

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDARD TWINNING PROJECT FICHE</b> <b>Further Strengthening the Assembly of Albania in the context of EU Accession</b></p>
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## **1. Basic Information**

1.1 Publication notice reference: EuropeAid/ 138-132/IH/ACT/AL

1.2 Programme: IPA 2014 Action Programme for Albania

1.3 Twinning Number: AL 14 IPA JH 01 16

1.4 Title: Further Strengthening the Assembly of Albania in the context of EU Accession (AL PARLIAMENT)

1.5 Sector: Public Administration, Justice and Home Affairs

1.6 Beneficiary country: Albania

## **2. Objectives**

### **2.1 Overall Objective:**

To improve the regulatory and oversight functions of the Parliament in order to strengthen the efficient fulfilment of the obligations stemming from EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the EU accession process.

### **2.2 Project purpose:**

To further strengthen the capacities of parliament for a more efficient approximation of legislation; to improve oversight functions of the parliament in relation to the work of the government and independent institutions; to strengthen the financial and budgetary autonomy of the Parliament; to enhance transparency and the administrative capacities of the Parliament.

### **2.3 Contribution to National Development Plan/Cooperation agreement/Association Agreement/Action Plan**

This Twinning Project will directly contribute to the objectives mentioned in the following strategic and/or programming documents:

**Indicative Country Strategy Paper** (adopted on the 18.08.2014) sets out the priorities for EU financial assistance for the period 2014-2020 to support Albania on its path to EU accession. The Country Strategy Paper states that there is a need to further strengthen democratic institutions in particular the role of the parliament for national consensus building.

**The European Commission's 2014 Progress Report on Albania** noted that progress has been made on the functioning of the parliament of Albania. However, the Report points out that further action is needed to improve the law-making and oversight role of the Assembly, notably, further strengthening the monitoring role in relation to the work of the independent institutions, including the appropriate follow-up to the findings and recommendations of these institutions; further enhancing the transparency in the law-making process, including the

timely publication of the minutes of committee meetings and adoption of clear rules on the public consultation.

**Assembly's Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the EU Progress Report 2014 on Albania** sets out five objectives to be achieved by the Assembly during the year 2015: 1) strengthening the legislative function of the Parliament; 2) strengthening the oversight role of Parliament; 3) strengthening the transparency of Parliament; 4) strengthening the financial and budgetary autonomy of the Parliament and 5) strengthening the administrative capacity of the Parliament.

**National Plan for the European Integration (NPEI) 2015-2020<sup>1</sup>** underlines the need to improve the functioning of the Assembly of Albania, in order to better perform its legislative and oversight functions, in line with the best practices of national parliaments of the EU member states. The NPEI 2015-2020 states that the work of the parliament will be focussed in achieving, during the mid to long-term period, the following objectives: 1) strengthening the legislative function of Parliament; 2) strengthening the oversight role of Parliament, 3) strengthening transparency in the work of the Assembly, 4) strengthening the financial and budgetary autonomy of the Assembly from the government and 5) strengthening the administrative capacity of the Assembly.

**The Roadmap to address the 5 key priorities recommended by the EC<sup>2</sup>** stipulates that the Assembly is a responsible institution for the implementation of some of the measures related to Priority 1 "Reform of the public administration", priority 2 "Reform of the Judiciary" and Priority 5 "Protection of human rights".

**The Twinning Project "Strengthening the Assembly of Albania"**, which was implemented by the Hungarian National Assembly in consortium with the French National Assembly and the French Senate during the period January 2012-June 2013, recommended measures, aiming to further strengthen the regulatory and oversight functions of the Assembly. The recommendation of the previous twinning that are not implemented yet are foreseen as actions to be implemented in this project.

### 3. Description

#### 3.1 Background and justification

**The Assembly of Albania plays a fundamental role in the democratic system of the Republic of Albania.** It is the highest law-making body which considers and approves the proposed legislation. The Assembly also exercises the function of political control over the government as well as monitors the implementation of obligations stemming from the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement, and the EU accession process, through the instruments of parliamentary oversight, stipulated in the Constitution and the Rules of Procedures of the Assembly. In addition to legislative and oversight function, the Assembly exercises representative functions. MPs and parliamentary groups, representatives of the

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<sup>1</sup> Decision of the Council of Ministers No.404, dated 13.05.2015 "On the Approval of the National Plan for European Integration 2015-2020".

<sup>2</sup> 5 priorities for opening the EU accession negotiations of Albania, defined in the Enlargement Strategy of European Commission 2013-2014, confirmed also in the Enlargement Strategy of European Commission 2014-2015, October 2014.

ruling majority and the opposition, develop political debates in the Assembly as representatives of the voters' interests.

**In the last two years the Assembly of Albania made significant progress towards being a parliament which functions in line with EU best practices.** Both the legal framework governing the organization and functioning of the parliament, the structure and the mechanisms of its operation has been reviewed with a view to further improve the Assembly's the law-making and oversight role in general and in the EU integration-related issues in particular. On 5 March 2015 the Assembly adopted by consensus the Law No. 15/2015 "*On the role of Parliament in the process of integration of the Republic of Albania in the European Union*". The aim of this law is to strengthen the law-making and oversight role of Parliament in the EU integration process. This new law provides the establishment of the National Council for European Integration, as the highest consulting structure in the process of EU integration.

