

# **HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2015 - ALBANIA**

## **SUMMARY REPORT ON CORRUPTION AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT**

### Achievements:

From 25 cases for corruption concluded in the first six months of the year, there were 28 guilty verdicts and one dismissal; prosecution of low-level public corruption; installation of camera systems in police patrol vehicles resulting in decrease of collect of bribes by police officers; the government expanded its automated system to manage traffic citations to include traffic commissions responsible for resolving traffic citation disputes, further reducing opportunities for corrupt practices; the Service for Internal Affairs and Complaints increased the number of investigated police officers; the establishment by public authorities of a web portal for citizen reporting; public availability of the assets of public officials; the parliament authorized an increase to the number of inspectors to investigate declarations of assets and conflicts of interest from 12 to 15 thus strengthening the institutions capacities and increased public transparency; ministers, judges, ambassadors have been fined for not disclosing their submissions or for conflicts of interest.

### Key issues:

Regular engagement in corrupt practices with impunity by officials from the government; acts of corruption are revealed among police and in educational institutions, including public universities – students complained that instructors demanded bribes for passing grades in courses; limited resources, investigative leaks, real and perceived political pressure and a haphazard reassignment system prevented government agencies to complete investigated corruption cases.

### Statistics:

According to the Ministry of Justice the convictions at district courts decreased by 26.8 percent during the year compared to 2014; despite the higher number of police officers being investigated, courts convicted few of them; since the establishment of the web portal in March to September the web portal had received 8,749 reports, and the coordinator referred 52 of those for prosecution.

### Public access to information:

The public is not allowed to access to government information even if the law provides it. The legislation has lack of clarity and officials are reluctant to release information. The law allows restricting access in case of classified information or when its release would violate the protection of personal data. To fulfill this gap most government ministries and agencies posted public information directly on their websites, but this led businesses and citizens to criticize the lack of transparency and the failure of the authorities to publish some regulations and legislation that should be basic public information.

**Source:U.S. Department  
of State**

**Country Reports on  
Human Rights Practices  
for 2015**