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Regional Social Policy Reform in the Dynamic of the Albanian National Social Protection Strategy

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Executive summary

This progress report focuses its analysis on the implementation of the “*Sectoral Strategy of Social Protection 2008 – 2013*” and its action plans at central and local levels. The analysis concerns the major steps towards the objectives of the Social Policy Reform in convergence with decentralization and de-institutionalization processes. The report brings a review of actual financial allocation at central and local levels versus the projected financial resource required by the strategy.

The Medium-Term Budget Programme (PBA) 2011–2013 of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAE) – as approved by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the annual budget forecasted and the actual budget allocated and spent for the Social Protection Program – highlight the consistency of their links but also show gaps and the need to cope with challenges in order to accomplish the EU’s required actions. The detailed action plan and the project need identified by the Shkodra District Municipality show a demand for financial resources to cover the project ideas to implement the framework of its strategic development plan.

In concert with the national *Sectoral Strategy of Social Protection 2008 – 2013*, the Shkodra Regional Council has developed the *Strategic Concept of Shkodra Regional Development 2010–2016* to make its actions more tangible, by tailoring national objectives to regional ones. The Strategic Concept details the regional development approach, based on five main fields of action incorporating their respective vision, objectives, priorities, and indicators. The five fields are: education, training and capacity building; infrastructure and services; tourism and agribusiness; interregional and other partner cooperation; and flood protection. This document provides a comprehensive attempt to coordinate efforts in developing the region.

The decentralization process is long and complex, and is based on the requirements indicated by the EU for the integration of Albania. During 2010 and 2011, the European Commission issued two important strategic documents for Albania to follow. The first is the 2011 *European Commission Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union*, which analyses Albania's application on the basis of the country’s capacity to meet the criteria and the conditionality of the Stabilisation and Association Process. The Opinion highlights 12 specific recommendations with regard to the stability of institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and protection of minorities to be followed by the respective responsible governmental structure. With regard to these, MoLSAE is responsible for priority 11, which relates to the issues of human rights and vulnerable groups. The second document, the *2011 EU Progress Report*, reviewed developments of the capacity of Albania to assume the obligations of membership for the period from October 2010 to September 2011, including criteria for Social Protection, Human Rights and Social Services issues. Both these documents bring the EU’s perspective, which helps to define the challenges of the dynamic process of social protection strategy at central and local levels.

This report tries to illustrate the dynamic of the main national and local policies aimed at achieving the objectives of social planning reforms. The analysis presents the context and action plans on which central and the local levels are working in order to address the challenges. When possible, the need for assistance to achieve the objectives of the action plan are identified. At central and local levels, besides the need to harmonise action plans from the bottom up, there is the need for a monitoring mechanism to optimize and boost results and add value to existing investment. Additionally, the monitoring of deadlines and indicators set for respective action plans requires support and assistance from local and international actors. Horizontally, the harmonization of

integrated, decentralized social services by promoting the involvement of all actors - such as local communities, civil society and business/private sector participation - requires increased focus from the partners assisting the decentralization process.

1. Social Policy reform in the framework of the decentralization process

A reform of social policy is currently ongoing in Albania. The guiding document for this reform is the *Sectoral Strategy of Social Protection 2008 – 2010* (SSSP), approved by the Council of Ministers, in Decision No. 80 on 28th January, 2008.

This Strategy gives a detailed view of the social protection policies of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAE). It is part of the *Sectoral Strategy of Social Inclusion* approved by the Council of Ministers with Decision No. 218, on 3rd February 2008, and defines concrete objectives for poverty reduction and social services to be offered to vulnerable groups within the framework of the *National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013* (approved by the Council of Ministers in Decision [VCM] No. 342, on 12th March 2008). It also stands within the framework of the *Government Program of European Integration 2009 – 2013* presented to Albanian Parliament on 16th September 2009, which aims to develop social policies on poverty reduction, improvement of the quality of living for vulnerable groups, integration, empowerment and social inclusion in community development, as well as to create an appropriate environment for equal opportunities in work, integration and social benefit.