Despite significant improvements in the functioning of the Assembly in recent years, the further consolidation of democracy and parliamentarism in Albania as well as the challenges brought about by the new phase in which Albania entered after receiving the candidate status for EU membership in June 2014, make it necessary to further improve the functioning of the Assembly in order to better perform its constitutional functions of lawmaking and oversight, in line with the best practices of European parliaments.

**For an effective EU law approximation process, a clear regulatory framework is needed.** The provisions of the new law No.15/2015 improved the legal framework governing the process of approximation of legislation and the compliance check of the draft-laws with the EU acquis, during their scrutiny in the Assembly. However, the entry into force of this law<sup>3</sup> requires that the Assembly of Albania take further measures in order to ensure its proper and effective implementation. For this purpose an analysis of the effects of this new law on the legislative procedures and the methodological basis of the work of the Assembly, in relation to the approximation process of domestic law with the EU acquis, should be prepared. Based on the conclusions and legal recommendations of this analysis, amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and modifications to other relevant internal rules and regulations governing various bodies and services of the Assembly need to be prepared and adopted in order to bring them in compliance with the provisions of the law No 15/2015. Moreover, a database of the approximated laws, guided by the principle of traceability need to be created in the parliament. The set-up of this parliamentary data base would facilitate the parliamentary works, especially during the accession negotiations.

On the other hand, defined objectives of the Assembly can be achieved only with a parliamentary staff who is well-trained on the issues of the EU integration and legal approximation. The trainings that were provided by previous IPA project "*Strengthening the Assembly of Albania*", were based on horizontal approach-and aimed at increasing the general knowledge of the Assembly administration on the EU-related issues. Therefore, further specific trainings of the Parliamentary staff dealing with the legal approximation –based on vertical approach- are needed. This can be achieved with focussed and in-depth trainings, accompanied by workshops, seminars, study visits, publications, etc.

**Despite the improvements in its oversight functions, the Assembly of Albania should continue addressing challenges in this regard.** The EC Progress Reports for the last years

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<sup>3</sup>The law No.15/2015 entered into force on 3 April 2015, 15 days after its publication in the Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No.38, dated 18 Mars 2015.

(2013 and 2014) point out that the parliament's oversight role need to be strengthened. As the parliamentary oversight is the weakest function currently performed by the Assembly of Albania, the improvement of oversight capacities is given an important place in the project.

The entry into force of the law No 15/2015 requires that the Assembly assess the compatibility of the current rules and procedures in force with the provisions of the new law, and, if necessary, amend them in order to bring them in compliance with the parliamentary oversight-related provisions of the new law. **Based on the Law No.15/2015 the Assembly has also established the National Council for European Integration (NCEI)**, as the highest national consulting structure in the process of EU integration of Albania. Support for the elaboration of the relevant internal rules and procedures on the organization and functioning of this new structure, as well as general and in-depth trainings of MPs, members of this structure and of its technical secretariat, on the role that this new parliamentary structure should play in the process of the European integration, is of crucial importance.

Moreover, in view of the preparations for the opening of the EU accession negotiations, it is important that the Assembly of Albania assess the current mechanisms available for monitoring the EU integration process and establish a parliamentary oversight mechanisms on the EU accession negotiations that will be conducted between the government of Albania and the EU institutions. For this purpose, a comparative analysis of the best practices for monitoring the EU accession negotiation used by the national parliaments of the EU Member states, that went through the process within the last 20 years should be carried out. Based on this analysis the Assembly of Albania will adopt the oversight model/mechanisms for monitoring the EU Accession negotiations that best fit to the Assembly of Albania. The Assembly has also to set up appropriate mechanisms for effectively monitoring the activities of the independent constitutional institutions and those established by law in relation to the EU integration issues.

**The parliamentary financial autonomy is indispensable in a democratic country and one of the preconditions of an effective separation of powers, between the legislative and executive branches in relation to the financial issues.** One of the key findings of the previous IPA Project was that the Assembly does not have budgetary autonomy from the government, which is not in compliance with the principle of the separation of powers stipulated in article 7 of the constitution of the Republic of Albania. In order to address this recommendation, the Assembly of Albania has established a Working Group, to carry out an assessment of the existing constitutional and legal framework on the financial and budgetary independence of the parliament from the government and to prepare a draft-law on the budget of the Assembly which will provide the legal procedures for drafting, approval and implementation of Parliament's budget, independently from the government, based on the European best European practices in this field. In this framework, further support from high profile-experts coming from national parliaments of the EU member states is considered of crucial importance, for the successful realization of this important parliamentary reform.

**Last but not least, a democratic parliament should be transparent, accessible and accountable.** For a parliament to fulfil its democratic mission, it is of vital importance to have effective communication with citizens and the civil society. The last Progress Reports and the recommendations of the previous IPA project highlighted the need to further strengthen the transparency and the involvement of the civil society in the legislative process, as well as to improve the public information on parliamentary activities and parliamentary documentation. Therefore, the transparency on the activity of the Assembly in general and in the EU-related issues in particular should be further strengthened. For this purpose, we intend to review the

Rules of Procedure of the Assembly (article 39, point 2) in order to bring it in compliance with the highest standards of transparency in the activity of the standing parliamentary committees and to develop a Communication Strategy for the Parliament. On the other hand, a well-trained parliamentary staff can very much ease and support the work of the MPs in general and could contribute to the transparent operation of the parliament as a heart of the democratic set up of any country. Therefore, the staff will be trained and seminars, workshops, etc. will be organised to reach the targeted aim.

