closely with the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, the Justice Appointments Council, and the Special Prosecution against Corruption and Organized Crime, by making available the report of the full audit of the declaration of assets and private interests of the candidate for different positions in the justice system. During 2025, HIDAACI has performed the full audit of the asset declarations of private interests for 177 candidates for different positions in the justice system.

Administrative investigations, including referral to prosecution and effective follow up:

During 2025, the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption continued to apply a proactive, structured and results-oriented approach in fulfilling its mandate for the administrative verification and investigation of corruption-related cases and complaints. During this period, 71 administrative investigation reports were finalised, resulting in the proposal of 207 administrative measures and the issuance of 234 institutional recommendations, broken down as follows:

- 140 administrative recommendations;
- 89 organisational recommendations; and
- 5 regulatory recommendations.

The recommendations issued aimed to:

- strengthen compliance with legal and procedural standards;
- revise and improve internal regulatory frameworks;

- ensure the timely and effective delivery of public services; and
- enhance service quality and institutional accountability towards citizens.

Administrative investigations were carried out across a wide range of institutions, including the regional directorates of the State Cadastre Agency, the Mandatory Health Care Insurance Fund, the Health Care Services Operator, the National Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices, the National Environmental Agency, the General Directorate of Customs, the General Directorate of Taxes, the State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate, and the Albanian Post.

These investigations focused primarily on institutional compliance and the quality of public service delivery.

In parallel, **2 (two) criminal referrals** were submitted to the Prosecutor's Office at the Tirana First Instance Court of General Jurisdiction.

As part of efforts to strengthen transparency and public accountability, for each administrative investigation report finalised, the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption also informed the citizens who had submitted the complaint, providing them with information on the main findings of the investigation and the measures taken, in accordance with the legal framework on personal data protection and the confidentiality of proceedings.

Beyond investigative activity, the Directorate initiated systematic follow-up on the implementation of its recommendations, with a focus on tangible results, the streamlining of internal procedures, the standardisation of practices and strengthened inter-institutional cooperation. In this context, a summary of systemic issues identified through administrative investigations was submitted to the State Cadastre Agency. The Agency demonstrated its readiness to act upon the recommendations by disseminating them to all regional directorates and adopting new regulatory acts aimed at updating and clarifying internal procedures.

Similarly, on 3 July 2025, the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption submitted a summary of findings to the National Territorial Protection Inspectorate, addressing structural challenges and proposing targeted measures to improve work processes and increase institutional effectiveness.

Furthermore, in line with its statutory mandate to ensure follow-up and effectiveness of administrative measures, and with a view to strengthening the practical impact of recovery and sanctioning mechanisms, the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption formally launched the monitoring of the implementation of the measures and recommendations issued in 2025. This process was initiated pursuant to Order No. 3, dated 6 January 2026, of the Director General of Anti-Corruption and will culminate in the preparation of a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Report (compliance report on follow-up recommendations) by February 2026.

Access to information and transparency programmes:

Implementation of 2024-2030 anti-corruption strategy:

The implementation of the Intersectoral Strategy Against Corruption 2024-2030 continues to be anchored in a fully operational national coordination, monitoring and reporting system. Political leadership is exercised by the Minister of State for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, in his capacity as National Anti-Corruption Coordinator, while technical coordination and day-to-day implementation oversight are ensured by the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, acting as the Strategy's permanent secretariat.

The Strategy is implemented through a multi-layered governance architecture, composed of:

- the National Anti-Corruption Coordinator (Minister of State for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption), providing strategic direction and political oversight;
- the Anti-Corruption Thematic Team, functioning as the high-level inter-institutional steering body;
- the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, acting as the technical authority responsible for planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting;
- Anti-Corruption Focal Points in all implementing institutions; and
- designated liaison officers covering ethics, conflicts of interest, whistleblowing, access to information, audit and integrity functions within implementing institutions.

This governance structure ensures that the Intersectoral Strategy Against Corruption 2024-2030 is implemented within a single, coherent national operational framework, applied consistently across both central and local government, rather than through fragmented or ad hoc initiatives.

Implementation progress is tracked through a mandatory bi-annual monitoring cycle, resulting in:

- a six-month monitoring report; and
- a comprehensive annual monitoring report.

Within this framework:

- the 2024 Annual Monitoring Report was approved on 10 June 2025 by the Anti-Corruption Thematic Team chaired by the Minister of State and formally adopted by Ministerial Order No. 4, dated 25 June 2025, providing a consolidated assessment of the first year of implementation of the Strategy;
- in September 2025, the Six-Month Monitoring Report for the first half of 2025 was consolidated, ensuring continuity of performance tracking and the early identification of implementation gaps.

Key results - Annual Monitoring Report 2024

The overall implementation rate of the 2024 Action Plan of the Intersectoral Strategy Against Corruption 2024-2030 reached **87.5%**, with performance by policy pillar as follows:

- **Prevention:** 100%
- **Repression:** 100%
- **Awareness-raising:** 62.5%

Overall, 22 measures and 63 activities were fully implemented. Of the 24 performance indicators, 20 were fully met, one was partially achieved, and two remain pending measurement.

Highlights by policy goal

Prevention

Albania continued to strengthen the legal and institutional foundations of its anti-corruption framework through progress on key reforms related to whistleblower protection, conflicts of interest, lobbying, asset recovery and donations. At the operational level, preventive capacity expanded further, with **734 Responsible Units for Whistleblowing** in place (including **36 newly established** during the reporting period) and **119 Anti-Corruption Focal Points** designated across public institutions. Preventive oversight was reinforced through **195 audits** conducted by the Supreme Audit Institution, while integrity planning at local level progressed with the adoption of **13 new municipal integrity plans**. In parallel, Albania continued addressing pending GRECO recommendations and expanded the use of digital tools for asset declarations and access to information, further strengthening transparency and accountability across the public sector.

Repression

Administrative and criminal enforcement against corruption continued to strengthen. In 2025, the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption handled **163 complaints**, resulting in **7 final reports**, **6 administrative sanctions** and **16 institutional recommendations**. The asset recovery framework was reinforced through the establishment of a **Technical Asset Recovery Office** within the State Police and a specialised **Asset Recovery Expertise Unit** within the General Prosecutor's Office. Law-enforcement and prosecutorial bodies registered **186 corruption cases**, reflecting a **40% increase in proactive investigations** and a **33% increase in arrests** by the Police Supervision Agency. Enforcement capacity was further enhanced through the creation of **10 joint investigation teams** and the operationalisation of specialised prosecution units for corruption, money laundering and financial crimes.

Awareness and education

Nationwide awareness-raising and integrity-building initiatives continued to expand. **Integrity Week 2024** was implemented with broad national coverage, supported by coordinated awareness campaigns and targeted training on whistleblowing across public institutions. In parallel, the **"Education Against Corruption"** initiative was rolled out in secondary schools, strengthening integrity and ethics education among young people. These efforts were complemented by enhanced cooperation with civil society organisations and the private sector, contributing to broader societal engagement in promoting transparency, accountability and integrity.

Key results - Six-Month Monitoring Report (January–June 2025)

The overall implementation rate reached **71.3%**, with performance by policy pillar as follows:

- **Prevention:** 72.2%
- **Repression:** 66.6%
- **Awareness:** 75%

Overall, 25 measures and 64 activities were fully implemented. Of the 24 performance indicators, 14 were fully met, six were partially achieved, and four were not achieved.

Prevention continued to advance through the anti-corruption legislative package, reinforced institutional capacities, and the development of both general and sector-specific corruption risk assessment methodologies, enabling earlier identification, prioritisation and management of corruption risks. Repression focused on strengthening the legal and institutional framework for administrative and criminal investigations, as well as improving coordination among law-enforcement and prosecutorial authorities. Awareness and education efforts were significantly intensified, with a strong emphasis on youth-oriented integrity and ethics initiatives aimed at fostering behavioural change and promoting a culture of transparency.

Quality control and institutional strengthening

Monitoring reports under the Intersectoral Strategy Against Corruption 2024-2030 are not merely descriptive, but are grounded in measurable performance indicators, evidence and verifiable deliverables, aligned with the Strategy's Performance Indicator Passport and the Integrated Planning Information System (IPSIS). GDAC is currently finalising the Annual Implementation Report for 2025.

To further strengthen implementation control, GDAC's monitoring and coordination capacity was reinforced in August 2025 through the recruitment of a Head of Sector for Strategy Monitoring, significantly enhancing analytical, verification and follow-up capacity.

Efficiency in implementation and monitoring

To professionalise and stabilise implementation across all institutions, GDAC has prepared a Manual for the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting of the Intersectoral Strategy against Corruption, developed with technical assistance from the EU4GG programme. The Manual standardises planning, implementation, documentation and reporting processes; clearly defines the roles of focal points, liaison officers and technical teams; and introduces uniform templates and reporting formats for activity plans, progress monitoring, and six-month and annual reports.

Following its imminent approval by the Minister of State, the Manual will be distributed to all implementing institutions and rolled out through tailor-made training sessions, adapted to the different capacities of Anti-Corruption Focal Points and developed in close cooperation with the EU4GG programme. This will ensure consistent, high-quality and EU-compliant implementation of the Strategy across the entire public administration.

Effectiveness of integrity plans at municipal level:

Albania has made substantial progress in strengthening corruption prevention at local government level through the systematic development and implementation of municipal integrity plans, as part of the Intersectoral Strategy Against Corruption 2024-2030, and beyond. In 2025, this process moved decisively from a formal compliance exercise to a structured, nationwide and risk-based prevention system. Integrity planning at municipal level was further consolidated, with **13 municipalities adopting new integrity plans**, bringing the total number of municipalities with approved and operational plans to **43**. These plans identify sector-specific corruption risks, define preventive and mitigation measures, and assign clear responsibilities for implementation and monitoring in high-exposure functions such as construction permits, property management, public procurement, social assistance and service delivery.

At the same time, the effectiveness and enforceability of integrity plans were strengthened through their formal linkage to municipal financing and performance management. Under the Performance-Based Grant 2025, administered by the Albanian Agency for Local Self-Government pursuant to Joint Instruction No. 1 of 11 July 2025, the existence and quality of a municipal Integrity Plan became one of the ten mandatory performance indicators for access to funding. The Agency provided technical assistance, verified submitted documentation and assessed compliance, ensuring that integrity planning became a practical eligibility condition for budgetary support, rather than a voluntary or symbolic exercise.

As a result, **43 municipalities currently have Integrity Plans in force**, covering a broad territorial and institutional spectrum and establishing the first nationwide baseline for monitoring integrity at local level. Through the national Performance Measurement System and the publication of results in the National Performance Report, central authorities are now able to systematically track, compare and support the implementation of corruption prevention measures across municipalities.

Municipal integrity plans are no longer generic policy documents. For the first time, **all 61 municipalities** were formally integrated into Albania's national risk-based anti-corruption framework through the nationwide rollout of the Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology for the public sector, adopted by the Minister of State for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption in April 2025. Each municipality designated a core technical officer, who was trained in July 2025 on the application of the methodology and on coordinating the identification, analysis and management of corruption risks at local level.

This process established, for the first time, a minimum and consistent institutional capacity in every municipality to apply a common national approach to corruption prevention, aligned with central government standards.

Overall, municipal integrity plans have evolved into a fully operational governance tool, linking corruption risk assessment, preventive measures, institutional accountability and financial incentives, and thereby significantly strengthening transparency and integrity in local government.

Risk assessment and dedicated measures for high-risk sectors:

Albania has established a structured, nationwide and risk-based system for corruption prevention, ensuring that high-risk sectors and functions are identified on the basis of evidence

and addressed through targeted and proportionate measures, rather than through generic or fragmented controls.

In 2025, this system reached operational maturity through the adoption and nationwide rollout of the national Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology for the public sector, approved by the Minister of State for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption. This methodology was further complemented by the preparation of a dedicated sector-specific corruption risk assessment methodology for public procurement. Together, these tools require institutions to map their core processes, identify corruption vulnerabilities, assess probability and impact, and define concrete mitigation measures, thereby providing a harmonised analytical framework for risk-based governance across the entire public administration.

To ensure that this framework is effectively applied in practice, targeted capacity-building activities were carried out throughout 2025. Core technical staff from central government institutions and all municipalities were trained between May and July 2025 on the application of the Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology, including the identification of risks, the scoring of probability and impact, and the design of mitigation measures. This process created, for the first time, a basic national pool of trained practitioners capable of applying a common, standardised risk-based approach to corruption prevention across high-risk sectors.

On this basis, structurally vulnerable sectors, such as property administration and public procurement, as identified under Objective 1.3 of the Intersectoral Strategy Against Corruption 2024-2030 have been prioritised for targeted intervention following the completion of corruption risk assessment processes by 2026. A similar process is expected to commence in the health sector, in cooperation with technical assistance from the Basel Institute on Governance, while a corruption risk assessment in the tax sector is also scheduled to be initiated during the same year. In all of these sectors, the process will culminate in the adoption of sectoral Anti-Corruption Action Plans, fully aligned with Objective 1.3 of the Strategy.

A notable example of successful implementation in 2025 was carried out within the State Cadastre Agency, through the completion of a comprehensive integrity risk assessment covering its core functions, including registration, transactions, compensation and legalisation. By November 2025, the Agency adopted its Integrity Plan 2025-2027, addressing key risks related to discretionary decision-making, data integrity, conflicts of interest and external interference. The Plan includes concrete measures such as strengthening internal control and audit functions; standardising and clarifying procedures for registration, legalisation and compensation; reducing discretion through clearer rules and increased digitalisation of processes; improving data integrity and the protection of cadastral information; reinforcing conflict-of-interest management and whistleblowing mechanisms; and increasing transparency, staff training and accountability.

The Integrity Plan covers nine operational risk areas, including financial management and procurement, human resources and ethics, registration and property titles, compensation, technical-legal control, internal audit, information management, public access and digital systems, ensuring that integrity safeguards are embedded across the entire value chain of property administration.

These conclusions will serve as a basis for further deepening the reform effort. This commitment will be strengthened through a more in-depth corruption risk assessment in the property sector, which remains one of the most vulnerable sectors.

Overall, Albania now operates a coherent, multi-sector and risk-based corruption prevention system that links corruption risk assessment, integrity planning, sector-specific methodologies and targeted technical assistance. This approach enables preventive resources, institutional reforms and integrity instruments to be focused where corruption exposure is highest, in line with European good practices on evidence-based governance and integrity management.

HIDAACI

1. Strengthening the methodology of the control of the declarations of private interests

1.1. Introduction of the new red-flag verification manual and of the operational development action plan 2026-2027

During the reporting period, the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflict of Interest strengthened its internal control methodology through the drafting of a risk-based model for the control of private interest declarations, aimed at increasing the effectiveness and objectivity of the controls carried out by HIDAACI. The model enables the prioritization of cases that present a higher risk of irregularities, while rationalizing the use of institutional resources.

In fact, Law No. 9049/2003 “On the declaration and audit of assets, financial obligations of elected persons and certain public officials”, as amended, particularly Article 25/1 provides a system that aims to align the frequency and depth of Full Control with the level of risk exposure associated with public functions, ensuring the rational use of institutional resources and the standardized treatment of declaring subjects. The Full Control pursuant to the Article 25/1 of Law No. 9049/2003, is carried out both on a periodic basis, in accordance with the differentiated intervals set out in and on an “ad hoc” basis, where there are lawful grounds that call into question the accuracy and financial coverage of the declared assets.

The Risk indicators (“red flags”), in the abovementioned manual are grouped into key categories. The methodology also includes the manner of the application of the risk indicators (“red flags”). The methodology provided in the red-flag verification manual is aligned with international good practices, in particular those promoted by the Council of Europe, and is also grounded in the Albanian legal and institutional framework. It builds upon the control mechanisms established under Law No. 9049/2003 and reflects the long-standing practical experience of HIDAACI in the verification of asset and private interest declarations.

Moreover, during 2025, the Financial Intelligence Agency (FIU) prepared an analytical overview of corruption indicators and typologies, drawing on national practices, and relevant international experience, as well as on the analysis of cases handled by FIU and reports from counterpart institutions and international organizations. Within this framework, HIDAACI integrated the relevant indicators and typological elements into its internal methodology, particularly for the drafting of the red-flag verification manual, applying exclusively those elements directly related to asset declarations and the assessment of financial sources, in line with its legal mandate.

Within the framework of the ongoing cooperation with EU4GG, HIDAACI has informed the project experts about the ongoing development of the internal red-flag verification manual, which will be shared with the project. In parallel, following a series of working meetings, the report “Assessment of Operative Procedures for Work of the HIDAACI on Asset Declaration with the Recommendations for Improvement” was drafted, for which HIDAACI has submitted its final comments with the aim of finalizing the document.

Overall, the introduction of the red-flag verification manual represents a substantive strengthening of HIDAACI’s control methodology, embedding a structured risk-based approach within the existing legal framework and enhancing the effectiveness and consistency of Full Control procedures.

Additionally, the HIDAACI has drafted an Operational Development Action Plan for 2026–2027. The European Commission through the screening process and Rule of Law reports on Albania, has noted progress in institutional strengthening, digital transformation, legal framework alignment and operational achievements. However, the remaining gaps will be addressed by the abovementioned Operational Development Action Plan, while anchoring HIDAACI’s role as the central preventive integrity institution of the Republic of Albania.

The Operational Development Action Plan 2026-2027 is structured around four strategic goals. The first goal focuses on strengthening institutional integrity and transparency, and will be implemented through stronger data protection safeguards, the creation of a public transparency dashboard with aggregated data on declarations, audits, and compliance trends, and improved communication and awareness efforts. The second goal seeks to increase the efficiency and impact of verification introducing a red-flag, risk-based verification model to complement the scheme of control provided by the legal framework on asset declaration, revision of the methodology and standard operating procedures to codify best practices and harmonize decision-making, creation of referral protocols with law enforcement organs and administrative agencies and targeted staff training. The third goal addresses digital transformation and data interoperability through, upgrading EACIDS architecture to enable API-based interoperability, enabling automated data cross-checks and case management to reduce human error and time, adopting robust cybersecurity and data governance frameworks in compliance with EU standards. The fourth goal aims to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation, through the signature and operationalization of MoUs and data-sharing protocols with SPAK, KLSH, FIU, and relevant agencies, establishing joint trainings and coordination mechanisms to harmonize data interpretation and response actions, engaging with international anti-corruption networks to exchange best practices and enhance Albania’s visibility. The implementation of the Plan is supported by a clear monitoring framework and a 24-month action plan, with measurable objectives and regular public reporting. The Operational Development Action Plan 2026–2027 has been shared with the EU4GG project and is pending approval.

2. Cooperation with the Financial Intelligence Agency and key law enforcement institutions

By the end of 2024, HIDAACI did sign a MoU with Financial Intelligence Agency (FIU), aiming to increase the effective collaboration between the parties in view of the implementation of the legislation for the prevention of money laundering, financing of terrorism as well as

corruption, through mutual sharing of information in a timely manner aiming at implementation of appropriate measures pursuant to the institutional competences fulfilling the respective objectives according to the scope of activity of each institution in compliance with the legal framework concerning the fight against corruption. HIDAACI has had an ongoing collaboration with FIU, and following the signature of the abovementioned MoU, **4 cases** have been referred to FIU.

Aside from the implementation of the MoU with FIU, HIDAACI aims to further increase the collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to the implementation of another MoU's such as the MoU with SPAK. Thus during 2025, in the context of fulfilling the mutual commitments arising from the MoU with the Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK), the exchange of data and information between the institutions continued. This cooperation aimed to intensify joint efforts in cases involving violations of the legal framework on conflict of interest and asset declaration, as well as potential corruption-related criminal offences. In support of SPAK's investigative activities concerning officials subject to the obligation to declare private interests, the HIDAACI made available all relevant information administered by the institution in **20 cases**, during the reporting period.

In parallel, HIDAACI maintained active cooperation with other law enforcement and justice sector institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, Prosecution Offices, and the General Directorate of Police, facilitating information exchange within the appropriate applicable legal framework. Finally, during 2025, a total number of **28 cases** have been exchanged as per above. At the institutional and strategic level, HIDAACI also contributes to the international Network for Integrity, which serves as a platform for coordination, exchange of good practices, and strengthened cooperation among integrity-related institutions. In recognition of its active role and expertise, HIDAACI has been elected Vice-President of the Network for Integrity by a two-thirds majority of the members of the network, reflecting a high level of trust and institutional confidence. Through its engagement in this role, HIDAACI supports a coherent and coordinated approach to integrity policies, asset declaration, conflict of interest prevention, and whistleblowing mechanisms, further strengthening both the preventive and enforcement dimensions of the national anti-corruption framework.

3. Publication of private interest declarations

Since December 2025, access to private interest declarations has been further improved through the publication of declarations starting from the most recently submitted ones, with regular updates to be ensured. The Asset Declaration Register provides a user-friendly interface, allowing users to search and filter published declarations by name and institution through intuitive dropdown menus. Declarations are made available in a machine-readable PDF format, enabling efficient electronic processing, searching, and copying of data, thereby facilitating transparency and ease of use.

Earlier in 2025, specifically in February 2025 HIDAACI had introduced other features to the publication module in order to further facilitate and ease the access to the requested data,

through developing an improved mechanism for the selection of specific subjects/functions/declaration years.

Currently, the publication portal is fully operational and can be accessed directly via the following link: <https://www.ildkpkj.al/publikimi-i-deklaratave-konfidenciale/>. Alternatively, the portal can also be accessed through the official HIDAACI website (<https://www.ildkpkj.al/>) by clicking on “Publication of Declarations” and, on the subsequent page, selecting the option “Asset Declaration Registers”.

Despite the number of requests from the media, individuals related to the publication of the declarations of private interests of the declaring subjects, HIDAACI continues to address them adequately. During 2025, HIDAACI registered and processed 24 requests for access to declarations of private interests, along with 25 authentications from the EACIDS declaration system. It is important to emphasize that the format of submitting the declarations of private interests shall be divided into two phases: 2003–2021, when all declarations were submitted on paper, and 2022 onward, when they are submitted electronically via the EACIDS system. Requests for information pertain to subjects obligated to declare, covering all periods, including current and former declarants.

A positive shift was observed in the manner in which requests for declarations of private interests were submitted. Following the introduction of electronic authentication through the e-Albania platform in 2023, the use of the EACIDS system for submitting requests has continued to increase. In 2025, for the first time, the number of requests submitted through electronic authentication via EACIDS exceeded those submitted in written form. This development reflects increased user trust in the electronic system, improved accessibility, and a more efficient and transparent process for accessing published declarations.

Lastly, for statistical purposes, the increasing volume of requests is clearly indicated by the data of the publication of private interest declarations, where during the period 2014 - 2025 about 84,527 declarations were made public, while only for the year 2025 there have been approximately 2,000 publications.

4. Developments in HIDAACI’s organic legal framework

4.1. Progress in legislative approximation and implementation challenges in the field of whistleblowing

During the reporting period, a new Law on Whistleblowing and Whistle-blower Protection was approved by the Parliament, marking a significant step in the approximation of the national framework with the EU *acquis*, in particular Directive (EU) 2019/1937 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law. This legislative milestone was achieved with the active contribution of HIDAACI, which continued to support the approximation process through analytical assessments, gap analyses, and the formulation of recommendations aimed at strengthening reporting mechanisms, protection against retaliation, and the overall effectiveness of the whistleblowing system. The approved new law strengthens the legal basis for whistleblowing in line with EU standards.

Following the entrance into power of the above-mentioned law, the main challenge concerns its effective implementation. Further efforts are required to ensure the timely alignment of secondary legislation, the strengthening of institutional capacities, and the consistent application of whistleblower protection mechanisms across both the public and private sectors. Addressing these aspects is essential to ensure the effective handling and conclusion of administrative investigations, the application of proportionate sanctions, and the overall effectiveness of the whistleblowing system.

While the new whistleblowing legislation represents an important milestone, its effective implementation will present several future challenges. In particular, the expanded scope of the law, together with the lowering of the threshold for the establishment of responsible units, is expected to significantly increase the number of responsible units in both the public and private sectors. This development will require enhanced monitoring, guidance, and oversight capacities in order to ensure effective implementation of the whistleblowing framework.

In parallel, the implementation of the new legal framework will necessitate institutional adjustments within HIDAACI, including changes to its internal structure, procedures, and allocation of resources, in order to effectively exercise its supervisory and investigative functions. Addressing these challenges will be essential to ensure the consistent handling of whistleblowing cases, effective protection against retaliation, and the application of proportionate administrative measures.

4.2. Advancement in the legal framework on the prevention of conflicts of interests

During the reporting period, progress was achieved in enhancing the legal framework on conflicts of interest through the advancement of a new draft law on the prevention of conflicts of interest in the exercise of public functions. The draft law aims to modernize and consolidate the existing framework and is currently under parliamentary scrutiny, with approval expected in the near future. At this stage, progress concerns primarily the legal framework, while the alignment of secondary legislation and practical implementation arrangements will follow upon the adoption of the law.

5. Transitional evaluation of the State Police, the Guard of the Republic and the Police Surveillance Agency

The HIDAACI based on the law no. 12/2018, dated 05.03.2018 "On the Transitional Evaluation of State Police Officers, Guard of the Republic and Service for Internal Affairs and Complaints", as amended, (Police Vetting), has been foreseen as one of the institutions contributing in the process with the preliminary verification of the asset declarations. Hence, during 2023, HIDAACI, along with the Ministry of Interior, issued the Joint Instruction no. 15, dated 27.01.2023, "On the approval of the forms of assets' declarations for the transitional and periodic evaluation, as well as the method of completing the abovementioned forms from the subjects under evaluation and related persons, who bear the obligation to declare in the implementation of the law no. 78/2022, "On some additions and changes to the law no. 12/2018 on the transitional evaluation of the employees of the State Police, the Guard of the Republic of Albania, and the Police Surveillance Agency at the Ministry of Interior".

Therefore, the High Inspectorate, has performed and is currently performing full control of the assets, the legality of the source of their creation, the fulfillment of financial obligations, including the private interests of the employees of the State Police, the Guard of the Republic of Albania, and the Police Surveillance Agency at the Ministry of Interior, and their related persons. During 2025, HIDAACI has completed the process of controlling/auditing the subjects included in the list submitted by the Agency, and has submitted to this institution the complete documentation along with the detailed and reasoned reports for 19 subjects.

6. Statistical data based on the results of control

The High Inspectorate, pursuant to Article 44 of the Law no. 9367, dated 7.4.2005 "*On the Prevention of Conflict of Interest ...*", as amended, and Article 40 of the Law no. 9049, dated 10.4.2003 "*On the declaration and audit of assets ...*", as amended, and Article 23 of the Law no. 60/2016 "*On whistleblowing and whistleblower protection*" has applied administrative measures by "fine", in cases of refusals to declare, as well as in cases of non-declaration and/or in cases of conflict of interests. Moreover, the High Inspectorate, related to the organizations which have the legal obligation to establish and report the responsible units according the law on whistleblowing and whistleblower protection, but failed to fulfill this obligation within the legal deadlines foreseen by the abovementioned law, imposed administrative sanctions with "fine" to the appropriate organizations. HIDAACI for the timeframe 2014 – 2025 has imposed about 2,306 administrative measures with "fine". The number of administrative measures with "fine" imposed by the High Inspectorate have for the period January- December 2025, has been 75 administrative measures. For the period 2014-2025, in total, 610 criminal and other referrals cases were filed for criminal offences of refusal to declare, failure to declare, hiding or false declaration, laundering of proceeds of crimes, fiscal evasion, in which are involved public officials. Where for the period January- December 2025, there are 16 cases referred.

7. Implementation of the current whistleblowing framework

The High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflict of Interest has continued to fulfil the competences conferred by the Assembly of the Republic of Albania through Law No. 60, dated 2 June 2016, "On Whistleblowing and the Protection of Whistle-blowers", as amended.

Pursuant to the law, HIDAACI, besides functioning as an external mechanism, is empowered: to monitor and issue guidelines for the internal and external mechanisms of whistleblowing; to control the proper functioning of the internal mechanism of whistleblowing and the respective responsible units in the organizations; to determine the administrative offenses under this law and impose fines, in accordance with Article 23 of this Law; to obtain and investigate the request for protection against retaliation measures imposed to whistle-blowers and to guarantee the protection of whistle-blowers against retaliation measures according to this law; based on the annual reports of the responsible units to draft assessment and to provide recommendations regarding the implementation of this law; to provide assistance and support regarding the implementation of the law on whistle-blowers protection; to raise the public awareness for the whistleblowing and protection of whistle-blowers, as well as to increase the culture of acceptance of whistleblowing.

Furthermore, the law provides a series of offences and administrative measures for the violations of the provisions of the law like: failure of the organization to establish the responsible unit, any act of retaliation against the whistle-blower; violation of the disclosure investigation principles by the employee; violation of the obligation for preservation of confidentiality; failure to initiate or terminate the administrative investigation by the employee. The administrative sanctions provisioned by “fine”, for the aforementioned violations/infringements, vary in a range of 100.000 ALL to 500.000 ALL.

In this framework the HIDAACI during 2025, has taken the necessary measures to monitor the establishment of the responsible units within the central and local public authorities, which have more than 80 employees. During this process, HIDAACI has collaborated with the General Directorate of Taxation, in order to identify the new public authorities which, meet the threshold provided by the Law No. 60/2016.

Following, HIDAACI instituted the respective contacts with the recent public authorities for the establishment of the responsible units and their reporting. HIDAACI, by receiving and administering the conveyed information from the responsible units, concluded the process of revising the National Register of Responsible Units, in which are evidenced the data and position of the person in charge for the implementation of this law. From the statistical data it results that in total 185 responsible units have been established and function in the public sector.

Additionally, HIDAACI has coordinated the process of identification of the private companies with more than 100 employees with the General Directorate of Taxation, in order to obtain the appropriate contacts for the establishment of the responsible units, in the new companies meeting the threshold and their reporting to HIDAACI. Following the information provided by the private companies, HIDAACI has revised the National Register of Responsible Units in the Private Sector, along with the data and position of the person in charge for the implementation of this law. From the statistical data it results that in total 526 responsible units have been established within the private sector.

At the end of this process, HIDAACI, for the organizations that carried out the obligation to establish and report the responsible units but failed to comply with this obligation within the legal deadlines foreseen by the law no. 60/2016, imposed administrative sanctions with “fine” for about 8 organizations. Hence for the period 2016 - 2025, there are in total 237 sanctions with “fine” applied to the organizations that failed to comply with the obligation to establish the responsible unit.

Moreover, through the collection and administration of reports from public authorities, the process of reviewing and updating the National Register of Responsible Units within Public Authorities was carried out, reflecting the designated persons responsible for implementing the whistleblowing law and their contact details. Likewise, following the information received, the data of the National Register of Responsible Units in the Private Sector were reviewed and updated. Currently, it is estimated that in the public and private sectors the total number of members of Responsible Units for whistleblowing is approximately 1,321 individuals, of

whom 361 are employed within Responsible Units for whistleblowing in public authorities, while 960 are employed in private entities.

In the framework of the ongoing cooperation and communication with the responsible units, HIDAACI has notified them as for the fulfilment of the legal obligations provided for in Articles 13 and 22 of the Law No 60/2016 “*On whistle-blower and whistle-blower protection*” regarding the adoption of internal regulations, as well as for the submission to HIDAACI of the annual report in writing by 15 January 2026. Accordingly, the analysis of the submitted information will be carried out, and the relevant data will be shared accordingly.

During 2025, the High Inspectorate, in the exercise of its legal powers, as an external reporting mechanism for whistleblowing and requests for protection against retaliation, has registered and administratively investigated a total of 11 new cases and 8 cases for protection from retaliation coming from the public sector.

HIDAACI has taken measures to register all cases reported to the External Registry on Whistleblowing, as well as to conduct an administrative investigation in compliance with legal timelines in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 60/2016 and Code of Administrative Procedures.

At the conclusion of the administrative investigation, for officials found in violation of legal provisions of law No. 9367/2005 “*On the prevention of conflicts of interest in the exercise of public functions*” as amended, law no. 9049/2003 “*On the declaration and control of the assets and financial obligations of the elected persons and some public officials*”, as amended in 13 cases, action was taken with administrative measure with “fine”.

HIDAACI for other cases reported, after the administrative investigation, has notified the competent body according to the issues raised by the whistle-blowers, as follows:

- Notification for further follow-up to the Supreme State Audit, for the auditing of the use of public funds;
- Notification for further follow-up to the State Police;
- Notification to the Head of the Central Public Authority, for the taking of measures for the elimination and/or resolution of conflict-of-interest situations.

As for the timeframe 2017 – 2025, HIDAACI has registered and investigated in the Register of Request for Protection against Retaliation 20 Requests for Protection against Retaliation. HIDAACI has initiated and completed the administrative investigation within the legal deadlines foreseen by the Law No 60/2016 and the Code of Administrative Procedures. At the conclusion, based on the investigation procedures in 2 cases it was determined that the organization had initiated acts of retaliation. Consequently, HIDAACI, has requested to the head of the appropriate public institution to refrain from any acts of retaliation aiming to protect the whistle-blower.

Furthermore, HIDAACI has continued its cooperation with the Albanian Helsinki Committee within the framework of the implementation of the initiative entitled “Civil Society against Corruption from a local challenge to a European response”. Within this initiative, one of the

priority objectives pursued is the enhancement of transparency, open access and accountability, as well as institutional capacities and engagement in the fight against corruption.

In this context, a “Cooperation Agreement” has been signed, aiming to define the main directions of cooperation and the modalities for its implementation, with the purpose of improving the treatment and respect of the freedoms and rights of whistleblowers, as well as raising awareness among employees of public authorities regarding the implementation of the legislation on whistleblower protection, in the context of aligning national legislation with international standards. Subsequently, HIDAACI, in cooperation with the Albanian Helsinki Committee, has participated in sessions organized with public institutions related to increasing awareness on whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers.

Particularly, during 2023 and 2024 and 2025 HIDAACI in close collaboration with the Albanian Helsinki Committee, has participated in the working sessions organized with public institutions on awareness raising related to whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers. Thus, within the framework of these activities there were 148 employees trained during 2023 whereas for the year 2024 there were 200 employees trained, continuing with around 120 employees trained during 2025, from public institutions such as University Hospital Centre “Mother Teresa”, the State Cadaster Agency, the General Directorate of Taxation, the Public Procurement Agency, Customs Directorate, General Directorate of State Police, Directorate of Prisons, University of Tirana, Polytechnic University of Tirana, etc. It is important to emphasize that for the period 2018-2025 there were 1990 employees trained, in training sessions and awareness raising in the public and private sector.

GPO

The General Prosecutor’s Office, aiming to enhance the quality and efficiency of investigations and the successful conduct of criminal prosecution, as well as to prioritize the fight against crime including offenses related to official duties and corruption continued its inter-institutional cooperation at the local level in the daily work of heads of offices, prosecutors, and judicial police officers, and at the central level to improve the quality of investigations and prosecutions in the field of corruption, including offenses related to official duties. This cooperation was conducted with the Special Prosecution Office in accordance with the Institutional Coordination Act of 15 December 2020, as well as within the framework of bilateral agreements concluded in 2020 between the General Prosecutor’s Office and the State Police General Directorate, the High State Control, and the High Inspectorate of Declaration and Control of Assets and Conflicts of Interest.

Within the framework of strengthening structures in the fight against corruption, work has continued in seven special sections established with the General Instruction no. 10/2020 in first-instance prosecution offices of general jurisdiction for the investigation offenses related to official duties, money laundering offenses, financial crimes, and, as well as asset investigations. Meanwhile, in prosecution offices with a smaller number of prosecutors, dedicated prosecutors were assigned for the prosecution of these offenses. At the same time, the heads of prosecution offices, in accordance with Article 21 of Law no. 97/2016, as amended, and this instruction, at the beginning of each calendar year, assess the establishment

of sections, the addition or reduction of categories of complex criminal offenses, the subjects committing them, and the relevant staff (prosecutors and judicial police officers), based on the real workload and operational needs.

In support of the work of these sections and the prosecutors engaged with money laundering cases and those related to official duty, by Order no. 111, dated 05.11.2025, the General Prosecutor appointed an accounting expert to the position of Head of the Expertise Sector.

Within the framework of implementing the Institutional Coordination Act “To increase efficiency through the coordination of the General Prosecutor’s Office with the Special Prosecution Office and the unification of certain administrative and inter-institutional procedural activities, while respecting the institutional competencies provided by law” signed on 15 December 2020, coordination continued through direct communications at the central and judicial district levels among the relevant Heads of Prosecution Offices according to the cases and specified objectives.

In this regard, for the 9 months of 2025, according to statistical data confirmed by the Special Prosecution Office, 22 criminal proceedings related to corruption or offenses connected to official duties were registered, representing 75.86% of the criminal cases transferred and accepted by the Special Prosecution Office during this period.

Within the framework of the measures outlined in the General Instruction of the General Prosecutor no. 4/2025, for the implementation of priority recommendations of the Council of Ministers, the General Prosecutor has instructed measures to enhance the active role of prosecutors in preliminary investigations, to ensure the conduct of full and comprehensive investigations, to carry out effective proactive investigations, and to use special investigative tools in accordance with the law. These measures take into account the legal criteria for the use of evidence-gathering tools, based on the scope of corruption offenses under the jurisdiction of general prosecutors, as well as the use of financial or asset investigations (“follow the money”), with the aim of further increasing effectiveness in combating corruption and related crimes.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (PART I)

Strengthened protection of fundamental rights in practice

Focus on:

European Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFR): implementation of human rights, capacities of independent fundamental rights bodies, application of the rights and freedoms set out in CFR, implementation of recommendations of international human rights monitoring bodies.

Implementation of human rights, capacities of independent fundamental rights bodies

The protection and implementation of human rights in Albania remain firmly grounded in the Constitution, notably Articles 3, 8 and 15–53, as well as in the country’s obligations under the main international human rights instruments to which Albania is a party. Throughout the year, Albanian institutions have continued to work on aligning national legislation with the EU acquis, strengthening institutional capacities and addressing the implementation of interim benchmarks in the field of fundamental rights. These efforts have focused both on legislative reforms and on improving the coordination and effectiveness of institutions responsible for the protection and implementation of human rights.