Among the strategic priorities of this strategy is the reform of social services through: decentralization; institutionalization of relationships with civil society; de-institutionalization; ensuring the quality of social services by setting quality standards, monitoring outcomes and assessing and improving service quality; evaluation of community planning; and the training and development of staff providing social services.

The main objectives for social services in this strategy are:

1. Decentralization and the transfer of all residential services to the administration of Local Government Units (LGUs)
2. Expansion of a wide variety of community services to cover of all groups with basic services in all the districts
3. Expansion of community services by the year 2013 in all municipalities that do not have such services
4. Piloting a guardianship service in two municipalities (Shkodra and Vlora) until 2010, then expanding this until 2013 to other local government units in accordance with needs and budget capacity – *according to information from MoLSAE officials, activities to realize this objective will start in 2012*
5. Deinstitutionalisation and consolidation of the ‘family-homes’ service model for children and people with disabilities, expansion of these services to other social groups (youth, the elderly)

6. Implementation of standards to increase the quality of services for children, the disabled and the elderly¹
7. Twice-yearly inspection of all residential services and day-care offered by public and private operators
8. Licensing of new providers and the periodic re-licensing of all NGOs working in care services

In the *Sectoral Strategy of Social Protection* the objectives determined in other sectoral strategies are reassessed and coordinated. These strategies are: the *National Strategy for Children* (VCM No. 368; 31.05.2005); *Strategy for Physical Disabled Persons* (2004); *Strategy for Roma Living Condition Improvement* (VCM Nr.633; 18.09.2003); *Gender Equality and Domestic Violence* (VCM Nr.913; 19.12.2007).

1.1 The financing of social protection

An important part of this strategy is that of ‘Financial Implication’, which indicates the budget forecasting that the government will allocate to the ‘Social Protection’ Strategy. The Medium-Term (PBA) Budget of the MoLSAE will serve as a three-year action plan for the strategy. In fact the Medium Term Budget 2011-2013 has been approved by the Ministry of Finance and serves as the main document for implementation of the strategy and government budget resource allocation to respective fields.

Based on recent guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance (No. 7/1 date 22.02.2010, No. 7/3, 10th July 2010), the procedures for the formulation of local annual budgets and medium-term budgets (PBA) are intrinsically intertwined. Planning for annual local budgets represents the first step towards a broader agenda that aims to set out forecasts of local revenues and expenditures for a three-year medium-term period. However the line ministries (including MoLSAE) follow the PBA and readjust it each year to design the ‘actual’ annual budget.

The MoLSAE PBA budget is subdivided in 6 Programs respectively: Planning, Management and Administration; Social Security; Social Protection; Working Market; Work Inspections; Equal Opportunities.

Following the PBA and the budget foreseen in the Social Security and Social Protection (SSSP) programmes we can see that the budget forecast for the ‘Social Protection’ programme for the year 2010 is 18,535,000 thousand Albanian lek (page 54) (€134,788,630)². Following the Strategy the government has allocated in the budget through PBA the sum of 18,867,500 thousand lek (€137,199,290). The annual budget allocation is 19,250,630 thousand lek (€139,974,420). The reality today (after analysing the finalized budget year of 2010) shows that the budget allocated from Government to MoLSAE achieved its allocated projection for the year 2010, of 19,250, 637 thousand lek (€139,977,710)

¹ In fact the MoLSAE has already set and approved standards for social services, for care services of trafficked individuals (or those in danger of trafficking, or in shelter care), and social care of children in residential centres.

² The amounts were converted from AL lek to euro using the website www.xe.com on December 2nd, 2011.