This twinning fiche is linked with the previous Twinning Project “*Strengthening the Assembly of Albania*”. As a follow-up to the previous twinning project and based on the above mentioned justifications, a new twinning project, in support of the Assembly of Albania under IPA II, was planned by the Assembly of Albania and approved by the EU in 2014. The aim is to ensure the consolidation of the results and the implementation of the recommendations from the previous project that are yet to be implemented as well as to ensure the proper and effective implementation of the provision of the new law No 15/2015. In addition, taking into account that the opening of the EU accession negotiations is the next step in EU integration process for Albania, further support is needed for the Assembly of Albania to respond to the new challenges that this new step brings about.

### **3.2 Linked activities**

The Twinning Project “*Strengthening the Assembly of Albania*”, financed by the European Union in the framework of the IPA 2010 Programme for Albania was composed of 5 Components: 1. Improved legislative procedure for a more effective EU approximation process; 2. Strengthened legislative, coordinating and awareness raising capacities of the Committee for European Integration and of all the other standing committees on European integration activities; 3) Strengthened oversight capacity for all standing committees; 4) Improved communication and information activities for the Parliament and 5) Improved management of parliamentary budget and human resources, in accordance with the EU standards.

The implementation of the project was to a large extent a success. All the mandatory results of the project were achieved. During the 18 months of the duration of the project were implemented 94 activities according to the 5 components of the project. A large number of staff members of the Assembly was trained and became familiar with the EU, in general and the role of EU national parliaments, in particular. Several guidelines were developed for the improved functioning of the Assembly's several services. 15 Information materials on parliamentary practices and activities for EU/related issues were developed, published and distributed.

Besides detailed training programs of the Assembly staff in various fields, the project experts have developed guidelines and recommendations, which aim at strengthening the Assembly, through the introduction of new procedures and methods in the functioning of Parliament, according to the best practices of the functioning of the national parliaments of the EU Member States. The Assembly of Albania has taken the necessary decisions in order to adjust its legal and administrative system for the handling of EU affairs, according to the project proposals and recommendations. The recommendations made by IPA project are also included as priorities in the Parliament's Action Plan for the implementation of EU Progress Report for Albania for the years 2013 and 2014 as well as priorities in the budget forecasting of the Assembly Services for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016. The majority of these recommendations

either are fully implemented, or are in the process of implementation, and the rest will be implemented in the framework of this twinning project.

### **3.3 Results**

The project will achieve the following results:

#### **Result 1. Improved legislative procedure and working methods of the Assembly for a more effective EU law approximation process.**

The main indicators of achievement for this result are:

- Analysis of the effects of the new law No.15/2015 on the legislative procedures and the methodological basis of the work of the Assembly is prepared.
- Draft-amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and to other internal rules based on the new law No. 15/2015 are prepared.
- Efficient approximation of legislation, based on the adequate enforcement of the provisions of the new law No.15/2015 in relation to the legal approximation process.
- “Manual on the System of Verification of the Compatibility of the Albanian Legislation with the EU Acquis at the Parliamentary Level” is prepared and published.
- Capacities of the staff strengthened.

#### **Result 2. Strengthened parliamentary oversight capacities in relation to the work of the government and independent institutions**

The main indicators of achievement for this result are:

- Analysis of the effects of the new Law No.15/2015 on the oversight role of the Assembly in relation to the European integration process is prepared.
- Draft-amendments to the Rules of Procedure and modifications of other relevant internal rules accordingly prepared.
- The oversight capacities of the Assembly are strengthened.
- Capacities of the relevant staff strengthened.

#### **Result 3. Strengthened financial and budgetary independence of the Assembly from the government, in line with the European best practices.**

The main indicators of achievement for this result are:

- An analysis of the existing legal framework on the financial and budgetary independence of the parliament from the government is carried out.
- A special draft-law on the Assembly budget is elaborated and finalised.
- Draft-amendments to the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure and to other relevant internal rules and regulations in force are prepared, aiming to bring them in compliance with the provision of the new draft-law on the Assembly’s budget.  
Capacities of the relevant staff strengthened

#### **Result 4: Strengthened transparency and administrative capacities of the Assembly**

The main indicators of achievement of this result are:

- Proposal for the review of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, in order to bring it in compliance with the highest standards of transparency in the activity of parliamentary Committees is prepared.
- Number of research papers, legal/technical analysis and background documents produced by the advisors of the legislative service and the experts of the Research service of the Assembly.
- Capacities of the relevant staff strengthened.