During the reporting period, legislative measures have further strengthened this framework, including amendments in the areas of non-discrimination and equality, reinforcing safeguards against discrimination and enhancing the enforcement mechanisms available to independent oversight bodies. In parallel, the continued assessment on the procedural and legal avenues to employment of alternative measures to detention, especially relating to pretrial detention, and the upcoming adoption of the Amnesty Law contributes to alleviating pressure on the penitentiary system, with indirect positive effects on the protection of fundamental rights.

The implementation of human rights has continued through the execution of a comprehensive set of national strategies and action plans aligned with the National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2030. Key instruments include the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030, the National Health Strategy 2021–2030, the LGBTI National Action Plan 2021–2027, the National Agenda for Children’s Rights 2021–2026, and the National Education Strategy 2021–2026. Targeted measures for vulnerable groups have remained a priority, notably through the continued implementation of the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Inclusion 2021–2025, aimed at improving access to education, employment, health and social services.

Additional human rights relevant policies have continued to be implemented across sectors, including the National Strategy for Social Protection 2024–2030, the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030 and its Action Plan, and the Cross-Sectoral Strategy for the Protection of Victims of Crime 2024–2030. These frameworks are complemented by the Cross-cutting Justice Strategy 2024–2030 and the Rule of Law Roadmap 2024–2030, ensuring a coordinated and rights-based approach to reform implementation.

Institutional capacities of independent fundamental rights bodies have been further strengthened. The People’s Advocate continues to play a central role through the investigation of complaints, monitoring and inspection of public authorities, and the issuance of recommendations, in line with the UN Paris Principles and its A-status accreditation. Concrete support to capacity-building was provided through the 2026 State Budget, which increased the staffing of the People’s Advocate from 67 to 70 positions, enhancing its ability to carry out its constitutional mandate. Similar efforts to reinforce capacities have continued with regard to the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data and the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination.

Taken together, these legislative, strategic and institutional measures demonstrate Albania's continued commitment to translating constitutional and international human rights obligations into concrete implementation actions. Further details on specific legislative amendments and sectoral reforms will be elaborated in the relevant thematic sections below.

[Application of the rights and freedoms set out in CFR,](#)

While Albania is not yet an EU Member State and is therefore not legally bound by the CFR, the institution contributes to its progressive alignment with EU fundamental rights standards.

Albania has made substantial progress in aligning its constitutional and legislative framework with the EU acquis and European fundamental rights standards. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania, notably Articles 15–58, is almost fully aligned with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, guaranteeing a comprehensive catalogue of civil, political, economic and social rights, including human dignity, freedom of expression, equality before the law, non-discrimination, access to justice, social protection, minority rights and environmental protection. In the area of personal data protection, Albania has achieved full alignment with the EU acquis, having adopted a 100 percent GDPR-aligned legal framework as of December 2024, complemented by secondary legislation adopted in November 2025. This progress was confirmed in the Enlargement Package of October 2025, which recognized full alignment in this field. In parallel, significant progress has been made in the areas of non-discrimination and gender equality, in line with the EU Common Position for Albania. Legislative gaps and institutional mandates have been addressed, including the adoption of a new Law on Gender Equality in November 2025 and the alignment of relevant criminal legislation with EU directives, while further legislative refinements, such as the revised law on domestic violence, are in the process of adoption. Together, these developments demonstrate a high degree of alignment with the EU acquis, with full alignment achieved in key areas and partial alignment continuing to be advanced in others, in line with Albania's EU integration commitments.

Since 2020, Albania continued to benefit from its observer status at the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. In November 2025 following the end of the mandate for the current representatives of Albania new representatives were appointed for another a five-year mandate.

In cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the ODIHR, the Ministry of Justice organized, in Tirana on 29–30 September 2025, the first workshop focusing on the systematic and robust collection of disaggregated data and statistics on equality and hate crime. The workshop brought together representatives of relevant central and local institutions, independent bodies and civil society organizations, with the aim of strengthening institutional capacities, facilitating the exchange of expertise, and discussing concrete measures to improve national data collection methodologies.

The discussions contributed to Albania's efforts to align its practices with the EU acquis and international fundamental rights standards, in line with the commitments under the Rule of Law Roadmap and the EU accession process. As a follow-up to the workshop, the FRA has

prepared two analytical reports containing recommendations to advance the systematic and robust collection of disaggregated data and statistics on equality and hate crime.

Furthermore, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Ministry of Justice participated in the Conference entitled “25 Years of Rights: Reflection on the Impact of the Charter”.

Organized by the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the conference brought together 200 representatives of interest groups that contribute to the implementation of the Charter.

Implementation of recommendations of international human rights monitoring bodies.

During 2025 the following reports have been adopted from international human rights monitoring bodies on Albania: The Human Rights Committee - CCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), The Universal Periodic Review report - UPR47, the Report of the Independent Expert on SOGI; Committee against Torture - CAT, The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance - ECRI.

1. The CCPR Committee considered the 3rd periodic report of Albania on 11 and 12 March 2025. On 21 March 2025, the Committee adopted the concluding observations.

The report highlights tangible progress with regard to alignment of legislation, institutional reform, and policy development, reflecting Albania’s responsiveness to recommendations issued by international and European monitoring bodies.

The CCPR review notes progress in legislative harmonisation, particularly in migration and asylum, and the adoption of the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030. The establishment of SPAK and the Anti-Corruption Strategy 2024–2030, strengthening of judicial independence and accountability; advances in gender equality, LGBTI+ protection, electoral reform, and judicial vetting, demonstrate continued efforts to improve democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights.

Since the March Report, several recommendations have been implemented, such as the appointment of the People’s Advocate of Albania (2025) and the Parliament adopted a new law on gender equality (2025) as well as new legal amendments to the law on protection from discrimination (Jan 2026).

2. The Universal Periodic Review report (UPR report) on Albania was adopted by the Human Rights Council Decision of 24 March 2025.

During the UPR47th session, Albania received 253 recommendations and supported 239, demonstrating a strong commitment and genuine political will to implement international human rights standards.

Albania moved forward with international human rights obligations by accessing the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR) in February 2025. A new draft criminal code is under consultation with all the stakeholders.

Regarding Judicial Reform and Anti-Corruption Measures: the vetting process of judges and prosecutors is being finalized, a new judicial map was adopted, the Intersectoral Justice Strategy 2024–2030 was launched. Anti-corruption measures included strengthening SPAK, introducing new transparency tools, and creating a parliamentary *ad hoc* commission on governance reforms.

Regarding Promotion of Equality and Protection of Minorities: Albania fully adopted the 12 secondary legal acts implementing the Law on National Minorities, enabling full application of rights related to identity, language use, and recognition. Protections for persons with disabilities and the LGBTI+ community were reinforced, including stronger safeguards against discrimination and hate crimes.

Advancing Gender Equality and Combating Gender-Based Violence: Through the National Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030, Albania is committed to criminalizing femicide, aligning the definition of rape with agreed language standards, expanding shelters, and improving access to free legal aid for victims of violence.

Protection of Children’s Rights: Key reforms included removing all exceptions allowing marriage under 18, strengthening protection against violence and exploitation, and improving inclusive education under the National Strategy on Children’s Rights 2021–2026.

Regarding Freedom of Expression and Media Protection: Commitments were made to protect journalists, align legislation with European anti-SLAPP standards, and improve transparency of media ownership through independent oversight.

Regarding Combating Trafficking and Protecting Migrants: under the National Action Plan 2024–2025, Albania strengthened prevention, victim protection, and prosecution in trafficking cases, while improving asylum procedures and migrant protection.

Overall, Albania’s UPR47 achievements reflect comprehensive reforms across justice, equality, protection of vulnerable groups, and international cooperation.

3. Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity on his visit to Albania was adopted during the 59th session of the HRC, June 2025

The Independent Expert was especially encouraged by the strong partnerships between feminist and LGBT groups, united by their shared commitment to advancing equality and combating gender-based violence; he welcomed the opportunity to visit a country that has shown a strong commitment to aligning its domestic laws and policies with international human rights standards, while also playing an active and positive role internationally in support of LGBT rights.

Report emphasises that Albania's legal framework is notably strong. The 2010 Law "On Protection from Discrimination" explicitly protects individuals on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. Amendments to the Criminal Code decriminalized same-sex relations and introduced enhanced penalties for bias-motivated crimes, including those based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Other key legislation, such as the Labour Code and the Law "On Social Housing," aim to protect marginalized groups; and public health laws apply universally without discrimination. These legal foundations place Albania ahead of many countries in the region in terms of formal equality. Albania has made tangible legal progress in promoting the rights of LGBTI people, though notable gaps persist. A key step forward has been the National Action Plan for LGBTI+ People (2021–2027), which outlines a comprehensive strategy to advance equality.

Albania is committed to implementing the recommendations submitted the expert in the 2025 report (paragraphs 97-110).

4. Albania's Implementation of the Committee against Torture Recommendations

Albania's third periodic review before the Committee against Torture (CAT) took place on 19-20 November 2025. The reforms highlighted in the CAT process closely intersect with key chapters of the EU acquis, notably Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) and Chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security).

Key achievements include strengthened asylum law ensuring non-refoulement, prison and juvenile justice reforms, and improved victims' rights; the establishment of SPAK strengthens accountability and anti-corruption efforts: advances in gender-based violence protection and oversight mechanisms are notable. However, challenges remain in consistent implementation, detention practices, migration safeguards, and enforcement of decisions.

As per the evaluations of the visits of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), there were no allegations of ill-treatment made by prisoners regarding staff of the penitentiary system. Where there were cases of allegation of ill-treatment between prisoners, it must be noted that cases of violence between prisoners have been reduced. The General Directorate of Prisons has implemented preventive measures through risk and needs assessments as well as internal classification to protect vulnerable groups, sharing cell, and through the application of the conflict resolution programs and anger management.

For more detailed information please refer to Annex No. 2 Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

5. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) conducted its 7th monitoring cycle visit to Albania from 16 to 20 June 2025. ECRI's monitoring operates in five-year cycles. The draft report¹¹ analyzes developments in the country up to 4 December 2025.¹²

The visit focused on two main themes:

- (1) preventing and combating hate speech and hate crime;
- (2) ensuring equal treatment and inclusion in education and healthcare.

Albania has shown significant progress in establishing the necessary legal frameworks (Legal Aid, Social Housing, Anti-Discrimination laws).

Positive Developments:

- Since the adoption of ECRI's sixth report on Albania on 7 April 2020, progress has been made, and good practices have been developed in a number of fields.
- The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) has been active in tackling hate speech.
- The Alliance Against Hate Speech, established in 2019, brings together national institutions such as the People's Advocate, the CPD, the Audiovisual Media Authority and the Albanian Media Council. It issued a statement of concern over a surge in hate speech targeting the LGBTI community and urged institutions to address the problem.
- ECRI was informed about initial and continuous training on hate speech and hate crime provided by the Security Academy and the School of Magistrates to police officers and other criminal justice actors, which is considered as a good practice.
- ECRI also learned that the authorities are working on a case management system for prosecution services to record data on hate crime cases more effectively.
- The Ministry of Education adopted a National Action Plan Against Violence and Bullying 2025– 2028 and, according to the authorities, there are currently 930 psychologists and social workers in schools and 340 security officers, that in two years will increase to 500, dealing with bullying.
- The authorities have taken various measures to improve the education levels of Roma and Egyptian children: the pupils can receive free textbooks and free transport to schools, if the distance is more than two kilometres. Limited scholarships are available for upper secondary and tertiary education, as well as for vocational training. The government also introduced special scholarships for pupils at risk of drop-out.
- In its previous report, ECRI noted that de facto segregation of Roma and Egyptian pupils was a problem in some schools. In this regard, in 2022, the European Court of Human Rights found a violation of Article 1 of Protocol No.12 to the European Convention on Human Rights in the case of X and Others v Albania. Since then, the authorities have taken some measures towards executing the judgment, especially by coordinating the various stakeholders. ECRI also notes that the "Trifon Prifti" school in Balteza (Fier), in which Roma and non-Roma pupils are learning together, is a positive example for integrated education.

¹¹ The final report on Albania will be adopted at the end of March 2026. The draft report was transmitted to the Albanian authorities on 15 December 2025 for a confidential dialogue with the view of correcting any factual errors.

- Also, the provision of care packages for Roma and Egyptian mothers giving birth in hospitals has been successfully implemented, which has led to a significant increase of Roma and Egyptian mothers giving birth in hospitals with positive health outcomes for mothers and children and increased uptake of post-natal services. A medical protocol for transgender persons has been finalised by a dedicated working group composed of physicians from several fields and civil society organisations, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

Key Findings of the 7th Cycle:

The report assesses the progress made since the 6th report was adopted in April 2020. While some advancements were noted, several key recommendations from the previous cycle have not been fully implemented:

- **Data Collection:** ECRI had recommended establishing a comprehensive data collection system for racist and LGBTI-phobic hate speech. The 2025 delegation noted that no substantial progress has been made in this regard.
- **Anti-Bullying:** The authorities were previously recommended to develop group-specific modules against bullying for Roma and LGBTI youth. The report states that they failed to move from general activities to these specialized modules.
- **Housing in Pogradec:** A priority recommendation to find a speedy solution to the housing crises in the Kabash and Guri i Kuq areas of Pogradec has still not been fully implemented. The property transfers from the state to the municipality are still awaiting final approval.
- **De Facto Segregation:** While some coordination measures have been taken following a 2022 European Court of Human Rights judgment, schools such as "Naim Frashëri" in Korça remain segregated.
- **Hate Speech:** While the legal framework has improved (e.g., the 2020 amendments to the Law on Protection from Discrimination), hate speech remains a concern, particularly online and when used by public figures targeting LGBTI persons, Roma, and Egyptians.
- **Education:** Bullying and discrimination against vulnerable groups persist. Despite some progress, de facto school segregation of Roma and Egyptian pupils remains a significant issue.
- **Healthcare:** A medical protocol for transgender persons has been finalized but is awaiting final approval.
- **Specific Issues:** The report highlights challenges with the "E-Albania" digital platform for communities with low digital literacy and the long-standing housing crisis for Roma and Egyptians in Pogradec.

Recommendations of international human rights monitoring bodies like CRC, CRPD, CAT are observed and prioritized by the People's Advocate in its work. The People's Advocate has the rights to submit "shadow reports" to these monitoring committees to offer a non-governmental perspective and has done so in the past (CEDAW)¹³. These recommendations are integrated

¹³ The People's Advocate has submitted a "shadow report" regarding Albania's compliance with CEDAW covering the 2016-2020 period.

into the People's Advocate monitoring work and are referred to in its own recommendations and amicus curiae.

In the context of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review by the Albanian state, People's Advocate as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), has expressed its position on some of the identified issues to certain areas of law: (1) National Human Rights Institution, with a focus on constitutional and legal framework in Albania that guarantees the necessary financial autonomy of the People's Advocate; (2) Conditions of detention, with focus on issues related to the lack of healthcare staff, healthcare facilities, infrastructural conditions, and prison overcrowding; (3) Migrants and asylum seekers; (4) Freedom of opinion and expression; (5) Equality & non-discrimination.

Data protection: implementation, institutional capacity of the Information and Data Protection Commissioner.

Implementation of the new data protection law

1. Regarding the legal framework

The Assembly of the Republic of Albania, in its Plenary Session, dated 19.12.2024, adopted Law No. 124/2024 *"On Personal Data Protection"*. This important regulatory act constitutes a step forward in the implementation of the most modern standards of protection of this fundamental right for Albanian citizens. The modernized legislation in the field of personal data protection is also a fulfilment of one of the obligations, within the framework of the country's integration process into the European Union (EU), as this act **fully** approximates the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Directive on the processing of personal data by law enforcement agencies (Police Directive).

Following the adoption of Law No. 124/2024 *'On Personal Data Protection'*, during 2025 the package of secondary legislation implementing the new personal data protection law was adopted, specifically:

1. Decision no. 01, dated 30.04.2025 on *"Determination of countries which ensure an adequate level of personal data protection"*, aims to identify the countries that ensure an adequate level of personal data protection. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Decision-No.01-30.04.2025-Adequate-Data-Protection-Countries.pdf>
2. Instruction no.01, dated 30.04.2025 on *"Security measures for personal data in the area of education"*, aims to determine the security measures and the enhancement of awareness regarding personal data protection in the field of education. This instruction sets out specific rules that educational institutions are required to implement in order to protect the personal data of pupils, students, and all individuals enrolled in an educational institution. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Guideline-No.01-30.04.2025-Education-Security-Measures.pdf>
3. Instruction no.02, dated 30.04.2025 on *"Protection of health personal data"*, aims to regulate the processing of personal data, sensitive data, and genetic data related to health, in order to ensure respect for individuals' fundamental rights, in particular the right to

privacy and the protection of personal data. This act applies to natural and legal persons carrying out activities in the healthcare sector, as well as to processors acting on their behalf. This instruction may be consulted at the following link at: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/guideline-no.02-30.04.2025-health-data-protection.pdf>

4. Instruction no.03, dated 30.04.2025 on “*Processing personal data from video surveillance systems*”, aims to ensure the lawful and transparent processing of personal data through video-surveillance systems, in compliance with personal data protection principles. Data stored by video-surveillance systems (images, sounds) are considered personal data, through which an individual may be identified directly or indirectly. The installation and management of CCTV systems must be carried out in accordance with personal data protection legislation. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Guideline-No.03-30.04.2025-Video-Surveillance.pdf>.
5. Instruction no.04, dated 30.04.2025 on “*Personal data protection and appropriate security measures in direct marketing*”, aims to establish the rules that controllers or processors of personal data must follow when carrying out direct marketing activities. It also seeks to ensure that the processing of personal data for marketing purposes is carried out in compliance with the obligations set out in Law No. 124/2024 ‘On Personal Data Protection’. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Guideline-No.04-30.04.2025-Direct-Marketing.pdf>
6. Instruction no.05, dated 16.07.2025 on “*Personal data processing by competent authorities*”, aims to establish clear rules for the lawful processing of personal data by authorities competent for the prevention, investigation, detection, or prosecution of criminal offences, as well as for the execution of criminal penalties and for matters of public and national security. Specifically, this document applies to all personal data processing activities carried out by Competent Authorities falling within the scope of Article 47 of Law No. 124/2024. Furthermore, this act requires Competent Authorities to comply with personal data protection principles, including lawfulness, data minimization, accuracy, and storage limitation, as well as to implement appropriate security measures, including the carrying out of data protection impact assessments where processing is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of data subjects. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Guideline-No.05-16.07.2025-Competent-Authorities.pdf>
7. Instruction no.06, dated 16.07.2025 on “*Adoption of the methodology for calculating the amount of administrative sanctions*”, aims to approve a consistent, transparent, and functional strategy for calculating administrative sanctions imposed by the Commissioner in relation to findings of violations under personal data protection legislation. According to this methodology, sanctions imposed on controllers must be effective, proportionate, and dissuasive. The document sets out the steps for assessing infringements, taking into account the specific circumstances of each case, including the nature of the violation, its purpose, and the significance of the personal data affected. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Guideline-No.06-16.07.2025-Administrative-Sanctions.pdf>.
8. Instruction no. 07, dated 20.11.2025 on “*The protection of personal data in the print, electronic and/or audiovisual media, as well as the exemptions for specific purposes of processing*”, aims to regulate the processing of personal data by the printed, electronic

and/or audiovisual media, establishing clear rules for balancing freedom of expression and the right to information with the protection of private life and personal data. It addresses, inter alia, the processing of sensitive data, the protection of minors, reporting on criminal matters, the use of images and recording equipment, and the exercise of the right to be forgotten, while also defining the cases and conditions under which certain legal obligations may be exempted for journalistic purposes, in accordance with Law No. 124/2024. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Guideline-nr.-07-date-20.11.2025.pdf>.

9. Instruction no. 08, dated 20.11.2025 on “*The additional criteria for the accreditation of certification bodies*”, aims to establish the additional criteria and procedures for the accreditation of personal data certification bodies, setting out requirements on independence, impartiality, confidentiality, accountability, technical and legal competence, and resource capacity, in line with Law No. 124/2024 and ISO/IEC 17065. It regulates the accreditation process, certification agreements, assessment and audit methodologies, decision-making, monitoring, renewal, suspension and revocation of certification, as well as complaint handling and transparency obligations, while defining the supervisory and sanctioning powers of the Commissioner to ensure a credible, consistent, and reliable certification mechanism for personal data processing operations. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Guideline-no.-08-date-20.11.2025.pdf>.
10. Instruction no. 09, dated 20.11.2025 on “*The general criteria for the certification and for granting of personal data protection seals and marks*”, aims to set out the general legal, technical and organizational criteria for the certification of personal data processing operations and the granting of personal data protection seals and marks, in accordance with Law No. 124/2024 and relevant international standards (including ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 27701). It defines the conditions, procedures and responsibilities for controllers and processors seeking certification, covering lawful processing principles, risk and impact assessments, technical and organizational security measures, data subject rights, international data transfers, internal governance and accountability mechanisms, as well as the rules on validity, monitoring, suspension, revocation and re-certification, ensuring that certification serves as a credible instrument for demonstrating compliance with personal data protection requirements. This instruction may be consulted at the following link: <https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Guideline-no-09-date-20.11.2025.pdf>.

This comprehensive set of regulatory acts provides the necessary substantive and procedural standards for controllers and processors, guarantees legal certainty, and enables the Commissioner’s Office to exercise its supervisory and enforcement functions in full compliance with the national and EU-aligned data-protection regime.

2. Regarding the measures to enhance public awareness and legal compliance

a. Regarding the Data Protection Officers:

With the adoption of the new Law no. 124/2024 “*On the Protection of Personal Data*” the controller/processor is required to appoint and subsequently inform the Information and Data Protection Commissioner’s Office about the contact details of the Data Protection Officer

(DPO). In this regard, the Commissioner has given an importance to the consolidation of the figure of the DPO. His role is essential within the organizational structure of the controller/processor, so that the latter can implement legal obligations and guarantee the rights of the data subject/citizen. This new approach has been materialized through the creation of *Network* of DPOs of the various public and private controllers that exercise their activity in the Republic of Albania.

In this context, “*The Role and Duties of the Data Protection Officer*” was the topic of the two-day event held on 3-4 July 2025 by the Commissioner's Office with public and private sector controllers. The event aimed to provide a detailed description of the role and responsibilities of DPOs, in accordance with Law No. 124/2024 “*On the Protection of Personal Data*”.

While the technical aspect of this relationship is the functioning of the Electronic Register of Personal Data Protection Officers, approved by the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 347, dated 19.06.2025 “*On the creation of the state database ‘Electronic Register of Personal Data Protection Officers’*”. This Register will contain data on Data Protection Officers appointed by public and private controllers and processors and will also serve as an interactive dialogue platform between them.

On the other hand, the Commissioner's Office has also given a particular importance to the DPOs training component, not only as a legal requirement stemming from Article 34, point 6 of the law, but also in the context of deepening the DPO's knowledge as a key actor for the practical implementation of legal requirements by controllers. For this purpose, the Commissioner's Office organized on 26-27 June the two-day “*Training of Trainers*” (ToT), within the framework of the “*Safe Data Albania*” project, implemented in cooperation with the Albanian Sustainable Development Organization (ASDO) with the support of the SMART Balkans program, funded by the Government of Norway. The Training of Trainers was conducted by Dott. Elisabetta Stringhi, expert from the Italian Data Protection Authority. The activity brought together professionals from public institutions and private companies to prepare them as the first national trainers in the field of personal data protection.

The program aims to build a national network of certified trainers who will train Data Protection Officers (DPOs), in accordance with the new legal requirements, harmonized with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The training included advanced topics such as the role and responsibilities of DPOs, risk management and auditing of data processing, dealing with security breaches, preparing privacy policies, and managing citizen requests.

Subsequently, on July 14, 2025, a 1 (one) week training of DPOs started based on the module for the professional formation and qualification of DPOs, organized by the Commissioner's Office in cooperation with the Higher Education Institution “*University College of Business*”. The training program aims to prepare qualified specialists who will exercise the function of Data Protection Officer in public institutions and private businesses. With the successful completion of this professional training for Data Protection Officers, **four groups with a total of around 100 participants** from the public and private sectors were provided with a professional certificate valid for the exercise of their duties in the institution where they are employed.

b. Public awareness meetings

Since the entry into force of Law No. 124/2024 “*On Personal Data Protection*”, the Commissioner's Office has undertaken a series of meetings and awareness-raising activities, with both public and private controllers, aimed at promoting legal compliance and effective implementation of the new legal framework. During these engagements, it was emphasized that the law, in force since February 2025, aligns Albania’s personal data protection regime with advanced European Union standards, ensuring Albanian citizens a level of protection equivalent to that enjoyed by EU citizens. The Commissioner presented the key innovations introduced by Law No. 124/2024, including strengthened transparency obligations, enhanced accountability mechanisms, and the reinforced role of Data Protection Officers (DPOs). Particular attention was given to sectors with a high volume of personal data processing.

In this context, meetings were held with representatives of banking institutions and the Albanian Association of Banks, a sector ranking among the largest controllers and processors of personal data. During these discussions, it was underlined that identified shortcomings should be addressed as opportunities for further improvement and alignment with the new legal requirements.

Similarly, the Commissioner’s Office organized a dedicated roundtable with the Albanian Insurers’ Association and senior representatives of insurance companies, focusing on the practical application of Law No. 124/2024. The insurance sector’s critical role as a major processor of personal data was highlighted, and companies were encouraged to view the Commissioner’s Office as a partner in achieving compliance. The Commissioner reaffirmed the Office’s commitment to continued support through training, guidance, and practical compliance tools. In parallel, the Commissioner’s Office placed strong emphasis on raising awareness among data subjects regarding the rights introduced by the new law.

Targeted awareness-raising activities were conducted for vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking and minors. Furthermore, open lectures were organized with higher education institutions to promote understanding of data protection rights and responsibilities. On the occasion of International Data Protection Day, a dedicated meeting was held with pupils, parents, teachers, and school officials, focusing on the importance of privacy and personal data security, addressing issues such as online privacy breaches and cyberbullying, and promoting safe digital behavior.

At the institutional and stakeholder level, the Commissioner’s Office, together with the Secretariat of the Investment Council and in cooperation with the Albanian Association of Foreign Investors (FIAA), organized a dialogue roundtable with the business community, aimed at increasing awareness of the rights and obligations arising from Law No. 124/2024. In addition, in cooperation with the European Movement in Albania (EMA), a discussion roundtable was held with the Working Group for Chapter 23, during which the key innovations of the law and the importance of its effective implementation by all stakeholders, including civil society, the media, and academia, were presented, contributing to strengthened institutional and public awareness.

The Office of the Commissioner also participated in the 31st edition of the Tirana International Fair “*Klik Ekspo Group 2025*”, held at the Palace of Congresses under the theme “*A Window to the Future – Albania 2030*”. The Office took part with a dedicated information stand, introducing visitors to the institution of the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data. Following the entry into force of Law No. 124/2024, the Commissioner’s Office prepared a series of new informational materials aimed at simplifying understanding and facilitating the practical implementation of the law. Visitors were also able to consult the publications and magazines issued by the Office over the years.

Within the framework of this fair, the Commissioner’s Office organized a panel discussion entitled “*Data Protection as Infrastructure for the Digital Future*”, bringing together representatives from public institutions, financial institutions, digital businesses, and startups to discuss the implementation of the new law and its role in building a secure, resilient, and sustainable digital future.

3. Regarding the Commissioner’s Decision

In the context of implementing the new Law No. 124/2024 “*On Personal Data Protection*,” the Commissioner has continued to exercise his supervisory and enforcement powers to ensure full compliance by controllers. During the reporting period, the Commissioner undertook a series of investigative and monitoring actions to assess the practical application of the new obligations introduced by the law, with particular attention to lawfulness of processing, transparency, data-subject rights, and the implementation of appropriate technical and organizational measures.

A total of 854 complaints were handled from citizens/data subjects, concerning alleged violations of personal data subjects’ rights. The complaints mainly related to: infringement of data subjects’ rights (access, rectification, information, and erasure); disclosure of personal data without the data subject’s consent; unlawful and unfair processing of personal data; publication of personal data in the media and online portals; installation of CCTV cameras in public and private premises; direct marketing and unsolicited communications via telephone; and retention of personal data beyond the period necessary for the specified purpose, among others. The examination of these cases shows that the vast majority of controllers undertook the necessary corrective actions to comply with legal obligations following the intervention of the Commissioner’s Office.

In parallel, **93 administrative investigations** were conducted. Of these, **18 investigations** were initiated following citizens’ complaints, while **75 investigations** were initiated ex officio by the Commissioner’s Office. **29 investigations** concerned public controllers, and **64 investigations** concerned private controllers.

Administrative investigations were carried out across a wide range of sectors, including the healthcare sector (dental clinics and medical laboratories), the banking sector, the education sector (both private and public universities), the ICT and telecommunications sector, various non-governmental organizations, the prosecution service, and the General Directorate of the Probation Service, including several of its regional branches.

As a result of these proceedings, the Commissioner issued **46 Recommendations**, **4 Decisions corresponding to 12 administrative fines**, and **1 Order** for the correction of personal data. In addition, the Commissioner's Office prepared **7 monitoring reports**, as well as a dedicated report entitled *"On the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Albania and Eurojust, regarding the implementation of personal data protection obligations."*

Institutional capacity of the Information and Data Protection Commissioner.

The Information and Data Protection Commissioner's Office consider that, within the framework of the approval of Law No. 124/2024 *"On the Protection of Personal Data"*, in order to ensure its effective implementation, capacities need to be strengthened both in terms of financial and human resources. This is a necessity with regard to the implementation of the new legal framework in the field of personal data protection in two aspects:

- **Firstly**, in terms of informing citizens and public/private data controllers about the rights and obligations introduced by this law, through the development of a broad national raising awareness campaign;
- **Secondly**, it is essential that the Office of the Commissioner is equipped with human and financial resources in order to exercise the new competencies stemming from the new law.

Requests for the enhancement of human and financial resources had been previously submitted to the relevant budgetary authorities, in anticipation of the approval of Law No. 124/2024 *"On the Protection of Personal Data"*, however, these requests were not fully addressed for the year 2026. In this regard the Office of the Commissioner formally submitted on 30th of April all necessary requests to the Ministry of Finance which is responsible for preparing the Medium-Term Budget Plan for the period 2026–2028, based on the needs identified to ensure its effective functioning. A key component of these requests is the strengthening of institutional capacities (financial and human resources) in view of the entry into force of Law No. 124/2024.

Subsequently, within the framework of the Medium-Term Budget Plan for the period 2026-2028, the Office of the Commissioner requested an increase in human resources, specifically 22 additional staff members for 2026 and 12 additional staff members for 2027, in order to meet its expanding legal and institutional responsibilities. However, under Law No. 87/2025 *"On the State Budget for 2026"*, the Office of the Commissioner was granted an increase of only 5 staff members. This number is insufficient to fulfil the duties and competences of the Office of the Commissioner, particularly in circumstances where, in addition to monitoring the implementation of the law on the right to information and the law on personal data protection, the Office of the Commissioner has been entrusted with new competences arising from Law No. 33/2023 *"On Open Data and the Re-use of Public Sector Information."*

***Freedom of expression and media freedom:** comprehensively reformed legislative and regulatory framework, decriminalisation of defamation, concrete measures to enhance safety of journalists.*

Comprehensively reformed legislative and regulatory framework, decriminalisation of defamation

On 28 January 2026 the law no. 15/2026 “On some addenda to the law no.97/2013 “On audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania”, as amended” was adopted by the Parliament.

This law provisions focus more on:

- Strengthening transparency on media ownership and audience reach;
- Distribution of public funds for state advertising and supply or service contracts.

In this regard, the draft law is harmonized with:

- the Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act).

A key instrument in consolidating these amendments was the consultation and the recommendations of the dialogue platform for the media drafted in the framework of the project “Promoting freedom of expression in Albania through open dialogue”. This is an initiative financed by the EU and Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe and the University of Tirana /Faculty of Journalist and Communication. Based on the field of responsibility these recommendations were sent to the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Means of Public Information. From January to November 2025, this platform has organized 10 meetings and one plenary session with different stakeholders such as relevant institutions Ministry of Justice, regulatory bodies, Assembly, journalists, CSOs, academia and experts of the media etc. The project focuses on strengthening freedom of expression and media pluralism in Albania, directly contributing to the fulfilment of the recommendations of the Council of Europe and priorities of Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) in the framework of the process of negotiations for Albania's accession to the European Union. The Open Dialogue Platform was focused on five main areas: i) Safety of journalists and violations of press freedom; ii) Access to information; iii) Media independence and independent journalism; iv) Reform of the Audio-visual Media Authority (AMA); v) Reform of Public Radio Television of Albania (RTSH).

After studying this package of recommendations, the Committee on Human Rights and Means of Public Information based on the Decision no.1, dated 10.11.2025 established an ad hoc working group in the political and technical level, which is being assisted by the EU and Council of Europe. Based on the proposal¹⁴ of the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Means of Public Information, the Bureau of the Assembly has approved the Decision No. 9, dated 03.12.2025 “On the approval of the request of this committee for appointing a list of four national independent experts that are in charge for preparing the media legislation package. These experts are part of the working group that includes the Chair and Deputy Chair of the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Means of Public Information as well as advisors of the Assembly of Albania. The working group is responsible for reviewing, analysing and drafting the respective amendments to the legislation on the media package. The working group shall draft proposals to amend the existing legislation in two phases:

¹⁴ Decision No. 2, dated 12.11.2025, “On the approval of external experts for the media legislation package” of the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Means of Public Information.

First phase: Prepare and submit to the Parliament draft amendments:

- Law No 97/2013 “On Audio-visual Media in the Republic of Albania”, as amended,
- Law No 7895 of 27.1.1995 “Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania”, as amended.

Moreover, the experts shall propose legislative amendments, referring to the specific laws and legal provisions where intervention is proposed, with a focus on creating new mechanisms to guarantee editorial independence, institutional accountability, and transparency of public funding for the media.

Second phase: Prepare and submit to the Parliament amendments:

- Law No 7850 of 29.7.1994 “Civil Code of the Republic of Albania”, as amended,
- Law No 8116 of 29.3.1996 “Code of Civil Procedure of the Republic of Albania,” as amended,
- Law No 7903 of 21.3.1995 “Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Albania”, as amended,
- Law No 7961 of 12.7.1995 “Labour Code of the Republic of Albania”, as amended,
- Law No 119/2014 “On the right to information”, as amended,
- Law No 111/2017 “On state-guaranteed legal aid”.

The experts are responsible as well, to draft the proposed legal amendments and the final report and they to collaborate with the Committee’s working group, which will review the proposals submitted by the experts and consult with them on the final drafts of the legal amendments. During the period November – December 2025, the working group held several meetings, in which international experts from Council of Europe have also contributed.

It is important to note that on 28 January, the Assembly of Albania also adopted the Law no. 8, dated 28 January 2026 “On amendments and additions to Law No. 7895, dated 27 January 1995, “The Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania,”” as amended, introducing new provisions concerning the criminal offence of defamation.¹⁵

Through the adopted amendments to Article 120 of the Criminal Code, new provisions have been introduced that exempt journalists, whether employed or self-employed and duly registered in accordance with the applicable legislation, from criminal liability for defamation when disseminating information in good faith. This exemption applies where the publication serves the public interest, reasonable efforts have been made to verify the accuracy of the information, and corrective measures are taken without delay once manifest inaccuracies are identified.

The amendments further clarify the concept of “good-faith dissemination” by linking it to compliance with ethical and professional standards of journalism and to a factual and reasonable basis for publication. In addition, opinions, value judgments, comments, criticisms, and interpretations, even when sharp, exaggerated, or offensive, are explicitly excluded from the scope of criminal defamation, unless they contain objectively false factual assertions.

¹⁵ <https://www.parlament.al/dokumentacioni/aktet/92a3e9f4-265e-4167-96e3-723b3b759eef>

While defamation remains formally regulated within the Criminal Code, the adopted amendments significantly narrow the scope of criminal liability and amount to a functional decriminalisation of defamation in respect of journalistic activity carried out in good faith and in the public interest. These changes strengthen safeguards for freedom of expression and align the national legal framework more closely with European standards, including the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

Article 120 of the Criminal Code, concerning the criminal offence of defamation, has been amended as follows (unofficial translation):¹⁶

After paragraph 2 of Article 120, the following paragraphs are added:

“A journalist, whether employed or self-employed, duly registered and recognised as such in accordance with the applicable legislation, regardless of nationality or the place where the activity is carried out, shall not incur criminal liability for the offence of defamation under this Article for the good-faith dissemination of data, statements, or any other information through the press, audiovisual media, electronic media, or other public communication platforms, where:

- a) the primary purpose of the dissemination is to inform the public on matters of general interest;
- b) at the time of publication, the journalist did not have, and in the specific circumstances could not reasonably have had, knowledge that the factual data or information were false, and has made reasonable efforts to verify their accuracy; and
- c) after being informed by the affected person or by the competent authorities that the factual data or information are manifestly false or clearly inaccurate, the journalist acts without delay to issue a correction or clarification, or to remove the content or disable access to it.

For the purposes of this Article, ‘good-faith dissemination’ means dissemination that meets the conditions set out above and is carried out in accordance with ethical and professional rules of journalism, on a factual and reasonable basis. Assessments, opinions, comments, criticisms, or interpretations, even when sharp, exaggerated, or offensive, shall not be considered defamation within the meaning of this Article, unless they contain, expressly or implicitly, claims, facts, data, or information that are objectively false.”

Concrete measures to enhance safety of journalists.

General Prosecutor’s Office

During 2025, in addition to implementing the General Instruction No. 5/2019 of the GPO, “On relations with the public in Prosecution Offices of general jurisdiction”, aimed at unifying the activities of Prosecution Offices in their communication with the public and the media regarding information related to criminal investigations and prosecutions, the implementation of Circular No. 1355 Prot., dated 22 October 2024, issued by the General Prosecutor, has continued, within the framework of the institutional commitment to enhancing the safety of journalists.