MoLSAE Expenditure 2010 (in lek and euro)

	PBA	Budgeted	Spent	% of spending Actual/Plan
Program Name	Vjetor2010	Vjetor2010	Vjetor2010	
Social Welfare	18,867,500,000 Lek or €137,199,290	19,250,637,000 Lek or €139,974,420	18,837,129,000 Lek or €136,944,480	98%
Equal Opportunities	23,200,000 Lek or €168,700	19,240,000 lek or €139,900	17,613,000 lek or €128.000	92%

Source: <http://www.mpcs.gov.al/programet-dhe-realizimi>

Derived from the analysis above for the year 2011 - for which we do not have a SSSP projected budget - the planned PBA budget is 19,387,010 thousand lek (€141,024,000). Compared with 2010 the budget allocation for the social protection program is 37.19% of all programs, versus 37.23% in the year 2010 (table below).

MoLSAE Budget expenditure for the year 2011 - 2011 (in LEK and euro)

		PBA 2010 Planned Budget	% to the Total Programs Budget	PBA 2011 Planned Budget	% to the Total Programs Budget
1	Social Protection	19,250,637, 000 lek or 140,025,700 €	37.23	19,387,010,000 lek or 141,015,654 €	37.19
2	Equal Opportunity	19,240,000 lek or 139,979 €	0.04	20,900,000 lek or 153,055 €	0.041
	Total Budget for all MoLSAE Programs	51,693,420,000 lek or 376,032,350 €		60,201,000,000 lek or 437,918,860 €	

The actual figures for the year 2011 show that the budget allocated for the first 9 months of 2011 is 22,432,507 thousand lek (€163,134,000), which is 15% more than in 2010, and actual expenditure has been 22,432,056 thousand lek (€163,131,000), which means that 100% of the allocated budget was spent.

2. Financing for social protection at local level

At the local level, the following table shows the trend of Unconditional Transfers (MoF) in local currency for the respective districts of the Shkodra Region as distributed at district level for the period 2010-2011. The Ministry of Finance has detailed and specified the allocated unconditional funds for each LGU within districts (communes or municipalities).

Unconditional Transfers for Shkodra districts allocated from MoF during the period 2009-2012 in thousand lek and euro:

District	Currency	2009	2010	% of change	2011 (reviewed July 2011)	% of change	2012	% of change
Malësi Madhe	lek	173,139	150,661	- 13	148,108	-1.69	151,519	2.3
	euro	1,259	1,095		1,077		1,102	
Pukë	lek	197,508	171,692	- 13	172,620	0.5	175,678	1.7
	euro	1,436	1,249		1,256		1,278	
Shkodra	lek	726,193	643,626	- 11	642,659	-1.5	673,426	4.7
	euro	5,282	4,682		4,675		4,899	

Following the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance and the Central Government, the budget formulation as described by the local officials of the Municipality of Shkodra, starts between February and March. Planning for the budget proposal of the following year begins immediately after the National Budget for the forthcoming year (i.e. 2012) has been approved by Parliament. The National budget for the year 2012 is presented and expected to be approved from the Parliament, including the respective tables and guidelines for each line ministry and LGU. As confirmed by the Head of the Budgeting Department in Shkodra, the annual budget formulation phase usually only lasts two to three months. The LGU starts detailing the coming year's annual budget based on the Budget Law approved from Parliament using the forms and annexes attached to guidelines given by the MoF. The annual budget starts on the 1st January and ends on the 31st of December. Following the Budget Law for the upcoming year (i.e. the law for the 2012 annual budget), the LGU has to detail its respective planned budgets. This planning process needs to start early in the year and according to MoF Templates and Forms, sent back to the MoF in electronic form. The detailed LGU annual plan is then approved by the MoF and becomes effective through the local system.

As we know from previous SeeNet reports on the Shkodra Region³, in addition to the unconditional transfers that cover about 50% of local government budgets, LGUs receive conditional grants which are used to finance the 'shared' functions of municipalities/communes. Conditional transfers are central government funds given to LGUs through line ministries. MoLSAE is the line ministry that receives conditional funds for social support and payments for persons with disability from Central Government.