### **3.4 Activities**

#### **Activity 1: Improve legislative procedure and working methods of the Assembly for a more effective EU law approximation process**

*The MS may propose additional activities in line with with the mandatory results. The following list of activities is indicative.*

- Preparing an analysis of the effects of the new law No.15/2015, on the legislative procedures and the methodological basis of the work of the Assembly, in relation to the approximation process of domestic law with the EU *acquis*;
- Prepare and publish a “*Manual on the system of verification of the compatibility of the Albanian Legislation with the EU Acquis at the Parliamentary level*”, based on the European best practices on the legal approximation of national law with the EU Acquis;
- Advanced training of all advisors of the Legislative Service on EU *acquis* in relation to the negotiating chapters;
- Specific Training of the staff of the Unit for Approximation of Legislation on the methodology and techniques of legal approximation of the national law with the EU Acquis;
- Creating a parliamentary database for the approximation of legislation guided by the principle of traceability, in order to facilitate the parliamentary works, especially during the EU accession negotiations;
- One study visit of the staff of the Unit of Approximation of Legislation and the staff of the Secretariat supporting the Committee on European Integration to the counterpart structure of the national parliament of an EU Member State.

#### **Activity 2: Strengthen parliamentary oversight capacities in relation to the activity of government and independent institutions**

*The MS may propose additional activities in line with the mandatory results. . The following list of activities is indicative.*

- Preparing an analysis of the effects of the new Law No.15/2015 on the oversight role of the Assembly in relation to the European integration process;
- Issuing recommendations on the best oversight model/mechanisms to be adopted by the Assembly of Albania for monitoring the EU Accession negotiations;
- Basic and advanced training of the members of the Technical Secretariat of the National Council on the European Integration, based on the training needs assessment of this new structure;
- Strengthening capacities of the Economic and Financial Committee to oversee the implementation of the state budget and public finances, as well as to follow up the recommendations of the Reports of the Supreme Audit Institution (High State Control) in relation to the implementation of the state budget and the spending of the public funds.

- One study visit of the selected staff of the Legal Service of the Assembly, the Technical Secretariat of the National Council for European Integration to the counterpart structure of the national parliament of an EU Member State.

**Activity 3: Strengthen financial and budgetary independence of the Assembly from the government, in line with the European best practices.**

*The MS may propose additional activities in line with mandatory results. The following list of activities is indicative.*

- Preparing an analysis of the existing constitutional and legal framework on the financial and budgetary independence of the parliament from the government, based on the best European practices in this field;
- Preparing a draft-law on the budget of the Assembly, which should provide the legal procedures for drafting, approval and implementation of Parliament's budget, independently from the government (*depending on legal recommendations of the analysis conducted in the framework of the activity of point one above*);
- Preparing draft-amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and to other relevant internal rules and regulations, with a view to bring them in compliance with the provisions of the new draft-law on the financial and budgetary independence of Parliament that will be elaborated in the framework of activity of point two above;
- One study visit of the MPs, Members of Secretariat for the Budget of the Assembly and the relevant administrative staff, to the counterpart structure of the national parliament of an EU Member State.

**Activity 4: Strengthen transparency and administrative capacities of the Assembly**

*The MS may propose additional activities in line with mandatory results. The following list of activities is indicative.*

- Analysing and preparing proposals for the review of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, in order to bring it in compliance with the highest standards of transparency in the activity of parliamentary Committees;
- Advanced training of the legal advisors of the Legislative Service and Monitoring of the Independent Institutions Service on the traditional/new methodologies of legal research, academic legal writing, case-law and legal reasoning;
- Training of the staff members of the Parliamentary Publication Service on the best practices relating to the transcription and the preparation of minutes of the meetings of the parliament bodies and plenary sittings as well as the materials for publication;
- Training of the staff members of the Parliamentary Research and Library Service on the best practices of parliamentary research;
- Training of the IPA Unit staff of the Assembly on the project design and implementation.

**3.5 Means/ Input from the MS Partner Administration:**

**3.5.1 Profile and tasks of the Project Leader**

The project is envisaged to provide exchange of experience and know-how with a MS Institution with good practice in the above stated project activities.

This project requires a Project Leader who will be responsible for the overall coordination of the project activities. The Project Leader is expected to closely work with the Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) and the short-term experts as well as with the counterpart of the Albanian Parliament (Beneficiary Institution).

**Profile:**

- University Degree in Law, Political Sciences, or Economics.
- Long-term civil servant official from a Member State homologue institution.
- At least 10 years of experience in managerial position in the Legislative Service, or in the European Department in the National Parliament of an EU MS;
- Minimum 5 years of experience in conducting comparative law studies in the field of approximation of national legislation to the EU *acquis*, within a Parliament of an EU Member State,
- Previous experience in at least one EU-funded project having as beneficiary a National Parliament will be a distinct advantage.
- Excellent English skills (oral and written);
- Excellent computer skills.

**Tasks:**

- Overall project co-ordination and monitoring,
- Supervision of the implementation of the project in coordination with the Albanian Project Leader counterpart,
- Mobilising short-term experts,
- Closely work with the RTA and the short term experts,
- Executing administrative issues (i.e. signing reports, side letters etc.),
- Undertaking all activities specified in the project and achieving the mandatory results

### **3.5.2 Profile and tasks of the Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA)**

This project requires a Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) as well as short term experts will implement the project.

The RTA will work on a day-to-day basis in the Assembly of Albania and support the co-ordination of different actions. RTA should be familiar with the legislative procedures both in the national parliaments of EU Member States and European Institutions as well as with the methods and techniques of legal harmonisation.

The Resident Twinning Adviser will have a key role in the coordination of inputs required for successful implementation of the project activities. He/she shall be supported by short – term experts from the European Union Member State(s).

