

HEAD OF PRESENCE INTERVIEW WITH TOP CHANNEL TV, 14 OCTOBER 2011

Interviewed by Muhamed Veliu

Top Channel: Mr. Ambassador, you have been very active suggesting some proposals about the next coming reform on electoral code. Can you tell us a little bit more what are you proposing exactly and what should be made?

Ambassador Wollfarth: The political parties have to prepare and enter into dialogue for electoral code reform and that reform should start soon. We have all heard the progress report from the European Commission. It has hopefully had a sobering effect. But at this stage what we see is that the parties seem to remain in the trenches and it looks like they are preparing to stay in these trenches and this is not good. It is not about playing if they were in 1914-1915. It is about preparing the future and entering into reforms, electoral code reform being one of them. Rules of Procedures in the Parliament would be a very good start and there have been proposals. There have been also proposals from the Socialist Party, which is a catalogue, which is open and which should also contribute to provide a basis for a dialogue that is really needed to prepare Albania for the future, for the development of this society. The stabilization of democratic institutions usually depends on good elections. And we want to see even better elections in the future. We need to see it, the Albanian people deserve it.

Top Channel: What is your suggestion exactly, what should be done at this moment, Ambassador?

Ambassador Wollfarth: Dialogue. Not blaming each other, but dialogue. Entering into dialogue. It does not matter in which format. It does not matter whether this is in private or in public - usually good preparations start in private – and also having a build-up of trust. Trust must replace mistrust and trust is needed to build the future of Albania. I am confident and the Presence in Albania stands also ready to support that. I am confident that it will be possible to prepare Albania for the future. However, steps must be done now. The clock is ticking and also for Electoral Code reform.

Top Channel: Mr. Ambassador, you have mentioned the word dialogue many times. The same thing did your colleagues Ambassador of the United States, Ambassador Sequi and everyone. But yesterday, we have seen Prime Minister of Albania swearing and shouting and threatening one Socialist MP at the parliament. Do you think this is the way forward?

Ambassador Wollfarth: The important way forward is to come to business-oriented dialogue and not to heated debate. This is, of course, also part of parliamentary life. I would not overestimate it, but also to come to good business terms, have sober thoughts, well-reflected thoughts, business-oriented drafts and then move to decision making. The Parliament is now back in session for a little bit more than four weeks, but nothing serious so far has happened and this looks like the time has not been used as it should have been. It should be used to prepare for the dialogue, to build trust, to work on draft legislation, including and starting with Electoral Code reform and we would like to see that happen soon.

Top Channel: If the dialogue which you are asking is not going to happen in the coming days or weeks what are the steps that the International Community is going to take in order to make this dialogue happen?

Ambassador Wollfarth: The important thing to remember is that it is up to the Albanians to decide on the speed of development. We can provide advice. We are willing to provide advice. We also have the patience to provide advice. It needs to be seen how patient the Albanian people is with what is happening on the political scene. We would like to see a higher speed. The people deserve it. The country deserves it and it will also serve prosperity and security in the area.

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