¹⁶<https://kuvendiwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/202602021005176020ligi%20nr.%208%2C%20dt.%2028.1.2026.pdf>

The circular is addressed to all Prosecution Offices of general jurisdiction and provides guidance to prosecutors to treat attacks against journalists and media professionals as a priority, while raising institutional awareness of the importance of safeguarding media freedom.

Pursuant to this circular, the main provisions are as follows:

- The Heads of Prosecution Offices and prosecutors are instructed to give priority to any public referrals submitted by journalists or media workers, as well as to any information received from other lawful sources. They are required to carry out the necessary verifications and investigative actions and to proactively initiate criminal investigations where elements of a criminal offense are identified.
- The Heads of Prosecution Offices are further instructed to follow, as a matter of priority, all cases related to the safety of journalists and the media, through continuous monitoring of the progress of investigations and the issuance of non-binding investigative instructions, in accordance with Article 48 of Law No. 97/2016 “On the Organization and Functioning of the Prosecution in the Republic of Albania”, as amended.
- The Heads of Prosecution Offices are instructed to prioritize the allocation of the necessary human resources in order to enhance the efficiency of investigations in cases related to journalists and media professionals.
- In order to strengthen institutional capacities in the investigation and adjudication of cases related to the safety of journalists, prosecutors and judicial police officers are encouraged to participate in specialized training activities in this field, which are also included in the curricula of the School of Magistrates.

Furthermore, in accordance with the article 61 on the Law no. 97/2016 “On the Organization and Functioning of the Prosecution in the Republic of Albania,” 13 prosecutors have been designated as focal points for media issues, one in each Prosecution Office of general jurisdiction. These designated media prosecutors have been instructed to give priority to cases involving journalists and to actively follow up on such cases, ensuring that they are handled promptly and effectively. In addition, 13 media coordinators for the right to information are appointed.

Within the Transparency Program of each Prosecution Office (approved by Order of the General Prosecutor No. 70, dated 29 June 2021), published on the official website www.pp.gov.al, the names and contact details of the focal points for each Prosecution Office of general jurisdiction are made available, prosecutors and coordinators for the right to information (telephone numbers and email addresses). The link in the footnote provides a direct link to the contact points (prosecutors and coordinators) of the Tirana District Prosecution Office. Similar links are available under the Transparency Program of each Prosecution Office.

¹⁷

A contact point has also been designated within the General Prosecutor’s Office for reporting cases of attacks against journalists, and a track record of such cases is being established. The Media Advisor of the General Prosecutor’s Office and the Coordinator for the Right to Information ensure the regular updating of information on cases involving attacks against journalists, as well as their publication.

¹⁷ https://www.pp.gov.al/Tirane/Programi_i_Transparences_per_Prokurorine/

Within the framework of inter-institutional cooperation, direct contact has been requested with the General Directorate of the State Police in order to enable real-time data coordination between the two institutions.

In 2025, the General Prosecutor’s Office initiated the process of drafting a Strategic Document for public communication and transparency, with the aim of achieving higher standards in the field of transparency and increasing public trust in the justice system. In this context, through the Official Letter No. 1640/9 Prot., 12.12.2025, contributions were requested from all structures of the prosecution offices of general jurisdiction, in order to share existing practices in public and media communication, managing of requests for information, challenges encountered, the level of proactive transparency, needs for improvement, as well as any proposals aimed at developing an effective public communication approach.

During 2025, communication with the media was significantly enhanced and improved, and timely responses were provided to all requests for information addressed to the General Prosecutor’s Office. All public notifications are published on the official website of the Prosecution Service (including the dedicated sections of the Prosecution Offices of general jurisdiction), which is continuously updated and available in both Albanian and English.

With regard to capacity building, the General Prosecutor’s Office and the Prosecution Offices of general jurisdiction maintained active cooperation in the implementation of the project on the safety of journalists, carried out in cooperation with the Embassy of the Netherlands. In the Prosecution Offices of Fier, Shkodër, and Korçë, three meetings were held between prosecutors, media representatives, and civil society organizations, with the aim of strengthening dialogue mechanisms, enhancing cooperation, and improving the safety of journalists and media freedom.

Furthermore, the OSCE organized a training session entitled “Strengthening the Capacities of Media Prosecutors, Public Communication, and Interaction with the Media,” held on 7 and 8 July 2025, with the participation of five prosecutors.

The School of Magistrates conducted two training sessions on the topic “Safety of Journalists with a Focus on Anti-SLAPP Standards,” attended by 18 prosecutors and three judicial police officers.

Regarding statistics, please find below the cases from the years 2023–2025 involving journalists;

Cases of 2025

No.	Proceeding/Referrals	Info	Status
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1	Registered proceeding no. 6316, October 2025, for the article 237 of the Criminal Code, "Assault because of duty".	For an incident that occurred on 05.09.2025, following the arrest of the citizen F. M., the Prosecution initiated criminal proceedings also against two other individuals, Q. L. and H. B., for obstructing a journalist and damaging the camera operator equipment while on duty.	Sent to court, one defendant F.M, for the article 237 "Assault because of duty".
2	Registered proceeding date 11.12.2025 for the article 237 of the Criminal Code, "Assault because of duty".	Journalist O.S. reports to the State Police that he has received life threats.	Under investigation
3	Registered referrals October 2025	Journalist P.N and his daughter have refereed their case to the Prosecution Office, alleging that they were threatened by the Head of the Crimes Section of the State Police in Përmet and his son;	Under investigation for the article 275 of the Criminal Code "Malevolence use of phone calls"
4	Proceeding registered sept. 2025	Journalist A.P from the investigative program "Stop" on TV Klan, has reported that he was assaulted by A.Z, who had previously been reported for defrauding citizens.	Under investigation
5	Referral registered September 2025	In Sept. 2025, journalists from the investigative program "Piranjat" were assaulted and threatened by two businessmen who were reported for not paying their employees.	Referral under verification
6	Referral registered September 2025	The administrator of the online portal timoni.al, A.T, has reported being threatened by businessman J.M.	Referral under verification

Cases of 2023-2024 GPO

no	Proceeding	Info	Status
1	Proceeding no. 41/2023, for the article 237 of the C.C, "Assault because of duty".	E.H journalist, has been attacked by two citizens during the exercise of his duties.	Case sent to court for the article 237, of the Criminal Code, "Assault because of duty".

2	Proceeding no. 48/10.02.2023, for the offenses of "Threats due to duty" and "Misuse of Land".	The alleged attack on the journalists of the Fiks Fare show during filming of illegal excavations in the Zezë River, Nikël, Krujë.	Case is sent to court for one defendant for the offences foreseen in the article 238 of the C.C, "Threats due to duty".
3	Proceeding no.2047/2023	The attack on Top Channel premises	The proceeding is suspended on 02.12.2025 and the file is sent to the Tirana State Police for investigations
4	Proceeding no.6833/2023 for the article 237 of the C.C, "Assault because of duty".	Gj.Z director of Pamfleti, has been attacked by indentified persons.	Case is sent to court for the article 237 of the Criminal Code "Assault because of duty".
5	Proceeding registered in 2023 for the articles 237, 150, 110/1 Criminal Code	A journalist O.Gj and the camera operator I.Z, were under attack during their duty.	Case sent to court for the articles 237-25, of the Criminal Code, "Assault because of duty", in collaboration.
6	Proceeding registered, no.7473/2024 for the article 237 of the C.C, "Assault because of duty".	A.Sh journalist of Top news has been attacked during her duty	Case suspended
7	Proceeding registered ex officio by the prosecutor no. 1415/07.11.2024	A journalist A.B has been attacked during the exercise of his duties.	Prosecutor sent the request to dismiss the case to the court in 2025. Court accepted the request. Case was dismissed. No complaint was filed.
8	Proceeding registered no. 1362/2024, for "Computer fraud", art. 143/b Criminal Code.	A media owner pretends he is threaten because of his duty.	Case is under investigation
9	Proceeding registered nr. 4171/2024, for "Stalking", foreseen by article121/a of Criminal Code.	A journalist reported being stalked due to the exercise of his professional duties through threatening, and insulting publications by an anonymous portal, affecting also his family.	Case is suspended

State Police

The Albanian State Police has placed increased emphasis on strengthening its engagement in ensuring the safety of journalists. As part of the consolidation of measures already taken and currently being implemented to enhance the protection of journalists, including during public

gatherings, additional actions are foreseen for 2026. In addition to the mandatory in-service training for police personnel, the programme provides for the delivery of specialised training to six hundred general patrol officers on the topic “Safety of Journalists during Gatherings.”

During 2025, a total of four hundred and seventy-six gatherings organised by various entities took place across the territory of the Republic of Albania. During 2026, to date, eighteen gatherings have been held by different entities. Throughout both 2025 and 2026, no incidents have been documented in which journalists were the object, subject, or otherwise involved in any incident during the conduct of gatherings.

Furthermore, by Order No. 19 of the Director General of the State Police, dated 8 January 2026, “On the revision of the Standard Working Procedure on the planning of police services during the development of gatherings,” a working group has been established to revise safety protocols, including those applicable to journalists in the context of gatherings and protests.

In addition, by Order No. 760 of the Director General of the State Police, dated 21 April 2025, the “State Police Guidelines on the Safety of Journalists and the Contact Point” were approved. These guidelines were drafted with the assistance of the Council of Europe, the People’s Advocate (Ombudsman), representatives of the Ministry of Interior, the General Prosecutor’s Office, journalists’ associations, independent journalists, and media outlets operating in the Republic of Albania.

The Albanian State Police has designated the Head of the Media Relations Sector as the contact point responsible for collecting evidence, registering, and reporting all physical and verbal attacks against journalists.

Within the State Police, this contact point has established and administers a dedicated database in which each case of attacks or other incidents involving journalists and media professionals is documented in detail. The database is updated on a case-by-case basis and serves exclusively to ensure accurate recording of such cases.

With regard to capacity-building, the Mandatory In-Service Training Programme, approved by Order No. 1619 of the Director General of the State Police, dated 12 December 2024, included within the module “Theoretical and Professional Training on Updated Legislation” the topic “Cooperation between the Police and Other Law Enforcement Institutions. Police–Media Relations and the Safety of Journalists.” This training was delivered to all State Police employees during 2025 and continues throughout 2026.

In addition, two specialised training activities were conducted for State Police structures in 2025, involving a total of seventy-six participants. A two-day training entitled “Enhancing the Safety of Journalists” was held on 25–26 June 2025, organised by the Council of Europe, with the participation of twenty-six police officers. A further training on “Measures to Guarantee and Protect the Rights of Journalists and Media Representatives during Public Assemblies and Other Related Activities” took place on 25–26 September 2025 at the Security Academy, organised by the Directorate of Public Order within the Department of Public Security, with fifty participants.

Equality and non-discrimination: institutional capacities, alignment with the EU acquis and European standards on non-discrimination (including of LGBTIQ+ persons), gender equality and combatting gender-based violence (including alignment with Directive (EU) 2024/1385) and steps taken to implement the new gender equality law, effective mechanisms for redress and assistance to victims.

Institutional capacities,

People's Advocate:

The total expenditures of the People's Advocate institution have increased by approximately 16.3 million ALL, or 6.8%, as follows:

- Expenditures for salaries have increased by 12.3 million ALL, or 7.4%.
- Expenditures for goods and services have increased by 1 million ALL.
- Expenditures for investments and transfers have remained unchanged.
- The number of employees has increased by 3 additional staff members.

Initially, the People's Advocate did not submit requests for additional budgetary allocations during the hearings of the parliamentary committees. Subsequently, a formal request was submitted to the Parliament for an additional allocation under the operational expenses category to fund awareness-raising projects on the role of the institution, in the amount of 2 million ALL. This request was approved by the committees for advisory opinion but was not approved by the Committee on Economy, Employment, and Finance.

Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination:

The total expenditures of the institution have increased by approximately 6.1 million ALL, or 8.1%, as follows:

- Current expenditures have increased by 2.7 million ALL, or 3.6%.
- Expenditures for investments have increased by 3.4 million ALL.
- The number of employees has not changed. (Allocations were approved for contracting external experts.)

The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination submitted additional requests regarding the funds approved in the draft budget for the completion of:

- The need for a permanent building that ensures accessibility for all categories of persons with disabilities, a suitable location easily accessible by citizens, and additional office space to accommodate the staff.
- The establishment of an internal case management system to improve the efficiency of the institution's internal activities, processing and generating data and statistics on equality and non-discrimination, as well as facilitating reporting and monitoring of the situation regarding discrimination and the institution's activities.
- The hiring of two additional staff members within the structure of the institution.

These requests were approved by the Committee on Human Rights and Public Information, but were not approved by the Committee on Economy, Employment, and Finance.

For more detailed information regarding the comparative data on human and financial resources dedicated to both institutions between 2024,2025 and 2026, please refer to Annex No.3 Data on human and financial resources

Alignment with the EU acquis and European standards on non-discrimination (including of LGBTIQ+ persons),

The draft law “On certain additions and amendments to Law No. 10221, dated 04 February 2010, ‘On Protection from Discrimination’

The law “On certain additions and amendments to Law No. 10221, dated 04 February 2010, ‘On Protection from Discrimination’, as amended” was adopted on the Plenary Session on the 03.02.2026 by the Parliament. The adoption of this law constitutes a significant step towards further alignment of Albania’s anti-discrimination framework with the EU acquis and European standards on equal treatment.

The law is specifically designed to transpose and align national legislation with key EU directives in the field of non-discrimination and equality bodies, notably Council Directive 2000/43/EC on equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. Through these amendments, the scope of protection against discrimination is clarified and expanded in line with EU requirements, ensuring comprehensive coverage of protected grounds and areas of application.

In line with the above directives, the draft law strengthens the institutional and functional independence of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, bringing the national equality body framework closer to EU standards. The proposed amendments clarify competences, enhance transparency and accountability, and improve procedural safeguards, including access to complaint mechanisms, assistance to victims, and the publication of decisions and recommendations, in accordance with the principles laid down in the EU acquis.

Furthermore, the law reinforces the preventive, monitoring, and advisory role of the Commissioner, particularly in the legislative and policy-making process affecting equality and non-discrimination. It also promotes stronger inter-institutional cooperation and data-driven monitoring, contributing to more effective implementation of EU anti-discrimination standards in practice.

Overall, the law represents a concrete step towards full approximation with the EU acquis in the field of non-discrimination and equality bodies, reinforcing Albania’s compliance with European standards and supporting the fulfilment of commitments under Cluster I “Fundamentals” within the EU accession process.

Gender equality and combatting gender-based violence (including alignment with Directive (EU) 2024/1385)

Law “On Gender Equality

Law No. 64/2025, dated 6 November 2025, “On Gender Equality,” adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Albania on 6 November 2025 and published in the Official Gazette on 10 December 2025, replaces Law No. 9970/2008 “On Gender Equality in Society.” The law aims to guarantee, protect, and promote gender equality both *de jure* and *de facto*, recognising it as a fundamental value for democratic development.

The law builds on Albania’s ongoing gender equality policies and regulates core aspects of gender equality across all areas of public and private life. It ensures equal treatment irrespective of gender through effective protection against gender-based discrimination, equal opportunities in the exercise of rights, participation, and contribution to social development. To this end, it introduces general and special measures tailored to different gender-based needs and priorities and clearly defines the competent authorities and their obligations in advancing gender equality.

Law No. 64/2025 places particular emphasis on strengthening gender equality mechanisms, including capacity-building for the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, regular awareness-raising activities on gender-based and domestic violence and gender stereotypes, and targeted initiatives on women’s property rights, work–life balance, equal pay, STEM participation, and women’s involvement in non-traditional professions.

The law is directly linked to the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2022–2030 and aligned with key cross-sectoral strategies, notably the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030, as well as broader policy frameworks supporting Albania’s EU integration process.

From an EU alignment perspective, the law is fully compliant with the relevant EU directives within its specific scope of application, while full approximation will be completed through amendments to related primary and secondary legislation, including the Labour Code, Family Code, and Criminal Procedure Code. It is aligned with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, notably Chapters III and IV (Articles 20–38), and approximated with a comprehensive set of EU directives, including Directive (EU) 2019/1158 on work–life balance for parents and carers; Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the protection of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding; Council Directive 79/7/EEC on equal treatment in social security; Directive 2010/41/EU on equal treatment of self-employed women and men; Directive 2006/54/EC on equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment and occupation; Directive (EU) 2024/1500 on standards for equality bodies; Council Directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment in access to goods and services; Directive (EU) 2022/2381 on improving gender balance among directors of listed companies; Directive (EU) 2023/970 on pay transparency and enforcement of equal pay; and Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

The law is fully consistent with the opening benchmarks of Cluster I “Fundamentals,” as set out in the Rule of Law Roadmap approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 736 of 13 December 2023, notably benchmarks III.A on gender-disaggregated data and III.K on gender equality and women’s rights, including commitments to address the gender pay gap and women’s labour market participation by 2025.

Finally, the law aligns with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 and the Gender Action Plan III (2021–2025), the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029, Albania’s obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, and contributes directly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, and 16.

The law "On the prevention and protection against violence against women and domestic violence"

The draft law On the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence” has been prepared and coordinated by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, with contributions from the Interinstitutional Technical Working Group established by Ministerial Order No. 179, dated 30 April 2025, “On the establishment and functioning of the interinstitutional technical working group for the drafting of amendments to Law No. 9669, dated 18 December 2006, ‘On Measures against Violence in Family Relations’, as amended.” Following the consultation process, under the leadership of the Ministry, six (6) consultations were held with all relevant stakeholders as shown below:

- Meeting with the Interinstitutional Technical Working Group and representatives from line ministries, INSTAT, the State Police and the Municipality of Tirana (4 September 2025).
- Meeting with Local Coordinators against Domestic Violence (4 September 2025).
- Meeting with representatives of civil society organizations (8 September 2025).
- Meeting with Independent Human Rights Institutions (9 September 2025).
- Meeting with representatives of the technology and media sectors (10 September 2025).
- Meeting with representatives of the justice system (10 September 2025).

Furthermore, on 6 October 2025, the draft law “On the Prevention of and Protection against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence” was published for broad public consultation with all stakeholder groups and citizens through the Electronic Register for Notifications and Public Consultations, where it was accessed by 679 visitors/citizens.

On 25 October 2025, the draft law “On the Prevention of and Protection against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence” was officially sent to the responsible institutions for consultation. Written comments and recommendations submitted by the relevant institutions were incorporated into the draft by the experts and the Interinstitutional Technical Working Group. On 4 December 2025, the draft law was re-sent for alignment with all the responsible and involved institutions. Following the completion of the interinstitutional coordination process, the legislative package was submitted to and approved by the Council of Ministers.

The law "On the prevention and protection against violence against women and domestic violence", as amended, was adopted by the Albanian Parliament on 27 January 2026. The law aims partial alignment with Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

This law aims to prevent, eliminate and protect against all forms of violence against women and domestic violence in public and private activities, including violence in the digital environment as well as ensure immediate protection against violence against women and domestic violence through legal, civil and administrative means, other necessary measures and integrated and comprehensive policies, with the victim at the center, paying special attention to family members who are disproportionately affected and who are most vulnerable, such as: women, girls, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Following the adoption of the law “On the Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence”, and its publication in the Official Gazette, work will follow up on establishing and strengthening the capacities of institutions at both central and local levels to ensure the effective implementation and addressing of violence and sexual harassment, including that in the workplace.

MoHSP provides services for LGBTI Persons in the National Shelter, such as received integrated support, mediation for employment and education, psychosocial and psychological services, psychiatric consultations, referrals to specialized services, family mediation, financial support for specific needs, as well as other services provided based on the assessment of each beneficiary’s individual needs. From January to December 2025, the Shelter for LGBTI Center provided residential services for 18 beneficiaries.. In parallel, 110 beneficiaries were supported through community services.

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Steps taken to implement the new gender equality law

As above mentioned the law On Gender Equality, places particular emphasis on strengthening the Gender Equality Mechanisms, which are referenced across several of its provisions as listed in main bullet points below:

- Building institutional capacities for the implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2019)1 on Preventing and Combating Sexism.
- Carrying out regular awareness-raising activities targeting gender-based and domestic violence, as well as gender stereotypes.
- Promoting awareness actions on women’s property rights, work–life balance, equal pay, STEM, and women’s participation in non-traditional professions.

Work has commenced on the drafting and adoption of secondary legislation for the implementation of the Law Nr. 64/2025, starting with the establishment and constitution of the National Gender Equality Council. The Council represents the highest advisory body in the field, chaired by the Ministry responsible for Gender Equality, and includes high-level political representation from line ministries and central-level institutions, as well as representation from elected and active civil society organizations.

Effective mechanisms for redress and assistance to victims.

Albania has established a structured, multi-tiered and differentiated system for the protection and support of victims of all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, domestic violence, abuse and trafficking in human beings, grounded in Law No. 121/2016 “On Social Care Services” and its implementing acts. Within this system, specialised NGO-run residential shelters constitute a clearly defined and regulated category of long-term residential social care services, operating under nationally approved standards and fully integrated into the national referral and case-management framework for victims of violence.

As of 2025, Albania operates **three specialised NGO-run residential shelters** providing long-term accommodation and multidisciplinary support to women and children victims of violence and trafficking. These shelters have been continuously supported by public funds for more than a decade, reflecting sustained State commitment and an institutionalized financing approach rather than project-based arrangements.

Based on the most recent verified financial data, **the average State contribution to these three specialised NGO-run shelters is approximately 68.7% of total operating costs**. State funding is primarily channeled through the Social Fund and is calculated on the basis of approved service standards, licensed capacity and reference costs. Public financing systematically covers the core and recurrent costs essential for service continuity and operational readiness, notably staff salaries and social insurance contributions, as well as food and essential daily needs of beneficiaries. Complementary donor funding is limited in scope and used mainly for non-core or developmental activities, without substituting the State’s responsibility for the essential functioning of shelters.

State support for these three NGO-run shelters is embedded within annual budget cycles and subject to regular monitoring, inspection and financial auditing by the State Social Service. Financing is calibrated not solely on daily occupancy, but on service capacity and service intensity, ensuring permanent readiness to respond to high-risk cases and fluctuations in demand. For 2026, State financing for these shelters has been further strengthened and recalibrated, with food costs fully covered on the basis of capacity and staff salaries predominantly or fully financed from public funds, reinforcing long-term sustainability and service continuity.

Beyond the three specialised NGO-run shelters and the two State-funded national centres, Albania operates a wider protection network of emergency and complementary services that support victims of violence but are not classified as shelters under national law. This includes

17 municipal emergency accommodation services providing short-term (up to 72 hours) protection within municipal social care structures, financed through public budgets at State and local level, including co-financing under the Social Fund, with donor support limited mainly to their establishment. The system also includes one specialised NGO-run residential service for LGBTIQ+ persons, which—although not formally licensed as a shelter—functions as a recognised protection mechanism within the national referral framework and is co-financed through the Social Fund (74.14%) and donor contributions, applying the same public financing methodology as licensed residential services. In addition, the family-type residential service “Rozalba” in Lezhë County provides care to adolescent girls aged 14–18 and, in specific cases, emergency accommodation to victims of violence; while not a specialised shelter, it contributes to the assistance framework and in 2025 received State funding covering approximately 58.61% of its total costs. Finally, the protection system includes three operational rape crisis and sexual assault referral centres embedded within public hospitals, with staffing and operational costs covered by the public health system, as well as a fourth centre in Vlorë expected to become operational in early 2026 under the same public financing arrangements.

The sustainability of NGO-run shelters is therefore ensured through an institutionalised and multi-layered framework, rather than through a fixed percentage threshold of State funding. This framework combines structured Social Fund financing, long-standing continuity of public support, integration within the national referral system, and systematic monitoring and financial oversight. Recent regulatory developments, including the strengthening of the Social Fund framework and the introduction of a dedicated Local Social Fund product within municipal budget programmes, further consolidate this approach by clarifying long-term public financing obligations and reducing reliance on ad hoc or project-based funding. For 2026, State financing has been increased and recalibrated, ensuring full coverage of food costs based on shelter capacity and predominantly or fully State-financed staffing, supported by the 17.6% increase of the Social Fund under the 2026 State Budget Law and complemented by four-monthly monitoring and the possibility of reallocations.

The Albanian approach ensures that the core operational costs of NGO-run shelters are sustainably covered by the State budget, while maintaining a balanced and legally grounded distribution of responsibilities that is consistent with decentralisation principles, European practice and the objectives of the interim benchmark.

Rights of persons with disabilities, including alignment with EU accessibility act.

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare coordinates the monitoring and implementation of comprehensive policies related to the rights of Persons with Disabilities in accordance with Law no. 93/2014 “On the inclusion and accessibility of persons with disabilities”. The overall aim is to establish a comprehensive framework for social inclusion and protection enabling for implementation of the provisions of the current legislation on accessible services, independent living and non-discrimination for all categories of Persons with Disabilities.

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has initiated the process for amendments of Law no. 93/2014 “On the inclusion and accessibility of persons with disabilities” following a review of legal provisions on goods and services. The aim has been to approximate national legislation

in this area with the EU Accessibility Directive 882/2019. The working group has been recently established based on Order of the Minister of Health and Social Welfare no.623, dated 18/12.2025 to draft the amendments. The Table of Concordance has been finalized. On the approximation of the EU Accessibility Act, a meeting was held on 15 January 2025 with civil society representatives of/for persons with disability. The civil society will be part of all phases of consultation of the legal amendments on the current Law on Accessibility and Inclusion of persons with disabilities.

In regard to Provision of inclusive education, Ministry of Education maintains special focus on marginalized groups and particularly students with disabilities. For the 2025-2026 school year, 5,208 students with disabilities are part of the public pre-university education system. Meanwhile, for the 2024-2025 school year, the number of students with disabilities was 4,682 in total.

The number of students with disabilities enrolled in special schools has decreased with 12% indicating the increasing trend for the integration of these students in inclusive education.

The number of teaching assistants has increased to 2,266 in year 2024-2025, which has significantly improved the teacher-assistant ratio to students. Ministry of Education also provides scholarship quotas for person with disabilities who apply to Higher Education Institutions.

In the area of inclusive education, for year 2024–2025 school year, the average ratio was 2.12, while for the 2025–2026 year it is 2.24. The Ministry of Education has amended in 2025 the guidance for assistant teachers, providing that 1 (one) assistant teacher can also work with 1 student with disabilities, improving the assistant teacher to student ratio.

The legislative changes aimed at transforming gradually the special schools. There are also 291 resource classes for 2024-2025 and 317 for schoolyear 2025-2026.

In the Employment and VET area, information sessions were held for persons with disabilities and their families in contact with the employment offices. In 2024, 3,130 people with disabilities were registered as job seekers, of whom 1,407 were women, while in 2025, 3,428 people with disabilities were registered, of whom 1,614 were women. The challenge remains the employment rates.

In regard to social protection, a mapping of services was carried out, through which an analysis of existing services was carried out, including community services, which have marked an increase in number, but also in beneficiaries. Within the framework of the social fund, there is an increase in the number of community services, mainly specialized mobile services, which has increased the number of beneficiaries of the services.

Through the Social Fund mechanism provided a total of 39 social services have been established and made functional, benefiting around 11,000 people with disabilities at the national level, spread across 4 regions and 39 municipalities. This network of services includes also 18 mobile services, which provide specialized care with groups of professionals consisting

of physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, speech therapists, close to families and communities, adapting to the specific needs of individuals.

In the area of health, home healthcare has been extended to Local Health Care Units, covering 325 health centers at the national level. Within the framework of this service, about 3,140 doctors and nurses in Primary Health Care have received training on the management of chronic diseases and mental health across the country.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has invested in the creation of new dental cabinets in 9-year schools, in about 12 regions of the country. 2 new ones have been added to the 36 units established in the first phase of the plan's implementation.

In regard to access to legal aid, the Free Legal Aid Directorate, in cooperation with the Primary Legal Aid Service Centres, carried out 19 meetings and activities were specifically dedicated to persons with disabilities, with a focus on informing about the right to free legal aid and mechanisms for access to justice. There have been also issued information in Braille and sign language interpretation on legal aid in awareness activities in order to make the information accessible to these categories.

The Audiovisual Media Authority /AMA has requested all stakeholders to ensure progressive access to audiovisual services for persons with disabilities and to facilitate the accessibility of this community on WEB sites, by ensuring that their official online sites and accounts on Video Sharing Platforms can be used by persons with hearing and visual disabilities, through the implementation of international accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG 2.1), including subtitles and audio descriptions for audiovisual content, the possibility of reading texts aloud (text-to-speech). There are 3 national Audiovisual Media Service Providers providing service in sign language.

The participation of persons with disabilities in society remains an important issue. Best practice in this area is the State Election Commission education and awareness program whereas the increased use of sign language interpretation during the 2025 local elections, has facilitated access to information for the hearing impaired. In the areas of culture, institutions have taken concrete measures to improve accessibility, while state funding for artistic activities has increased providing funding for 6 projects for NGOs (5) and also one individual with disability. The amendments of the “Law on Sports,” in 2025 recognize and guarantee sporting activities for all social groups, including the Albanian Paralympic Committee as official entities.

At the same time the five-year timeframe of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025, adopted by Decision No. 276, dated 12 May 2021, has been completed. The Interinstitutional Working Group for drafting the new National Action Plan has been established by Order of the Minister of Health and Social Welfare No. 553, dated 11 November 2025. The monitoring report was carried out based on a comprehensive and participatory approach. For this reason, the report took into account information derived from the perceptions of stakeholder groups, regarding the extent to which the implementation of these policies has influenced the improvement of their quality of life. Two semi-structured questionnaires, which

were used for: (i) focus groups with persons with disabilities from different categories and/or their parents; (ii) organizations of persons with disabilities and those providing services for them.

In the draft National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, independent living will be addressed through concrete measures aimed at promoting independent living and expanding community-based support services. The drafting of the new Action Plan will take into consideration the Commission Notice – Guidance on Independent Living and Inclusion in the Community of Persons with Disabilities in the Context of EU Funding (C/2024/7897), in line with the recommendations of the European Union.

Rights of the Child: integrated child protection system, with the best interest of the child as the guiding principle, including as regards children deprived of parental care or with disabilities (deinstitutionalisation and complete transition towards community-based care).

Policies on children's rights and protection aim to strengthen mechanisms to ensure the protection and fulfilment of children's rights. The work process for drafting a new strategic document, the National Agenda for Children's Rights 2027-2030, has currently begun. The new document of National Agenda for Children's Rights 2027–2030 is expected to have a very positive development, especially in the context of the obligations we have undertaken with the integration processes with the European Union. It will clearly reflect the measures to advance the implementation of the 2023 Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, with the aim of addressing the recommendations of this Committee in a complete, structured and measurable manner.

On December 22, 2025, was held the first meeting of the Inter-institutional Working Group, established by Order of the Minister of Health and Social Welfare no. 547, dated 05.11.2025 “On the establishment of the Inter-institutional Working Group for the drafting of the National Agenda for Children's Rights 2027–2030”. At the same time, at this meeting, the monitoring report of the National Agenda for Children's Rights for the years 2021-2025 was also presented. Children will be part of the drafting of this new document, with their participation in the meetings that will take place during this process.

On November 26, 2025, was held the meeting of the National Council for the Rights and Protection of the Child. This meeting was attended by 10 children with observer status, who share their opinions and suggestions regarding the draft documents that were presented and discussed in this Council, respectively the Presentation of the “National Plan for the European Child Guarantee”, the Draft Law “On Alternative Family Care in the Republic of Albania” and the National Plan for the Transformation of Residential Social Care for Children, towards Alternative Services for Children and Families 2025-2026”.

The State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, regarding to implementation of Instruction no. 767, dated 28.12.2023 of the Minister of Health and Social Protection “On the Approval of the Methodology for Quality Control of the Work of Child Protection Structures at the Local Level”, has conducted 11 monitoring, respectively in the municipalities of Dibër, Vlorë, Kucovë, in the administrative unit Dajt, Tropojë, Has, Shkodër, Vau i Dejës, Devoll,

Gjirokaštër, Himarë. After the monitoring, it has prepared and sent reports regarding the quality of the control, giving the relevant recommendations, which have been sent to the mayors of the respective municipalities.

Child protection mechanisms constitute a key element for guaranteeing their rights. At the local level, in each municipality, Child Protection Units have been established and are functioning, which are responsible for identifying, assessing, taking under protection and providing services to children at risk from any form of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect. We have an increase in the number of Child Protection Workers from 241 employees to 370 of Child Protection Workers, who manage cases according to the procedures established in the regulatory framework.

In the total number of cases managed by Child Protection Units, it results that the problems of cases of children in need of protection, which have been handled by Child Protection Workers Children are different and diverse. Child Protection Workers in collaboration with other actors have provided the necessary services and interventions for child protection.

For the period July-September 2025, 2042, child protection cases were managed, of these 296 new cases identified and provided with the necessary services.

These include:

- 151 cases of children in street situations or at risk of economic exploitation,
- 34 cases of children at risk of trafficking,
- 121 cases of physical abuse, and
- 54 cases of sexual abuse.

During 2025, in the framework of protecting children on the Internet, many awareness-raising meetings were held to prevent risks in the Internet, as well as several trainings were held, which were jointly organized by the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, the National Authority for Cybersecurity and the Child Protection Workers in many municipalities of the country.

During these activities, 690 students and 169 professionals (Child Protection Workers, psychosocial staff in schools, teachers, social workers, school principals, parents, etc.) were trained, from 16 schools and in 11 municipalities of the country.

During the period January-December 2025, 484 cases of children in need of protection were advised by the National Line ALO 116-111 and 328 cases were referred to the relevant institutions for further treatment.

The Baby Bonus is a successful social policy, in relation to demography and the increase in birthrate, contributing to the universal policy for all families. For the period January-December 2025, a total of 23,233 baby bonuses were received.

Deinstitutionalisation and complete transition towards community-based care

Deinstitutionalisation has advanced both at individual and systemic levels. Data from public residential centres demonstrate a clear downward trend in the number of children placed in institutional care over time. The total number of children in public residential centres decreased from 246 children in 2021 to 199 children at the end of 2025, despite some fluctuations linked to new admissions and the increasing complexity of remaining cases. This overall reduction confirms the gradual shift away from institutional care and the impact of strengthened prevention, family support and alternative care pathways. At the same time, entries into institutions declined from a peak of 60 children in 2024 to 46 in 2025, reflecting improved early identification of risks, stronger gatekeeping and more effective use of community-based services. Children leaving institutions have increasingly been placed in family- and community-based care arrangements, including family reintegration, kinship and non-kinship foster care, supported independent living and adoption processes (not reflected in exit statistics), further consolidating deinstitutionalisation outcomes.

Particular attention has been paid to children with disabilities, who represent a growing proportion of children remaining in institutions. This trend underscores the complexity of cases still in residential care and the need for specialised, individualised alternatives. In response, Albania has introduced the concept of specialised alternative care within the National Deinstitutionalisation Plan, encompassing a continuum of community-based and family-oriented solutions, including small group homes, supported living arrangements, specialised foster and kinship care, professional foster care, and targeted support to families to enable them to care for children with disabilities. Transitional services are explicitly defined as time-limited and strictly interim, based on individual care plans, with the objective of minimising duration and ensuring sustainable family-based outcomes.

Systemic transformation of residential care structures is progressing in parallel. A moratorium on the placement of children aged 0–2 years in residential institutions remains in force in Durrës and Shkodër, reinforcing the principle that institutional care is not appropriate for very young children. Transformation processes are advancing in Korçë and Vlorë, where former residential institutions are being replaced by multifunctional Child and Family Empowerment Services. These services integrate prevention, early intervention, emergency support, family strengthening, services for children with disabilities, mobile outreach, and professional alternative care, ensuring continuity of support while dismantling institutional models. Building on these experiences, a comprehensive and fully costed Transformation Plan for the seven remaining public residential institutions has been approved by the Steering Committee on Deinstitutionalisation and formally transmitted to the European Commission. The Plan foresees the complete transformation of all institutions by the end of 2026 and is financed at over 85% through the State budget, complemented by development partners, ensuring financial sustainability and continuity of services throughout the transition period.

A major milestone underpinning this reform is the adoption of the Law on Alternative Care by Parliament in December 2025. The law establishes, for the first time, a comprehensive and unified legal framework for family- and community-based care in Albania. Key innovations include the formal recognition and regulation of professional foster care as a distinct social service, strengthened quality standards and supervision mechanisms across all alternative care modalities, clearer case management and decision-making procedures grounded in the best

interests of the child, and the establishment of an electronic register for alternative family care as an integrated module of the national Social Care Electronic Register. The law also reinforces the role of municipalities and the State Social Service in planning, monitoring and financing alternative care, while ensuring alignment with the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care and EU standards. Secondary legislation, expected by mid-2026, will operationalise the law and fully align service delivery with the transformed care model.

At local level, deinstitutionalisation is supported by the progressive strengthening of Needs Assessment and Referral Units (NARUs), which play a central role in prevention, early identification of risks, integrated case management and coordinated referrals. NARUs are established at administrative-unit level and currently operate in 15 municipalities, with scaling-up planned throughout 2026. The preparation of national guidelines on the establishment and functioning of NARUs, including job descriptions, intersectoral protocols and standard operating procedures, is at an advanced stage and expected to be approved by Ministerial Order. Through their close cooperation with Child Protection Units and municipal social services, NARUs contribute directly to reducing unnecessary institutionalisation and ensuring that children and families access timely, appropriate and community-based support.

Overall, progress achieved confirms that Albania is moving steadily towards a child protection system centred on prevention, family support and community-based solutions. The combination of declining institutional placements, secured transformation planning, strengthened local capacities through NARUs, and a modern legal framework for alternative care demonstrates a coherent and integrated reform trajectory, aligned with European standards and the Indicative Benchmark on the Rights of the Child.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (PART II)

Strengthened protection of fundamental rights in practice

Focus on:

Right to property: initial property registration and integrated management system, digitisation, and access to quality and timely services, digitalisation of cadastral maps and ownership titles, administrative and judicial progress in property compensation cases, including handling of complaints, reduced court case backlog and effective enforcement of court rulings.

