



## Ongoing Matra Projects

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Albania

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**Title:** *Exploring cooperation opportunities between the Supreme Courts of the Netherlands and Albania (inception phase)*

**Organization:** Dutch Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary (SSR)

**Summary:** This project aims to explore opportunities for long-term cooperation between the Supreme Court of Albania and the Supreme Court of the Netherlands by conducting a targeted needs assessment through high-level visits and stakeholder engagement. The project seeks to identify the Albanian Supreme Court's priorities and challenges, with the goal of developing a tailored, sustainable partnership framework. It will conclude with an assessment report outlining recommendations and the potential for a second-phase project.

**Duration:** September 2025 – December 2025

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *AI Literacy in Strengthening the Democracy*

**Organization:** Albanian Media Institute

**Summary:** This project tackles the growing impact of Artificial Intelligence in the democratic discourse in Albania. It addresses the lack of AI literacy amongst public and media, the absence of national debate on AI and democracy, and the risk of disinformation amplified by AI tools.

Through awareness campaigns, journalist trainings, AI Cafés, MIL Weeks, policy briefs, and public debates, the project aims to promote ethical, transparent, and informed use of AI in the Albanian society.

**Duration:** July 2025 – September 2027

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *“Enhancing oversight: The Role of the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution to improve Anti-money Laundering Efforts”*

**Organization:** Institute for Democracy and Mediation

**Summary:** The project aims to boost public oversight of Albania's anti-money-laundering system by positioning ALSAI as both a proactive and an independent watchdog that drives transparency, coordination and civil-society engagement. The projects also will equip ALSAI with a dedicated AML audit methodology, enabling evidence-based coordination with state, civic and private-sector partners. It also aims to enable social actors including CSOs and private sector to access and apply ALSAI's audit findings, thereby strengthening external accountability across the AML chain.

**Duration:** July 2025 – November 2027

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *Strengthening Journalists Safety*

**Organization:** SCIDEV

**Summary:** Through engagement with stakeholders and set up of the working group and mechanism for the protection of journalists, the project will contribute to the reduction of the number of uninvestigated attacks on journalists, decrease the level of impunity for perpetrators, and create more efficient reporting and investigation protocols. With enhanced safety and stronger institutional support, journalists will be able to conduct their work more freely and without fear of repercussions.

The project will improve the professional capabilities of journalists, leading to better adherence to ethical standards and higher-quality reporting. The availability of resources and guidelines for safe reporting will enable journalists to provide more in-depth, accurate, and unbiased coverage of important issues, contributing to a more informed and engaged public.



By raising awareness about the challenges faced by journalists and fostering public trust in the media, the project will increase public support for media freedom and the protection of journalists. The increased public condemnation of threats and attacks against journalists and the heightened awareness of the importance of their role in a democratic society will exert pressure on relevant institutions to prioritize the safety of journalists and promote media freedom.

**Duration:** November 2023 – April 2026

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *Cluster One EU Negotiations Platform - Albania*

**Organization:** ClusterOne EU Negotiations Platform – Albania (C1-EU-NPA)

**Summary:** ClusterOne Platform supports the public institutions engaged in the Cluster One EU negotiations through provision of policy expertise and advocacy. It will strengthen accountability and responsiveness of the public institutions engaged in the EU negotiation process to deliver on the fundamentals first and the overall pace of negotiations as well as the role and visibility of Albanian CSOs in EU negotiation process. The project will perform a set of combined activities that include (1) research, (2) coordination and networking, and (3) advocacy. This project is implemented by a consortium of organizations: IPS, AHC with lead partner CSDG.

**Duration:** July 2021 – May 2026

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** University Law Competition: TV Debate, a Tradition of Excellence (II, III, IV edition 2023, 2024, 2025)

**Organization:** Halimi Foundation Institute

**Summary:** University Law Competition is a regional MATRA project implemented by Halimi Foundation Institute. The project will host three televised editions of "University Law Competition", which is a contest in the format of 12 live broadcasted mock trials per edition/year. This initiative aims to prepare 150 students from Albania, North Macedonia and Kosovo through mock trials with practical knowledge in various fields of law. In addition, the project will have a positive effect on the legal culture of the society by informing the general public about the importance of an independent judiciary, rule of law and due process, how to address the court, their proper treatment within the standards of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the execution of court decisions, etc. Moreover, this project aims to strengthen regional cooperation between universities, encouraging exchange of best practices and playing an active role in the professional education of students.