³ Reports are available at the webpage www.cespi.it/seenet.html

In addition to unconditional and conditional grants, the central government budget invests according to the priorities emanating from the line ministries. The PBA for 2011 – 2013 has therefore already planned to finance the following projects, considered as priorities by Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Shkodra Region:

- In the field of Primary Health Care, 112,112,000 lek (€815,618) for the third phase of regional hospital reconstruction, including the treatment for mentally ill hospital patients in the region
- Accomplishment of 30% of equipment needs for the treatment of patients during 2013, and 20% thereof in 2012, at a cost of 833,820,000 lek (€6,065,517)
- The reconstruction of Shkodra Municipality Hospital at 564,000,000 lek (€4,109,039) for the year 2011

The Shkodra Region has intensive and dynamic financing from international donors that covers various aspects of regional development. The *Strategic Concept of Shkodra Regional Development 2010 – 2016* has detailed regional development on five fields of action with their respective vision, objectives, priorities, and indicators. The five fields are: education training and capacity building; infrastructure and services; tourism and agribusiness; interregional and other partner cooperation; and flood protection.

This document introduces proposed project ideas for all actors to be implemented in order to achieve the specific objectives set for each field. In the field of improvement of social services and health the budget required to achieve the objectives set is €333,000 and €920,000 respectively.

	Budget forecasted (€)	Possible Financial Source
Improvement of social services		
Strengthen social service offices in all LGUs	200,000	- IPA CBC - LGU's competitive programs, Other donors: GTZ, UNDP, ADA, SDC, SNV, KFW, etc
Identification of financial needs for social service institutions	20,000	
Coordination between health, education structures and municipalities/communes offices	30,000	
Training for EU standards of social service delivery	32,000	
Expansion of diversity of community service	50,000	
Health		
Increase professional standards through medical supply and professional training	120,000	- IPA CBC - LGU's competitive programs, Other donors: GTZ, UNDP, ADA, SDC, SNV, KFW, etc.
Consolidation of medical network	100,000	
The purchase of health centre equipment	200,000	
Support for health projects	400,000	

Source: MoLSAE and Shkodra Municipality

Some examples proposed for the *Improvement of social services* project are:

- Workshop for quality service and assistance for blind people
- Training for quality service and assistance for the elderly
- Training for administrative staff with regard to their responsibilities deriving from the decentralization of social services

- Training for public institution staff offering social care services to ensure the achievement of approved quality standards
- Lobbying to encourage the participation of non-profit social businesses in the financing and provision of social services
- Workshop for promoting and encouraging the initiative for children

The projects are presented to donors to be financed in partnership with the LGU. The IPA - under the CBC program with Montenegro, the IPA CBC Adriatic, and trans-national programmes for Southeast Europe and the Mediterranean - is seen as the main potential source of financing for such projects, in addition to other donors, such as Italian Cooperation, Swiss Cooperation, GTZ, UNDP, and ADA. To implement the strategy, the Municipality of Shkodra will also use other self-funded resources such as competitive grants for LGUs, as well as partnership in joint projects (i.e. 15% of IPA-funded projects).

This strategic document provides a comprehensive attempt to coordinate efforts to develop the region, but still the central level suffers from a lack of evidence and/or a clear picture of ongoing running projects, and their modalities and types, as well as financial evidence in order to articulate social service planning. Both central and local levels are seeking a further strengthening and coordinating of priorities and financial allocation, according to the priorities set.

2.1 Participation in budget formulation and implementation

Local government in Albania, as an effective executive mechanism, acts within the powers delegated to it by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, relevant legislation, and the directives provided by central government. In practice, a significant degree of decentralization has been attained through the vertical transfer of power and functions from the central government to local units at the first level (municipality/commune). The delegation of financial functions, in this respect, comprises the creation of a partially autonomous financial system. In order to fully realize financial autonomy, the public perception of local citizens must be an integral part of the local financial system management. This is a very important aspect, considered as key information for social planning for the Regional Council of Shkodra. For a better prioritization of financial resource allocation, the central level is also interested in concrete local community involvement for addressing the most needed interventions, and coordinating other financial donor resources.