**Profile:**

- University Degree in Law, Political Sciences or Economics or equivalent professional experience of 10 years in public administration.
- At least 3 years of professional experience both at managerial and expert level in activities related to the implementation of the EU *acquis* in the area covered by the Twinning project fiche.

- Minimum 3 years of experience in conducting comparative studies in EU law and in the field of approximation of national legislation to the EU legislation.
- Excellent English skills (oral and written);
- Excellent computer skills.

The RTA will be located within the premises of the Assembly and for 12 months period will be responsible for the following key activities:

### **Tasks**

- Daily co-ordination of the project;
- Communication with the RTA counterpart and Beneficiary Project Leader on project activities,
- Mobilisation and briefing of the short term experts;
- Permanent contacts with the main BC component counterparts;
- In coordination with the BC PL and RTA counterpart maintain regular contact with the MPs,
- Undertaking all activities specified in the project and achieving the mandatory results;
- Preparation of projects progress reports
- Advising on EU policies and best practices, related legislation and regulations;
- Planning and organization of the study visits, training activities and the visibility events of the project (kick-off, final event, thematic events).
- Liaison with CFCU and EU Task Manager.

### **3.5.3 Profile and tasks of the Short-Term Experts**

The PL and the RTA will be assisted by international short-term experts (STEs). Their “mix” should be identified by the Project Leader/RTA in the course of defining the operational side letters (OPS). The short-term expert shall assist the PL and the RTA in delivering the activities within the project. STEs that will be engaged should be professionals with parliamentary work background. This Twinning project should be implemented by a MS parliamentary administration. Tasks for short-term expert(s) will be elaborated by Project Leader/RTA and the beneficiary counterpart at the work plan preparation stage.

### **Profile**

- University Degree in law, political science, economics or similar discipline relevant to the project or equivalent professional experience of 7 years in public administration.
- Minimum 3 years of experience at expert level in the field of approximation of national legislation to the EU *acquis*, and/or in other fields covered by this project, preferably within a Parliament of an EU MS.
- Excellent English skills (oral and written);
- Excellent computer skills.

### **Tasks:**

- Undertaking all activities and achieving mandatory results;
- Conducting analysis on the area of the project components;
- Preparing and conducting training programs;
- Elaborating and presenting the proposals on the area of the project components.

#### **4. Institutional Framework**

The Assembly of Albania exercises the legislative, oversight and representative functions in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the Rules of Procedure of the Albanian Parliament. The Parliament is composed of 140 MPs elected for 4 years.

The Assembly of Albania appoints in the Plenary Setting 8 Standing Parliamentary Committees (Article 19 of the Rules of Procedure): 1) Committee on Legal Issues, Public Administration and Human Rights; 2) Committee on European Integration; 3) Committee on Foreign Policy; 4) Committee on Economy and Finances; 5) Committee on National Security; 6) Committee on Productive Activities, Trade and Environment; 7) Committee on Labour, Social Issues and Health and 8) Committee on Education and Means of Public Information.

The Committee on European Integration (CEI) has the following fields of responsibility: European integration issues; approximation of legislation with EU Acquis; monitoring the implementation of the obligations stemming from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, and the oversight of the financial assistance of the European Union for Albania (Article 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and Article 10 of the Law No.15/2015).

The law No.15/2015, stipulates the establishment of National Council for European Integration (NCEI). This structure has already been established in the parliament of Albania. NCEI is the highest national consulting structure in the process of European integration, which promotes and guarantees the inclusive cooperation among political forces, public institutions and civil society, as well as ensures the enhancement of transparency in the decision-making process in relation to the EU integration issues. NCEI is headed by the chairman of the CEI and its deputy chairman is the chairman of Albanian delegation to the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Parliamentary Committee (SAPC).

The Secretary General of the Assembly of Albania, as the highest civil servant in the Assembly, supervises the services of the Assembly. The Administration of the Assembly of Albania is composed by five Services: 1) Legislative Service; 2) Information and Documentation Service, 3) Administrative Service, 4) Foreign Relations Service and 5) Monitoring of the Independent Institutions Service.

The task of the Legislative Service is to provide to the Assembly, Parliamentary Standing Committees and MPs the necessary legal assistance to carry out the legislative and oversight functions of the Assembly. The Legislative Service is composed of 4 Directories (Services): 1) Legal Service 2) Plenary Settings Service, 3) Parliamentary Committees Service and 4) Service for the Approximation of Legislation.

The Director General of the Legislative carries out effective supervision of the services under his/her responsibility. The Director General of the Legislative Service is under the direct responsibility of the Secretary General of the Parliament.

The main task of the Legal Service is to provide its own contribution for the functioning and the constant improvement of the activity in the parliamentary committees, parliamentary councils and other parliamentary bodies. The Service for Plenary Settings ensures support to the Speaker of the Parliament and MPs for the good functioning of the parliamentary procedures in the plenary settings in compliance with the Constitution and Rules of Procedure

of the Assembly. The Parliamentary Committee Service ensures support to the Speaker of the Parliament, MPs and standing parliamentary Committees for the good functioning of the parliamentary procedures in committees in compliance with the Constitution and Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. The Service for the Approximation of Legislation provides to the Assembly, the Standing Committees and MPs, the required legal and scientific expertise in the process of harmonisation and approximation of Albanian legislation to the EU Acquis.