First Registration

Throughout 2025, progress in the first registration process at the State Cadastre Agency (SCA) continued to advance steadily, **increasing from 90% coverage in 2024 to 91.5% by December 2025** representing **an overall increase of 1.5 % within a single year.**

This progress is particularly significant when viewed in a longer-term perspective. Over the past decade (2014–2023), the average annual completion rate amounted to approximately 6–

10 cadastral zones per year. By contrast, during 2024 and 2025 SCA completed approximately 30 cadastral zones per year, means 60 cadastral zone over the last 2 years, marking a threefold increase in implementation capacity and operational performance.

At present, first registration activities are ongoing in 151 cadastral zones nationwide, reflecting the highest level of simultaneous operational engagement since the establishment of SCA in 2014. As a result, overall national coverage will be at **level of 96.5% within 2026**.

Our objective is to **finalize the first registration process by the end of 2027**, which is one year ahead of the statutory deadline set for 2028. This reflects the Agency's determination to accelerate reforms, enhance the legal security of property rights, and support the country's economic development.

Cadastral Services

The management of cadastral services at the State Cadastre Agency is supported by a comprehensive case management system that integrates multiple digital modules to streamline service delivery and enhance operational efficiency. These modules include the e-Albania portal, the National Notary Chamber's NISA system, and the "ASHK for Institutions" module, each tailored to meet the specific needs of citizens, notaries, and public institutions, respectively.

The use of blockchain technology in cadastral services enables automated processes, increasing data security, transparency, and traceability. Currently, 10 automated services are operational (five of which were achieved in the last year 2025), with the number of beneficiaries expected to grow progressively through the expansion of digitalization. Approximately 10–15% of applications are processed automatically in real time, significantly reducing manual intervention and waiting times. Simultaneously, efforts continue to simplify information and applications via the e-Albania platform, alongside providing online payment options through e-banking and bank cards, ensuring easier access and more efficient service delivery, which was implemented during the past year, 2025.

Monthly monitoring of automated services during 2024 and 2025 shows a substantial increase in automatic processing volumes in 2025 compared to 2024. Early 2025 saw significantly higher levels of automation, reflecting the positive impact of expanded digitalization. This higher and stable trend continued throughout the second half of 2025, demonstrating growing trust in digital services and the effectiveness of reforms aimed at automating cadastral processes.

In 2025, the State Cadastre Agency provided a total of 2,436,072 cadastral services, a 35% increase compared to 2024.

Further consolidation is expected through the completion of property cartela and cadastral map digitalization, as well as the finalization of first registrations, which will reduce administrative errors, strengthen legal certainty, and ensure timely resolution of complaints.

Digitisation, and access to quality and timely services

As part of its broader digital transformation agenda, the SCA is steadily advancing the digitization of property cartelas, cadastral maps, and has fully scanned the associated legal and technical documentation. These efforts aim to enhance data quality, interoperability, transparency, and overall service efficiency, thereby strengthening legal certainty, improving service delivery for citizens and businesses, and aligning cadastral practices with EU standards within the framework of the rule of law.

Digitalisation of cadastral maps and ownership titles

The Digitalization Reform

Establish a Roadmap on Digitalization Processes

On June 2025, SCA has established the Roadmap for State Cadaster Agency digitalization (Order No. 710, 09.06.2025 of General Director). The main objectives include completing the process of digitizing all property cards, technical-legal documentation and cadastral maps, finalizing the first registration process throughout the country. The expected benefits of this transformation are numerous and far-reaching: increased transparency and accountability in land administration, strengthened legal certainty for citizens and businesses, improved efficiency of public services, reduced opportunities for corruption, support for investment and sustainable economic development.

Progress towards digitalization of ownerships titles

The completion of first registration remains one of Albania's highest priorities. In parallel, and as part of the Agency's broader digital transformation agenda, SCA is steadily advancing the digitization of property cartelas and their associated legal and technical documentation (references), with the objective of improving data accuracy, accessibility, and service efficiency.

- Digitalization of property cartelas:

During 2025, the process of digitizing property cartelas made significant progress, increasing from 24% in 2024 to 80% by December 2025, representing an overall growth of 56%. In line with the timeline established under the Reform Agenda, **the remaining 20% of cartelas are expected to be digitized by June 2026**, thereby completing the full digitization of all property cartelas.

- Scanned references:

The scanning of technical and legal documentation (references) has shown very good progress. In October 2024, the percentage of scanned references was 53.5%. From October 2024 to November 2025, an additional 42.6% of references were scanned, and the process of scanning reference documents **was fully completed in December 2025**, marking a significant milestone for the State Cadastre Agency.

- Digitization of Cadastral Maps

The State Cadastre Agency start its cooperation with UNOPS under the EU-funded “EU for Property Rights” project, with UNOPS acting as the implementing partner responsible for the preparation, management, and execution of the procurement and technical processes related to the digitisation of the remaining paper-based cadastral maps.

In this context, UNOPS has finalised the procurement process and the received applications are currently under technical and financial evaluation.

It is foreseen that the contract will be awarded and signed within the course of **February 2026**, allowing the digitisation activities to formally commence immediately thereafter with the goals finalizing the digitization process within **December 2026**.

In parallel, the procurement process for the “Quality Control of the Digitisation of Cadastral Maps in Albania” component was also launched and is likewise being managed and implemented by UNOPS. The tender was published on 11 December 2025 on the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) website, with a submission deadline of 11 January 2026. This independent Quality Control component, implemented by UNOPS, provides an additional layer of assurance regarding the accuracy, consistency, and overall quality of the digitisation outputs, and serves as a key safeguard for the integrity and sustainability of the process.

Administrative and judicial progress in property compensation cases, including handling of complaints

During 2025, the Agency processed the following requests through formal decisions:

- **64 compensation decisions**, with a total value of **5,524,950.42 euro**;
- **127.6 hectares of physical compensation**;
- **the discontinuation of 7 administrative proceedings or the rejection of the respective requests.**

Financial compensation for properties affected by informal constructions

With regard to **financial compensation** for owners whose properties have been affected by informal constructions, according to data administered by ALUIZNI, for **2024 - 2025** it results that:

- **8,847 case files** were enforced with payment at the **30% rate**, with a total value of **46,518,129.29 euro**. Following the execution of the final 30% instalment, the enforcement process is considered fully completed (100%) for these applications.

For clarification purposes, out of the total number of cases enforced at the 30% rate, **5,320 case files** were enforced in **December 2024**, while the corresponding financial disbursement was carried out during **2025** through second-level banks. Furthermore, in **December 2025**, **3,527 case files** were enforced at the 30% rate, for which the financial disbursement will be carried out during **2026** through second-level banks;

- the corresponding **70% value** for these case files is estimated at **108,542,301.68 euro**;
- for **1,480 case files**, compensation has been transferred at the **70% rate**, amounting to **77,161,408.79 euro**, while the remaining **30%**, amounting to **33,069,175.20 euro**, remains to be enforced at a later stage.

By Jan 2026, the ATP has compensated 3,527 pending dossiers using 2024–2025 funds, with an execution value of ALL 1.4 bn (equivalent to EUR 14,452,104.72). The financial fund disbursed by the ATP for the 3,527 applications has directly benefited 13,000 individuals and families.

Reduced court case backlog and effective enforcement of court rulings.

Albania managed to accelerate backlog reduction, as regards to financial compensation of ex-owners during 2025: whereas Albania made noticeable progress, represented by an increase of almost 50% in 2025, by additionally compensating 3,527 dossiers as of end of Jan 2026, with a value of ALL 1.4 bn (funded by the 2024–2025 budget) and by reducing the backlog from 7,000 compensation dossiers pending in 2024 to 3,473 remaining.

In order to address the backlog reduction, the Roadmap for increasing Judicial Efficiency was adopted with the Decision No. 407, date 15.07.2025 On the Adoption of the “Roadmap for the Efficiency of the Justice System in Albania 2025-2027”.

This roadmap envisages a measure regarding organizing meetings with central and local institutions to discuss concrete measures that could have a positive effect in terms of overcoming the backlog related to property issues.

Rights of persons belonging to minorities: implementation of secondary legislation on national minorities, capacity and resources to protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

In implementation of the sublegal acts adopted pursuant to Law No. 96/2017, “On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania”, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has established the Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities, in accordance with Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 845, dated 26.12.2025, “On the Determination of the Composition, Functions and Procedure of the Commission for Examining Requests for the Recognition of a National Minority”.

The Commission’s primary functions include examining requests for the recognition of new national minorities, as well as administering and verifying self-identification forms submitted by individuals declaring affiliation to a national minority, in accordance with the principle of free and informed self-identification.

During 2025, the Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities held four meetings and, as of 24.12.2025:

- No request for the recognition of a new national minority has been submitted;
- A total of 684 self-identification forms have been processed, representing 603 individuals;
- 354 decisions confirming self-identification have been issued (202 for Egyptians, 51 for Roma, 94 for Bulgarians, 7 for Montenegrin minority).

The remaining forms (334) were returned for completion or not reviewed due to procedural deficiencies, including cases in which forms were submitted on behalf of minors, in violation of the principle that self-identification is a personal act based on free will and conscious choice, and may only be carried out by adults. In no case was further verification of self-identification required, as no circumstances were identified that would raise serious doubts regarding the accuracy of the self-identified information (pursuant to Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 843, dated 26.12.2024).

Regarding the implementation of Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 844, dated 26.12.2024, “On the Use of the Language of National Minorities in Relations Between Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Local Government Authorities”, the Municipalities of Dropull, Finiq, and Pustec have fulfilled the legal obligations for:

- Providing public services in the respective minority languages;
- Installing bilingual signs on national and local roads within administrative units inhabited by recognized national minorities.

According to information received from the municipalities, Dropull and Finiq provide all services also in Greek, while Pustec Municipality offers verbal communication and administrative explanations in Macedonian, public announcements are also delivered in this language, and active participation of the Macedonian minority in decision-making processes is ensured. Bilingual signs have been installed on national and local roads in administrative units with recognized minorities (Dropull: Albanian-Greek, Finiq: Albanian-Greek, Pustec: Albanian-Macedonian).

Meanwhile, regarding awareness-raising and capacity-building, during 2025 the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Committee for National Minorities, civil society organizations, and the media conducted awareness activities on the self-identification process. Meetings were organized with representatives of 62 associations of national minorities, assisting hundreds of individuals to correctly and informedly complete self-identification forms, including 100 persons in Elbasan through the Egyptian and Roma Youth Movement, 80 through the Social Directorate, 75 through the Center for Social Advocacy, and 70 through the Center for Empowerment and Community Organization. The “Treja” Center maintained continuous contact with Roma and Egyptian families in the Selita area, Tirana.

Additionally, the Council of Europe has prepared guidance material on the self-identification process, which is expected to be translated into eight national minority languages and published after final approval by the competent institutions.

Capacity and resources to protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

The legal framework was reinforced by amendments to DCM No. 286/10.05.2019 through DCM No. 548 (01.10.2025), introducing a transparent selection process chaired by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and involving cross-institutional representation that ensure a more structured, transparent and inclusive process.

Regarding leadership election the revised procedures have been implemented in practice. Pursuant to Prime Minister's Order No. 233, dated 29.12.2025, Ms Konstantina Beziani, has been reappointed as Chairperson of the Committee on National Minorities (CNM), through an open and transparent procedure, in compliance with all legal deadlines.

Albania has taken steps to strengthen the effectiveness and operational capacity of the CNM by ensuring adequate financial resources. Funding by CNM to project-based activities rose from EUR 41,841 (2023) to EUR 125,523 (2025), and remain steady as per the mid-term budgetary planning, with the total budget of the CNM increasing by 28% from EUR 514,479 (2025) to EUR 658,285 (2026), underpinning operational capacity and outreach.

The combination of a formalised, inclusive selection mechanism and higher, ring-fenced resources addresses core expectations under the interim benchmarks, such as aligning with EU/FCNM practice on independent, competence-based appointments while enabling substantive, project-level delivery. Continued transparency by way of the proactive publication of activities and public information on the official website of the CNM consolidate these gains.

For more information regarding activities and the budget over the years please refer to Annex No.4 Project and Annex No.5 Budget

FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME

Focus on:

EU acquis alignment and strategic framework: *asset recovery and confiscation, cybercrime, child sexual abuse and exploitation both online and offline, trafficking in human beings, firearms, prevention and criminalisation of money laundering and countering terrorist financing, strategy against serious and organised crime.*

Throughout 2025, in the context of Chapter 24 “Justice, Freedom and Security”, and particularly with regard to the obligations set out under the Interim Benchmarks, Albania has continued to make steady progress in aligning its strategic and legal framework with EU standards, while further strengthening the capacities of its specialised structures in the fight against organised crime.

Alignment of the Albanian Criminal Code with the EU acquis

In terms of EU acquis alignment in the areas of asset recovery and confiscation, cybercrime, child sexual abuse and exploitation both online and offline, trafficking in human beings, firearms, the prevention and criminalization of money laundering, counter terrorism, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has proposed amendments to the Criminal Code aimed at aligning Albanian legislation with 14 EU directives in these areas.

The Criminal Code package has been approved at the Plenary Session of the Assembly on 27 January 2026.

EU acquis alignment and strategic framework on asset recovery and confiscation

In terms of the EU acquis alignment regarding the asset recovery and confiscation, on 26.06.2025, Law No. 44/2025 “On the Asset Recovery Office” was adopted. This law is an important instrument in the fight against money laundering and the recovery of assets obtained from criminal activities.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned law, the ARO Office has been elevated to the level of a Directorate, under the name “Directorate of Asset Recovery,” operating under the authority of the General Director of the State Police.

Currently, work is about to be finalized regarding the drafting of the secondary legislation in cooperation and coordination with international partners, including Europol, the Council of Europe (CoE) and UNODC. The state of play for the drafting of the secondary legislation is as follows:

- The Instruction of the Minister of Internal Affairs, No. 203, dated 27.11.2025, “On defining the rules and procedures for the selection of the candidate for Director of the Asset Recovery Office,” has been approved.
- The Order of the General Director of the State Police on the selection of the Director of the Asset Recovery Office (ARO), Order No. 48, dated 7 January 2026, has been approved.

Following the above-mentioned orders, by Decision No. 9951/12, dated 31.12.2025, the Application Evaluation Commission declared the appointment of the successful candidate for the position of “Director of the Directorate of Asset Recovery”.

Currently, the following appointments have been made within the Directorate for the following positions:

1. Head of the Sector for Internal and External Communications.
2. Head of the Sector for Analysis and Statistics.

The process of completing the staffing structure for both sectors with specialists is ongoing.

In the meantime, the remaining acts have been submitted to the European Commission for comments. Their state of play is as follows:

- The Order of the General Director of the State Police “On approving the application format for communications” the EC has expressed its agreement with this draft order.

- The Order of the General Director of the State Police “On job descriptions and positions” has been resubmitted to the EC after the State Police reflected the EC comments.
- The Order of the General Director of the State Police “On approving the Standard Operating Procedure of the Directorate of Asset Recovery” the EC has provided comments, which are currently being reflected by the relevant structures. The act will be resubmitted to the EC for final endorsement.

Strategic and legal framework on the fight against arms trafficking

The new National Strategy for the Control of Small and Light Weapons, Ammunition, and Explosives 2025–2030, along with the Action Plan 2025–2028”, was approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 787, dated 24.12.2025.

The Draft Law “On the Import, Export and Transit of Firearms, their Essential Components, and Ammunition” was approved at the Plenary Session of the Assembly on 27 January 2026. The purpose of this draft law is to establish new provisions on the import, export, and transit of firearms, their essential components, and ammunition, in alignment with EU regulations as well as with the agreements and treaties to which Albania is a party. The draft law introduces state control measures over the import and export of firearms, their essential components, and ammunition, as well as measures regulating their import, export, and transit. Its objective is to ensure compliance with Article 10 of the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (“UN Firearms Protocol”).

In addition, Order no. 1592, dated 16.10.2025 "On the approval of the standard working procedure for small arms and light weapons", with the aim of standardizing the procedures for collecting, analyzing, storing and disseminating data on small arms and light weapons at all levels of the State Police structures, as well as increasing efficiency in the exchange of information between national structures and international partners.

Prevention and criminalisation of money laundering and countering terrorist financing.

The "National Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Strategy 2024-2030" and its Action Plan, approved by decision no. 1, dated 25.07.2024 by the Coordination Committee of the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing continues to be smoothly implemented.

Concerning **countering terrorist financing**, there are no developments in terms of legal alignment.

Strategic Framework in the fight against organized crime

New strategy against organised and serious crimes

The implementation of the "Crosscutting Strategy Against Organized Crime and Serious Crimes 2021-2025 (SOSC)" and its Action Plan 2023-2025, approved by DCM no. 1140, dated 24.12.2020, amended by DCM no. 54, dated 01.02.2023, has continued throughout 2025. In this regard, two reports were prepared:

- The SOSC monitoring report drawn up for the first six months of 2025.
- The SOSC monitoring report drawn up for January-December 2025.

During the implementation of the 2021–2025 strategy, several substantive achievements in terms of prevention and suppression of organized crime and serious crime need to be emphasized:

- Adoption of three new laws with significant operational and strategic impact: Law No. 38/2025 on the Processing of Travel Information in the Republic of Albania; Law No. 44/2025 on the Asset Recovery Office; and Law no. 39/2025 on State Border Control.
- Establishment, restructuring, and functional reorganization of key institutional capacities, including the Asset Recovery Office, the Early Warning System Unit, the reorganization of the Criminal Police Department, and the creation of dedicated cybercrime units at both central and regional levels.
- Improvement of procedural frameworks and physical and ICT infrastructure, which has been instrumental in strengthening inter-institutional, regional, and international cooperation, facilitating the establishment of Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), particularly in drug trafficking cases, and enabling structured operational cooperation and effective information exchange with Europol, Interpol, EMPACT, and Eurojust.
- Expanded investigative access to national databases integrated into the DEEPSEE platform and to international information systems and databases.
- Targeted investments in specialized operational equipment and secure information-exchange systems.
- More effective use of Europol, Interpol, and related platforms for intelligence-led policing, criminal intelligence analysis, and information exchange.
- Establishment of result-tracking systems (e.g., the PRESTO e-tracing system for money-laundering offenses) to support evidence-based decision-making and strategic prioritization of interventions against organized crime.

As regards the drafting and adoption of the new Crosscutting Strategy of the Fight against Organized Crime and Serious Crimes 2026-2030 and its Action Plan 2026-2028, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as the lead institution in the field of prevention and the fight against organized crime and serious crime, has coordinated the process of drafting the new strategic framework in this area.

The new strategic framework for the prevention and fight against organized crime and serious crime was developed in the framework of the National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2022–2030 and following the conclusion of the implementation cycle of the Crosscutting Strategy against Organized Crime and Serious Crime 2021–2025 and its Action Plan 2023–2025.

The new strategic framework reflects newly identified needs related to reforms that must be undertaken, in line with the national agenda and the European integration process as the “Reform Agenda/Growth Plan”, the Rule of Law Roadmap for Chapter 24 “Justice, Freedom and Security” and the Interim Benchmarks for Chapter 24.

New focus areas

The National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Organized Crime and Serious Crime 2026–2030, together with its Action Plan 2026–2028, defines state policy in this field for the next five years.

It is based on three strategic pillars/goals:

- a) prevention;
- b) prosecution and disruption;
- c) national and international cooperation.

The concept note of the new strategic framework, proposed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was approved on 23 July 2025 at the meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Based on this concept note, the main innovations of the new strategic document include:

- **Preventive approach:** Increased focus on the prevention of organized crime and serious crime, reflected in the title of the strategy and in the specific weight of the measures envisaged under this goal;
- **National and international cooperation:** Introduction of a new strategic approach to national and international cooperation, driven by the European integration perspective and the need for closer cooperation in this field;
- **Trafficking in human beings no longer included as a component of the new strategic framework:** The fight against trafficking in human beings is excluded as a component, as it will be addressed through a separate strategic document dedicated to this field;
- **Strategic approach to asset recovery and management and forensic services:** Inclusion of a strategic approach for the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets and for the Institute of Scientific Police, with the aim of accreditation, addressed as two separate strategic goals;
- **Cybercrime investigations:** Capacity building in cybercrime investigations, previously regulated through a sectoral action plan of the State Police General Directorate ending in 2025, is now elevated from a sectoral level and included in the new strategic framework due to its importance.
- **Environmental crime:** Inclusion of a specific goal on the prevention of environmental crime, in line with recommendations for increased attention to environmental crime in strategic documents, also reflecting global trends of rising criminal activity in this area;
- **Social dimension and impact:** Increased attention is given to the social dimension in the fight against organized crime and serious crime, aiming to address these phenomena at an early stage, discourage youth involvement in criminal activities, and support the identification and assistance of victims of crime.
- Another important aspect addressed is the identification and tracing of criminal assets, their seizure and confiscation, and their administration, with a focus on returning these

assets for the benefit of the citizens of the Republic of Albania. In line with the legal framework establishing the Asset Recovery Office, the new strategic framework provides a comprehensive strategic approach to the asset recovery process.

Emphasis is placed on alternative development, awareness-raising, and engagement of communities and the private sector. In addition to inter-institutional goal and measures, the strategy also foresees awareness-raising measures combined with the provision of alternatives for youth, potential victims, and communities exposed to organized crime.

Continuity and strategic coherence

The new strategic framework ensures continuity and consistency in measures and activities related to key components, such as:

- prevention and the fight against the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs, by addressing and strengthening the operational, investigative, and analytical capacities of law enforcement structures at both national and international levels;
- prevention and detection of money laundering, with a focus on the practical implementation of the legal framework, improving the quality and effectiveness of financial investigations, achieving final confiscation of assets of criminal origin, and strengthening inter-institutional coordination.

The strategy also promotes an integrated strategic approach to addressing interconnected sub-components of organized crime and serious crime, including drug-related crime, money laundering, economic and financial crime, cybercrime, environmental crime, and others, as forms of organized criminality requiring coordinated, risk-based responses grounded in national risk assessments.

Within this framework, the focus is on prevention, effective prosecution, and national and international cooperation as key elements for increasing the effectiveness of the fight against organized crime and for fulfilling commitments under the European integration process.

Institutional framework and consultation process

The new strategic framework was developed with the engagement and involvement of all institutions responsible for the prevention and fight against organized crime and serious crime, including line ministries, law enforcement agencies, and institutions and capacities established under the justice reform, such as the Special Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). It also involved specialized agencies such as the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets, the Financial Intelligence Agency, the National Cannabis Control Agency and the National Cybersecurity Agency.

The consultation process of the strategy and action plan

The full package of the draft decision “On the Approval of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Organized Crime and Serious Crime 2026–2030 and the Action Plan 2026–2028” was published on the Electronic Register of Notifications and Public

Consultation. The draft remained open for public comments and suggestions from 15 October 2025 to 12 November 2025. During this period, the document was accessed 385 times by the public, though no comments were submitted. To strengthen the consultation process and ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Internal Affairs received valuable opinions and comments from external actors, including academics, civil society representatives, and partner organizations.

Comments were submitted by three NGOs: Partners Albania for Change and Development, the Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance, and the Helsinki Committee.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs also shared the strategic documents via email with partner organizations active or implementing projects in the field of prevention and the fight against organized crime and serious crime, including GIZ, ICITAP, OSCE, UNDP, EU4LEA, and Forensic for Albania. Within the inter-institutional partnership platform, the strategic documents were also distributed via email for consultation to 29 actors (NGOs, academics, independent experts, etc.) who are members of this platform. The platform was established by Prime Minister's Order No. 113, dated 30.08.2019, "On the forms of participation, functioning and institutional structure of the partnership platform for European integration," with the aim of consultation, information-sharing, communication, and increased involvement of interest groups and non-state actors in the process.

In particular, EU4LEA identified aspects for improving the content of the strategic documents. These were integrated together with European Commission comments to align the documents with EU standards and the European Union's strategic approach in this field and were reflected by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The consultation process contributed to improvements in the draft strategic documents, mainly with regard to:

- the inclusion of civil society as a key actor both in the drafting process and in the monitoring of the strategy and action plan;
- the integration of a gender perspective into the envisaged policies;
- ensuring financial support through domestic and foreign funding sources;

Current State of Play on the new strategy

The strategy and its action plan is pending for confirmation by EU Commission to continue with the final phase of interinstitutional consultation and the approval by the Council of Ministers.

Institutional framework in the fight against organised crime - structural reform of the State Police

As regards the institutional framework, a structural reform of the State Police is foreseen to strengthen investigations into organized and serious crime.

In fulfillment of the obligations to adopt the by-laws required under Law No. 82/2024 ‘On the State Police’, the structural organization of the State Police is also mandated, including the Department for Criminal Police as one of its key components.

Currently, the Department for Criminal Police, in accordance with the mission assigned by law, the obligations stemming from strategic documents, work programs, and the documents related to Albania’s EU integration process, is engaged in preventing, detecting, and combating criminal activity, as well as bringing to legal responsibility the individuals and criminal groups involved in such activities.

In order to ensure the achievement of these strategic priorities, a further qualitative step is required in the organization and functioning of the structures responsible for investigating organized and serious crime. This entails the reconceptualization of a Department for the Investigation of Organized and Serious Crimes, through which it becomes possible to:

- a. Improve and unify the functioning of the structure at both levels, creating a hierarchy-based functional pyramid that enhances internal communication within the department, information exchange, and the conduct of qualitative and harmonized investigative and surveillance actions.
- b. Provide services closer to the community for reporting criminal offences, preventing further consequences of criminal activity, identifying perpetrators, and conducting full and comprehensive investigations in accordance with criminal legislation.
- c. Create a broader operational space for personnel within the structure for the investigation of organized crime and serious crimes.
- d. Create opportunities for normal career progression, especially within the structure, for staff working in organized crime and serious crime investigations.
- e. Improve investigative and surveillance work against organized crime and serious crimes.
- f. Improve the work related to receiving, processing, and exhausting criminal information, enabling the securing of evidence and qualitative investigative actions for offences related to organized crime, narcotics and trafficking, economic and financial crimes, environmental crimes, cybercrimes, and operational actions of investigative structures.
- g. Improve investigative and surveillance work to address new criminal challenges, particularly in the field of cybercrime, financial crime, and the use of advanced technology for committing criminal offences.
- h. Create new opportunities for financial investigations, money laundering, and the identification, tracing, seizure, confiscation, and recovery of criminal assets.
- i. Improve investigative work related to corruption offences, their referral to the Special Prosecution Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK), and provide investigative support to this structure.
- j. Improve proactive investigations and parallel financial investigations in cases of organized crime, trafficking, economic-financial crime, and other offences generating economic and professional benefits.
- k. Improve investigative and operational support to the Special Prosecution Against Corruption and Organized Crime.

- l. Reorganize and strengthen financial analysis capacities as an important instrument in investigative activity.
- m. Improve international operational cooperation through Europol, as an integral part of the Organized Crime and Serious Crimes Department.
- n. Improve work related to fulfilling obligations in the area of EU integration.
- o. Create opportunities for budget management by the structures of the Department for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Serious Crimes.

The need for these changes is further driven by the requirement to align these structures with those of European partners, where the investigation of organized crime necessitates a modern, methodical approach.

For more detailed information please find attached in Annex No. 6 Details on the future structural reform of the State Police in boosting fight against organized and serious crime).

Structural changes that took place in the Albanian State Police during 2025

The Passenger Information Unit was elevated to the level of a Sector by Order of the Minister of Internal Affairs No. 177, dated 21.10.2025. With the entry into force of Law No. 38/2025 “On the Processing of Travel Data in the Republic of Albania”, and the relevant order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was transformed into the Travel Intelligence Sector (T.I.S.).

The Travel Intelligence Sector operates as a Sector within the Department for Criminal Police and is responsible for collecting, processing, and disseminating travel data through the secure “push” transmission method from every carrier operating in the Republic of Albania by land, water, or air, upon entry, exit, or transit, registering the relevant travel data with a complete, solid, and operational structure.

In addition, we also mention the elevation of the ARO Office into the Directorate of Asset Recovery under the authority of the Director General of the State Police as mentioned above.

Organized and Serious Crime Threat Assessment - SOCTA

The Albanian State Police is working on the drafting of the analytical report "SOCTA 2026 - Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment". This report is drafted every 2 years and analyzes the trends of criminal activities of the 2-year period, compared to the previous 2-year period, specifically SOCTA 2024-2026, in accordance with the methodology of the EUROPOL SOCTA report.

This analytical product "Threat Assessment of Organized and Serious Crime" is drafted only by the State Police and is a strategic analytical report, which identifies, analyzes and assesses the threats coming from organized and serious crime. This is a present, future-oriented threat assessment that relies on comprehensive qualitative and quantitative focused analysis focused on three aspects:

- a) criminal groups;
- b) areas of organized and serious crimes;

c) the wide environment in which individuals and criminal groups operate and carry out their activity.

For the first time in 2025, this analytical product was distributed to the Contact Officers of the partner countries' embassies attached to Tirana, Europol, Interpol, "EU4LEA" and "EU4FAST".

In this framework, trainings were conducted with the participation of all the Albanian State Police analysts on the risk assessment processes of criminal groups, strategic assessments, on the use of analytical programs, the use of different databases, the exchange of best practices of the analysts' work in drafting these analytical products.

One of the latest developments in the framework of capacity building is the equipping of analysts with high-performance computer infrastructure and the use of the analytical software "MERCURE", which have directly affected the reduction of data processing time for analytical products and their quality.

The strengthening of analytical capacities has also been supported by the EU4LAW ENFORCEMENT project, in the framework of the development of activity 1.2.1, "Improving skills in conducting criminal intelligence analysis, also through the use of criminal intelligence tools", project 24ALB106 and 24ALB107 of the BKA, the German Government and the OSCE.

The development of analytical capacities has influenced not only the training for the drafting of strategic analytical reports (SOCTA, Risk Assessment of Criminal Groups, Strategic Assessment) but also the contribution to the drafting of strategic reports at the international level. It is worth mentioning the periodic contribution provided by the State Police for the drafting and updating of the SOCTA – EU strategic report.

Track record: in all fields of serious and organised crime (including trafficking in human beings and child sexual abuse, cybercrime, firearms trafficking, drugs trafficking), money laundering and terrorist financing.

The Ministry of Justice, in the role of the National Coordinator for the functionality of the E-platform, has finalized the collection of data for the first nine months of 2025. Complete data for 2025 will be available after February 2026, following the internal harmonization process.

For more detailed information please find attached Annex No. 7 and Annex No.1 with the track record for the period January-September 2025 provided from the Ministry of Justice

Track record and activity provided from the General Prosecutor's Office

With a view to strengthening the track record, the European Commission has established the unified regional platform for the Western Balkans for real-time data collection and the creation of a consolidated history of prosecutions and criminal convictions. Within the competences of the prosecution offices of general jurisdiction, the platform enables reporting on cases under

investigation for the criminal offence of money laundering, as well as statistical data on selected criminal offences related to economic and serious crimes.

The General Prosecution Office, in its role as coordinator, together with the first instance prosecution offices of general jurisdiction as primary users of the platform, has been actively engaged throughout 2025 in the entry and reporting of data in line with the platform's requirements. At the same time, the General Prosecution Office continues to coordinate closely with the National Coordinator at the Ministry of Justice and with the services of the European Commission to ensure the smooth functioning of the platform.

During 2025, the prosecution offices of general jurisdiction have continued the implementation of General Instruction of the GPO No. 3, dated 25 April 2024, "On the use of the electronic E-Tracking platform for reporting data on corruption and organised crime". In this framework, administrative and procedural measures were requested from the heads of prosecution offices to ensure the accurate, complete and periodic entry of data into the electronic platform.

In January 2025, the European Commission announced changes to the e-platform, introducing the reporting of additional data. In line with the guidance received and following coordination with the Ministry of Justice and other reporting institutions, (SPAK and the State Police), as further clarified by the General Prosecutor through letter No. 1144/3 dated 27 January 2025, data on plea agreement requests and asset investigations under the anti-mafia law have been insterted by the general prosecution offices, into the e-platform, with regular reporting covering the period from 2022 onwards.

Actually, in the platform are inserted the following statistical data for the 9 months of 2025; The European Commission has requested this list of articles under the Albanian Criminal Code for the general prosecution offices of general jurisdiction, corresponding to specific groups of offences, for reporting purposes. The full list of articles is provided in the footnote below.¹⁸;

9 months of 2025				
List of offences	Proceeding registered	Defendants registered	Proceedings sent to court	Defendants sent to court
Corruption	499	104	143	260
Money Laundering	158	18	13	30
Cybercrime	59	21	5	8

¹⁸ Trafficking in human beings (Articles 109 – Kidnapping or keeping hostage a person; 109/b – Forcing through blackmail or violence for submission of wealth; 110/a – Trafficking of adult persons; 128/b – Trafficking of minors); trafficking of arms (Articles 278/a – Trafficking of weapons and munitions; 282/a – Traffic of explosive, burning, and poisonous materials); drug trafficking (Articles 283 – Manufacturing and selling narcotics; 283/a – Trafficking of narcotics; 284 – Cultivation of narcotic plants; 284/a – Organizing and leading criminal organizations; 284/c – Producing and manufacturing narcotic and psychotropic substances; 284/ç – Illegal production, trade, and use of precursors); smuggling of migrants (Article 298 – Facilitation of illegal border crossing); cybercrime (Article 143/b – Computer fraud); money laundering (Articles 287 – Laundering of proceeds of criminal offences or criminal activity; 287/b – Appropriation of money or goods derived from criminal offences or criminal activity); and corruption (Articles 135 – Theft through abuse of office; 244 – Active corruption of persons exercising public functions, para. 1; 245/1 – Exercising unlawful influence on public officials, para. 1; 248 – Abuse of duty; 256 – Misusing state contributions; 259 – Passive corruption by public officials, para. 1; 164 – Abuse of powers; 164/a – Active corruption in the private sector).

Production/trafficking of drugs	1323	776	440	636
Firearms related offences	13	15	3	5
Trafficking of human beings	67	28	20	42
Smuggling of migrants	64	45	37	71

Referring to the fight against “Human Trafficking”, the following activities have been carried out.

Criminal prosecution, criminal policy, and the protection of trafficking victims constitute one of the General Prosecution Office’s main priorities, considering the severe violation of human rights that accompanies this form of crime. The General Prosecution Office considers that effective results can only be achieved through a comprehensive approach, beginning with preventive measures through awareness-raising and education, continuing with close cooperation with all relevant domestic actors and international partners, and ensuring the protection of victims, criminal prosecution, and proportional sanctioning of perpetrators.

During 2025, in implementation of General Instruction No. 6, dated 23 July 2024, “On the effective investigation and prosecution of criminal offences against human trafficking,” approved by the General Prosecutor with the aim of strengthening a unified and victim-oriented approach in combating human trafficking, priority work has continued on the investigation of this category of offences. Over this nine-month period, positive results were observed in improving the quality of investigations, standardizing procedural practices, and strengthening inter-institutional coordination, leading to enhanced victim protection and respect for human rights.

Engagement and cooperation with international projects supporting Albanian and regional institutions in strengthening the investigation and prosecution of all forms of trafficking have continued, addressing institutional challenges and needs in the fight against human trafficking and ensuring victim protection. Notably, this includes the OSCE project “EU Support for Strengthening the Fight Against Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in the Western Balkans,” which contributed to capacity-building and inter-institutional coordination in this field.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs has also continued, ensuring participation in the meetings of the National Referral Mechanism, during which the implementation progress of measures under institutional responsibilities was presented, and standard operating procedures for the protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking, prepared by the inter-institutional working group, were discussed.

Following the publication of GRETA’s Fourth Evaluation Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and in order to fulfil Albania’s reporting obligation on measures taken by 20 June 2027, the General Prosecutor has reaffirmed the institutional commitment to strengthening the fight against human trafficking. The General Prosecutor emphasized the need for effective criminal prosecution

based on the use of special investigative methods, the accurate legal qualification of trafficking offences, the pursuit of proportional and preventive sanctions, and the strengthening of inter-institutional cooperation between the police, general jurisdiction prosecution offices, and the Special Prosecution Office.

In this context, through Circulars No. 1038/1 Prot., dated 16 July 2025, addressing the recommendations of the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and No. 1200 Prot., dated 3 September 2025, to ensure the implementation of GRETA recommendations, prosecutors and judicial police officers of general jurisdiction prosecution offices were requested to pay special attention to the protection of victims and their families, including respect for the non-punishment principle, safeguarding the identity and privacy of victims, facilitating the right to compensation through seizures and confiscations, and conducting specialized trainings, particularly on child-friendly interviewing techniques.

During this period, in the framework of capacity-building, prosecutors, judicial police officers, and victim coordinators participated in trainings and activities organized by the School of Magistrates, various non-governmental organizations active in this field, and other international organizations assisting general jurisdiction prosecution offices in the area of trafficking and serious crimes. Key trainings and workshops included:

- Training on “Understanding the Victim from the Criminal Offence Perspective,” attended by 2 prosecutors;
- Training on “Civil Claims in Criminal Proceedings – Deadline for Legitimacy of the Civil Plaintiff,” attended by 2 prosecutors;
- Training on “Online Sexual Exploitation of Minors and Investigation/Tracing Methods,” attended by 2 prosecutors and 11 judicial police officers;
- Training on “International Child Abduction,” attended by 10 prosecutors;
- Workshop on “International Cooperation in Criminal Matters,” organized by the British Embassy in Tirana, attended by 8 prosecutors and 2 judicial police officers.

