

**ADDRESS OF HEAD OF OSCE PRESENCE IN ALBANIA IN MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING SIGNING CEREMONY
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM, UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA
15 APRIL 2013**

*Professor Rrokaj, Dean of the Faculty
Professor Fuga,
Dear students,*

It is a real pleasure to be here today in my function as Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania. In particular, I am happy to see all these young people, the future of the country.

Today we are kicking off what can be considered as an exciting cooperation project between the OSCE Presence and the Journalism Department of the University of Tirana – a project in which you, dear students, will play a key role.

As you all are well aware, I assume, Albania is approaching parliamentary elections on 23 June. This will be again an important test of Albania's democratic maturity. It looks as if the whole election process and not just the election day itself will have an impact on Albania's chances for further European integration.

The importance of the pre-election process cannot be overemphasized. The media have an important role to play in the ongoing electoral process in providing information for citizens. That can be about programmes of political parties or candidates' platforms, to name just two examples. Through objective and balanced reporting, they can contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Albania.

Despite having such a big responsibility, Albanian media outlets are not well known for applying the principles of ethical journalism, particularly during election campaign periods.

The OSCE Presence and the Journalism Department of the University of Tirana are therefore joining forces to conduct research and analysis into the practices of various editorial desks. This will assist us in better understanding the causes of professional and ethical shortcomings on the part of the media.

The outcome of this effort should help us to diagnose possible missing elements in the process of shaping news and information. In turn, this will provide a basis for developing solutions to address the problem through assistance to news organizations and the journalists who work for them.

*Professor Rrokaj,
Professor Fuga,
Dear students,*

I hope that you will find this project rewarding. We see it as most constructive for helping to build a better informed society, the solid platform for a stable democracy.

I wish you all much success for your studies!

Thank you very much!

E.o.T