The IPA Unit in the Assembly is set up under the direct supervision of the Secretary General of the Assembly, which is responsible for the programming, preparation and technical implementation of the projects coming under its responsibility and funded under the IPA II programme, in line with the Operational Agreement and in accordance with the relevant Financing Agreement. The Secretary General of the Assembly is *ex-officio* head of the IPA Unit. The IPA Unit is composed of 2 experts: one Project Programming Officer and one Project Implementation Officer.

The staff of the IPAU will ensure the co-ordination and the day-to-day running of the project from the BC institution. The Project Implementation Officer of the IPAU will be *ex-officio* RTA counterpart from the Assembly of Albania. A dedicated Project Implementation Unit will also be established for the implementation of the project.

## **5. Budget**

The budget for the project is EUR 500,000 which will be covered by IPA contribution, in line with the Twinning Manual.

## **6. Implementation Arrangements**

### **6.1 Implementing Agency responsible for tendering, contracting and accounting**

**General Directorate for Financing and Contracting of EU, World Bank and Other Donor Funds/ Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) in the Ministry of Finance**

**Mr. Manol Simo**

**General Director**

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**Delegation of the European Union to Albania**

**Mrs. Dorarta Hyseni,**

**The Project Manager at the EU Delegation**

### **6.2 Main counterpart in the BC**

**Project Leader:**

Mrs. Albana Shtylla

**Secretary General of the Assembly of Albania,**

## **The Resident Twinning Adviser counterpart:**

Mr. Sidrit Minxhozi,

**Project Implementation Officer at the IPA Unit,**

Assembly of Albania

## **6.3 Contracts**

The project will be implemented through one twinning contract.

## **7. Implementation Schedule (indicative)**

7.1 Launching of the call for proposals: Q2-2016

7.2 Start of project activities: Q4-2016

7.3 Project completion: Q4- 2017

7.4 Duration of the implementation period: 12 months. The execution period will end 3 months after the implementation period of the Action (work plan), which will take 12 months.

## **8. Sustainability**

The successful implementation of the project will further improve the regulatory and oversight functions of the Parliament in general and in the EU-related issues in particular. The successful implementation of the project will bring about a more efficient and qualitative approximation of Albanian legislation to the EU *acquis*, improve oversight functions of the parliament in relation to the work of the government and independent institutions, strengthen the financial and budgetary autonomy of the Parliament from the government and enhance the transparency and the administrative capacities of the Parliament.

The sustainability of this project's results will be ensured by the continuation of the reforms and efforts to further strengthen the capacities of the MPs and especially of the staff of Parliament for more efficient approximation of domestic legislation to EU law and improved oversight functions.

The results of the project and the know-how that will be acquired through the implementation of the Twinning Project will be maintained, disseminated and furtherly developed in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of this Twining project. The training manuals and guidelines elaborated under the Twinning Project will continue to be used and updated by the Assembly after the project's completion.

## **9. Crosscutting issues (*equal opportunity, environment, etc...*)**

Equal access in compliance with the constitutional principal of equality will be guaranteed for participation in this project. The selection of the training participants in this twinning programme will be made on non-discriminatory criteria regarding to men, women, administration staff, members of parliament, majority and opposition participation.

The project has no evident effect on the environment.

## **10. Conditionality and sequencing**

### **10.1 Conditionality**

A key condition for the implementation of the Twinning Project is the full support of the most senior elected members level (such as the Speaker, the Conference of Presidents) and the highest parliamentary civil servant level (such as the Secretary-General) to the execution of this twinning project, independently of political affiliations and of the political situation. Additional conditionality includes:

- Co-operation and transparency among all partners and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project,
- Full commitment of both the Albanian Parliament and the twinning counterpart to mobilise all appropriate human and financial resources for a successful implementation of the project.

The Beneficiary furthermore shall:

- a) Support the RTA with office accommodation, trainings rooms and logistical assistance, for details please refer to point 5.13 of the Twinning Manual at the following address: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial\\_assistance/institution\\_building/2012/manual\\_may\\_2012.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/institution_building/2012/manual_may_2012.pdf)
- b) Ensure that appropriate staff is made available to work with the EU twinning partner(s). Counterparts for each of the objectives will be appointed to facilitate the implementation of the respective activities of the twinning project;
- c) Be responsible for providing the EU experts with legislation and any other documents necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d) Ensure that staff trained under this project is encouraged to increase its capacity according to the tasks specified in the job description and to its promotion based on the merit. In this context a data base of what training was provided to which person should be maintained by the implementing partner for future monitoring.
- e) Provide all possible assistance to solve any unforeseen problem that the EU twinning partner(s) may face;

Equally, the Twinning team, as led by the Twinning Resident Adviser must ensure full collaboration with the counterparts of the institution. Communications should be open and consistent. The Twinning team must carry out activities in the interest of the institution, and maintain its involvement at all stages of activities.

### **10.2 Sequencing**

Keys milestones will be:

- Successful selection of a Twinning partner

- Signature of the Twinning contract, including the Twinning Work Plan;
- Start of the twinning partnership (inter alia, the arrival in the country of the Resident Twinning Advisers);
- End of the implementation period;
- Submission of the final report.