Active engagement was also maintained in providing assistance to trafficking victims. Victim coordinators at the General Prosecution Office were involved in joint awareness-raising and experience-sharing activities, as well as in guiding and supporting coordinators from first-instance prosecution offices and judicial police personnel. To strengthen professional capacities and harmonize practices, participation highlights include: One coordinator in the IVLP (International Visitor Leadership Program) on “Combating Human Trafficking” in the United States, organized by the U.S. Embassy in Tirana; Two coordinators from the General Prosecution Office in the forum “Position and Rights of Victims in Criminal Proceedings,” organized by the Psycho-Social Centre Vatra.

In the context of cooperation with international law enforcement agencies, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking-related offences, data from the IMPRO system of the General Prosecution Office indicate that for the period January – December 2025:

2 mutual legal assistance requests related to human trafficking were processed.

42 rogatory requests from abroad related to drug trafficking were processed and 46 rogatory requests were sent abroad.

- Statistical data for human trafficking for the first nine months of 2025 are as follows:

i) Regarding the offence “Trafficking of Adult Persons,” provided by the Article 110/a of the Criminal Code, 6 criminal proceedings with 1 defendant were registered during the first nine months of 2025, an increase compared to the same period in 2024 when 2 proceedings were registered. Of these, 1 proceeding with 2 defendants was sent to trial, and during this period 2 defendants were convicted for this offence.

ii) Regarding the offence “Trafficking of Minors,” under Article 128/b of the Criminal Code, 3 criminal proceedings with 1 defendant were registered during the first nine months of 2025, compared to 2 proceedings in the same period in 2024.

It is worth highlighting the cooperation through the establishment of joint investigative teams to address complex international crimes, enabling real-time collaboration and the sharing of evidence. In this context, a proposal for an agreement to establish a joint investigative team was submitted in August 2025 between one of the Albanian general jurisdiction prosecution offices and the competent Colombian authorities. This concerned the criminal offences of “Exploitation of Prostitution” and “Trafficking of Adult Persons,” as provided under Articles 114 and 110/a of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania. Within this criminal proceeding, and coordinated by EUROJUST and EUROPOL, with financial support from the Eurojust-managed project WB CRIM JUST – Strengthening Cross-Border Cooperation in Criminal Justice in the Western Balkans, and the EU4Fast Project, a joint investigative team from Albania and the Colombian authorities successfully carried out an “action day” in Colombia, resulting in the arrest of several individuals and the seizure of material evidence and assets suspected to be of criminal origin.

Cybercrime

Through General Instruction of the General Prosecutor, No. 4/2025, “On the priority recommendations of the Council of Ministers in the fight against crime for 2025 in the general jurisdiction prosecution offices” ,and the Action Plan approved by Order No. 68/2025, the General Prosecutor requested the heads of general jurisdiction prosecution offices to assess current capacities for establishing specialized cybercrime investigation units, and to assign dedicated prosecutors and officers to handle offences in the cyber domain. Furthermore, a technical and budgetary analysis for advanced investigative equipment and software was requested, as well as the provision of external support for training prosecutors, judicial police officers, and technical staff to benefit from specialized courses and programs in the field of cybercrime.

Combating cybercrime requires strengthening and consolidating professional capacities, increasing investigative expertise, and developing close international and inter-institutional cooperation. Also, the General Instruction of the General Prosecutor No. 4/2025, abovementioned, emphasizes participation in trainings and encourages joint training activities with law enforcement institutions. For this reporting period, prosecutor participation in relevant trainings is as follows:

- Training on “Cybercrime: Computer Forgery and Interference with Computer Data,” held on 2 April 2025, attended by 8 prosecutors and 8 judicial police officers;
- Training on “Cybercrime,” 1–3 April 2025, attended by 3 prosecutors;
- Training on “Racist and Xenophobic Acts Committed via Computer Systems,” 16 April 2025, attended by 8 prosecutors and 6 judicial police officers;
- Training on “Digital Violence and Internet Offences,” 18 February 2025, attended by 2 prosecutors and 7 judicial police officers;
- Training on “Magistrate Skills Development – Digitalization,” 5 June 2025, attended by 3 prosecutors;
- Training on “Online Sexual Exploitation of Minors and Investigation/Tracing Methods,” 9 April 2025, attended by 2 prosecutors and 11 judicial police officers;
- Training on “Advantages and Disadvantages of Artificial Intelligence,” 7 May 2025, attended by 3 judicial police officers;
- Training on “Cyber Awareness for Prosecutors,” 23–24 June 2025, organized by the U.S. Department of State in Tirana, attended by 19 prosecutors;
- Training on “Online Radicalization: Detection, Investigation, and Prosecution,” 7–11 July 2025, organized by CEPOL in Austria, attended by 2 prosecutors;
- Training on “CFMLAR – Tools and New Technologies,” 7–11 July 2025, organized by CEPOL in Romania, attended by 1 prosecutor.

Active support was also provided in terms of mutual legal assistance and cooperation. Victim coordinators and prosecutors participated in joint activities, contributing to capacity-building and harmonization of practices in the field of cybercrime.

Regarding statistical data on cybercrime offences, during the first nine months of 2025, there was a 15.05% decrease in the number of registered proceedings, from 279 to 237, while the number of defendants is increased 2.5 times, from 14 to 35, compared to the same period in 2024. The number of proceedings sent to trial increased significantly, from 11 to 28, and the number of defendants sent to trial rose to 34, 2.4 times higher than in the first nine months of 2024. Specific offences are analysed as follows:

- Pornography (Article 117 of the Criminal Code): A 45.76% increase in registered proceedings for the first nine months of 2025 compared to 2024, from 59 to 86. The number of defendants increased from 1 to 12. Proceedings sent to trial increased from 1 to 16, with 18 defendants sent to trial.
- Computer Fraud (Article 143/b of the Criminal Code): 59 proceedings were registered in the first nine months of 2025, a 9.23% decrease compared to 65 proceedings in the same period of 2024. The number of registered defendants increased significantly from 7 to 21, while proceedings sent to trial increased from 3 to 5. Defendants sent to trial increased from 5 in the first nine months of 2024 to 8 in the same period of 2025.
- Mutual legal assistance with foreign authorities remains crucial for successful investigation and completion of cybercrime cases. During this period, the following were recorded: 7 letters rogatory received from abroad, 88 letters rogatory sent abroad, and 1 request for the transfer of a criminal proceeding from Albania to a foreign jurisdiction.

Cooperation in the field of narcotics

Pursuant to General Instruction No. 4/2025, “On the Priority Recommendations in the Fight Against Crime for 2025 in General Jurisdiction Prosecution Offices,” the relevant structures in general jurisdiction prosecution offices are instructed to continue enhancing cooperation with domestic, regional, and international law enforcement agencies in order to increase the effectiveness of investigations into priority criminal offences, including drug-related crimes, with the aim of improving the quality and effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions related to narcotics and illegal trafficking.

Following this, in January 2025, the General Prosecutor signed a cooperation agreement on “Information Exchange within the Framework of Control, Inspection, and Monitoring of the National Cannabis Control Agency” with the Director General of the National Cannabis Control Agency. This agreement aims to ensure structured cooperation in cases of legal violations related to the use, cultivation, production, and distribution of cannabis, its products, and end-products for medical and industrial purposes. Under this agreement, the prosecution commits to providing information for the verification of the integrity and background of candidates, agency employees, and licensed entities, while the Agency undertakes to provide the Prosecution with complete documentation and evidence necessary for investigations and prosecutions. To ensure effective implementation, the parties will establish a Joint Coordinating Group, which will hold periodic meetings to monitor progress and address potential challenges in fulfilling the commitments.

As part of strengthening inter-institutional cooperation between prosecution structures, judicial police at prosecution offices, judicial police services in the State Police, and other state agencies, statistical data for the first nine months of 2025 indicate that the measures taken have had a significant impact on the general and specific prevention of crime. This impact is reflected in the effective investigation and prosecution of serious offences, including the production/cultivation of narcotics, as outlined below:

i) Drug Trafficking (Article 283/a of the Criminal Code): For the 9 months of 2025, 49 proceedings involving 24 defendants were registered, and 9 proceedings with 27 defendants were sent to trial. Compared to the same period in 2024, this represents a 68.96% increase in proceedings, a 71.43% increase in registered defendants, an 18.18% decrease in proceedings sent to trial, and a 28.57% increase in defendants sent to trial for this offence.

ii) Production and Sale of Narcotics (Article 283 of the Criminal Code): During the first nine months of 2025, 861 proceedings with 665 defendants were registered, reflecting a 4.24% increase in registered proceedings and a slight 7.25% decrease in registered defendants compared to the same period in 2024. For the same period, 393 proceedings with 539 defendants were sent to trial, representing an 11.88% decrease in proceedings sent to trial and a 31.34% decrease in defendants sent to trial.

iii) Cultivation of Narcotic Plants (Article 284 of the Criminal Code): In the first nine months of 2025, 412 proceedings with 87 defendants were registered, reflecting a 17.93% decrease in proceedings and a 6.09% increase in registered defendants. Regarding proceedings and defendants sent to trial, 38 proceedings with 70 defendants were sent to trial, representing a 19.51% decrease compared to the same period in 2024.

iv) Prosecutor's requests for preventive measures for individuals involved in drug-related crimes remain relatively strict, with 76.84% of requests seeking preventive detention and the remainder requesting lighter measures such as the obligation to report to the judicial police.

v) The same policy applies to sentencing requests for defendants accused of these crimes. For the first nine months of 2025, 70.31% of sentencing requests sought imprisonment, while 29.69% requested alternative sanctions to imprisonment.

Arms trafficking

- Regarding the criminal offence of "Trafficking of Weapons and Ammunition" (Article 278/a of the Criminal Code): Statistical data for the first 9 months of 2025 show that 12 proceedings involving 14 defendants were registered. Compared to the same period in 2024, this represents a 9.09% increase in registered proceedings, a doubling of registered defendants, a decrease from 5 to 2 proceedings sent to trial, and a decrease from 8 to 4 defendants sent to trial.
- Regarding the criminal offence of "Unlawful Possession and Production of Weapons, Explosive Devices, and Ammunition" (Article 278 of the Criminal Code): For the first 9 months of 2025, 232 proceedings with 163 defendants were registered, while 123 proceedings involving 145 defendants were sent to trial. Compared to the same period in 2024, the number of registered proceedings remained the same, proceedings sent to trial decreased by 1.60%, registered defendants decreased by 15.10%, and defendants sent to trial decreased by 5.23% for this offence.
- Regarding the criminal policy for this offence: 89.26% of the prosecutor's requests for preventive measures were requests for pre-trial detention (arrest in prison). Concerning sentencing requests for the 9 months of 2025, 99.17% of the requests were for imprisonment and only 0.83% were for fines. As for the type of sentence applied, suspension of sentence and probation were requested for only 24.17% of defendants.

Regarding proactive investigation, prosecutors, for the 9 months of 2025, have increased their active role in conducting proactive investigations using special investigative tools in 123 criminal proceedings only in relation to the following criminal offenses: - production and sale of narcotics; - trafficking in narcotics; - cultivation of narcotic plants; - trafficking in weapons and ammunition; - unauthorized possession and production of weapons, explosive weapons and ammunition; - money laundering, - trafficking of persons - assistance for the illegal crossing of persons. This process has served both to prevent and/or further interrupt criminal activity, as well as to strike/finalize with the arrest in flagrante delicto or detention of 78 persons suspected of committing criminal offenses within the competence of the Prosecution Offices at the Courts of First Instance with General Jurisdiction.

Albanian State Police (Criminal Police Department) results/statistical information throughout 2025

Criminal offences

During 2025, 9567 criminal offenses were identified by the local and central structures of the Criminal Police Department and 8967 offenses or 94% of them were detected.

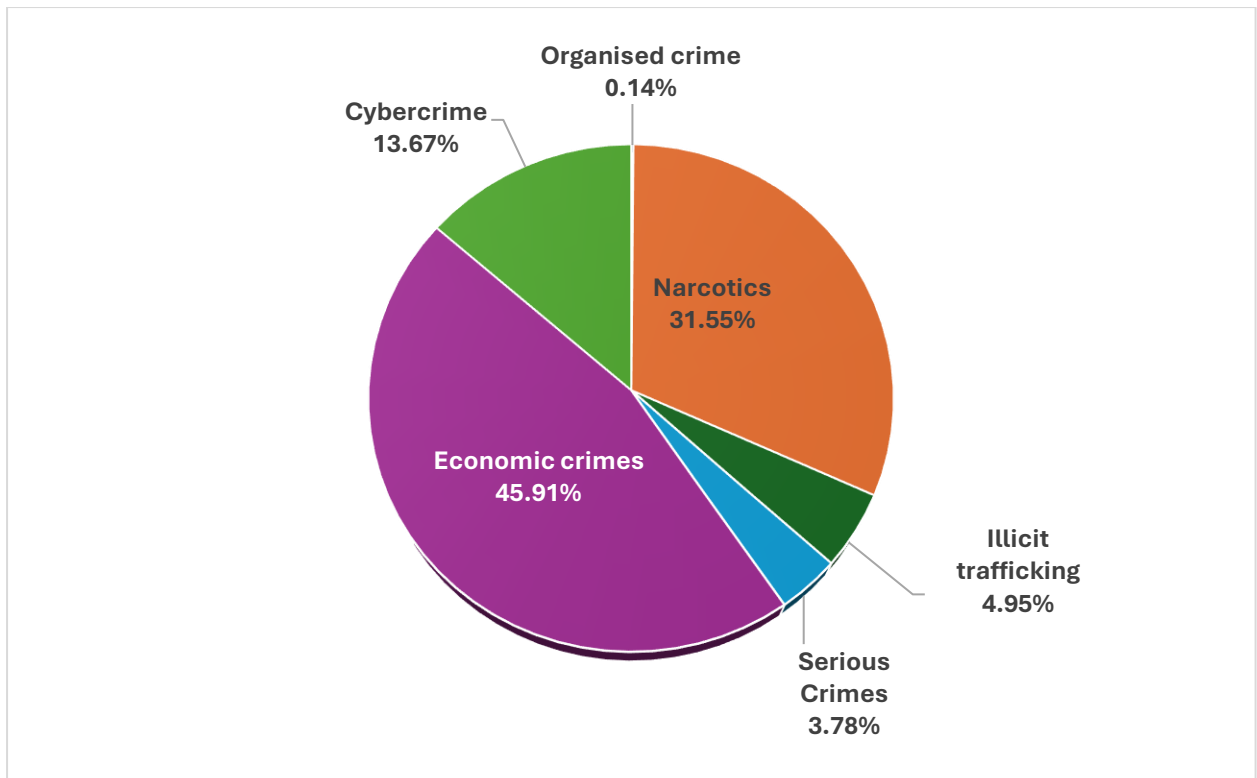


Divided according to the following structures:

- In the field of Organized Crime, **13** criminal offenses have been identified; 9 of them have been resolved.
- In the field of narcotics, **3018** criminal offenses have been identified, 2983 of them have been resolved.
- In the field of illegal trafficking, **474** criminal offenses have been identified, of which 455 have been resolved.
- In the field of serious crimes, **362** criminal offenses have been identified, of which **342** of them have been resolved.
- In the field of investigation of economic and financial crimes, **4392** criminal offenses have been identified, of which 4319 have been resolved.
- In the field of Cybercrimes, 1308 criminal offenses have been identified, 859 have been resolved.

Compared to 2024, 1287 more criminal offenses have been identified.

The percentage occupied by specific areas of criminality in relation to the total criminal offenses, identified for 2025, is reflected in the graph below.



In terms of the number of identified cases, criminal offenses in the field of economic and financial crime rank first, accounting for 45.9% of the total recorded cases. Next are criminal offenses in the field of narcotics with 31.55% and criminal offenses in the field of cybercrime with 13.7%.

Based on statistical data, for 2025, there is an increase in criminal offenses according to the trends:

- In the field of computer crimes with 98 criminal offenses or 8.1%,
- In the field of serious crimes against the person with 8 criminal offenses or by 2.6%,
- In the field of narcotics with 899 criminal offenses or 42.4%,
- In the field of illegal trafficking with 13 criminal offenses or 2.8%,
- In the field of economic and financial crimes with 284 criminal offenses or by 10.1%,
- In the field of money laundering with 38 criminal offenses or 7.2%.

There is a decrease in the identification of criminal offenses in:

- In the field of organized crime with 34 criminal offenses or 72.3%,
- In the field of serious crimes against property, with 14 criminal offenses or by 21.2%.
- In the field of corruption with 4 criminal offenses or 0.5%.

Proactive investigations

1518 proactive investigations were referred, as follows:

- **752** proactive investigations in the field of economic and financial crime.
- **347** investigations in the field of illegal trafficking.

- **283** investigations in the field of narcotics.
- **122** investigations in the field of computer crimes.
- **14** investigations in the field of serious crimes against person and property.

Compared to the same period of 2024 (1242), there were 276 more proactive investigations, or 22% more.

Police operations

663 police operations have been conducted, of which 130 in cooperation with international partners. Regarding the field of activity, they are divided as follows:

- 311 police operations in the field of narcotics, of which 122 operations in cooperation with international partners.
- 159 police operations in the field of trafficking, of which 2 operations in cooperation with international partners.
- 127 police operations in the field of economic and financial crime, of which 1 operation in cooperation with international partners.
- 36 police operations in the field of crimes against the person and property, of which 1 operation in cooperation with international partners.
- 30 police operations in the field of cybercrimes, of which 4 operations in cooperation with international partners.

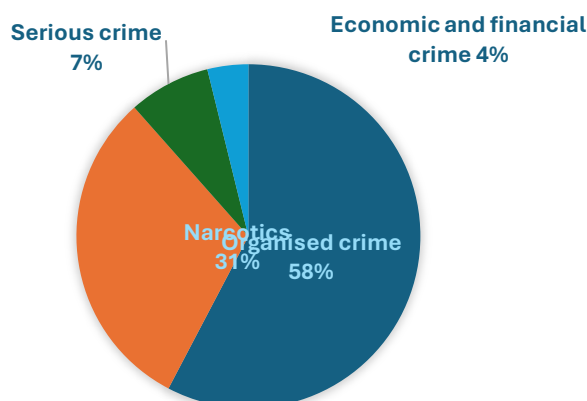
Compared to the same period last year (531), 132 more police operations were performed, or 25% more.

Criminal groups

26 criminal groups have been dismantled, of which:

- 15 with activity in the field of organized crime
- 8 criminal groups with activity in the field of narcotics
- 2 criminal groups with activity in the field of serious crimes
- 1 criminal groups with activity in the field of economic and financial crime

CRIMINAL GROUPS DISMANTLED IN 2025



Compared to the same period last year, 10 criminal groups were dismantled less, or 28% less.

Joint Investigation Teams

During 2025, the Albanian State Police had a total of 22 **Joint Investigation Teams (JITs)**, whereas in 2024, there were **16 JITs**, specifically:

- **15 JIT in the field of narcotics, with Italian, Croatian, French, Finnish partners, etc.** for the criminal offenses "Trafficking in narcotics", committed in cooperation, "Structured criminal group", "Committing criminal offenses by a structured criminal group", and "Laundering of the proceeds of a criminal offense or criminal activity";
- **2 JIT in the field of economic and financial crime, with Italian partners** for the criminal offenses "Passive corruption of judges, prosecutors and other justice functionaries", "Active corruption of judges, prosecutors and other justice functionaries", in cooperation, "Exercise of illegal influence on persons exercising public functions", carried out in cooperation, in the active form of granting irregular benefit.
- **5 JIT in the field of cybercrimes** in cooperation with Austrian, Spanish, German, Swedish, Italian partners.

Compared to the same period last year (16), there are 6 more joint investigation teams, or 38% more.

Trafficking in human beings

Regarding the phenomenon of Trafficking in Human Beings in Albania, there is significant decrease in Albanian citizens who are trafficked to other countries. Meanwhile, there is increase in the cases of foreign citizens, who use Albania as a transit, staying for short periods in our country and who are used for prostitution or work. Specifically:

"Trafficking in adult persons", Article 110/a, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, during 2025, a total of 48 criminal offenses were identified, of which 48 were detected, **with** 100% detection. Compared to 2024, 6 more criminal offenses have been identified (42).

"Benefit or use of services provided by trafficked persons", Article 110/b, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, a total of 6 criminal offenses have been identified, of which 6 have been detected, with 100% detection. Compared to 2024, 1 more criminal offense has been identified (5).

"Actions that facilitate trafficking", Article 110/c, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, a total of 1 criminal offense has been identified, of which 1 has been detected, with 100% detection. Compared to 2024, 1 criminal offense with more (0) has been identified.

"Trafficking in minors", articles 128/b and 128/b-22, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, 13 criminal offenses have been identified, 12 have been detected, with a detection rate of 92.31%. Compared to 2024, 10 fewer criminal offenses have been identified (23).

"Assistance for illegal border crossing", Article 298, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, 59 criminal offenses were identified, 56 were resolved, with 94.92% resolving rate. Compared to 2024, 27 fewer criminal offenses have been identified (86).

Article 298 "Providing assistance for illegal border crossing", -20 police operations.

Firearms trafficking

Criminal offenses

During the period January-December 2025:

- **486** (90.33%) out of 538 cases for "Illegal possession and manufacture of weapons, explosive weapons and ammunition" were resolved. 681 perpetrators were prosecuted, of which 369 were arrested.
Compared to the same period in 2024 (488 cases recorded; 439 or 89.9 % resolved) there is a decrease in cases with 2 fewer criminal offenses and an increase in detection by 0.4%.
- **30** (93.7%) out of 32 cases for "Trafficking of weapons and ammunition" were resolved. 51 perpetrators were prosecuted, 22 of which were arrested.
Compared to the same period in 2024, (39 cases identified, 39 or 100% of cases resolved, "a decrease of 7 cases and a 6.3% reduction in resolved cases"
- **218** (99 %) out of 216 cases for "Manufacturing and possession of hunting and sporting weapons without permission" were resolved. 258 perpetrators were prosecuted, of whom 91 were arrested.
Compared to the same period in 2024, (147 cases recorded, 147 or 100% cases resolved) there is a decrease with 71 fewer criminal offenses and a decrease in resolving by 1 %.
- **74** (98.6%) out of 75 cases for "Violation of the rules on explosive, flammable and radioactive substances" were detected. 118 perpetrators were prosecuted, of whom 10 were arrested.

Compared to the same period in 2024 (63 cases identified, 62 cases or 98.4 % resolved) there is an increase with 11 more criminal offenses and an increase in resolving by 0.2%.

- Two cases of the criminal offense "Trafficking of explosive, flammable, poisonous, and radioactive materials" were identified, with 2 cases resolved, or 100%, as provided by Article 282 of the Criminal Code. In these cases, 2 perpetrators were prosecuted, of whom 2 were arrested.

Compared to the same period of 2024, where 2 cases were recorded and 1 case was solved, or 50%, the situation remains the same in terms of the number of cases, but there is an increase of 50% in the resolution rate.

Police operations

During this period, 141 police operations were finalized, specifically:

- **119** for the criminal offense "Production and unlawful possession of military weapons and ammunition", provided by Article 278 of the Criminal Code.
- **10** for the criminal offense "Production and unlawful possession of hunting and sporting weapons", provided by Article 280 of the Criminal Code.
- **12** for the criminal offense "Trafficking of weapons and ammunition", provided by Article 278/a of the Criminal Code.

Compared to 2024, when 105 police operations were finalized, there is an increase of 36 additional operations.

Proactive investigations in the field of arms trafficking

During this period, special investigative methods were initiated in 60 (sixty) cases, specifically:

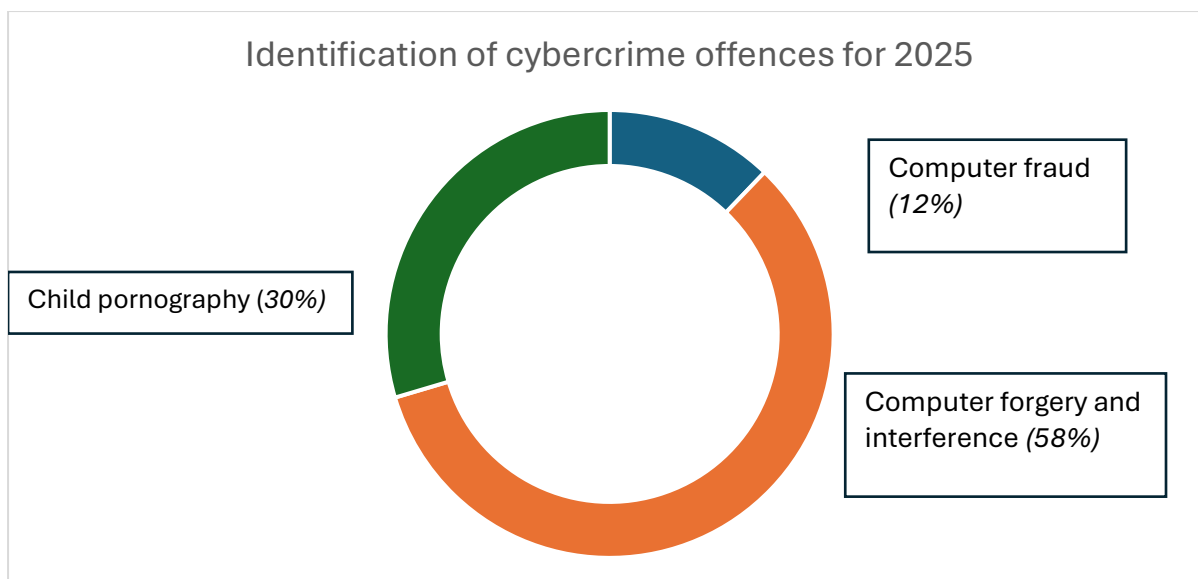
- **45 cases** for "Production and unlawful possession of military weapons and ammunition", Article 278 of the Criminal Code.
- **15 cases** for "Trafficking of weapons and ammunition", Article 278/a, with 2 cases finalized.

Compared to 2024, when 74cases were handled with special investigative methods, there is a decrease of 14 proactive investigations.

Cybercrime

Statistical data:

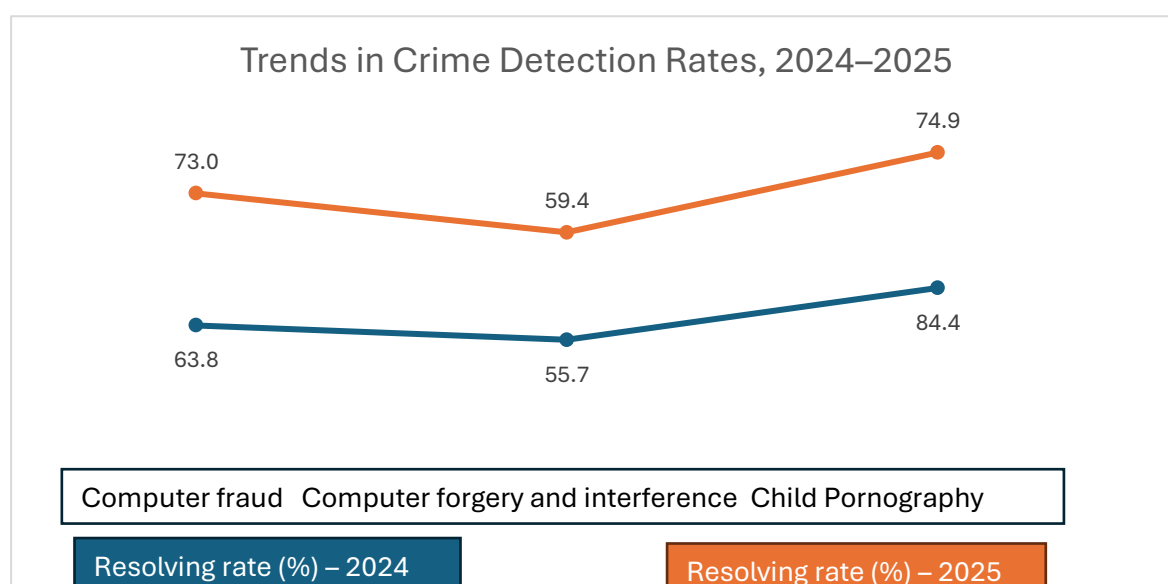
During 2025, **1308** criminal offenses were identified nationwide, of which **859** offenses (65.67%) were resolved, with a total of **1006** perpetrators. Of those 97 perpetrators have been arrested, 20 detained, 734 have been prosecuted at large, and 155 perpetrators have left.

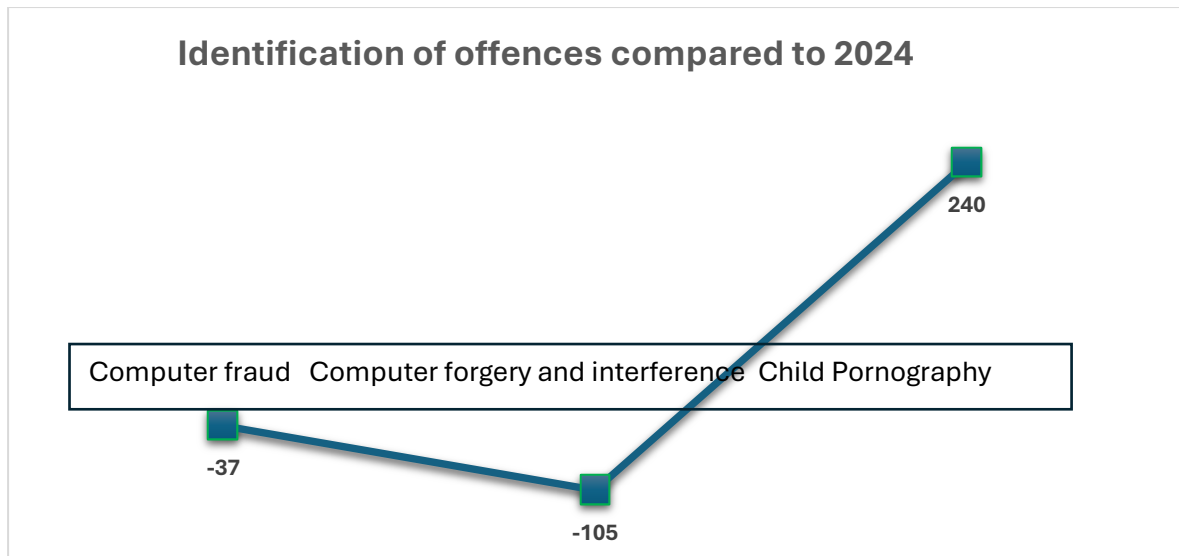


Compared to 2024, when **1210 criminal offenses** were identified, it turns out that in 2025 **98** more offenses were identified, which constitutes an **increase of 8.1%**, while **the crime-solving rate has increased by 5.67%**.

According to the types of criminal offenses:

- **Computer fraud:** 159 offenses, 116 detected (72.96%), 37 offenses less than 2024;
- **Forgery and computer interventions:** 762 offenses, 453 detected (59.45%), a decrease of 105 offenses compared to 2024;
- **Underage pornography:** 387 offenses, 290 detected (74.94%), an increase of 240 offenses compared to 2024.





The decline in computer fraud is linked to successful police operations and awareness campaigns. The decrease in computer interventions is the result of cooperation with Meta and TikTok, while the increase in offenses in the field of child pornography is related to the intensification of educational and awareness-raising activities.

Also, the Directorate has finalized **65 National Operations and 4 International Operations**, strengthening its investigative capacity.

Joint investigation teams

The Cybercrime Investigation Directorate **is pursuing 5 Joint Investigative Teams in the field of cybercrimes** in cooperation with Austrian, Spanish, German, Swedish and Italian partners.

Terrorist financing

The Counter-terrorism Directorate reports that during 2025, there was 1 (one) case referred related to the offence of “Financing of terrorism” as a parallel investigation for the offence of “Incitement, public calls and propaganda for the commitment of terrorist acts”, art. 232/a of Criminal Code.

**As for other track record provided from the Albanian State Police on drugs, they are presented in the session of “Cooperation in the field of drugs”, whereas statistics on money laundering, are presented in the following point of the agenda related to Financial investigations*

Financial investigations: financial investigations when dealing with organised crime and money laundering.

Statistics and activity of the General Prosecution Office related to asset investigation and money laundering

During the year 2025, the **General Prosecutor's Office** continued to prioritize the fight against money laundering and the development of financial investigations within the work of the general jurisdiction prosecution offices, with particular focus on enhancing the effectiveness of criminal prosecution, improving the quality of investigations, and strengthening tangible results in identifying, seizing, and confiscating criminally derived assets. In this context, the institution undertook sustainable organizational and procedural measures to ensure a unified and professional approach to handling complex money laundering cases.

At the same time, structures within the General Prosecutor's Office continued to monitor the implementation of General Instruction No. 10/2020 "On administrative and procedural measures to enhance effectiveness in combating money laundering, financial crimes, and terrorist financing, as well as in asset investigations within general jurisdiction prosecution offices," as amended. This strengthened prosecutors' orientation toward conducting parallel financial and asset investigations from the early stages of criminal proceedings, particularly for offenses generating substantial illicit financial gains. This approach was further reinforced by General Instruction No. 4/2025 abovementioned, which reconfirmed institutional priorities in combating crime for 2025, emphasizing money laundering, asset confiscation, and the effective use of legal instruments available to the prosecution.

- To support the work of money laundering units and prosecutors handling such cases, the General Prosecutor appointed, by Order No. 111 dated 05.11.2025, an accounting expert as Head of the Expertise Sector.

- At the institutional level, the General Prosecutor's Office has been actively engaged in national mechanisms against money laundering, contributing to the work of the Coordinating Committee against Money Laundering and its technical subgroups aimed at improving the exchange and use of information in investigations. This engagement was also reflected in contributions to the National Risk Assessment Action Plan, as well as in implementing recommendations from international bodies, including FATF and MONEYVAL, within the framework of preparations for the sixth MONEYVAL evaluation round for the period 2025–2026. The General Prosecutor's Office demonstrated full institutional commitment in the 6th round of Albania's MONEYVAL evaluation, ensuring the collection and submission of reliable data, concrete cases with seizures, confiscations, and convictions, as well as maintaining continuous communication with the Financial Intelligence Agency, MONEYVAL experts, and subordinate prosecution structures to strengthen reporting quality and achieve concrete results in combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

In this context, through Circular No. 683/1 dated 30.04.2025, the General Prosecutor directed the general jurisdiction prosecution offices to enhance investigative efficiency and criminal prosecution of money laundering offenses, as well as to ensure complete, accurate, and up-to-date reporting in the e-Presto system for all relevant criminal proceedings and asset investigations.

Regarding infrastructure and data management, in the absence of CMS implementation, the General Prosecutor's Office undertook concrete initiatives to improve the existing **e-Presto** system to enable the collection and analysis of detailed statistics on money laundering cases

and asset investigations under the anti-mafia law. Through internal acts such as General Instruction No. 3 dated 30.04.2025, which amended Instruction No. 10/2020, and circulars issued in 2025, procedures for entering, updating, and using data from first-instance prosecution offices were standardized to increase transparency and the quality of institutional reporting.

Continuous investment in human capacity has been crucial in this process. The General Prosecutor's Office supported the participation of prosecutors and judicial police officers in a series of specialized trainings organized by the School of Magistrates and international partners, focused on money laundering investigations, asset recovery, complex financial crimes, and challenges related to virtual assets. These activities contributed to enhancing professional expertise and practical skills for handling complex financial cases.

As part of capacity-building efforts, the following training activities were conducted:

- On 28–29 January 2025, OSCE organized the workshop “On Asset Recovery and Extended Confiscation in Albania” within the project “Strengthening Asset Recovery Efforts in the OSCE Region,” attended by 13 prosecutors and 2 judicial police officers.
- On 24 February 2025, the School of Magistrates, with support from the Council of Europe, conducted training on “Application of ECtHR Jurisprudence in Corruption, Money Laundering, and Terrorist Financing Cases.”
- On 23 June 2025, in Tirana, OSCE, in cooperation with the Italian Police Liaison Office and the Regional Chief of Guardia di Finanza for the Western Balkans, organized training on “Investigating Money Laundering through Cryptocurrencies,” attended by prosecutors and representatives of law enforcement structures.
- Other continuous training activities organized by the School of Magistrates included:
- On 13 May 2025, training on “Figures of the Offense of Money Laundering,” attended by 9 prosecutors and 2 judicial police officers.
- On 20 May 2025, training on “The Anti-Mafia Law: Practical Application,” attended by 20 prosecutors and 1 judicial police officer.
- On 19 May 2025, training on “Investigating Money Laundering Offenses and Their Complexity,” attended by 21 prosecutors and 10 judicial police officers.

Inter-institutional and international cooperation represents another key pillar of the General Prosecutor's Office activities in the fight against crime.

During the 9-months of 2025, following requests received from foreign authorities, 14 asset verification requests were addressed with the State Police within the framework of criminal investigations.

As a result of this consistent institutional approach, during the first 9 months of 2025, there has been an intensification of criminal prosecution in the field of money laundering, with 158 new proceedings registered involving 18 defendants, 13 cases sent to trial involving 30 defendants, and 17 convictions issued. Compared with the same period in 2024, this represents an 8.96% increase in registered proceedings, a 28.57% increase in registered defendants, a 62.50% increase in cases sent to trial, and a 76.47% increase in defendants sent to trial. These indicators

reflect the ongoing efforts of the General Prosecutor's Office to ensure an effective criminal response in line with European standards in combating money laundering.

Three successful cases of preventive seizure are highlighted, based on the Criminal Procedure Code, involving significant land plots that were proceeds of domestic criminal offenses related to document falsification, where perpetrators had alienated the land to secure greater profits.

Regarding asset seizures under the Anti-Mafia Law, there were types of seizures of third-party assets, including those of a legal entity, obtained from the criminal activities of relatives in trafficking and organized crime. The seized assets involved substantial values, including those in the construction sector.

