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## **INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ALBANIA**

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Council of Europe Newsroom (16 April 2018)

On 13th April, at the initiative of the former Ombudsperson Iglit Totozani, the Albanian Parliament, in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the European Union, hosted a high level roundtable on protection mechanism for human rights defenders. 2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Declaration on human rights defenders as well as 10th anniversary of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Declaration on action to improve the protection of human rights defenders and promote their activities.

Over 60 senior representatives of the key Albanian state institutions, civil society, media, academia and international community exchanged on the legal and practical aspects pertaining to human rights defenders in Albania and how to foster their protection.

The event was addressed by Vasilika Hysi, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Artemis Dralo, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Europe, Claus Neukirch, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Tirana, Brian Williams, UN Resident Coordinator, Erinda Ballanca, Peoples Advocate and Steven Stork, First Counsellor at the European Union Delegation. All the above speakers highlighted the challenges faced worldwide by human rights defenders and pressed for the responsibility of the State to encourage and create favorable conditions for human rights defenders to participate in public life, dialogue with the authorities and co-operation with national and international stakeholders.

The event concluded that a follow up resolution in the light of the UN Declaration shall be prepared and submitted for approval in the Albanian Assembly.

The event took place in the frame of the European Union/Council of Europe project Enhancing the effectiveness of the Albanian System of human rights protection and anti-discrimination.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/tirana/-/initiative-to-support-human-rights-defenders-in-albania>

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