## **ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE**

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format (compulsory)
2. Detailed Implementation Chart (indicative)
3. Contracting and Disbursement Schedule by Quarter for full duration of programme (including disbursement period) (indicative)
4. List of relevant laws and regulations (indicative)

## ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
<p>To improve the regulatory and oversight functions of the Parliament in order to strengthen the efficient fulfilment of the obligations stemming from EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the EU accession process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Accelerated and simplified parliamentary procedures for the adoption of the approximated legislation.</li> <li>-Progress made towards the fulfilment of the obligation stemming from the SAA and the EU Accession process, through increased number of laws approximated in compliance with the requirements of article 70 of the SAA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-EU Progress Report for Albania.</li> <li>-Adoption of relevant legislation in compliance with the EU rules and standards.</li> <li>- Statistics of the Parliament</li> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- implementation of article 70 of SAA</li> </ul>	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>To further strengthen the capacities of parliament for a more efficient approximation of legislation; to improve oversight functions of the parliament in relation to the work of the government and independent institutions; to strengthen the financial and budgetary autonomy of the Parliament; to enhance transparency and the administrative capacities of the Parliament.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improvement of the parliamentary practice relating to verification of the compatibility of Albanian laws with the EU acquis:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of approximated laws (and the percentage, as compared to the total number of laws adopted) per year increased.</li> <li>-Number of EU legal acts transposed in Albanian laws per year increased.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Strengthened effectiveness of the parliamentary oversight over the activity of the government and the independent institutions in relation to the EU integration issues, through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased number of hearing and reporting organized by the Parliamentary Standing Committees with the members of government and heads independent institutions;</li> <li>- Increased number of the plenary sessions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-EU Progress Report on Albania.</li> <li>-National Plan for European Integration 2015-2020.</li> <li>-Parliamentary documents, postings on the official website.</li> <li>- Annual Report on the Activity of the Assembly submitted by the Secretary General of the Assembly to the Parliamentary Bureau.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Normal functioning of the Assembly.</li> <li>-Continued commitment to EU integration.</li> <li>-Allocation of sufficient human and material resources for the project.</li> <li>- Stability in the legal status, functions, powers and staff of the Assembly.</li> </ul>

	<p>and items debated, in relation to the EU integration process;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft-law on the budget of the Assembly prepared.</li> <li>- Increased transparency in the exercise of the law-making and oversight functions of the Assembly.</li> </ul>		
<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)</b>	<b>SOURCES OF VERIFICATION</b>	<b>ASSUMPTIONS</b>
<p><b>Result 1.</b> Improved legislative procedure and working methods of the Assembly for a more effective EU law approximation process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analysis of the effects of the new law No.15/2015 on the legislative procedures and the methodological basis of the work of the Assembly is prepared.</li> <li>- Draft-amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and to other internal rules based on the new law 15/2015 are prepared.</li> <li>- Efficient approximation of legislation through proper and effective implementation of the new law Nr.15/2015.</li> <li>- Manual on the system of verification of the compatibility of the Albanian Legislation with the EU Acquis at the Parliamentary Level is prepared and published.</li> <li>- Number of trained staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-EU Progress Reports on Albania</li> <li>-Official Journal.</li> <li>-Number of approximated laws passed in the Parliament annually.</li> <li>-Number of amendments done by the CEI to draft-laws proposed to the Assembly.</li> <li>-Project documents;</li> <li>-Attendance sheets for training events; Evaluation of trainings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Political commitment.</li> <li>-Full commitment of the twinning project partners (MS and BC).</li> <li>- Optimal collaboration and transparency between twinning partners (MS and BC teams).</li> <li>-Training materials are of a high quality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Result 2.</b> Strengthened parliamentary oversight capacities in relation to the activity of government and independent institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analysis of the effects of the new Law No.15/2015 on the oversight role of the Assembly in relation to the European integration process is prepared.</li> <li>- Draft-amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and modifications of other relevant internal rules in order to bring them in compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-EU Progress Report on Albania.</li> <li>-Number and regularity of the of oversight activities.</li> <li>-Project documents/reports.</li> <li>-Attendance sheets for training events; Evaluation of trainings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Political commitment forParliamentary control of the EU Accession process;</li> <li>-Proactive involvement of the Services of the Assembly.</li> <li>-Training materials are</li> </ul>