Financial and asset investigations for seizure and confiscation of assets:

i) During the 9 months of 2025, in general jurisdiction prosecution offices, within the framework of investigating the offense "Laundering of Proceeds of Crime or Criminal Activity" under Article 287 of the Criminal Code and related offenses, in accordance with Articles 36, 274, 210, 190 et seq. of the Criminal Procedure Code, and pursuant to Article 3/1 et seq. of Law No. 10192 dated 03.12.2009 "On the Prevention and Combating of Organized Crime, Trafficking, Corruption and Other Crimes through Preventive Asset Measures," the courts ordered: Confiscation of criminal assets in 9 cases and seizure of criminal assets in 14 cases.

ii) In implementation of Article 3/1 et seq. of Law No. 10192 dated 03.12.2009, within the framework of asset investigations, prosecutors registered 153 property verifications during the 9 months of 2025.

Statistics and activity of the Special Prosecution Office related to asset investigation and money laundering

Data on asset investigations for 2025, as well as criminal proceedings for the criminal offence of money laundering:

1. Within the framework of the Anti-Mafia Law, 31 asset investigations were registered, namely 18 asset referrals and 13 asset proceedings.
2. Within the framework of the Anti-Mafia Law, the Special Court against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) issued 5 seizure decisions against the assets of subjects linked to criminal offences involving organized crime.
3. Within the framework of the Anti-Mafia Law, SPAK issued 4 confiscation decisions against the assets of subjects linked to criminal offences involving organized crime.
4. Within the framework of the Criminal Code, SPAK issued 9 preventive seizure decisions against the assets of subjects linked to criminal offences involving organized crime.
5. The Special Prosecutors registered 32 criminal proceedings for the criminal offence of "Laundering of the proceeds of criminal offences or criminal activity," provided for under Article 287 of the Criminal Code.

During 2025, investigators of the Financial Investigation Sector participated in the following training:

- 21–24 January – “Financial Investigation Course,” organized by the NCA and the British Embassy, attended by 12 financial investigators.
- 27–28 January – Training on “Computer Evidence and Data Analysis,” organized by the Expertise Sector within SPAK, attended by 12 financial investigators.
- 24–26 March – Training on “Criminal Financing, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery – New EMPACT Cycle 2026–2030,” organized by EU4FAST, attended by 1 financial investigator.
- 26 March – Workshop on “Mutual Legal Assistance,” organized by the NCA, attended by 2 financial investigators.
- 10–11 April – Training on “Electoral Crimes,” organized by the Council of Europe, attended by 12 financial investigators.
- 23–24 April – Simulation Exercise IO 5 “Legal persons, misuse for money laundering and terrorist financing, and beneficial owners,” organized by GIZ, attended by 2 financial investigators.
- 12–15 May – Study visit “Strengthening the SPO,” organized by CILC, attended by 1 financial investigator.
- 18–21 May – Study visit “Investigative capacities for digital assets in the Western Balkans,” organized by the NCA and the British Embassy, attended by 1 financial investigator.
- 24–26 June – Training and workshop “Interviewing Strategy in Financial Investigations” and “Strategic Planning and Asset Recovery in Financial Investigations,” organized by CILC, attended by 12 financial investigators.
- 9–10 July – Regional workshop “Cross-border financial investigation of crimes involving digital payments and virtual assets,” organized by the Council of Europe, attended by 1 financial investigator.
- 06–11 October – Training on “Financial Investigation – Phase 2,” organized by the NCA and the British Embassy, attended by 12 financial investigators.
- 13–15 October – Training on “Covert surveillance, house searches and interviewing,” organized by CILC, attended by 12 financial investigators.
- 21–23 October – Training on “Analyst’s Notebook,” organized by CILC and Data-Expert Academy, attended by 11 financial investigators.
- 21–22 October – Workshop “Matching data software in police investigations,” organized by the French Embassy, attended by 1 financial investigator.
- 17–19 November – Training on “Tax Inspectors Without Borders,” organized by UNDP and OECD, attended by 1 financial investigator.
- 5–6 November – Training on “Specialized training on the investigation and prosecution of crypto-asset crimes for SPAK judges and prosecutors,” organized by EUROJUST, attended by 2 financial investigators.

Statistics provided from the Albanian State Police related to money laundering

The Albanian State Police, over the years, has taken steps by clearly defining objectives and priorities in the fight against organized crime, criminal money laundering networks in order to

target and seize any illegal economic asset deriving from criminal activity. These objectives and priorities are foreseen in:

- “The National Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Strategy 2024-2030”, and its Action Plan, approved by Decision no. 1, dated 25.07.2024 by the Coordination Committee of the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.
- The Cross-Sectoral Strategy Against Organized Crime and Serious Crimes 2021-2025 and its Action Plan 2023-2025, approved by DCM no. 1140, dated 24.12.2020, amended by DCM no. 54, dated 01.02.2023.

In the framework of inter-institutional cooperation, in the fight against money laundering, a series of cooperation agreements have been signed between institutions such as the Financial Intelligence Agency, Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets, Ministry of Finance, General Prosecutor's Office.

In implementation of the National Strategy against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, the objectives set therein, in an approach based on the Risk identified in the National Money Laundering Risk Analysis, the State Police has intensified the operational activity and inter-institutional and international cooperation in order to prevent, identify and crack down on money laundering activities generated from organized crime, focusing on the most exposed sectors to this phenomenon.

The real estate and the construction sectors are among the most affected. The State Police has intensified cooperation with other law enforcement institutions and supervisory authorities, increasing the number of investigations carried out and decisions on seizures of criminal assets. Investigations have been carried out in the framework of suspicious transactions, in values above the permitted threshold, verifying the origin of income, the finances of persons with criminal evidence and the assets they have invested, investments made in the construction sector by persons seemingly without sufficient income have been investigated. Legal entities, telematic businesses, and shell companies used for money laundering in the country have also been investigated. As a result, criminal schemes designed to blend illicit funds with legitimate economic activities have been dismantled.

The State Police has increased technical and investigative capacities in the field of property investigations, financial analysis and virtual assets, in cooperation with international partners, through continuous training of employees.

The number of electronic accesses to databases of interest for financial investigation has been further expanded, significantly increasing the speed of investigation, effectiveness and preservation of investigative secrecy.

The number of criminal investigations parallel to property investigations has increased, using data from criminal investigation to track, seize and confiscate assets of criminal origin.

In the framework of this commitment, the State Police has strengthened the cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office, the Financial Intelligence Agency, Europol, Interpol and international

partner agencies, by exchanging information and coordinating actions against criminal groups with cross-border activity.

Data for 2025 in the field of money laundering

During 2025, a total of 775 cases were referred by the State Police structures in the field of money laundering and property investigations, in the framework of criminal offenses subject to the work of the Sector for the Investigation of Money Laundering and Criminal Assets, with **957 perpetrators**.

According to the legal basis, the following are recorded:

- As for the Article 287 of the Criminal Code, there are **458** cases, with 598 perpetrators, the resolving rate is 99.78%;
- As for Law 10192, dated 3.12.2009, as amended, there are **317 cases**, with 359 cases, the resolving rate is 100%.

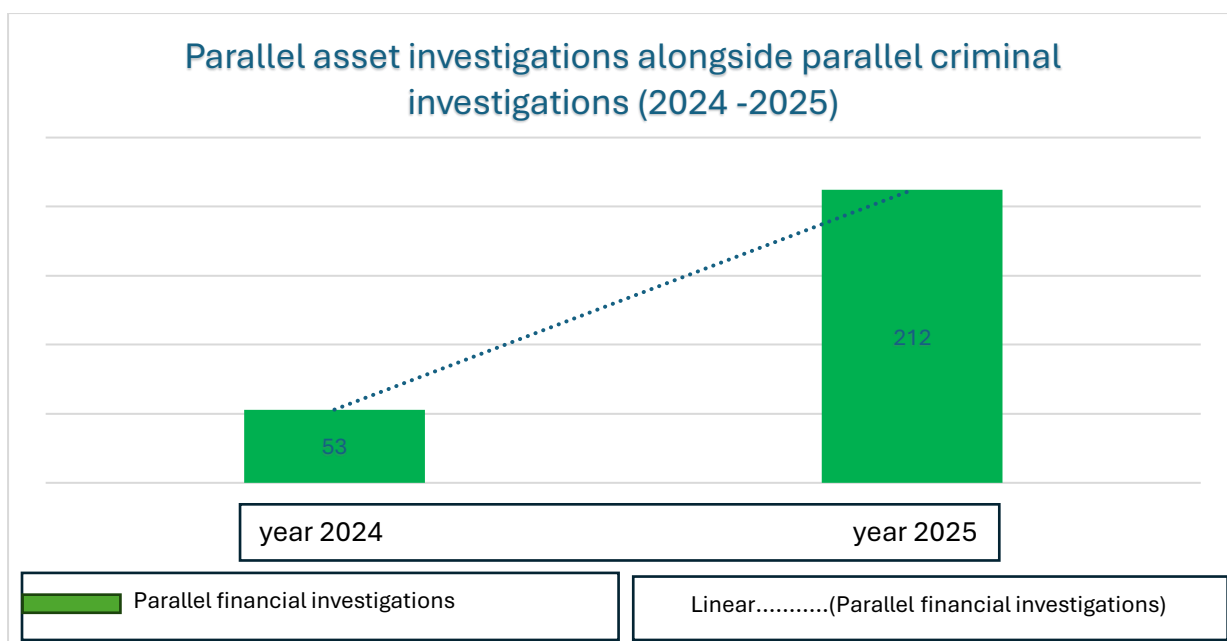
In the context of referrals made to the prosecution, there were 568 referrals in the field of money laundering and asset investigations, of which 207 were parallel referrals.

Property investigations parallel to criminal investigation

During 2025, **212 property investigations were carried out in parallel with criminal investigations**, of which:

- 5 prosecution proceedings (Article 287 of the Criminal Code + Law 10192);
- 207 referrals made, mainly Law 10192 + Article 287 of the Criminal Code).

Compared to 2024 (53 parallel investigations), **there is an increase in the number of parallel investigations with 159 cases**.



For 2025, the central and regional Money Laundering Investigation structures handled 326 cases through **proactive investigation**. Compared to 2024, when 318 cases were proactively investigated, this reflects an increase of 8 cases.

During 2025, a total of 568 cases were referred related to Article 287 of the Criminal Code and Law 10192, dated 3.12.2009, as amended. As a basis for starting proactive investigations in the field of money laundering and financial investigations, the following have served:

- information received from international partners, about 27% of cases;
- information received from the FIA about 24% of the cases;
- information from confidential sources about 22% of cases;
- open sources of information 2% of cases;
- police information and domestic intelligence 18% of cases;
- mutual legal assistance (letters received from the General Prosecutor's Office) 2% of cases;
- denunciations, reports and complaints about 5% of cases.

The State Police remain fully committed to the fight against money laundering and the pursuit of the financial resources of organized crime, as one of the main pillars for guaranteeing security, strengthening order and economic transparency in the country.

***Asset seizure and confiscations:** track record in seizure and final confiscation of assets, Asset Recovery Office.*

During 2025, a total of EUR **17,936,029** were seized and confiscated by the Albanian State Police structures, which do not include 115 assets that are still not valued by Agency of Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets (AASCA), assets derived from criminal activity.

Divided according to the legal basis, as follows:

EUR 16,896,687 of assets derived from criminal activity were seized.

Specifically:

- As for the offence of "Laundering the proceeds of a criminal offense or criminal activity" (Article 287), assets in the amount of 8,150,722 euros were seized. This value does not include 44 seized assets, for which the value cannot be determined, as the determining authority is the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets. (AASCA).
- Pursuant to Law No. 10192/2009, assets worth 8,745,965 euros were seized.
- CASH seized during the exercise of controls (Article 287 and 287/b) amounting to about EUR 3,335,320.
- 1,039,342 euros and 22 assets still unassessed by AASCA, were confiscated and have passed in favor of the state in 5 cases (4 court decisions).
- Confiscations according to Law no. 10192, dated 03.12.2009, "On the prevention and suppression of organized crime, trafficking, corruption and other crimes, through preventive measures against property", as amended: in 3 cases, 1,039,342 euros and 12 assets still not assessed by (AASCA).
- Confiscations according to Article 287 of the Criminal Code, for the criminal offense "Laundering of the proceeds of a criminal offense or criminal activity": in 2 cases (1 court decision), 10 assets still not assessed by (AASCA).

Activity of the Asset Recovery Directorate

The Directorate of Asset Recovery has had exchanges of requests with the ARO of the European Union, the CARIN NETWORK, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, regarding the tracking, identification and recovery of criminal assets.

During 2025, there were a total of 81 requests, of which 52 were incoming requests and 29 were outgoing requests.

The following types of assets have been identified in these requests:

- **52 incoming requests:** 27 real estate, 37 vehicles, 215 bank accounts and 17 businesses.
- **29 outgoing requests:** 19 real estate, 9 vehicles, 55 bank accounts and 13 businesses.

On 13-17 January 2025, representatives of ARO in Albania were part of the "A.S.S.E.T Project – Tax Enforcement Force of Search and Confiscation of Criminal Assets", organized by the European Economic and Financial Crime Unit at EUROPOL, in The Hague-Netherlands, where 28 countries of the European Union and non-member states took part in. During this operation, the ARO specialists at the General Directorate of State Police contributed to the further development of investigations in two cases, one of which was linked to Italy and the other to Iceland. As a result, the following were identified:

- 10 residential / business buildings in Albania;
- 14 vehicles registered in the name of suspects, family members or persons related to them.
- 13 bank accounts registered in the name of these citizens.

The Financial Analysis and ARO specialists at the General Directorate of State Police participated in advanced trainings in 2025 on conducting parallel financial investigations alongside criminal investigations of offenses generating criminal proceeds, organized by the OSCE or OPDAT.

- Operational Meeting in the framework of the "A.S.S.E.T Project – Task Force for the Implementation of the Search and Confiscation of Criminal Assets" organized by Europol on 12-17 January 2025.
- On January 28-30, 2025, it was organized by EUR4LEA2 "Training for the Mercure Analytical Program Part I".
- Training on "Financial Investment and Non-Proliferation", organized by RACVIAC, on 09 – 12 June 2025, in Zagreb, Croatia.
- On 18 - 26 June, the Financial Analysis Sector and ARO have developed for the Local Director of Police on "Financial investigation parallel to the criminal offense".
- Training on Cross-border Financial Investigation of crimes involving digital payments and virtual assets, organized by the Council of Europe, held in Strasbourg on 09-10 July 2025.
- Regional meeting "Asset Division Agreements and Cooperation between Asset Recovery Offices – formal and informal exchange of information and evidence" on 23 September 2025, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- On 07-09 October 2025, a training for the Mercure Analytical Program Part II was organized by EUR4LEA2.

Benefits from confiscated assets

Throughout 2025, the Criminal Police Department applied with four projects to the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets and benefited from the Special Fund for Crime Prevention. The projects approved are:

The total amount that the State Police has utilized from funds derived from criminal assets, which have been confiscated and are administered by the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets, is €1,105,000.

The distribution by years is as follows:

During 2024, a total amount of 385,000 euros has been used and allocated for the following procurements:

Assets under the administration of AASCA by type, time period January 2025 – November 2025				
No.	Category	Description		Total
1	Immovable assets	Apartments / Buildings / Premises / Parking spaces / Garages	Seized	251
			Confiscated	5
		Land plots / Building land / Arable land / Forests / Pastures	Seized	57
			Confiscated	19
2	Movable assets	Vehicles / Motor vehicles	Seized	26
			Confiscated	1
3	Commercial entities (natural and legal persons) / Assets of the commercial entity		Seized	37
			Confiscated	0
4	Bank accounts / Monetary amounts		Seized	284
			Confiscated	4
5	Material evidence		Seized/Confiscated	400
TOTAL				1,084
No.	Assets under administration during 2025	Total (1, 084)		
1	Seized	655		
2	Confiscated	29		
3	Material evidence	400		

Purchase of technical equipment for the provision of evidence and technical equipment for the performance of special operations, in the amount of 120,000 euros;
Purchase of 13 vehicles, with a total value of about 265,000 euros.

During 2025, a total amount of EUR 720,000 has been used and allocated for the following procurements:

- Tactical equipment for the Special Operations Force, in the amount of EUR 50,000;
- Forensic equipment and software, in the amount of 50,000 euros, intended for strengthening investigative capacities in the field of cybercrime;
- Purchase of 10 vehicles, with a total value of about 320,000 euros, for operational use by the Special Operations Force, in the Department for Crime Investigation;
- Equipment for the incineration of narcotics and relevant technical assistance, intended for the safe disposal of seized narcotic substances, in the amount of EUR 300,000.

Statistics on seizure and confiscation of assets provided from the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets for the period January-November 2025

Fight against trafficking in human beings: preventive measures, track record, national referral mechanism and actions to support victims and potential victims.

The fight against trafficking in persons continues to be one of the key priorities of the Albanian Government and of all other structures with duties and responsibilities in this field. During the reporting period, the **Ministry of Internal Affairs/Anti-Trafficking Sector** has undertaken and coordinated a number of activities aimed at improving the legal framework, strengthening anti-trafficking preventive measures, implementing the National Referral Mechanism, and providing support to victims and potential victims of trafficking.

In terms of the implementation of the legal and institutional framework:

The implementation of the National Action Plan for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons 2024–2025 (approved by the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 458, dated 10 July 2024) has continued smoothly. The Plan reflects the commitment of the Albanian Government, state and non-state institutions, and anti-trafficking actors operating within public and non-public structures to minimize the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, in its capacity as the coordinating institution, in cooperation with the responsible and contributing institutions identified in the Action Plan and in partnership with national and international organizations operating in the field of anti-trafficking, drafted and published the monitoring report on the implementation of the National Action Plan for the period July–December 2024, as well as the subsequent report for the period January–June 2025. Currently, the process of drafting the annual report for the period January–December 2025 has commenced. Following the drafting and approval of the monitoring report, the document will be published on the official website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Below are listed some of the main achievements in the implementation of the Action Plan: On 13 April 2025, the Memorandum of Understanding “**On cooperation procedures for the identification of cases of forced labour and trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation**” was signed by the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Economy and Innovation.

The purpose of this Memorandum is to strengthen preventive measures for proactive identification, as well as the protection of victims of forced labour and trafficking. The main focus of the Memorandum is the implementation of the principle of legality in prohibiting forced labour, the protection of personal data, respect for the right to freedom of movement, social protection of labour, non-discrimination, and the protection of the best interests of the child.

Through this document, the responsibilities and commitments of each party are defined in the context of joint efforts for the prevention, proactive identification, and protection of victims of trafficking, as well as the regulation of relations and modalities among the structures involved. The Memorandum contributes to the establishment of close cooperation among the signatory institutions, with the aim of avoiding delays in information exchange and undertaking joint actions to prevent and identify cases of labour exploitation.

By Order of the Prime Minister No. 94, dated 27 June 2025, **the establishment of Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees** in all 12 regions of the country was approved, with the aim of supporting and coordinating efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings at local and regional level.

The Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees are mandated to plan, coordinate, and implement measures related to:

- Preventing trafficking in human beings through awareness-raising campaigns and educational activities;
- Early identification of potential victims of trafficking through the training of local staff and cooperation with the community;
- Promoting cross-border cooperation in the fight against trafficking;
- Developing programs for the management of emergency cases;
- Ensuring the protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration of victims of trafficking, in cooperation with relevant institutions and organizations;
- Exchanging information and data among institutions for the identification and criminal prosecution of trafficking networks;
- Monitoring the local trafficking situation and providing periodic reporting to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other central structures.

In implementation of the above-mentioned Order, Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees and Technical Task Forces have been established in each institution of the Regional Prefect. In order to ensure the proper functioning of the Committees, the respective regulations for each Regional Committee have been drafted. In October, the Regional Committees prepared the calendar for the development of awareness-raising activities in schools, meetings with the community, and the organization of exhibitions in schools, etc. Members of the Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees, the Technical Task Forces, and national partner organizations operating in the regions participated in these activities.

By **Council of Ministers Decision (DCM) No. 772, dated 19 December 2025**, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the protection of victims and potential victims of trafficking were approved. The SOPs for the protection of victims of trafficking aim to provide a clear, harmonized, and functional framework for all state and non-state institutional actors involved in addressing this complex and sensitive phenomenon.

The SOPs define the steps to be followed and establish a clear division of responsibilities among the actors involved at all stages of the process, from the initial identification of a potential case to long-term support and the reintegration of the victim into society. These procedures are built on the principle of respect for human rights and place the victim at the center of action, ensuring a comprehensive approach that is gender and age-sensitive and tailored to the individual needs of each case.

They aim not only to prevent trafficking, but also to ensure an effective and coordinated response for the identification, protection, assistance, assisted voluntary return, and reintegration of victims and potential victims of trafficking, regardless of whether they are Albanian or foreign nationals, and irrespective of whether they are identified within or outside the territory of the Republic of Albania.

The procedures respond to the need for a sustainable institutional system that guarantees that no victim or potential victim remains without assistance, and that each institution acts in a coordinated and standardized manner, without overlaps or gaps in responsibilities. At the same time, the SOPs represent an important step toward aligning Albania's regulatory framework and practice with European Union standards, in particular with EU Directive 2011/36/EU, as amended by EU Directive (EU) 2024/1712, "On preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims," as well as with the ongoing recommendations of national and international reports assessing the institutional response to trafficking in human beings in Albania.

In their content and structure, the procedures take into account the need for the continuous improvement of existing mechanisms, particularly with regard to capacities for formal identification, investigation, psychosocial assistance, criminal prosecution of perpetrators, and support for victims on their path toward a new and secure life.

Following the approval of the Standard Operating Procedures, the Ministry of Internal Affairs disseminated them for information and implementation to the line ministries and the structures responsible for their enforcement. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, in cooperation with the structures responsible for the implementation of the procedures and with the support of partners, will conduct training sessions in all 12 regions of the country with frontline professionals, with a particular focus on the identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking.

By Order of the Prime Minister No. 114, dated 26 August 2025, the Inter-Institutional Working Group (IIWG) was established for the drafting of the National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons and its Action Plan. In implementation of the above-mentioned Order, two meetings of the Inter-Institutional Working Group were held on 10 November and 23 December 2025. The deadline for the approval of the National Strategy and its Action Plan is envisaged for the third four-month period of 2026.

The vision of this National Strategy is to build a comprehensive, integrated, and proactive response to trafficking in human beings, strengthening prevention, early identification and specialized protection of victims, the effective prosecution of perpetrators, as well as the development of sustainable partnerships.

The National Strategy and its Action Plan aim to provide a comprehensive and sustainable framework for the prevention of and fight against trafficking in human beings, through a human rights-based, victim-centered, and results-oriented approach. The document is grounded in an analysis of current risks and case typologies, institutional experience in implementing national

referral and coordination mechanisms, and the need to strengthen the integrated response of state institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other relevant mechanisms.

The Strategy integrates prevention, protection and assistance for victims, effective prosecution of perpetrators, and the strengthening of domestic and international partnerships, reflecting the recommendations of international monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including GRETA recommendations, the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Progress Reports, as well as the findings of the monitoring reports of the National Action Plan 2024–2025.

At the same time, the Strategy aims to enhance inter-institutional, regional, and international cooperation, increase the professional capacities of the institutions involved, and ensure coherence with broader policies in the fields of justice, employment, social protection, migration, and children’s rights. The overall objectives of the Strategy will be implemented through specific objectives, concrete measures, and measurable indicators, structured around four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership.

In the area of prevention and public awareness:

Building on a positive tradition established over the years, the Ministry of Internal Affairs undertook the initiative to designate October as the “**Month of the Fight against Trafficking in Persons**” and, in cooperation with state institutions and partner organizations, organized awareness-raising and sensitization activities in all 12 regions of the country aimed at preventing trafficking in human beings. These activities sought to draw the attention of all state and non-state structures to the importance of joint engagement in the fight against trafficking in persons, as well as to convey messages on the risks posed by trafficking and on the channels and forms for increasing public awareness, in particular among vulnerable groups. The activities carried out throughout the month mainly focused on:

- Forums and discussion groups with professionals, students, and community representatives;
- Awareness-raising activities and information sessions with students from secondary and lower secondary schools, university students, community representatives, representatives of state and non-state structures, psychologists, and social workers;
- Regional exhibitions featuring works by students from secondary and lower secondary schools;
- Awareness meetings on the prevention of trafficking in persons and irregular migration with police officers, staff of the State Social Service, municipal social service employees, education and health system staff, psychologists, social workers, representatives of the Roma and Egyptian communities, business representatives, etc.;
- Awareness-raising marches at regional level;
- Distribution of informational and awareness-raising materials related to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.

In the area of inter-institutional cooperation and coordination, and support for victims and potential victims of trafficking:

The implementation of the **Agreement on the functioning of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)** for victims and potential victims of trafficking, signed in June 2023 and expanded with two new members in December 2024, continued. During the reporting period, three NRM meetings were held (on 3 July, 29 September, and 23 December during which NRM members also participated in the meeting of the Inter-Institutional Working Group for the drafting of the National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons and its Action Plan).

- On 3 July, the draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), prepared by the Inter-Institutional Working Group established by Prime Minister's Order No. 243, dated 24 December 2024, was presented. The comments and suggestions of the NRM members were reflected in the draft document.
- On 29 September, discussions were held on the coordination of activities among NRM members for the organization of the Anti-Trafficking Month; the monitoring report on the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons for the period January–June 2025 was approved; and the report on the implementation of the NRM Work Plan was agreed upon. In May, the Anti-Trafficking Sector prepared a questionnaire for NRM members regarding the prevention of the exploitation of foreign nationals and children for labour. Following the submission of contributions by NRM members, a report on the results of the questionnaire was prepared. The report contains a summary of responses, findings, and recommendations aimed at improving work in addressing issues requiring intervention. This report will also serve as a baseline for the drafting of the Action Plan of the Strategy.
- On 23 December, NRM members participated in the meeting of the Inter-Institutional Working Group for the drafting of the National Strategy against Trafficking in Persons and its Action Plan. During the meeting, discussions focused on the vision, objectives, and measures, and proposals were made for the establishment of small working groups with state and non-state actors that should contribute to the drafting of the document.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and with the support of GIZ, in implementation of the National Action Plan for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons 2024–2025 and the EU4FAST project, **conducted four training sessions with healthcare service staff**. Approximately 100 healthcare professionals (doctors, head nurses, psychologists, and social workers) participated in these trainings, which focused on the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 499, dated 29 August 2018) and on addressing mental health issues affecting victims and potential victims of trafficking. The trainings were held in: Shkodër (5–6 March), Vlorë (27–28 March), Pogradec (12–13 November), and Durrës (18–19 November 2025).

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, in cooperation with the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights and with the support of the OSCE, **organized meetings with members of Regional Committees and Technical Tables, as well as with child protection workers**, respectively in: Shkodër (11–12 March), Vlorë (19–20 March), Durrës (26 March), Lezhë (5 June), Korçë (11 June), Fier (17 June), Elbasan (15 October), Durrës (24 October), Shkodër (31 October), Korçë (7 November), Vlorë (12 November), and Kukës (20 November). The purpose of these meetings was to identify challenges encountered in the most concerning forms of trafficking, such as child trafficking and the exploitation of foreign nationals, to strengthen

inter-institutional cooperation in addressing trafficking in human beings at local level, and to coordinate support services for victims, ensuring a comprehensive and effective response.

Based on a **decision of the Inter-Institutional Committee on Measures against Organized Crime**, since November 2025 the **Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets** has been supporting the organization “Different & Equal” by providing a confiscated immovable property a residential building consisting of two floors plus one underground level (ground floor with an area of 91.6 m² plus a veranda of 17.9 m²; first floor with an area of 91.6 m² plus a veranda of 22.7 m²; underground floor with an area of 40.2 m²) for use in the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking. In addition, the “Vatra” Psycho-Social Center has been supported by the State Social Service and the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets with personal items and furnishings for beneficiaries accommodated in the shelter.

The **Albanian State Police**, considering as a priority the fight against irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, in cooperation with partners, has enabled the establishment and operation of:

1- "Joint Task Force on Preventing and Cracking Down on Criminal Activities in the Field of Migration" with the authorities of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The purpose of this Task Force is to strengthen cooperation to identify and crack down on criminal activities related to irregular migration, through verification and exchange of information, in real time through secure communication channels. The Task Force, led by the Border and Migration Police, consists of two officers of the Border and Migration Police and one officer of the Criminal Police, as well as representatives from the British side, has been accommodated in the office at the Rinas Border Police Station and has been equipped with the necessary technical infrastructure for the realization of the tasks.

In this framework, the Working Group is working on the Action Plan for 2026, defining joint measures.

Results obtained in the framework of the Task-Force

Operation MAREEWUD

- Verification and exchange, in real time, of information on the identification of Albanian citizens.
- Analysis of information in order to identify in the field the risk areas, from which there are Albanian citizens who have left for Great Britain.
- Verifications in the databases available by the State Police for the involvement of persons in criminal activities in our country.
- Periodic, weekly information on the arrival of Albanian citizens in Great Britain and the number of asylum seekers (only figures and not personal data);
- Information from the British authorities on the modus operandi for the arrival of Albanian citizens in Great Britain;
- **Within the AL-UK Task Force**, British mobile phone numbers have been sent for verification and identification, which have resulted in communications for proceedings 101 and 177 of 2023 of the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Corruption and Organized Crime.

- **Information has been exchanged** to the British authorities through Europol regarding the Modus-Operant that are currently being used by criminal groups that deal with the trafficking of persons from Albania to the United Kingdom and persons who commit financial crimes.
- Two money laundering cases related to persons with a precedent in the United Kingdom **are being pursued for referral.**

Forgery of documents

Among the documents that are forged are identification documents, ID cards, passports and visas, which are carried out by people to avoid the penalties they have received in EU countries, by changing generalities and photographs, or they falsify entries and exits from the territory of the country, to avoid the terms of stay in EU countries.

The method used

The ways that forgers have used to carry out the falsification of documents have been by performing laser beam stamping, mechanical interventions (corrections), filling in the document from scratch, etc.

The "Joint Investigative Services Unit" with the U.S. authorities, a Unit which is under the authority of the Department of Criminal Police and attached to the Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Tirana. This Unit consists of 1 Head of Unit and 2 specialists.

Criminal proceedings in the field of irregular migration

JIT - Joint Operation "WHATNA", in the framework of **proceeding 11/2024 of the State Police and SPAK**, which is being pursued with the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) with **the United Kingdom**, for the criminal offenses "Laundering of the proceeds of a criminal offense", "Assistance for illegal border crossing" and "Structured criminal group", two agents of the Cover-up Investigation Sector have been deployed and it has become possible to hand over a controlled amount of money on behalf of the criminal group. The operation consists of cracking down on the phenomenon of "Money Laundering". Various procedural actions have been carried out. The investigation continues.

Criminal proceedings no.60/2023 in SPAK for the criminal offenses "Trafficking in weapons and ammunition" committed in cooperation, "Structured Criminal Group", in cooperation with partners of Great Britain. So far, information has been shared with the British side in view of this case, where 4 citizens have been arrested by the services of the Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime, 3 other citizens are being investigated. Various procedural actions have been carried out. The investigation continues.

Joint police operation conducted on 01.10.2025, within a Europol Task Force, with the participation of the Albanian, Colombian and Croatian Police, with the support of Eurojust, which enabled the cracking down of an international group dealing with human trafficking. The criminal network consisting mainly of Colombian nationals recruited and trafficked

women, for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in several European countries, including Croatia and Albania. As a result of the investigations, for a long time, the operation was concluded in a day of action, in Albania and Colombia and as a result:

- 17 people were arrested, 7 in Albania and 10 in Colombia
- 16 inspections of apartments and premises were carried out, in both countries
- 54 victims of trafficking were identified, women of South American origin.

Regarding the phenomenon of Trafficking in Human Beings in Albania, there is significant decrease in Albanian citizens who are trafficked to other countries. Meanwhile, there is increase in the cases of foreign citizens, who use Albania as a transit, staying for short periods in our country and who are used for prostitution or work. Specifically:

"Trafficking in adult persons", Article 110/a, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, during 2025, a total of 48 criminal offenses were identified, of which 48 were detected, **with** 100% detection. Compared to 2024, 6 more criminal offenses have been identified (42).

"Benefit or use of services provided by trafficked persons", Article 110/b, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, a total of 6 criminal offenses have been identified, of which 6 have been detected, with 100% detection. Compared to 2024, 1 more criminal offense has been identified (5).

"Actions that facilitate trafficking", Article 110/c, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, a total of 1 criminal offense has been identified, of which 1 has been detected, with 100% detection. Compared to 2024, 1 criminal offense with more (0) has been identified.

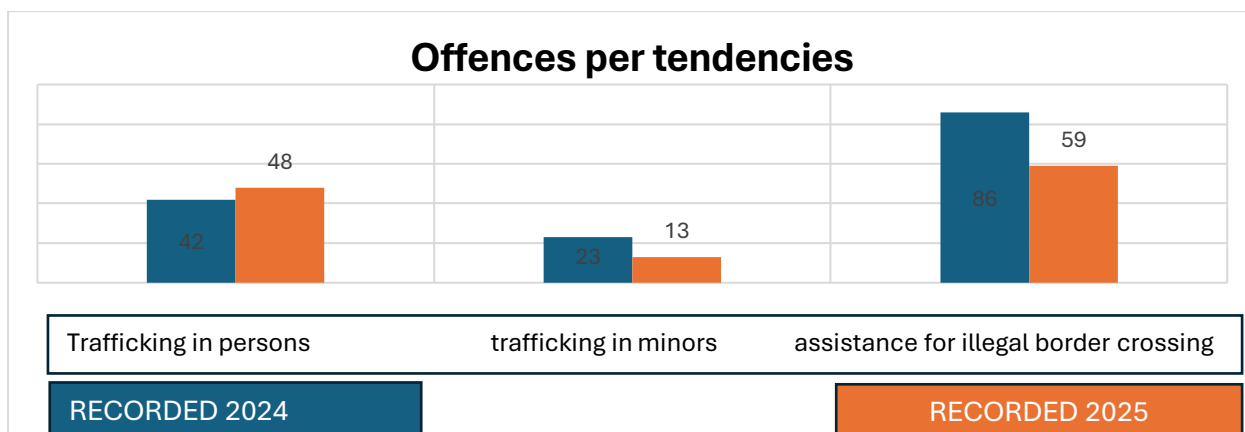
"Trafficking in minors", articles 128/b and 128/b-22, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, 13 criminal offenses have been identified, 12 have been detected, with a detection rate of 92.31%. Compared to 2024, 10 fewer criminal offenses have been identified (23).

"Assistance for illegal border crossing", Article 298, of the Criminal Code;

For this criminal offense, for 2025, 59 criminal offenses were identified, 56 were resolved, with 94.92% resolving rate. Compared to 2024, 27 fewer criminal offenses have been identified (86).

Article 298 "Providing assistance for illegal border crossing", **-20 police operations.**



COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF DRUGS

Focus on:

***Institutional, strategic and legal frameworks:** National drugs strategy, National Early Warning System and National Drugs Observatory, EU acquis alignment.*

National Drug Strategy

Regarding drug strategic framework, based on the repeated recommendations of the European Commission and the assessment conducted in October 2025 within the framework of Albania's EU accession obligations under Chapter 24 "Justice, Freedom and Security", it is evident that, despite the existence of several strategic documents addressing drug-related issues, such as the Strategy against Organized and Serious Crimes 2021–2025 and the Action Plan (new strategy 2030 under development), as well as the Action Plan for the Prevention, Treatment and Harm Reduction from Drugs 2023–2026, the need for a dedicated, comprehensive, and intersectoral national drugs strategy remains immediate.

As the current approach, relying on fragmented strategies and sectoral plans, does not provide a unified framework capable of ensuring coherence, effective coordination among institutions, and systematic monitoring of implementation. There is a clear need to adopt an overarching strategic document aligned with the EU Drugs Strategy 2021–2025 and its forthcoming update.

In this regard, a dedicated measure for the development of the National Drugs Strategy 2030 and its accompanying action plan is foreseen in the working plan for addressing the closing benchmarks under the EU integration process, specifically within Chapter 28, Subchapter "Public Health" (Cluster 2). This strategy will integrate all three core pillars supply reduction through law enforcement and judicial cooperation, demand reduction through prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, and harm reduction through mitigation of health and social risks, supported by cross-cutting themes such as international cooperation, research and innovation, and governance.

During this reporting period, steps are being taken to establish an intersectoral working group responsible for drafting the strategy and action plan. This group will bring together representatives from all relevant fields, including public health and social protection, law enforcement and justice, customs and border management, education, finance and economy, as well as local governance, forensic and toxicology expertise, and civil society actors.

The scope of the working group will focus on ensuring full alignment with the EU Drugs Strategy 2021–2025 and its forthcoming update, consolidating the pillars of supply reduction, demand reduction, and harm reduction into a single coherent framework, and defining governance and coordination mechanisms supported by clear monitoring indicators. This approach aims to guarantee effective implementation and timely progress toward meeting EU standards, while utilizing the current data and analyses produced by the National Drug Observatory to ensure evidence-based planning and compliance with European standards.

National Early Warning System

The National Early Warning System is operational within the Albanian State Police pursuant to the following orders:

1. Order No. 127, dated 26.07.2024, of the Minister of Interior, “On the establishment and functioning of the national early warning system on new psychotropic substances”.
2. Order No. 233, dated 05.12.2024, of the Minister of Interior, ‘On certain amendments to Order No. 47, dated 14.04.2023, approving the structure and staffing at the central and local levels, as well as the special structures of the State Police’, as amended, pertaining to the National Early Warning System.”

Throughout 2025, the National Early Warning System Unit was reinforced with the addition of three staff members, the Head of Unit and two specialists.

By Order no. 589, dated 18.04.2025 of the General Director of the State Police, the job descriptions regarding the functions of the Head of the NEWS Unit" and the Specialist of the NEWS Unit" were approved.

The unit aims to detect, test, share information on risk identification and assessment, prepare and support actions in response to health and social threats arising from new psychoactive substances.