**Duration:** September 2023 – June 2026

**Funds:** Matra Regional

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**Title:** *Observatory of Public Procurements*

**Organization:** Center for Legal Empowerment

**Summary:** The project aims to tackle the critical challenges facing public procurements and public-private partnerships, through the Observatory of Public Procurements. This initiative is designed to provide expert insights to a wide range of stakeholders: CSOs, academia and private sector. The goal is to address and improve the current challenges in implementation of Public contracts, such as insufficient expertise, inadequate legal structures, poor organizational setups, and a lack of transparency and effective monitoring. The project will also advocate for the adoption of clear standards and best practices, promoting reforms aligned with EU integration process, driving towards structural improvements in the domain of public procurements.

**Duration:** October 2024 – September 2026

**Funds:** Matra



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**Title:** *Increasing the footprint of CSOs in the EU Growth Plan in Albania*

**Organization:** Cooperation and Development Institute

**Summary:** The project aims to increase inclusiveness, oversight, accountability, transparency and efficiency of the EU Growth Plan monitoring mechanisms. It will contribute to increasing the awareness and facilitating stakeholder engagement during Reform Growth Facility operation. The project activities will also encompass the inclusive participation of social actors, crucial for the EU integration ownership.

**Duration:** October 2024 – September 2026

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** Enhancing the Albanian Prosecution Capacities

**Organization:** Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC)

**Summary:** The project aims to enhance the financial investigation capabilities of the Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) in Albania by leveraging Dutch expertise. In cooperation with the Albanian School of Magistrates it will provide specialized training and workshops to prosecutors and investigators, focusing on translating data into actionable intelligence and evidence. The project will address challenges by strengthening the SPAK effectiveness and efficiency, as well as enhancing the capacity of its financial investigation unit. The project will extend its scope to include prosecutors from the general jurisdiction to build the overall capacity of the Albanian prosecution service in dealing with financial crimes. The goal is to consolidate the learning curve of the prosecutors to effectively deal with an increase in cases, build trust in law enforcement, and combat corruption and organized crime in Albania.

**Duration:** January 2025 – December 2026

**Funds:** Matra Decentralized

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**Title:** *Strengthening Regional Judicial Cooperation in WB for Effective Litigation before CJEU and Implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*

**Organization:** Center for Legal Research and Analysis

**Summary:** Civil Society Organizations: CLRA, Civil Rights Defenders, Civic Alliance will train 400 judges and 200 public prosecutors in litigation before the Court of Justice of the EU and applying the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro. To achieve some sustainability the training curricula, that will be developed within the project, and the pool of experts will be embedded in the existing programs of the Judicial Academies.

**Duration:** October 2025 – March 2027

**Funds:** Matra Regional

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**Title:** *The Consolidation of the Regional Appeals Court – a Review of its Impact on Judicial Efficiency*

**Organization:** Institute for Policy & Legal Studies

**Summary:** Albania has been attempting to reform its judicial system for greater efficiency, but faces issues like long proceedings and case backlogs. The EU Commission's 2023 report points out these challenges. A new Judicial Map has been introduced, merging and closing courts. However, the reorganized Court of Appeal and Prosecution Office in Tirana face challenges. A project is proposed to review the impact of the new judicial map on system efficiency and justice quality. It will monitor performance, provide reports, and suggest solutions. The goal is to enhance efficiency and justice quality, aligning with the new judicial map objectives. Expected outcomes include regular reports, a court users' survey, and potential measures to improve efficiency and justice quality. The project aims to improve



Albania's judicial institutions and benefit the judiciary, government bodies, and Albanian citizens.

**Duration:** September 2024 – May 2027

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *Truths Beyond Numbers*

**Organization:** FAKTOJE Center

**Summary:** This project aims to advance media freedom, transparency, and public accountability by investing in independent journalism and civic engagement. Through strategic collaboration with the High State Audit (KLSH), the project will support the production of high-impact investigative reports that uncover corruption, misuse of public resources, and institutional failures. Participating journalists will receive specialized training in fact-checking, data-driven journalism, and anti-corruption reporting, serving as watchdogs for the public interest. In parallel, the project will implement nationwide media literacy campaigns and develop a public dialogue platform increasing citizen awareness, promoting critical thinking, create space for informed civic debate.