<p><b>Result 3.</b> Strengthened financial and budgetary independence of the Assembly from the government, in line with the European best practices</p>	<p>with the parliamentary oversight-related provisions of the law No 15/2015 are prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provisions of the new law Nr.15/2015 in relation to the oversight function of Assembly are properly and effectively implemented.</li> <li>-The Committee on European integration effectively monitor the activity of the government on the EU integration issues, in line with the provisions the new law Nr.15/2015</li> <li>-Regular public hearing and reporting of the government institutions and independent institutions in the Assembly;</li> <li>-Number of trained staff.</li> </ul> <p>- An analysis of the existing legal framework on the financial and budgetary independence of the parliament from the government is carried out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A special draft-law on the Assembly budget is elaborated.</li> <li>-Draft-amendments to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure and to other relevant internal rules and regulations in force are prepared, aiming to bring them in compliance with the provision of the new draft-law on the Assembly's budget.</li> <li>- Number of trained staff;</li> </ul> <p>- Proposal for the review of Article 39, point 2 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, in order to bring it in compliance with the highest standards of transparency in the activity of parliamentary Committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Official Journal.</li> <li>- Analysis reports.</li> <li>- Draft-law and draft amendments to the Rules of procedure.</li> <li>-Attendance sheets for training events; Evaluation of trainings.</li> </ul> <p>-Number of trained staff.</p>	<p>of a high quality.</p> <p>Political commitment on the adoption of a special law on the budget of the Assembly.</p> <p>-High quality trainings provided by the</p>
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<p><b>Result 4:</b> Strengthened transparency and administrative capacities of the Assembly.</p>	<p>is prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- umber of research papers, legal/technical analysis and background documents produced by the advisors of the legislative service and the experts of the Research service of the Assembly.</li> <li>- Number of trained staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Number of parliamentary documents (research papers, legal analysis, background documents, and briefings) produced each year by the relevant staff of the Assembly (advisors of the legislative service and experts of the Parliamentary Research department).</li> </ul>	<p>twining experts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Staff commitment to proactively take part in the trainings.</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>MEANS</b>	<b>OVERALL COST</b>	<b>ASSUMPTIONS</b>
<p><u><b>Activities to achieve Result 1:</b></u></p> <p>Improve legislative procedure and working methods of the Assembly for a more effective EU law approximation process.</p> <p><u><b>Activities to achieve Result 2:</b></u></p> <p>Strengthen parliamentary oversight capacities in relation to the activity of government and independent institutions.</p> <p><u><b>Activities to achieve Result 3:</b></u></p> <p>Strengthen financial and budgetary independence of the Assembly from the government, in line with the European best practices.</p> <p><u><b>Activities to achieve Result 4:</b></u></p> <p>Strengthen transparency and administrative capacities of the Assembly</p>	<p><b>Twining contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>One Member State Project Leader</i></li> <li>- <i>One Member State Resident Twining Adviser</i></li> <li>- <i>Short-term experts</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Twining Contract: 500,000 EUR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Both parties (twined and operating structure) mobilise appropriate human and financial resources.</li> <li>-Normal functioning of the Parliament.</li> <li>-Political consensus on new draft proposals.</li> </ul>

**ANNEX 2: Detailed Implementation chart (indicative)**

**Project: Further Strengthening the Assembly of Albania in the context of the EU Accession (AL PARLIAMENT)**

**2016**

**2016**

<b>June</b> <b>T</b>	<b>July</b> <b>T</b>	<b>August</b> <b>C</b>	<b>September</b> <b>C</b>	<b>October</b> <b>C</b>	<b>November</b> <b>I</b>	<b>December</b> <b>I</b>
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**2017**

<b>January</b> <b>I</b>	<b>February</b> <b>I</b>	<b>March</b> <b>I</b>	<b>April</b> <b>I</b>	<b>May</b> <b>I</b>	<b>June</b> <b>I</b>	<b>July</b> <b>I</b>	<b>August</b> <b>I</b>	<b>September</b> <b>I</b>	<b>October</b> <b>I</b>	<b>November</b> <b>R</b>	<b>December</b> <b>R</b>
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**2018**

<b>January</b> <b>R</b>
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**T = Tendering**

**C = Contracting period**

**I = Implementation**

**R=Report**

**ANNEX 3: Contracting and Disbursement Schedule by Quarter for full duration of programme (including disbursement period) (indicative)**

		Quarter 1 2016	Quarter 2 2016	Quarter 3 2016	Quarter 4 2016	QUARTER 1 2017	QUARTER 2 2017	QUARTER 3 2017	QUARTER 4 2017
Contract Twinning (Components 1, 2, 3, 4)	Contracted € 500,000				80%				20 %
	Disbursed				€ 400,000				€ 100,000

#### ANNEX 4: List of Laws and Regulations

- Constitution of the Republic of Albania, approved with the law No 8417 of 21.10.1998 “*The Constitution of the Republic of Albania*”, Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No.28, date 7.12.1998, p.1073; amended by Law No9675 of 13.01.2007 “*On some amendments to Law No 8417 of 21.10.1998 “The Constitution of the Republic of Albania”*”, Official Journal of the Republic of Albania No 2, date 14.01.2007, p.39 and Law No 9904 of 21.04.2008“*On some amendments to Law No 8417 of 21.10.1998 “The Constitution of the Republic of Albania”, as amended*”, Official Journal of the Republic of Albania No 61, dated 07.05.2008, p.2728.
- Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania, approved by the Decision of the Assembly, No.166, dated 16.12.2004, as amended by the Decision of the Assembly No.15,dated 27.12.2005; Decision No.193, dated 7.7.2008; Decision No.21, dated 4.3.2010; Decision No. 41, dated 24.06.2010; Decision No.88, dated 24.02.2011 and Decision 41/2013, dated 30.05.2013.
- Law no. 9590, dated 27.7.2006 “*On the ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Albania and the European Communities and their Member States*”, Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No.87, dated 14.08.2006, p.2955.
- Law No.15/2015,dated 5.3.2015 “*On the role of Parliament in the process of integration of the Republic of Albania in the European Union*”, Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No. 38, dated 18.03.2015, p. 1754.
- Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 233, dated 18.03.2015“*On some addenda and amendments to the Decision of the Council of Ministers No.584, dated 28.08.2003 “On the approval of the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Ministers”*”, as amended”, Official Journal of the Republic of Albania, No.43, dated 23 March 2015, p.1869.