During 2025, with the establishment of the contact point with the European Drugs Agency (EUDA), notifications were sent by this agency for 45 practices of new psychoactive substances, identified and categorized as such based on EU Regulation No. 2023/1322 and Council of Europe Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA. Any notification received for the identification of new psychoactive substances has been sent to the following structures:

- The National Agency for Drugs and Medical Devices;
- Toxicology Laboratory at the Institute of Forensic Medicine;
- Institute of Public Health, at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare;
- Customs Laboratory, at the General Directorate of Customs;

- The Pavilion of Clinical Toxicology, Addictology and Alcohol Addiction, at the University Hospital Center "Mother Teresa";
- National Drug Observatory.

“Various information relevant to the Unit’s scope of work has been transmitted to the cooperating structures, based on data received from the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Europol, and Interpol.”

Regarding the cooperation with civil society, the organizations operating in Albania and whose object of activity is the field of interest of the NEWS Unit have been identified, as well as contact data have been exchanged with 2 Non-Profit Organizations "Teen Challenge Albania" and "Action Plus", which provide rehabilitation services/programs for citizens who are addicted to alcohol and drugs. During 2025, it has participated in **11 different meetings** within the country with the participation of relevant institutions, part of the National Early Warning System, as well as in online and physical meetings/trainings abroad and related to the scope of the Unit's work.

Communications have been developed with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in order to open technical discussions for the drafting and then signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between institutions, whose structures are part of the National Early Warning System, in order to harmonize and coordinate actions, aiming that in the end all these structures function as a single mechanism. It has been agreed in advance with officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that on issues of the National Early Warning System, Memorandums of Cooperation will be signed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other Ministries that have the relevant institutions, part of the National Early Warning System, with a deadline of March 2026.

National Drugs Observatory (NDO)

In the context of the restructuring process undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the National Drugs Observatory (NDO) was formally established in July 2025 through:

- Order of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare No. 314, dated 11.07.2025, ‘On the approval of the guideline on the composition, organization, and functioning of the National Drug Observatory, as well as the official document appointing the Head of the Sector.’
- Prime Minister’s Order No. 102, dated 14.07.2025, ‘On certain amendments to Prime Minister’s Order No. 205, dated 23.10.2024, ‘On the approval of the structure and organization of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare’.

The NDO operates within the organizational structure of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, ensuring close integration of drug monitoring activities with national public health policies. At the same time, the Observatory functions as a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism, reflecting the multidimensional nature of drug-related issues, which encompass public health, public security, and social dimensions.

The Observatory is staffed with one Head of Sector and two Specialists. Despite its limited size, the NDO is mandated to act as the national reference point for drug-related data collection, analysis, and reporting. It is responsible for addressing issues related exclusively to illicit drugs. Its mandate includes the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of data concerning drug use and drug-related. The National Drugs Observatory focuses on issues related to illicit drugs. In addition to monitoring drug demand and supply indicators, the NDO also contributes to reporting on security aspects related to drugs, in line with the requirements of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA). This includes collecting and analyzing data on drug markets, trafficking trends, and related security challenges, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Early Warning System.

The NDO is primarily responsible for supporting official reporting to the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) by providing reliable data on a broad range of indicators. These indicators cover both public health aspects, such as patterns of drug use, treatment demand, and prevalence rates, and law enforcement aspects, including seizures, arrests, and other drug-related criminal activities. NDO ensures that Albania's contributions to EUDA reporting are accurate, timely, and aligned with European standards. In addition to its EUDA-related work, the NDO collaborates closely with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide information for reporting to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The National Drugs Observatory maintains close cooperation with national institutions and bodies involved in drug-related matters, including those responsible for health, law enforcement, security, and early warning mechanisms. While structured data exchange mechanisms are in place, the scope and procedures for requesting and providing specific information are still being developed, in light of the Observatory's recent establishment. These procedures are being progressively formalized as part of the NDO's operational consolidation. Cooperation with State Police (the Early Warning System) is of particular importance for the collection and analysis of drug supply, security-related data, monitoring of emerging substances and drug-related threats.

As the National Drugs Observatory (NDO) operates within the Ministry of Health and Social welfare, and was established only recently, it has not yet published an Annual Report on the Drugs Situation in Albania. However, the preparation and publication of such a report is foreseen as one of the Observatory's key future objectives. The NDO intends to start collecting, analyzing, and consolidating national data on drug demand and supply indicators in cooperation with relevant national institutions. The first Annual Report on the Drugs Situation in Albania is therefore planned to be developed once sufficient and reliable data are gathered, ensuring alignment with EUDA standards and methodologies.

Eu acquis alignment in the area

The following draft-laws has been adopted :

1. Draft Law “On several additions and amendments to Law no. 8874, dated 29.3.2002, “On the control of substances used for the illicit manufacture of narcotic and psychotropic substances”.

The Draft Law “On several additions and amendments to Law No. 8874, dated 29 March 2002, *“On the control of substances used for the illicit manufacture of narcotic and psychotropic substances”* was approved on 3 February 2026.

The specific objective of this draft act is to update the list of narcotic and psychotropic substances, based on the updated lists issued by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

This draft law aims to establish a more efficient framework aligned with international standards, ensuring strengthened international control over high-potency synthetic opioids and new synthetic cannabinoids.

The added value of this draft law lies in the creation of a stronger and more effective legal mechanism for controlling narcotic and psychotropic substances, in line with international standards and in support of enhancing public safety.

These amendments will allow for the timely updating of the list of newly identified substances, significantly reducing the risk of their use in illicit activities and strengthening institutional cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking.

2. Draft Law “On several additions to Law no. 7975, dated 26.7.1995, On narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as amended.”

The Draft Law “On several additions to Law No. 7975, dated 26 July 1995, *“On narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as amended”* was approved on 3 February 2026.

The main purpose of this draft act is to improve the existing legal framework regulating the control of substances that may be used illegally for the production of narcotic and psychotropic substances. This improvement is driven by the need to align with international legislation and to strengthen prevention and control mechanisms in the fight against the illicit trafficking of drugs. The specific objective of this draft act is to update the list of substances that are illegally used for the production of narcotic and psychotropic substances.

This draft law aims to create a more efficient and internationally harmonized framework, ensuring strict control over the production, import, export, transport, and use of substances that may be misused for illicit purposes. The added value of this draft law lies in the establishment of a stronger and more effective legal mechanism for controlling substances that may be used in the production of narcotic and psychotropic substances, in accordance with international standards and in support of enhancing public safety.

These amendments will enable a more controlled system for the circulation of sensitive substances, significantly reducing the risk of their use in illegal activities and strengthening institutional cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking.

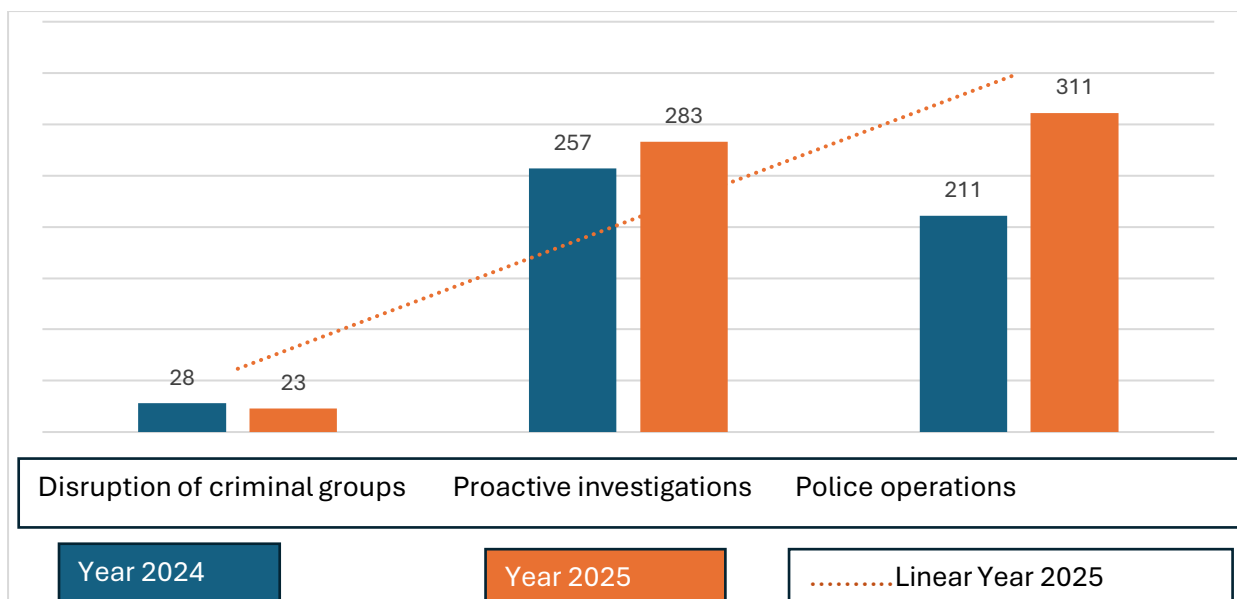
Implementation and track record on drugs seizures and destruction (including enforcement of infringements against the legal cultivation of cannabis).

Track record on drugs

Narcotics trafficking remains an important issue, while notable progress has been made in strengthening border controls, regional cooperation and approximation to EU standards. Efforts are focused on cracking down on networks involved in trafficking cannabis, heroin and cocaine.

In the field of narcotics, preventive and strike measures have been strengthened, such as: Increase proactive investigations in order to prevent and crack down on the criminal activity of drug trafficking in time.

- During 2025, 283 cases were followed, while in 2024, 259 cases were followed with proactive investigations in the field of narcotics.
- Identification of leaders and members of criminal groups or various entities related to them for a more effective exercise of criminal prosecution as well as in parallel identification of their assets in order to weaken economic and financial power through seizure and confiscation of assets of criminal origin-
- During 2025, 23 criminal groups were hit, while in 2024, 28 criminal groups were hit in the field of narcotics.
- Increase international cooperation through the exchange of police information, the organization of operational meetings with countries involved in the criminal activity of drug trafficking, the establishment of joint investigative teams and the development of operations;
- During **2025, 122 operations** were carried out in cooperation with international partners, while in 2024, 82 operations were carried out in cooperation with international partners in the field of narcotics.



Track record on drugs:

During 2025, a **total of 3018 criminal offenses** were identified in the field of narcotics, **2983** of them were resolved or **98.84%**, **3774 persons** were prosecuted, **1126 or 30%** of them were arrested/detained, **2534 or 84%** were prosecuted at large, **114 or 3%** were declared wanted. Comparing the data with the same period of 2024, it is found:

- Increase in the identification of criminal offenses with 899 offenses, or +42.4%.
- Increase in resolved cases by 884 offenses, or +42.1 %.
- Increase in the number of persons prosecuted by 812 perpetrators, or +27.4%.
- Increase in the number of arrested/detained persons by 74 persons or +7%.
- Increase in the number of persons prosecuted at large by 709 persons, or +38.8 %.
- Increase in the number of persons declared wanted/different by 32 persons, or +39%.

Seizures of narcotics:

During 2025, the following were seized:

NAME	QUANTITY ANNUAL 2025	QUANTITY ANNUAL 2024	DIFFERENCE for 2025
HASHISH	65.15 gr	36.31 gr	+28.84 gr
HEROIN	751.64 gr	13 kg 011.9 gr	-12 kg 260.26 gr
CANNABIS/MARIJUANA	1291531.104 gr	1329 kg 288.194 gr	-37 kg 757.09 gr
COCAINE	25465.14 gr	60 kg 559.9 gr	-35 kg 94.76 gr
MDMA	55 gr	17.65 gr	+37.35 gr
CANNABIS OIL	22000 ml	3671.35 gr	+18.02 l
METHADONE	0.2 gr	396.4 gr	-396.2 gr
CANNABIS FARA	11492 pieces	17581 Pieces	-6089 Pieces
CANNABIS FARA		791.27 gr	-791.27 gr
ECSTASIES	435.91 gr	160.29 gr	+275.62 gr
ECSTASIES		103 cups	-103 Cups

SYNTHETIC NARCOTICS		3 gr	-3gr
MIXTURES NARCOTICS L.	19.8 gr	90 kg 619.95 gr	-90 kg 600.15 gr
KETAMINE	29.95 gr	6.1 gr	+23.85 gr
METHAMPHETAMINES		75 gr	-75 gr

Regarding the seizures of narcotics, during this year compared to the same period of 2024, it is found:

- Reduction of the amount of Cocaine by **35 kg 94.76 gr.**
- reduction of the amount of Heroin by **12 kg 260.26 gr.**
- reduction of the amount of Marijuana by **37 kg 757.09 gr.**
- increase in the amount of Hashish Oil by **18.02 liters.**
- increasing the amount of hashish by **28.84 gr.**
- reduction of cannabis seeds by **791.27 gr and 6089 pcs.**

Disposal of narcotics

During 2025, the following quantities of narcotics were destroyed/disposed:

No.	TYPE NARCOTICS	DISPOSAL (Kg/gram)
1	Heroin	4,268 kg
2	Cocaine	11,785 kg
3	Marijuana	1083.120 kg
4	Rezina	173 kg and 761 grams
5	Narcotics Mixer	402,105 grams
6	M.D.M.A.	60,443 grams
7	Methadone	4,389 grams
8	Amphetamine	1,035 grams
9	Morphine	83,434 grams
10	L.S.D.	0,018 grams
11	Cannabis oil	370 ml
12	Sattiva cannabis seeds	0,521 grams
13	Cannabis Sativa Plant	65 samples
14	Alprazolam	0,15 grams
15	Oil, not narcotics	103 ml

Regarding the purchase of fuel equipment for the disposal of narcotics, a fund of 300,000 euros has been provided, which has been allocated by the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Properties. In process of tendering for the purchase of this equipment.

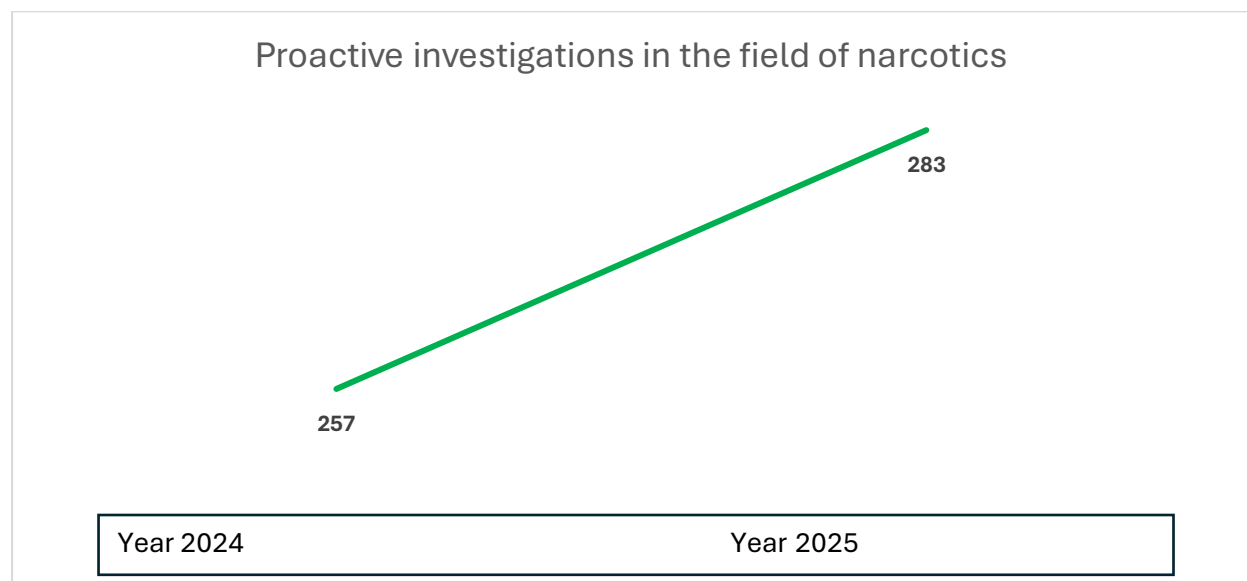
Police operations in the field of narcotics

During 2025, 311 police operations were carried out by the structures of the Department for Criminal Police, of which 122 operations were carried out in cooperation with international partners.

In comparison to 2024, the number of operations performed increased by 100.

Proactive investigations in the field of narcotics

During 2025, 283 proactive investigations were referred by the structures for the investigation of narcotics, with the use of special investigation techniques.

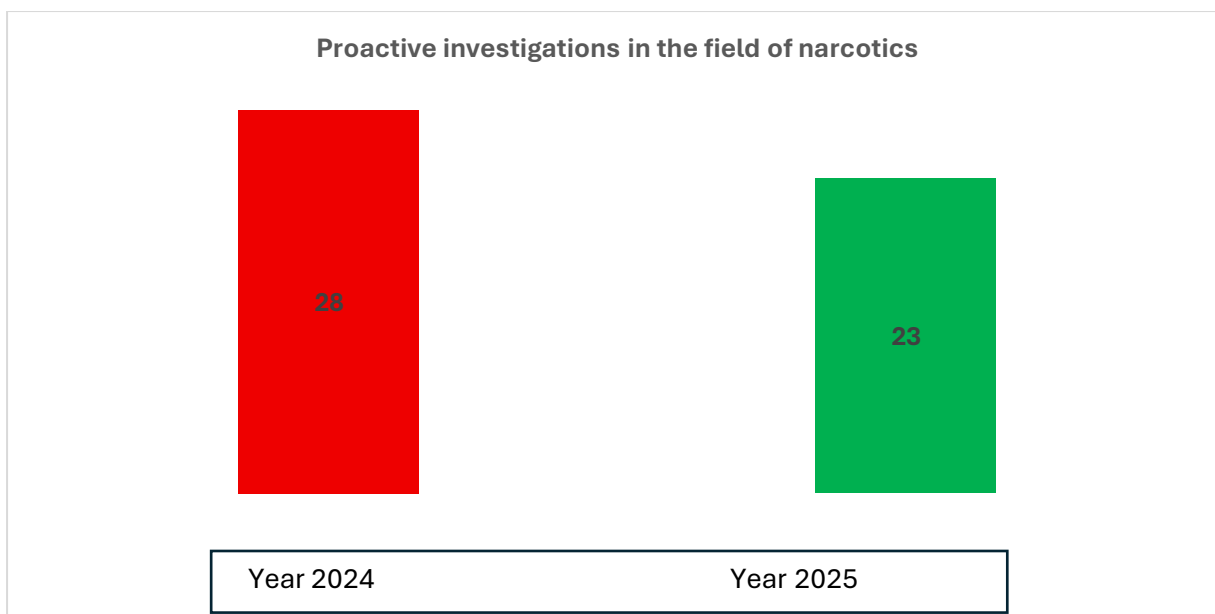


Compared to 2024, 26 more proactive investigations have been referred (257 investigations for production, sale, trafficking of narcotics in 2024 have been referred).

Criminal groups in the field of narcotics

During 2025, 23 criminal groups of production, sale, and trafficking of narcotics were dismantled in the field of narcotics.

Compared to 2024, 5 fewer groups were dismantled (28 groups dismantled in 2024)



Cooperation with foreign law enforcement authorities regarding criminal proceedings in the field of narcotics.

Currently, the Department for Criminal Police is pursuing **15 Joint Investigation Teams with Italian partners**, for criminal offenses of international narcotics trafficking, within the structured criminal group, money laundering, etc. **Fight against Drugs (Cannabis Cultivation)**

Albania continued to implement the National Strategy against Organised Crime and Serious Crime 2021–2025 and the related Action Plan 2023–2025, with a particular focus on the prevention and repression of cannabis cultivation, in line with Article 284 of the Criminal Code. During 2025, law enforcement authorities maintained a high level of operational activity across the entire territory, combining preventive measures, proactive investigations, and intensive territorial controls.

Operational Results

In 2025, a total of 204,814 cannabis plants and 17,447 seedlings were identified and destroyed nationwide. Of these, 97,920 plants were detected by local police structures, while 106,894 plants were identified through aerial monitoring, conducted in cooperation with Italian Guardia di Finanza, demonstrating continued and effective international cooperation.

A total of 637 criminal offences related to cannabis cultivation were recorded, including 584 detected cultivation cases and 53 proactive investigations finalised. Overall, 106 proactive investigations were registered, indicating an increased focus on intelligence-led policing and early intervention. Law enforcement authorities identified 1,646 cultivation sites, the majority of which were located on state-owned land, with a limited number detected on private land or in enclosed (indoor) environments.

Criminal Proceedings and Accountability

In connection with cannabis cultivation offences, 199 persons were implicated, resulting in 111 arrests, 40 detentions, 18 prosecutions at large, and 30 persons declared wanted. In addition, authorities initiated criminal proceedings against 178 public officials and other persons for abuse of office and failure to report a crime (Articles 248 and 300 of the Criminal Code). These proceedings resulted in 4 arrests, 8 detentions, and 166 prosecutions at large, reflecting continued efforts to address corruption-related risks linked to drug cultivation.

Proactive Investigations and Preventive Measures

Proactive investigations remained a key tool in 2025. Of the 106 proactive proceedings registered, 53 were finalised, leading to the destruction of 15,267 cannabis plants, 6,456 seedlings, and the seizure of 6,189 cannabis seeds. These cases involved 76 perpetrators, including local officials and employees of forestry and environmental services, underlining the importance of integrity measures at local level. Preventive interception measures were used in line with legal requirements. A total of 144 requests for preventive interceptions were submitted, of which 126 were approved.

Intelligence, Awareness and Territorial Control

Police structures processed 7,718 intelligence reports related to cannabis cultivation, mainly originating from confidential sources, confirming improved information-gathering capacities. Preventive and awareness-raising activities continued throughout the year. Authorities conducted 900 awareness meetings, involving over 19,000 participants, aimed at discouraging involvement in cannabis cultivation and strengthening cooperation with local communities. Territorial controls remained extensive. In 2025, police carried out 233,686 inspections, supported by inspection teams, drones, and aerial surveillance, covering greenhouses, warehouses, abandoned buildings, former military sites, open areas, and previously cultivated plots. Overall, Albania maintained strong operational results in combating cannabis cultivation in 2025. The continued use of aerial surveillance, proactive investigations, and cross-border cooperation represents good progress. However, the persistence of cultivation cases and the involvement of public officials indicate the need for sustained efforts, particularly in prevention, local-level accountability, and follow-up investigations, including financial investigations and asset confiscation.

Enforcement of infringements against the legal cultivation of cannabis

The National Agency for Cannabis Control is responsible for ensuring regulatory oversight of licensed and permitted cannabis-related activities, as well as for the effective implementation and supervision of the regulatory framework established under Law No. 61/2023, “On the control of the cultivation and processing of cannabis and the production of its by-products for medical and industrial purposes”. This framework is designed to prevent diversion, abuse and criminal infiltration of the sector, while safeguarding lawful activities carried out in full compliance with applicable legislation.

The legal framework governing the sector has been substantially strengthened through the adoption of 20 out of the 26 mandatory by-laws foreseen under Law No. 61/2023. These sub-legal acts are aimed at ensuring effective monitoring of the implementation of the law, establishing comprehensive institutional control and enforceable oversight mechanisms, and contributing decisively to the prevention of diversion of cannabis plants, products and by-products for unintended or illicit use.

Among the adopted by-laws, Instruction No. 274, dated 16.05.2024, as amended, sets out the procedures, deadlines, criteria and documentation required for the verification of the integrity of NACC employees, as well as licensed and permitted entities. This instruction ensures that only individuals and entities with no criminal background related to narcotics, money laundering, terrorism or organized crime, and with a clean professional and moral record, are involved in cannabis-related activities. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 8, dated 09.01.2025, establishes security standards and protective measures for licensed cannabis cultivation and processing facilities for medical purposes, including rules governing the movement of dedicated transport vehicles for raw materials and finished products, in order to prevent unauthorized activities. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 9, dated 09.01.2025, further defines strict requirements and tariffs for physical security and protection measures applicable to permitted entities, introducing rigorous criteria for continuous monitoring throughout the entire cultivation, processing and production cycle.

The adopted legal and sub-legal framework establishes detailed rules governing the physical and operational security of cultivation and processing facilities, as well as the transport of reproductive plant material, including seeds, seedlings, clones and mother plants, in addition to by-products and final products. It further regulates controlled movements from border entry points to licensed and permitted cultivation sites and vice versa, setting mandatory standards for security, monitoring and documentation under the supervision of the Agency. These measures ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of the law, comprehensive institutional control and enforceable oversight mechanisms, including strict export rules aimed at preventing unauthorized or illicit use.

In addition, Instruction No. 5, dated 20.01.2025, establishes detailed procedures for the destruction of cannabis plants, ensuring full compliance with national legislation and strengthening inter-institutional coordination in relation to traceability, documentation and oversight, thereby mitigating the risk of illegal repurposing. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 149, dated 06.03.2025, approves the cadastral areas where the cultivation of cannabis plants for industrial purposes is permitted, restricting cultivation to predefined and controlled areas in order to enable effective oversight, inspections and law enforcement, while minimizing the risk of unauthorized activities. Instruction No. 11, dated 10.03.2025, regulates the export of cannabis products and final by-products for industrial purposes, ensuring compliance with applicable rules and procedures and preventing unauthorized access, unlawful diversion and the export of illegal products. This instruction guarantees that only certified products are exported from Albania to recipient entities holding a valid import certificate.

A key component of the regulatory system is the approval, by decision of the Council of Ministers, of the areas where industrial cannabis cultivation is permitted, and, separately, the

approval of the specific zones in which cultivation licences may be issued. This dual approval mechanism strengthens oversight, facilitates inspections and on-site controls, and enables timely intervention in cases of non-compliance.

The framework also provides detailed rules on the confiscation and destruction of cannabis plants, products and by-products in cases of non-compliance with legal, licensing or permitting conditions. These procedures are standardized and fully documented in order to ensure transparency, traceability and to eliminate any risk of diversion or illegal reuse.

Furthermore, the marking and traceability framework will enable the monitoring of cannabis-related activities at every stage, from planting and cultivation to processing, storage, transport and final destination, including destruction, confiscation and export. Through the accurate identification of the location of cannabis plants, products and by-products, as well as their holders at each stage, this system will directly support the Agency's supervisory and control functions and will contribute significantly to the prevention of diversion.

The Agency is competent to impose administrative sanctions, including fines, the temporary suspension of activities and other measures provided by law. In cases where serious or repeated violations are identified, the Agency proposes to the competent minister the suspension or revocation of the relevant licence or permit, in accordance with the applicable legal provisions and established procedures. Cases involving elements of criminal offences are referred to the competent authorities. In this context, close interinstitutional cooperation, particularly with the State Police, the General Prosecutor's Office and the Special Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organized Crime, ensures coordinated administrative and criminal enforcement against illegal cannabis cultivation, while safeguarding lawful activities from criminal interference.

With regard to the remaining by-laws foreseen under Law No. 61/2023, part of one Decision of the Council of Ministers concerning the designation of the authorized authority for the implementation of the marking and traceability system has been approved, while the remaining provisions of this decision have been finalized and are currently undergoing inter-ministerial coordination. One additional by-law is in the final stage of preparation, whereas four others are in the drafting phase.

The institutions responsible for the finalization of these by-laws include the ministry responsible for health, the ministry responsible for public security, the ministry responsible for agriculture, the ministry responsible for finances, as well as the Licensing Commission. These by-laws aim to establish a centralized state database for tracking all licensed and permitted activities, implement a unique marking and traceability system covering the cannabis plant from seed to final product, clearly define institutional responsibilities for oversight, and set out detailed procedures for ensuring compliance, including mechanisms for the suspension or revocation of licences and permits where necessary.

With the completion of the regulatory framework, the Agency has prioritized the transition to the full operational phase within 2026 as a key strategic objective.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

Focus on:

***EU acquis alignment:** countering terrorism, prevention and countering of radicalisation and violent terrorism both online and offline, resilience and protection of critical entities and infrastructures.*

EU acquis alignment on countering terrorism

In the context of counter-terrorism, EU Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism” is included in the package of amendments to the Criminal Code, which is expected to be adopted shortly.

Legal framework for addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online

The Ministry of Internal Affairs initiated the process of completing and aligning the legal framework for addressing the online dissemination of terrorist content by establishing the interinstitutional working group. The draft Prime Minister’s Order, currently drafted, aims to establish an inter-institutional working group tasked with drafting a dedicated legal framework to address the dissemination of terrorist content online and to align it with European Union legislation. This initiative responds to Albania’s obligations under the Joint Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, signed at the EU–Western Balkans Ministerial Forum in October 2025, as well as commitments arising from the Rule of Law Roadmap and the National Plan for European Integration. A key driver of the initiative is the current absence of a specific national legal framework aligned with Regulation (EU) 2021/784 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online.

The establishment of the inter-institutional working group seeks to identify competent authorities responsible for supervising and controlling online service providers, analyze the existing normative framework, and identify legal and institutional gaps in relation to EU requirements. The group will propose the necessary legislative acts or amendments, conduct impact assessments where required, and define a clear implementation roadmap. Its work will focus on setting procedures for the identification, prevention, and removal of terrorist content online, as well as mechanisms for coordination, information exchange, cooperation with online platforms, and periodic monitoring.

The draft order emphasizes a balanced approach that strengthens public security while safeguarding fundamental rights, particularly freedom of expression and the right to information. In line with Regulation (EU) 2021/784, hosting service providers will be required to remove terrorist content within one hour of receiving an order from competent authorities and, where appropriate, to adopt proactive measures to prevent the reappearance of such content. Transparency, accountability, and users’ rights to appeal unjustified removals are integral components of the proposed framework.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs will act as the lead institution in this process, working closely with law enforcement, intelligence services, regulatory authorities, independent institutions, and other stakeholders, including civil society and international partners. The expected outcome is the creation of a safer digital environment in accordance with EU standards, preventing online radicalization and terrorist propaganda while ensuring coherent and uniform rules for all platforms operating in Albania.

Resilience and protection of critical entities and infrastructures

Following coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Directorate of the State Police, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, an online seminar was successfully conducted within the framework of the EU-funded project “Enhancing the Protection of Public Spaces and Critical Infrastructure in the Western Balkans,” implemented under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III). Given that the project, which is being implemented in WB countries, is approaching the completion of its current phase in March 2026, an important update during the activity, was that the European Commission has approved the continuation of the project into a subsequent phase, which will place greater emphasis on in-depth thematic work, including opportunities to strengthen public–private cooperation and to develop sustainable partnerships.

The online seminar took place on 4 December 2025 via the Zoom platform and focused on the two core components of the project: the protection of public spaces and the protection of critical infrastructure. Discussions addressed relevant legislation, good practices, and opportunities for public–private partnerships, with particular emphasis on the “security-by-design” approach. The event brought together representatives from key national institutions, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Directorate of the State Police and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, as well as relevant stakeholders, and contributed to enhancing institutional awareness and cooperation on strengthening security measures in public spaces and critical infrastructure across the region.

This project is supporting Albanian authorities, particularly the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, which is the leading institution for drafting the new law on critical infrastructure, given that Albania has some provisions in the law on civil protection, but not a dedicated legal framework on the area.

Albanian representatives have participated regularly in the steering committee for the implementation of the project.

Strategic framework and institutional steps: update on the new strategy on the prevention of violent extremism and countering terrorism, coordination of CT and CVE strategies and actions.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs implemented the Cross-cutting Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and the Fight against Terrorism 2023–2025, along with its corresponding Action Plans for the period 2023–2025, which concluded in December 2025.

As the lead institution responsible for coordinating the development of the new strategic framework in the field of Prevention of Violent Extremism and the Fight against Terrorism (PVE/CFT), the Ministry of Internal Affairs is currently in the process of establishing an inter-institutional working group. This working group will be tasked with conducting an evaluation of the previous strategy and drafting both the evaluation report and a concept note outlining the proposed approach for the new strategic framework for the period 2026–2030.

The new strategic framework will be aligned with the Joint Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans (JAP II), as well as with the EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda and its key priorities.

The strategic framework is expected to be adopted by a Decision of the Council of Ministers during the third quarter of 2026.

Roadmap for the implementation of the newly signed JAP for countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Albania participated in the ad hoc Regional Meeting on the implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism for the Western Balkans (JAP II), which was organized by the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalization, in cooperation with the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) and ELIAMEP. Building on the signing of JAP II on 30 October 2025 and the first regional meeting held in Skopje in November 2025, the Tirana meeting was an opportunity to present the progress made for drafting the National Roadmap, the activities, timeline, and to also discuss how the proposed activities falls under the regional context to strengthen cooperation and advance the implementation of commitments at both national and regional levels.

The meeting gathered senior representatives from national security institutions of the six Western Balkan partners, the European Commission (DG ENEST), and EU Delegations in the region. Albania was represented by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is the leading institution for the drafting of the Roadmap and National Coordinator for P/CVE, together with representatives of the Counterterrorism Directorate in the Albanian State Police. Participants exchanged information on progress and challenges in drafting National Roadmaps, discussed inter-institutional coordination and technical harmonization, and received guidance from IISG on reporting and monitoring mechanisms. The meeting concluded with agreed next steps for finalizing National Roadmaps and further enhancing regional cooperation in line with European standards for preventing violent extremism.

Regarding Albania's progress on drafting the Roadmap, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has established within 2025 the interinstitutional working group and has organized, as well, an introductory meeting to explain the methodology and guiding institutions, law enforcement,

and intelligence agencies on the new context and regional approach of the JAP 2026-2030, while discussing the proposed measures/activities by the institutions. Albania delivered the first draft of the Roadmap to the EU Knowledge Hub before the meeting in Tirana.

The implementation of the Joint Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (JAP II) in Albania has progressed in a structured and measurable manner, with activities clearly mapped against all five strategic goals and supported by broad institutional involvement. The Ministry of Internal Affairs continues to act as the lead coordinating authority, ensuring systematic participation of law enforcement, intelligence services, line ministries, regulatory bodies, independent institutions, and relevant non-state actors. This approach has enabled Albania to move from planning to concrete implementation, with several initiatives already underway or completed.

Under Goal 1 (Legal and Strategic Framework), progress is primarily concentrated on legislative development and alignment with EU *acquis* to draft a dedicated legal framework addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online, in line with Regulation (EU) 2021/784, the law on explosive precursors and the new strategic framework for the prevention of violent extremism and fight against terrorism 2026-2031. In parallel, strategic planning documents under JAP II have been integrated into national policy frameworks, ensuring consistency with the Rule of Law Roadmap and EU integration priorities.

With regard to Goal 2 (Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism), activities are mainly focused on strengthening preventive structures and coordination mechanisms. Progress includes enhanced cooperation between central institutions and local-level actors, increased engagement with civil society organizations, and targeted capacity-building initiatives for practitioners involved in prevention and community resilience. A significant share of measures under this goal addresses online radicalization and extremist narratives, reflecting national risk assessments and regional trends identified through JAP II cooperation.

Under Goal 3 (Early Detection, Risk Assessment, and Intervention), Albania has concentrated efforts on improving institutional capacities for identifying individuals at risk of radicalization and managing cases in a coordinated manner. Concrete actions include the development of referral and information-sharing mechanisms among law enforcement, intelligence services, education and social services, as well as drafting the national risk assessment.

Progress under Goal 4 (Operational Cooperation and Capacity Building) is reflected in increased joint trainings, improved inter-agency coordination, and the refinement of operational procedures related to counterterrorism and CVE.

Finally, Goal 5 (Regional and International Cooperation) shows strong engagement, with Albania actively participating in regional coordination meetings, contributing to peer exchanges on National Roadmaps, and reporting progress through JAP II monitoring mechanisms. Cooperation with the European Commission, EU agencies, and Western Balkans partners has strengthened harmonization of approaches and reinforced Albania's commitment to implementing JAP II in line with European standards.

Track record on terrorism-related offences.

During 2025, there have been no terrorist acts in Albania. The terrorism threat in the country has been assessed as “Low to Medium”, mostly because of the evolving conflicts in the international arena.

For the referring period, the Counter-Terrorism Directorate has referred to the Special Prosecution Office (SPAK) procedural materials for the offences:

- 1 case for the offences “Incitement, public calls and propaganda” Art. 232/a, and “Financing of terrorism” Art. 230/a.
- 1 case for the offence of “Recruitment of persons for the commitment of terrorist offences” ·
- 5 cases referred for the offence “Incitement, public calls and propaganda” Art. 232/a in one of the above cases (Art. 232/a), 2 individuals were arrested in the operation “OROSHI”.

Repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of FTF.

The Albanian Government has carried out 4 (four) repatriation operations, returning a total of 38 Albanian citizens from the conflict zones of Syria and Iraq. These include 1 citizen in 2019 (not followed by the CVE Center), 13 citizens on May 27, 2022, 19 citizens repatriated on August 1, 2021, and 5 citizens repatriated on October 27, 2020.

The CVE Center remains strongly committed to coordinating and monitoring work of line ministries, law enforcement agencies, and national and international partners to support the rehabilitation, reintegration, and resocialization (RRR) of women and children returned from the Syria–Iraq conflict zones. The CVE Center coordinates and monitors the implementation of Individual Protection Plans (IPPs) developed for all returnees. For children aged 0–18, case management is provided by the Child Protection Worker (CPW) while case management for individuals over 18 is carried out by the Unit for Needs Assessment and Referral.

Currently, among the repatriated individuals, there are 28 children. Of these, 9 have reached the age of 18, while 19 are under the age of 18. Nineteen children attend compulsory basic education, while 6 attend secondary education, including: 1 in general education, 3 in vocational education (electrical and mechanical), 1 in artistic education (painting), 1 in professional sports education.

Meanwhile, nine women have been sentenced to probation (alternative measures) and are being monitored through individualized plans by Probation Service specialists. Five of the returnees have completed vocational training courses in macramé, soap production, tailoring, culinary arts, and assistant accounting. Currently, only one woman is enrolled in a one-year employment program facilitated by the Employment Office, with the contract expected to conclude in April 2026.

Returned families have also benefited from programs implemented by civil society organizations. Psychological support services ended in July 2025, while other assistance, including food cards and targeted support, concluded in December 2025 following the completion of the respective projects. In response to identified needs, the CVE Center coordinated with the donor GCERF to extend rental support for three families for an additional four months, until April 2026. Regarding food security, families have been provided with food packages by the relevant administrative units. Additionally, the Multifunctional Center for the Prevention of Violent Extremism remains available to provide educational and support services to these families.

