

# POLICE OFFICERS RECOMMEND

*This brief provides a set of recommendations to support the findings of the “Building Integrity to Improve Performance and Sustainability of Anti-Corruption in the Albanian State Police” Project supported by the Embassy of The Netherlands in Albania. The document is the result of several years of work and is conceptualized as a guide for public decision-making authorities in adopting policies to strengthen the integrity of the State Police. The presented recommendations are conclusive of suggestions and discussions conducted with police officers in the course of performing activities for specific components of the project.*

*In this context, the Institute for Democracy and Mediation held several roundtables with police officers of various ranks and levels on issues linked with the implementation of mechanisms of police integrity and ethics. Conducted during July 2019-January 2021, these roundtables produced a comprehensive database on police integrity, on the fight against corruption in the State Police, and on other challenges confronting the police, including ethics, performance, and other mechanisms of integrity. Building on discussions from these roundtables, but also on findings solicited from the implementation of other components of the project, the Albanian State Police (ASP) officers consider the following recommendations intended for the senior leaders of the central police structures of particular importance:*

## 1 OVERALL POLICY AND COORDINATION FRAMEWORK

### **Evidence-based analysis of issues in the framework of anti-corruption policies in the State Police, particularly:**

- Conduct risk assessment analysis on certain aspects of integrity or work processes mostly exposed to integrity risks within police organization;
- Conduct regular polls to measure public perception on citizens' experience with police structures – these polls may be carried out by independent and professional domestic or foreign service providers;
- Enforce the legislation in force regarding the work conditions in the State Police (Law No. 10237, dated 18.02.2010, “On Safety and Health at Workplace” and 25 subregulatory acts in pursuance of this law); regularly assess and monitor ASP officers' working conditions and ensure that these conditions meet operational requirements. This would enable a more adequate working environment for police officers;
- Conduct regular job performance evaluations of police officers; Promotion should be merit-based following clear indicators and evidence of job performance;
- Conduct periodic assessments and monitoring of the police vetting process.

### **Strengthening cooperation and a more dynamic coordination between public stakeholders and interest groups**

- Strengthen institutional interaction between the Internal Affairs and Complaints Service and the General Directorate of State Police in the exchange of information in general to assist with targeted and effective audits of police officers' declarations of asset and conflict of interest;
- Strengthen cooperation with external stakeholders and, in particular, with the police union, the media, and the civil society.

### **Increasing State Police transparency and accountability**

- Publish analytical annual performance reports of the General Directorate of State Police with performance indicators;
- Adopt and publish a Transparency Program at regional police department level and for the entire police organization;
- Facilitate and regulate better the reporting and monitoring mechanism of corrupt acts and unethical conduct on the part of police officers with the aim of increasing visibility of and awareness on the fight against corruption;
- Develop and adopt a communication strategy for the State Police to include the increase of awareness on standards of ethics.

### **Effective coordination of the State Police with the objectives of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2013-2023 and the Relevant Action Plan:**

→ Develop and adopt integrity plans for police units in the country pursuant to the methodological instrument (approved by the Ministry of Justice) and the deadlines set out in the relevant Action Plan, as a need to strengthen the integrity management system in the police units. This integrity plan seeks to establish a systemic form to identify all processes and practices that are complexly administered by the police organization as well as to identify

the risks that affect the normal operation of each police unit;

- Enhance the capacities of the Department of Performance and Professional Standards in the General Directorate of State Police with particular focus in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the police units' integrity planning process;
- Encourage independent national and international civil society organizations and police missions to monitor and oversee the work of and cooperate with the State Police.

## **2 STRENGTHENING EFFECTIVE ANTI-CORRUPTION MECHANISMS IN THE STATE POLICE**

### **Strengthening oversight and monitoring mechanisms to prevent corruption**

- Regularly assess the police officers' knowledge of ethics, integrity, and professional conduct with the aim of restraining their inclination to corruption;
- Adopt guidelines and internal regulations/code of conduct on the prevention of and fight against corruption among the ranks of the State Police at police unit level;
- Establish adequate systems to facilitate, process, and act on complaints for corruption and ethical violations within the police organization (whistleblowing units in police structures); Guarantee anonymity and confidentiality of reporting of unethical or corrupt conduct within police organization in pursuance of the legal provisions of the Law on Whistleblowing.
- Raise public awareness and information on procedures of reporting and denunciation of corrupt acts committed by the State Police;
- Improve mechanisms to prevent corruption in the State Police, such as enforcing an integrity test.

### **Improvement of performance and professionalism of the State Police officers**

- Implement a reform of promotion and career growth in the State Police in order to ensure a merit-based and motivated police service, as a fundamental need to prevent corruption;
- The current procedures of promotion for police officers need to be more transparent, making it possible for police officers to have the time it takes to prepare for testing;
- Reconsider level of salaries of police officers so that wages match the expectations of staff as best as possible;
- Prepare draft decisions of Council of Ministers on treatment of State Police officers with financial remuneration for their job-related hardship, for impossibility to take annual leave, and supplementary payments for job-related relocations away from family;
- Enforce the legal provisions of the Labor Code and Status of State Police regarding working time, days off, overtime, public holidays, and Saturdays and Sundays;
- Make available a psychological service to police officers in all State Police structures in order to improve their mental health and to manage their stress;
- Update the continuous training curricula following most recent requirements on ethics and institutional integrity.

Prepared by: **Rovena Sulstarova • Armela Xhaho**

*This recommendation brief was prepared in the framework of the "Building Integrity to Improve Performance and Sustainability of Anti-Corruption in the Albanian State Police" Project supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of The Netherlands. The project objectives, implementation, and results are the full responsibility of the implementing organization – the Institute for Democracy and Mediation.*

*The attitudes and opinions expressed in this document belong to the actors involved in the project implementation and do not necessarily represent those of the Government of The Netherlands.*