**Duration:** September 2025 – September 2027

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *"Hidden at work" – Increasing Efforts to End Labor Exploitation and Human Trafficking in Albania*

**Organization:** VATRA Psycho-Social Center, Vlorë

**Summary:** Human trafficking continues to pose a significant threat in Albania, especially affecting vulnerable groups such as women and girls. In recent years, Albania is becoming increasingly a destination of human trafficking for women and girls following a wide campaign by Albania to recruit workforce from third countries in the service industry. Although many migrants that arrive in Albania find good working conditions, others fall prey of labor exploitation and for many women and girls, forced sex work. In recent years an increasing number of foreign many nationals from South East Asia, Africa and Latin America were exploited in the labor market and forced into sex work.

This project aims at addressing the systemic gaps in early identification, inter-institutional coordination, and survivor support related to human trafficking and labor exploitation in Albania especially affecting migrant populations.

**Duration:** October 2025 – September 2027

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *"Lead by example"- A Youth-Led Approach to Crime Prevention and Violence Reduction in Albania*

**Organization:** Albanian Institute for Activism and Social Change

**Summary:** This project introduces a youth-led model for crime prevention and community safety, focusing not only on under-aged children but also on young citizens aged 15 to 24. Youth involvement in crime whether in gangs, hooliganism, or organized crime continues to rise, posing a significant threat to social cohesion and public safety. While young people are entitled to rights due to their age, it is equally important to emphasize their responsibilities, including criminal accountability if they become involved in crime. By training youth in conflict resolution, violence response, and digital engagement, the initiative places them at the forefront of change, empowering them to proactively contribute to transforming their communities. Furthermore, the project provides an opportunity to establish an early warning system for criminal behavior, improving communication between youth and community police, and fostering stronger cooperation.

**Duration:** October 2025 – September 2027

**Funds:** Matra



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**Title:** *Enhancing Judicial Integrity in Albania*

**Organization:** Dutch Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary (SSR)

**Summary:** The Enhancing Judicial Integrity in Albania project aims to support strengthen professionalism, ethics, and public trust in Albania's judiciary following its recent vetting process. By offering continuous training, workshops, and knowledge exchange with Dutch judicial experts, the project seeks to contribute to ensure the long-term sustainability of judicial reforms, focusing on improving ethical standards, supporting magistrates and inspectors, and promoting transparency. Running from September 2025 to December 2027, the project will include intervision training to promote ethical reflection, enabling magistrates to explore complex cases and encouraging open dialogue through a platform to express uncertainties, receive peer feedback, and navigate sensitive issues. The project also includes a study visit to the Netherlands and is implemented by Dutch Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary (SSR) in collaboration with Albanian justice institutions.

**Duration:** September 2025 – December 2027

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** *Enhancing Cybersecurity, Data Protection and Resilience in Albania's ICT Transformation*

**Organization:** Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)

**Summary:** The proposed project directly supports Albania's alignment with the EU's digital governance framework and responds to core priorities under its accession roadmap. By strengthening the implementation of the GDPR and supporting preparatory steps toward the adoption of the Digital Services Act (DSA), Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), and the NIS2 Directive, the initiative contributes to Albania's obligations under Chapter 10 (Information Society and Media), Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights), and Chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security) of the EU acquis.

At the national level, the project complements Albania's 2024 adoption of the GDPR, while addressing the critical gap between legal transposition and enforcement. It also anticipates future key actors, including journalists, media outlets, and civil society, to understand and respond to new standards for platform accountability, algorithmic transparency, and cybersecurity.

**Duration:** October 2025 – September 2028

**Funds:** Matra

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**Title:** Rule of Law Trainings

**Organization:** Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Leiden Law School, The Hague Academy for Local Governance

**Summary:** Organized by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Leiden Law School and The Hague Academy for Local Governance. The trainings focus on the strengthening of the institutional capacity in the field of Rule of Law within government organizations. Through interactive sessions combining theory, practical skills and study visits, policy advisors, members of the judiciary and other civil servants working in the government and justice sector acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to drive reforms in their home countries. Seven different training programs are offered per year and in each training 2-4 Albanian participants are selected.

**Duration:** 2017 – 2027

**Funds:** Matra Central

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**Title:** *G2G: Towards Democratic Local Governance: Albania and the Netherlands*



**Organization:** The Hague Academy of Local Governance, VNG International, Helvetas

**Summary:** This project strengthens local governance in Albania by strengthening the capacity of public institutions to deliver transparent, accountable, and inclusive services - especially for women and vulnerable groups. Drawing on Dutch expertise and fostering partnerships between Albanian and Dutch institutions, it supports training, mentoring, and reform efforts across all 61 municipalities. Central to the approach are the Training Academy of Local Government of Albania (TALGA), a Training of Trainers program, and hands-on learning in four pilot municipalities.

**Duration:** February 2025 – December 2028

**Funds:** Matra Central

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