The CVE Center remains committed to coordinating with relevant institutions at both central and local levels to undertake emergency measures to ensure housing for these families.

To ensure the sustainability of support following the completion of projects, the CVE Center is focusing on transitioning from short-term assistance to longer-term solutions by integrating returned families into existing institutional schemes at both central and local levels.

ASYLUM, VISA, MIGRATION, BORDER MANAGEMENT

Focus on:

Legal and Irregular Migration: institutional and operational framework on migration and border management, migrant smuggling, return and readmissions.

National context

According to official data from the 2023 Population and Housing Census, the resident population within the territory of the Republic of Albania amounts to 2,402,113 inhabitants. Meanwhile, the number of foreign nationals residing in Albanian territory has been recorded at 21,940 individuals, representing a significant increase compared to previous years and reflecting new developments in migratory flows, mainly related to employment, study, and family reunification purposes.

During 2025, 19 321 applications for residence permits have been submitted (marking an increase by 46.6%, compared to 2024), 12240 first time applications and 7081 applications for the renewal of residence permits.

Irregular migration towards Albanian Southeast border continued to be present, but with an obvious decrease. During 2025, 1926 irregular migrant have been apprehended, marking an increase by 25%, compared to 2024, when 1540 irregular migrants were apprehended. The legal and strategic framework of Migration.

National Migration Strategy 2024–2030

Since May 2024, the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030 and its Action Plan 2024–2026 have been under implementation. The Strategy is aligned with:

- The Global Compact for Migration, signed by Albania in 2018.
- The EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Returnees from Third Countries (Brussels, April 2021), part of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.
- The EU Action Plan for the Western Balkans.

To monitor the implementation of the Strategy, a dual monitoring system has been established, covering both the achievement of specific objectives across all proposed pillars and the improvement of overall coordination of activities, namely:

The Technical Committee on Migration, established by Prime Minister's Order No. 111, dated 16 July 2024.

This body is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and includes department-level directors/general directors from implementing institutions/agencies, as well as representatives from local self-government units. It meets twice a year or whenever necessary and reviews progress reports on the Strategy. Representatives of international organizations are also invited to participate in meetings.

The Steering Group on Migration, established by Prime Minister's Order No. 112, dated 16 July 2024. This body is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and includes deputy ministers from responsible ministries. It meets once a year or whenever necessary and reviews Strategy progress reports.

The Migration Sector within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, acting as the technical secretariat, prepared and circulated for consultation the first monitoring report for the period May–December 2024 and finalized, in July 2025, the monitoring report for the period January–June 2025.

During the period January–June 2025:

- A total of 53 measures were reported, showing different levels of implementation.
- Of these, 29 measures were fully implemented, representing about 55% of the total, indicating a satisfactory level of achievement of planned objectives.
- Additionally, 21 measures, or approximately 40%, are under implementation, reflecting continued institutional commitment.
- Only 2 measures were partially implemented, while 1 measure representing about 2% of the total was not implemented, indicating a relatively low level of non-implementation.

Work is currently underway to prepare an annual monitoring report for the period January–December 2025, which is expected to be presented at the next meeting of the Technical Committee on Migration.

Regarding key achievements, the Strategy implementation progress reports indicate that:

Migration legislation: In June 2025, Law No. 43/2025 “On certain amendments and additions to Law No. 79/2021 ‘On Foreigners’” was adopted and promulgated by Decree No. 221, dated 08.07.2025, of the President of the Republic of Albania. This act aligns Albanian legislation with four EU directives, including Directive 2004/38/EC “On the right of Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.”

In June 2025, **Albania joined the European Migration Network** as an observer country by signing an administrative agreement with the European Commission. The National Contact Point has now been established and communicated to the Network.

Albania has been an active participant in regional migration processes, such as the Prague and Budapest Processes, and has prepared the report on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration in Albania for the period 2023–2024.

By Decision No. 788, dated 24.12.2025, of the Council of Ministers, **the National Contingency Plan for Mixed Migration Flows** for the period 2026–2028 was approved, strengthening national response and coordination capacities.

The mechanism for coordinating migration governance has been strengthened, including an enhanced role for local government. With the support of GIZ, the Ministry of Internal has strengthened Local Migration and Diaspora Structures in municipalities, focusing on the treatment of vulnerable categories, migrant integration, prevention of irregular migration of Albanian citizens, and reintegration of returnees.

Within the framework of the “EU4Migration in Albania” project, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is cooperating with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR to establish a social center for unaccompanied foreign children (by 2026), in line with the Law on Foreigners.

Law No. 43/2025 on Amendments and Additions to Law No. 79/2021 “On Foreigners”. In June 2025, Law No. 43/2025 “On certain amendments and additions to Law No. 79/2021 “On Foreigners’” was adopted and promulgated by Decree No. 221, dated 08.07.2025, of the President of the Republic of Albania.

The act is in accordance with:

- The provisions of the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030.
- The implementation of Council of Ministers Decision No. 736, dated 13.12.2023, “On the approval of the Roadmap for the Rule of Law”;
- Further alignment of migration legislation with the EU acquis, within the framework of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

The Law No. 43/2025 “On certain amendments and additions to Law No. 79/2021 “On Foreigners’”, is partially aligned with:

- Directive (EU) 2016/801 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes, educational projects, and au pairing.
- Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.

- Directive (EU) 2024/1233 on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State.
- Directive (EU) 2021/1883 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment.

With the adoption of these legal amendments, several innovations will be implemented:

- EU citizens and their family members are exempted from the obligation to obtain a Single Permit and Residence Permit, fully harmonizing national legislation with Directive 2004/38/EC. This exemption is also in line with recommendations of the European Commission's 2023 Report.
- Revisions concerning categories of foreigners entering as students or school pupils who are issued residence permits, in line with recent changes to the EU acquis.
- In accordance with Directive (EU) 2016/801, conditions for entry and residence permits for researchers have been facilitated, including provisions allowing them to teach in accordance with national legislation.

For the implementation of the Law No. 79/2021 "On Foreigners," as amended, an inter-institutional working group was established by Prime Minister's Order No. 210, dated 10.11.2025, tasked with drafting the necessary secondary legislation.

National Contingency Plan for Mixed Migration Flows 2026–2028

By Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 788, dated 24.12.2025, the National Contingency Plan for Mixed Migration Flows for 2026–2028 was approved as a strategic instrument for managing emergency situations in the fields of migration and asylum.

The drafting process was conducted in a coordinated and inclusive manner through the Inter-Institutional Working Group established by Prime Minister's Order No. 95, dated 12.06.2024, with the involvement of responsible institutions and the support of international organizations and EU agencies.

- The Plan is based on EUAA and FRONTEX emergency planning methodologies and aims to ensure a coordinated and effective response in line with international standards and Albania's national commitments.
- It is harmonized with the requirements of Chapter 24 of the EU acquis, as well as obligations arising from the Global Compact for Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, and the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030.
- The Plan includes a clear financial framework ensured through a budgeted Action Plan by activities, guaranteeing feasibility and sustainability of the envisaged measures.
- It provides concrete measures for border management, asylum application processing, the operation of a central coordination mechanism, four response scenarios, and revision of the document at the end of 2028.
- Implementation of the Plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in cooperation with relevant public institutions and international partners.
- The first review of the Plan is scheduled to be carried out in the last four-month period of 2028, except in cases of emergencies. The process is conducted by the GNT, which

is established by the order of the Prime Minister and chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs. The review is a periodic process, carried out every three years.

Updates on unfounded asylum applications by Albanian citizens in EU member states and the Schengen area

The issue of asylum applications by Albanian citizens in EU Member States and the Schengen Area has been a focus of key responsible institutions of the Albanian Government, particularly the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as the main authority for migration and asylum policies.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has undertaken several measures, including:

- **Close cooperation with international organizations** such as IOM and UNHCR, EU partners and agencies such as Frontex and Europol, the German organization GIZ, as well as the OSCE and the EU Delegation in Tirana. The focus has been on strengthening policies to prevent irregular migration of Albanian citizens, promoting opportunities within the country, reinforcing the reintegration mechanism for returnees and strengthening migration and diaspora offices in municipalities.
- **Implementation of concrete measures of the Action Plan of the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030**, particularly those related to mandatory information for Albanian citizens returning through deportation on the risks of irregular migration and opportunities at home.

According to official Eurostat statistics (12 January 2026), during 2025 there was a significant decrease in the number of first-time asylum applications by Albanian citizens, with a total of 4,525 applications submitted, compared to 7,285 applications in 2024. This represents a decrease of approximately 37.9%, indicating a downward trend in asylum interest or a shift in migration modalities toward EU Member States and the Schengen Area.

The decline results from a combination of factors, including changes in migration preferences, increased regular labor migration, improved economic opportunities domestically, and stricter admission policies in certain EU Member States.

Analysis by country:

1. **Germany:** Applications decreased from 1,435 in 2024 to 570 in 2025.
2. **Greece:** From 995 to 905 applications.
3. **France:** From 2,220 to 1,250 applications.
4. **Italy:** From 1,885 to 1,255 applications.

Statistical data on legal migration

During 2025, 19 321 applications for residence permits have been submitted (marking an increase by 46.6%, compared to 2024), 12240 first time applications and 7081 applications for the renewal of residence permits.

Main nationalities of the applicants were: India -2691, Philippines - 2415, Italy - 2239, Egypt -2198, Kosova -1813, Turkey -1441, USA - 606, Myanmar - 506, Russia - 442, Ukraine - 312.

Out of these applications, 16 691 have been approved, 351 have been rejected while 2279 are being processed.

During 2025, 856 residence permits have been revoked.

Irregular migration

Irregular migration towards Albanian Southeast border continued to be present, but with an obvious decrease. During 2025, 1926 irregular migrant have been apprehended, marking an increase by 25%, compared to 2024, when 1540 irregular migrants were apprehended. Main nationalities of the irregular migrants were Pakistan, Egypt, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sudan.

Out of 1694 newly arrived irregular migrants, 126 of them applied for asylum, 87 of them were issued removal orders and were transferred to the Closed Centre to undergo readmission procedures, 42 of them were issued orders to stay in e defined territory, while 1445 were issued departure orders.

In spite of the explanation given by Albanian pre-screening officers and the direct question if they want to apply for asylum in Albania, the irregular migrants openly declare their intention to proceed towards European Union. Such intention is also shared with FRONTEX deployed screeners.

During 2025, a change of migration movement was noticed. In 16 cases, in Shkodra, 84 irregular migrants were apprehended coming from Montenegro with the intention to go to Greece. This new trend is being paid special attention.

The main entry point was Korça Region, mainly Kapshtica area, where 459 irregular migrants were apprehended, marking a decrease by 18% compared to the previous year, when 558 irregular migrants were apprehended.

The second entry point was Gjirokastra Region, mainly Kakavija area, where 345 irregular migrants were apprehended, marking a decrease by 0.9% compared to 2024, when 348 irregular migrants were apprehended.

The third entry point was Saranda Region, mainly Qafë Botë area, where 171 irregular migrants were apprehended, 201 less than 2024, when 372 irregular migrants were apprehended.

The main exit point, from our country, is that of the region of Shkodra on the border with Montenegro, mainly the area of Hani i Hotit, a direction where 694 irregular migrants were apprehended, during 2025, marking an increase by nearly 4.3 times, compared to 2024, when 158 were apprehended.

The second exit point from our country, is Kukës region, mainly Morinë border area, where during 2025 41 irregular migrants were apprehended trying to travel towards the Republic of Kosovo, against 32 apprehended during 2024.

As a result of the strengthening of human and logistic capacities in the entry points, 93 % of irregular migrants have been apprehended in the entry or exit points, while 7% have been apprehended in land.

Considering the current irregular migration flow towards our borders, Albania has sufficient and sustained border management capacities and adequate staffing to manage mixed migration flows.

In order to strengthen the professional capacities, border and migration department has participated in several activities which addressed mainly the fundamental rights of the migrant, as follows:

Albanian State Police has 6 accommodation facilities for the apprehended irregular migrants, which, given the fact that the apprehended migrant would be accommodated for not more than 10 hours, is considered as sufficient reception capacities. One facility is run by Gjirokastra Municipality, which is available at any time, for the accommodation of migrants with vulnerabilities.

- Closed Center for Foreigners, Karreç - 100 beds.
- Temporary Reception Center in Gerhot, Gjirokastra - 60 beds.
- Kakavija Border and Migration Station - 35 beds (13 of them, in 2 separate rooms, are dedicated to unaccompanied minor and persons with vulnerabilities)
- Social Center, under Gjirokastra Municipality – 24 beds used for persons with vulnerabilities.
- Temporary Reception Center in Kapshtica, Korça 100 beds.
- Temporary Reception Center in Qafë Botë, Saranda 60 beds.
- Kapshtica Border Station, Korça - 8 beds (2 different rooms are dedicated to unaccompanied minors and persons with vulnerabilities).

In the meantime, Albanian Border and Migration services have work to prevent the use of the territory as a transit route towards Schengen area. During 2025, 692 foreign citizens have been refused entry in Albania, 539 of these in Rinas Airport. Main nationalities of the refused citizens were Turkey, Iran, Russia, India, Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, Bangladesh, Morocco, China, etc.

Due to the cooperation of Rinas Airport Border Police with flight companies, during 2025, 41 citizens have been refused embarking on flight to Albania, after the pre-departure verification of electronic visas and other travel documents.

Border management

Border security and migration management have continued to be among the main priorities of the Albanian State Police.

Strengthening of human resources and logistic capacities of Border and Migration services has been a top priority.

The structure and the organigramme of the Border Police Commissariat of Vlora International Airport has been adopted and is pending implementation.

Law No. 39/2025 “On State Border Control”, adopted on 26 June 2026, has further aligned the national legislation with the EU acquis, namely with Regulation (EU) No 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 establishing a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code); Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard, repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624; Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/581 of 9 April 2021 on the situational pictures of the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR); and Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders of the Member States and amending the provisions of the Schengen Convention.

Drafts of 9 sublegal acts, in implementation of the new law on state border control, have already been finalized and are under consultation with other institutions and agencies.

Regarding the **strengthening of logistical capacities**, with the contribution and support of main donors, including the European Union, the German Federal Police, UNDP, the British Border Force and the Italian State Police, the Border Police has been equipped with modern equipment for state border control and surveillance. ⁱ

In the framework of a project funded by German Federal Police, work is ongoing for the rehabilitation of the radio communication system in the sea border.

It should be highlighted that all border check and border surveillance equipment, requested by Border and Migration Department and provided by our partners, are in line with the Schengen Catalogue.

Training of border guards has continued. 803 border guards have benefited from 67 specialized and advanced training courses, 23 in cooperation with other State Police structures, 44 training by partner organizations and agencies.

Cooperation with Customs, within the control of the second border line during 2025, has been paid increased attention. During 2025, 935 467 second line checks have been performed marking and increase by 13.3 % compared to 2024. 722 275 checks were carried out with a scanner in cooperation with the customs authorities.

Border Police, in cooperation with the participating institutions of IMOC, have conducted, coordinated and managed 112 operations, 62 more than 2024, as follows:

- 27 maritime operations for border control and surveillance.
- 75 maritime operations for assistance at sea and SAR.
- 4 maritime operations related to other police tasks.
- 2 maritime operations for the enforcement of maritime legislation.

- 4 marine operations against pollution prevention and environmental protection.
- 14 joint maritime operations have been conducted in cooperation with FRONTEX, Montenegrin Border Police and Greek Coast Guard.
- 466 joint patrols have been conducted in cooperation with Guardia di Finanza Coast Guard has conducted 626 coordinated patrols with Border Police.

In the meantime, cross border cooperation with the neighboring countries has continued without obstacles.

In the framework of the implementation of protocols for joint patrols, during 2025, 1076 joint patrols were carried out with border police officers of neighboring countries, 244 with Montenegro, 111 with North Macedonia, 255 with Kosovo and 466 with the Guardia di Finanza.

Police Cooperation Center with Montenegro, Republic of Kosovo, North Macedonia and Greece, are fully operational.

The main threats to border security, during 2025, continued to be the trafficking of narcotics, the use of forged documents, smuggling, illegal border crossing, smuggling of migrants, non-declaration of cash at the border, cross border movement of wanted persons, etc.

During 2025, the Border and Migration structures recorded 1404 criminal offences, marking an increase by 26% compared to the previous year.

Control and surveillance of the border has been strengthened to prevent the trafficking of narcotics. During 2025, Border and Migration Police in 54 cases of drug trafficking, (16 more than 2024) has seized 336.710 kg 683 of cannabis sativa, 12.4 gr of cocaine, 19.8 gr amphetamine, while in five case, 515 cannabis sativa plants have been identified.

During 2025, in 87 cases, 52 in entry and 35 of non-declaration of cash at the border, border and migration police has seized 1 962 895 €, 5 005 USD, 258 825 Pounds, 1 524 100 ALL and 23 420 Swiss Francs.

The Joint Operation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which proceeds swiftly, continues to play a very important role in strengthening of border security, countering cross border crime and migration management, especially in the border the Republic of Greece.

JO Albania 2025, started on 21 January 2025, in all state border of the Republic of Albania. On 22 January 2026, the Joint Operation JO Albania 2026 will start.

In the framework of the implementation of quality control mechanism, during 2025, Border and Migration Department conducted 40 thematic and ad-hoc inspection activities. In conclusion of the inspection activities, relevant instructions and recommendations for the inspected units have been issued.

Migrant smuggling

During 2025, 44 suspected cases of smuggling of migrants have been **reported by Border and Migration services**, marking an increase by 43% against 2024. In these cases, 51 perpetrators were apprehended, 34 of whom were identified as Albanian citizens and 17 foreign citizens. In these 44 cases, 121 citizens were attempted to be smuggled, of which 105 were foreign citizens and 16 Albanian citizens. The main nationalities of foreign nationals who have been smuggled are Bangladesh 16, Pakistan 14, Egypt 11, Syria 12 and 68 other nationals, etc.

During 2025, by Criminal Police Department has been reported as below:

- For Article 298, of the Criminal Code "Assistance for illegal border crossing", 59 criminal offenses were identified, 56 were detected, with 94.92% detectability. Compared to 2024, 27 fewer criminal offenses have been identified (86).
- Article 298 "Providing assistance for illegal border crossing", -20 police operations.

Return and readmissions

Regarding the management of irregular migration, draft agreements and protocols with seven countries Estonia, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Algeria, Indonesia, and the Philippines are currently undergoing institutional assessment. In addition, draft agreements for seven other countries Bangladesh, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine have been prepared and sent to the respective parties as proposals. As assessed during the Joint Readmission Committee Meetings, the implementation of the readmission agreement with EU MSs and third countries and also of the readmission protocols has continued without obstacles.

Albanian authorities have addressed all readmission requests, submitted my other countries, without delay.

During 2025, in implementation of the Readmission Agreement between Albania and the European Community and bilateral readmission agreements, 348 requests for Albanian adult citizens were processed and answered, 39 requests more than during 2024.

No	Requesting country	2024	2025
1.	Germany	171	228
2.	Belgium	46	62
3.	France	3	0
4.	Poland	0	2
5.	Finland	0	1
6.	Luxembourg	5	4
7.	Netherlands	7	7
8.	Sweden	0	0
9.	Bulgaria	0	1
10.	Norway	1	1
11.	Italy	0	0
12.	Spain	0	0
13.	Slovenia	1	0
14.	Great Britain	74	42
15.	Kosovo	0	0
16.	Montenegro	1	0
	Total	309	348

On the other hand, Albanian authorities have processed 9 requests for the readmission of Albanian unaccompanied minors, against 12 requests submitted during 2024. 7 requests have been answered positively, while 2 is in process.

		2024			2025		
No	Requesting country	Total	Positive	In Process	Total	Positive	In Process
1	Germany	11	10	1	3	3	-
3	Sweden	1	1	0	0	0	0
4	Greece	0	0	0	4	4	-
6	Kosovo	0	0	0	2	-	2
	Total	12	11	1	9	7	2

During 2025, 45 return operations were carried out from Great Britain, with 1886 returned Albanian citizens, against 49 operations carried out with 2098 returned Albanian citizens during 2024.

Year/Month	2024		2025	
	Operations	Returned	Operations	Returned
January	3	164	3	142
February	5	260	4	163
March	4	176	4	176
April	4	167	4	170
May	5	187	3	134
June	3	124	4	185
July	4	162	5	210
August	5	193	4	137
September	4	168	4	149
October	5	191	4	150
November	4	190	4	177
December	3	116	2	93
Total	49	2098	45	1886

Country	Requests of Albanian authorities							Requests for Albanian authorities						
	2024			2025				2024			2025			
	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	In Process	Total	Positive	egative	Total	psitive	Negative	In Process
Greece	46	39	7	61	56	5	0	19	12	2	8	7	1	0
Montenegro	0	0	0	8	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kosovo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Serbia	1	0	1	9	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
England	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	47	39	8	79	61	18	0	20	13	2	11	7	4	0

During 2025, Albanian authorities submitted, to other countries, 79 readmission requests, related to third country nationals, and received 61 positive answers and 18 negative ones.

- During 2025, Albanian migration services, with the support of IOM, processed 25 requests for assisted voluntary return to the country of origin, against 24 processed during 2024.
- During 2025, 15 assisted voluntary returns have been performed.
- During 2025, 2 return operation, from France, were conducted with Albanian escort, with 64 Albanian returnees, against 6 operations conducted during 2024, with 252 returnees.

Within the framework of the implementation of the Regional Project WBCAP (Enhancing Readmission Capacities in the Western Balkans), the e-RCMS (Readmission Case Management System) Module software has already been installed as part of TIMS. On November 20, 2025, the Nordicstation B Company conducted an online test training with representatives of the institutions involved in the handling of readmission cases. At the end of December 2025, within the framework of the operationalization of this module, several “online” tests were carried out, in cooperation with the Belgian authorities, which were successful. Within January 2026, communication for the handling of readmission requests with the Belgian authorities through this module (e-RCMS) should begin.

One of the specific measures of Border and Migration services is the careful check of the travel documents of Albanian and foreign citizens traveling in or out of Albania.

Document abuse was present even during 2025. During 2025, the phenomenon of the use of forgery documents has marked an increase by 68.4 %, compared to the previous year (187 cases during 2025 against 111 during 2024). In 187 cases, 260 counterfeited documents, used by 172 citizens, 127 Albanian citizens, and 45 foreign citizens, were found. 252 counterfeited documents were found in exit while 8 were found in entry.

Out of the 260 forged documents identified and seized in 187 cases, there were 76 passports, 80 identity cards, 24 residence permits, 11 fake stamps and 69 other fake documents.

Schengen governance: implementation of the Schengen Action Plan, preparation of the Schengen strategy.

Within the framework of fulfilling the Interim Benchmarks under Chapter 24 “Justice, Freedom and Security”, Albania has undertaken a structured process to strengthen Schengen governance, through the drafting and approval of the Schengen Action Plan 2026–2030.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has been designated as the lead institution for this process and has coordinated the preparation of the Action Plan in close cooperation with its relevant structures and all contributing institutions covering the areas of the Schengen acquis. The Action Plan is the result of inter-institutional work and reflects the legal, institutional and operational measures required for full alignment with Schengen standards.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs initiated preparatory work in advance for the drafting process, establishing a clear structure of measures and ensuring an effective inter-institutional coordination process. The drafting of the Schengen Action Plan has been carried out in line with national and sectoral strategic documents, ensuring that the measures are coordinated, sustainable and measurable, in support of Albania’s progress towards membership in the European Union.

On **1 October 2025.**, an online meeting was held with representatives of the European Commission, with the aim of exchanging technical guidance on the drafting and completion of the Schengen Action Plan, in accordance with the format and methodological approach established by the European Commission.

The Schengen Action Plan 2026–2030 constitutes Albania’s key strategic document for Schengen governance. It sets out the measures, institutional responsibilities and timelines for aligning Albania with the standards of the Schengen Area, serving as a roadmap for the country’s preparation towards integration into the Schengen security and cooperation mechanisms and ensuring that legislation, infrastructure and operational capacities comply with the EU acquis.

The Action Plan covers all key areas of the Schengen acquis, including border management, visa policies, migration and asylum, return, police and judicial cooperation, information systems, data protection and monitoring mechanisms. For each measure, responsible institutions, implementation timelines, sources of funding and performance indicators are clearly defined. The proposed measures are primarily short-term and medium-term and are linked to the main Schengen priorities, ensuring a coordinated and sustainable approach to Albania’s preparation in line with the relevant standards.

Through the approval and implementation of this document, the objective is to fulfil Schengen requirements and standards and further strengthen integrated border management, maintain a

high level of border and internal security, facilitate cross-border traffic at border crossing points, prevent and manage irregular migration, combat cross-border crime, and enhance the return process for persons who do not have the right to stay in the territory of the Republic of Albania.

The Schengen Action Plan provides an overview of the measures translated into concrete activities for each of the covered areas, necessary to achieve both the general and specific objectives.

The drafting process has been conducted in continuous consultation with the European Commission. The Action Plan has been submitted to the European Commission for review, and all comments and recommendations provided have been reflected in subsequent versions of the document, ensuring full compliance with the EU methodology and requirements.

Prime Minister's Order no. 1, dated 12 January 2026, "On the establishment of the Inter-Institutional Working Group for the drafting of the Schengen Action Plan 2026–2030", has been approved, providing the formal basis for inter-institutional coordination and monitoring of the Action Plan's implementation. The Schengen Action Plan was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) No. 44, dated 21.01.2026.

Visa Policy Alignment: implementation of the visa policy alignment roadmap.

Albania is firmly committed to advancing on its European integration path and move forward with the same pace to conclude accession negotiations by 2027. Within this framework, full alignment with the EU visa policy constitutes an important benchmark under Chapter 24 "Justice, Freedom and Security".

In 2025, Albania took progressive steps to align its visa policy with the European Union acquis by implementing two decisive and legally binding measures, namely terminating the visa-free agreement with Belarus and discontinuing the seasonal visa-free entry for Bahraini nationals. Thereby reducing the number of discrepancies from 13 to 11. Furthermore, in this context Albania prepared a roadmap concerning the gradual alignment with the EU visa policy.

The roadmap sets out clear timelines towards full visa policy alignment with specific third countries. These timelines have been discussed and agreed upon with the European Commission as well. The roadmap was adopted by the end of 2025. In line with this roadmap, the relevant Albanian authorities were duly notified of the discontinuation of the seasonal visa-free practice for Oman, Thailand and Indonesia.

Asylum: asylum procedures and system, separate reception facilities for unaccompanied children.

The asylum system in Albania

Implementation of the right to asylum in the Republic of Albania

The implementation of the right to asylum in the Republic of Albania is guaranteed by the interaction of several components.

Albania has an asylum system, which continues to improve through further alignment with European standards, realizing the full functioning of the procedures in the determination of the status of international protection for asylum seekers, and the right to asylum is according to European Conventions.

There is a complete legal framework.

The approval of Law No. 10/2021 "On Asylum in the Republic of Albania", and its by-laws (15 acts) in its implementation, have a fundamental role in the full implementation of the standards required to the field. The legal framework is partially aligned with the 5 main EU Directives in the field of asylum which guarantees the main principle of non-refoulement.

The new aligned law on asylum procedures provides the granting of asylum rights even when requests for international protection are presented in transit areas within the borders of the Republic of Albania.

It also guarantees other rights of asylum seekers and refugees from law-enforcement institutions, as well as equal treatment with third-country nationals legally staying in Albanian territory.

For the remaining provisions of the 5 directives, compliance tables will be prepared and legal changes are expected to be made during 2026. Through these acts, Albania has aligned itself with legally civilized countries.

The implementation of the right to asylum in the Republic of Albania is guaranteed by the interaction of several components. In previous years, Albania applied temporary protection measures for foreign citizens originating from countries affected by international or internal armed conflict, notably Afghanistan, based on Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 501, of 25.08.2021 (as amended). These measures were implemented in close cooperation with international partners and ensured immediate protection, accommodation and onward resettlement support.

During 2025, the context shifted from emergency response to a consolidation phase. No new mass inflows requiring the activation or extension of temporary protection mechanisms were recorded. The majority of Afghan citizens previously granted temporary protection had either been resettled to third countries or had completed the necessary administrative procedures and departed the territory of the Republic of Albania.

Remaining cases were managed on an individual basis, primarily through the regular asylum procedure, in full compliance with Law No. 10/2021 "On Asylum in the Republic of Albania" and the principle of non-refoulement.

The experience gained from the implementation of temporary protection measures has strengthened inter-institutional coordination and operational preparedness.

These have been formally reflected and incorporated into the Contingency Plan for Migratory Flows, approved in 2025 with the support of IOM, UNHCR and EUAA. The plan provides a structured and sustainable framework for managing potential future mixed migratory flows, including asylum seekers and persons in need of international protection.

Overall, 2025 was characterized by a stable asylum situation, a low number of applications for international protection and sufficient national reception capacities. Albania demonstrated its ability to manage protection needs through its regular legal and institutional framework, in line with EU standards and international obligations. In October 2024, the Second Roadmap for Cooperation with the EUAA (2024-2027) was officially approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs. This Roadmap is in line with the priorities set out in the National Strategy for Migration and its Action Plan, which have been approved.

As for the measures foreseen to increase the number of qualified interpreters in temporary reception centers, as well as to encourage female interpreters to enhance reporting on violence and possible trafficking cases, are part of the National Action Plan for the National Strategy on Migration and are scheduled to be addressed in 2026.

In the meantime, the authority responsible for asylum, together with the Department for Border and Migration, will initiate an assessment of the needs to define the professional profile of interpreters and the most required languages. Following this assessment, a formal request will be submitted to the Ministry of Justice. Additionally, the creation of a network of “on hold” interpreters, who will assist authorities in a timely and professional manner, is under consideration.

Thus, while the concrete measures will be implemented in 2026, preparatory steps such as needs assessment and structuring of the formal request will be undertaken beforehand.

Albania has the necessary institutions to handle requests for international protection and to improve access to asylum

The General Directorate for the Development of Migration and Asylum, within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is the main authority responsible for asylum matters in Albania.

During 2025, the General Directorate continued to operate with consolidated institutional capacity, ensuring the effective management of asylum procedures and coordination among the competent authorities.

The Asylum sector which is under the General Directorate for the Development of Migration and Asylum administers the electronic register of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in the Republic of Albania. The register functions as an integrated system connecting:

- the General Directorate for the Development of Migration and Asylum,

- the Directorate of Border and Migration, and
- the National Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers.

This integrated database enables real-time exchange of information, supports statistical reporting, contributes to shorter decision-making procedures and serves as the central national repository of asylum-related data.

Cooperation with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) continued throughout 2025, focusing on capacity-building, procedural quality and further alignment with EU asylum standards.

Albania has reception centers for asylum seekers.

During 2025, Albania continued to improve the infrastructure for the reception, accommodation and interviewing of migrants and asylum seekers, in close cooperation with national institutions and international partners, with the aim of further aligning reception conditions with EU standards.

The National Asylum Reception Centre remains the main accommodation facility for asylum seekers. As an open center, it provides reception throughout the asylum procedure, including during appeal stages in case of negative decisions.

Following continued investments supported by international partners, the Centre has a reception capacity of up to 220 people and is staffed with multidisciplinary personnel, including medical, social and psychological professionals.

The Centre operates in compliance with national legislation and international conventions ratified by the Republic of Albania, with a focus on safeguarding fundamental human rights and continuously improving service standards for asylum seekers and refugees.

Regarding the NCA capacities since 2022, a caretaker has been added to cover the night shifts. In addition, new facilities have been introduced, including a playground and a basketball court, which further enhance the overall environment and support community engagement.

In the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers (NCA), a total of **55 cases** of unaccompanied children (UASC) were treated during 2025. In addition, other children were identified and assisted in the territory in cooperation with local authorities and partner organizations.

Additional reception capacity is ensured through specialized facilities. The Social Centre for Irregular Migrants and Vulnerable Asylum Seekers in Gjirokastër provides short-term accommodation for up to 20 persons, with a particular focus on women and children during the pre-screening phase.

Two transit centers for temporary registration and accommodation operate in Gërhot (Gjirokastër) and Kapshticë (Korçë), each with a capacity of up to 60 persons. These centers

are equipped with IT systems enabling registration and screening procedures and contribute to Albania's preparedness in the event of increased migratory inflows.

In 2025, Albania approved the "The Contingency Plan for mixed migration flows was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 684, dated 27 December 2025, covering the period 2026–2028., developed in accordance with EU methodology and with the support of UNHCR, IOM and EUAA. The plan strengthens institutional preparedness and coordination for managing mixed migratory flows, including asylum seekers and vulnerable groups.

These developments are closely linked to the implementation of the National Migration Strategy 2024–2030, in particular Pillar IV on asylum.

An outstanding issue remains the establishment of the Centre for Unaccompanied Minors, which is expected to be completed in December 2026. Until this centre is operational, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the organization Arsis for the establishment of a provisional centre for unaccompanied children. The MoU was signed on 29 December 2025.

Albania–EU Cooperation Framework

EU support continued through the launch of the EU4Migration project (2025–2028), implemented by UNHCR and IOM in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The project focuses on strengthening the asylum and migration system in line with EU standards, enhancing institutional capacity for asylum processing, improving reception conditions, protecting unaccompanied children and vulnerable groups, and supporting Albania's EU integration process.

During 2025, key achievements included the advancement of the National Migration Strategy, the approval of the "The Contingency Plan for mixed migration flows was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 684, dated 27 December 2025, covering the period 2026–2028, further alignment of asylum-related legislation with the EU acquis and continued cooperation with UNHCR, IOM and EUAA in the areas of training, infrastructure development and technical assistance.

Asylum procedure and statistical data

The competent authority for border and migration management shall be the responsible state authority for carrying out the preliminary screening and registration of third-country nationals or stateless persons who express the intention or submit an application for international protection at border crossing points or within the territory of the Republic of Albania.

Where the competent authority for border and migration management faces difficulties in determining the status of the person during the screening phase, it shall request the immediate presence and assistance of the authority responsible for asylum and international protection, in accordance with the principles of cooperation and procedural guarantees.

Where, upon completion of the screening procedure, the third-country national or stateless person is identified as an applicant for international protection, the competent authority for border and migration management shall promptly notify:

- the authority responsible for asylum and international protection; and
- the central authority responsible for the reception and treatment of foreigners.

Notification may be transmitted through one or more of the following official communication channels:

- official telephone;
- official electronic mail;
- official written notification.

The authority responsible for border and migration management shall ensure coordination for the safe transfer and handover of the applicant to the designated National Reception Facility, as determined by the asylum authority, on the basis of a handover protocol, drawn up in duplicate in accordance with the model approved by the relevant secondary legislation.

One copy of the protocol shall be submitted to the receiving authority, while the second copy shall be retained by the competent border and migration authority.

All relevant data collected shall be duly recorded in the National Register of Foreigners, in line with the respective competences and in accordance with the legislation governing electronic national databases.

- Where an application for international protection is lodged directly with the authority responsible for asylum and international protection, that authority shall inform the competent border and migration authority, which shall:
- facilitate the taking of biometric identifiers, including fingerprints, in accordance with applicable legislation; and
- ensure the registration of the applicant in the asylum information system. The authority responsible for asylum and international protection shall, in all cases, receive:
 - a copy of the screening form;
 - a copy of the biometric data form; and
 - a brief case information note, within 48 hours of the completion of the screening procedure, via official electronic communication.

Where, during the screening procedure, the legal grounds for detention of an applicant for international protection are identified, in accordance with the applicable legislation, the competent authority for border and migration management may order detention and shall follow the procedural safeguards and judicial guarantees provided by law.

In such cases, the central authority responsible for foreigners and the asylum authority shall be notified without delay.

All competent authorities, as defined in this provision, involved in the processing of personal data of applicants for international protection, shall adopt appropriate technical and

organisational measures to ensure the protection of personal data against unlawful access, disclosure, loss or destruction, in compliance with data-protection legislation aligned with EU standards, in particular where such data are processed electronically.

In implementation of the legislation on asylum, Border and Migration services have identified and referred 126 asylum seekers.

Statistical data on Asylum

During 2025, most of the requests for international protection came from foreign citizens who came from countries that were characterized by a situation of international or internal armed conflict such as Afghanistan, Palestinian, etc.

January-December 2025:

Number of asylum requests referred to the year 2025 – 144 in total:

Number of decisions – 31

in total, as follows:

Refugee status – 7;

Subsidiary protection –13;

Revocation of status -0;

Refusal 4;

Decision of Suspension 4;

Decision of Cessation – 3;

Decisions Issued by the Authority for Asylum and Refugees		
Decisions	2024	2025
Refugee status	1	7
Subsidiary protection	16	13
Refusal	3	4
Revocation of status		
Decision of Suspension	10	4
Decision of Cessation	9	3
Decision "On the rejection of the asylum application"		
Decision "On Loss of Status"	6	
Total	45	31

Statistical data on Asylum

The number of asylum request referred to 2025 for the period January – December 2025, is 144 asylum requests in total.

Requests for International Protection			
NR	Country	2024	2025
1	Afghanistan	33	17
2	Syria	17	9
3	Ukraine	7	5
4	Iraq	8	2
5	Morocco		1
6	Algeria	1	1
7	Pakistan	13	3
8	Russia	2	
9	USA		
10	Iran	6	2
11	Tunisia		1
12	Somalia		
13	Turkey	1	1
14	Bangladesh		2
15	Serbia		
16	Nepal		
17	United Kingdom		2
18	Egypt		57
19	Yemen		
20	Belarus		1
21	Argentina	2	
22	Cambodia	1	
23	Armenia	2	
24	Sudan	1	
25	Saudi Arabia	1	2
26	Cameroon	2	2
27	Kazakhstan	5	
28	Nigeria	2	5
29	Palestine		13
30	Chine		4
31	Côte d'Ivoire		1

32	India		1
33	Poland		1
34	Israel		1
35	Sri Lanka		3
36	Jordan		4
37	Romania		1
38	Uganda		1
39	Africa		1
	Total	104	144
