

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO ALBANIA (FIRST BATCH)

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

- How is the Government honouring commitments made at the 2018 Berlin process Summit in London to protect “whistle blowers” in the public and private sector who take personal risks to provide critical information?
- What steps has the Government taken to tackle modern slavery following its endorsement of the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in June 2018?
- What is the Government doing to ensure that the law on Measures Against Violence in Family Relations is fully enforced?
- How will the Government ensure that proposed new anti-defamation laws do not limit the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, and in particular limit the freedom of the media to report on individuals in positions of authority?
- What has the Government done to improve the conduct of future elections given widespread allegations of vote buying and pressure on voters in 2017?

GREECE

- The Advisory Committee of the FCNM has recently identified a number of gaps in Albania’s legislation and policy regarding minority rights and has adopted to that effect concrete recommendations for immediate action. A major point of concern has been that “relying on civil registry data for the purpose of recognition of a person’s affiliation with a national minority is contrary to the principle of self-identification”. What specific measures is the Government of Albania taking to remedy this situation?
- Just three months before the 2011 population census, a fine of 100K ALL (700 euros) was introduced for incorrect replies, including replies which did not correspond with civil registry data regarding ethnic affiliation. As a result, the census was heavily boycotted by all minorities and its results were largely contested. In view of the above:
 - a) What steps is the Government of Albania taking to ensure that the law on the 2020 census does not contain such provisions, but instead complies with the right to self-identification, as stated in para. 116 of the State report?
 - b) Is the Albanian Government considering carrying out an information campaign with a view to publicly clarifying that no fine will be incurred as regards self-identification statements not corresponding with civil registry data?
- Contrary to the provisions of art. 16 of the FCNM and other relevant international standards, in the 2014 territorial reform, some municipalities or communes which traditionally have been inhabited by a large number of members of national minorities

were merged with other municipalities or communes which do not share the same ethnic, cultural or religious features. A case in point is the merging of Himarë with Horë-Vranisht. What measures is the Government of Albania considering to remedy this situation? Furthermore, does the Government of Albania intend to apply the 20% threshold set as regards the use of the minority language and education in the minority language, to the smaller local communities (*njësie administrative*)?

- The 2015 legislation on “Strategic Investments” expanded the scope of public interest in order to enable expropriation for commercial purposes. However, legitimizing expropriations for commercial investments risks blurring the distinction between “public” and “private” interest as justification for an expropriation. Would Albania consider revising the said legislation so that “public interest” be defined in a more restrictive manner,?
- Determining the legal ownership of immovable property in the form of issuing property titles to the rightful owners, and allowing for the registration of these titles is arguably one of the key challenges in terms of addressing the property problem in Albania, affecting, in particular, minority members. What steps is the Albanian Government planning to take in this regard? Is the Albanian government considering receiving international expertise?

PORTUGAL on behalf of the Group of Friends on NMIRF’s

- Could the State-under-review describe its national mechanism or process responsible for coordinating the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations and the monitoring of progress and impact?
- Has the State-under-review established a dedicated ‘national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up’ (NMIRF) covering UPR recommendations, but also recommendations/observations generated by the UN human rights Treaty Bodies, the Special Procedures and relevant regional mechanisms, which, *inter alia*, clusters all the above, manages them in national databases, coordinates implementation actions across government, monitors progress and impact, and then streamline reporting procedures back to the UN? If so, could the State-under-review briefly share its experience on creating such mechanism, including challenges faced and lessons learnt, as well as any plans or needs to strengthen the NMIRF in the future?

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- The United States recognizes that trafficking in persons is a significant challenge in Albania. What steps is the Government taking to secure adequate and sustainable funding for victim shelters and increase identification of victims of trafficking and vulnerable populations?

- The United States recognizes the steps that the Government has taken to combat corruption in the judiciary through the vetting and requalification process of judges and prosecutors. Judicial reform has forced out judges who cannot justify their wealth, creating vacancies to be filled by qualified, clean judges. What measures will the Government take to ensure that these vacancies are filled by vetted, qualified candidates in a transparent manner to strengthen the independence and integrity of these institutions?
- Albanian media are active and diverse, and able to express a wide variety of viewpoints. However, we remain deeply concerned by efforts to exert direct and indirect political and economic pressure on media organizations and individual journalists, including threats and violence against those who investigate crime and corruption. What steps will the Government take to protect journalists from violence, economic, and political pressure?
- Albanian labor laws are well-written but inadequately enforced, leading to impunity for certain labor law violations, especially anti-union activities. What steps will the Government take to better enforce its labor laws and ensure freedom of association and collective bargaining?

SWEDEN

- What steps have been taken by the government to ensure that the Commissioner on Children's Rights has sufficient human and financial resources to fulfill its' mandate across the country?
- What measures have been taken to ensure the establishment and the functioning of the referral mechanisms for victims of domestic violence in all the municipalities?
- What measures are being taken to increase funding to civil society organisations providing services for victims of domestic violence?