In addition to the civil society, business/private sector participation in setting LGU priorities in shared financial project implementation is also seen as very important by the LGU. The participation of business/the private sector, civil society and public actors in local government activities, especially in the formulation and implementation of the local budget, is crucial to principles of good governance for several reasons. According to municipality officials the main reasons are:

- Since the budget is an estimate of what local government spends and where its priorities lie, there is a need to seek citizens' opinions on how and where public funds are channelled.
- Since the budget is a *tool for the provision of services* and the satisfaction of society's needs, it is essential that citizens are involved in the process of prioritization and allocation of funds. Being very close to local people, civil society groups can be an effective mechanism to assess the needs of various communities.
- The participation of civil society in the budget process brings in a *variety of skills* and experiences that can be very useful to the designation of an effective budget. Moreover, the experience and skills that civil society groups have gained either on their own, or through

cooperation with their counterparts outside the country, can be effective in facilitating budget reform processes.

Focusing on a participatory approach in policy design, Shkodra Municipality has been trying to involve these society actors in its regional development policy design. The design of the *Strategic Concept of Shkodra Regional Development 2010 – 2016* followed a consultation process which included various workshops with interested stakeholders, both from civil society and the business community. Knowledge is shared between actors in this process and sectoral expertise and the voice of community individuals is combined into the same platform.

However, the process is aimed at implementing the ideal formula of participation: 1/3rd – 1/3rd – 1/3rd from public, private and civil society participants respectively, but it was difficult to attain this rate of participation. In particular private sector participation is still low (even though it was expected to be higher). This is because the dialogue between public and private entities is a novel process and in particular the private business sector is not particularly aware of what the benefit of this process could be for their community.

3. Social inclusion in the framework of EU recommendation

Local and central governments have to prioritize their actions taking into consideration the 12 recommendations of the EU Delegation to Albania as well as the recommendations derived from the 2011 EU Progress Report, chapters 19 and 23, *Economic and Social Rights* and *Judiciary and fundamental rights* respectively. According to the latest report, the EU Progress Report for Albania, *there has been uneven progress in the area of social inclusion, [and] pockets of persistent poverty remain in rural and mountainous areas* (page 51). Therefore taking concrete steps to reinforce the protection of human rights, notably for women, children and Roma, and effectively implementing anti-discrimination policies, are key priorities of the EC's Opinion.

With this focus and objective, central and local governments intensified their investment and are working to improve social protection services and give specific focus to the highlighted recommendations, such as the rights of physically and mentally disabled people. According to official statistics there are 94,804 disabled people living in Albania, of whom thirty-five percent are women.⁴ In the analysis of this issue, MoLSAE states that in Tirana, Shkodra and Elbasan there are 250 disabled people who today benefit from the services offered by different organizations⁵. Centres placed in these areas serve not only those regions but also extend beyond their borders. However, we are still able to highlight from the *2011 EU Progress Report* the following observation: *Progress in the treatment of socially vulnerable and/or persons with disabilities is insufficient. The lack of access to equal rights resulting from the differentiated status for certain groups still persists. Individuals with mental disabilities still do not have an official status.*

⁴ http://albania.usaid.gov/shfaqart/58/62/Support_for_Persons_with_Disabilities.htm

⁵ There are no detailed records about the number of disabled people. Various attempts to study the numbers indicate that official numbers are under-estimated.

Implementation of the national strategy on persons with disabilities continues to be inadequate and employment quotas are not enforced.” (page 54)

The same document, following the theme of social rights, notes: “...implementation of the Strategy on improving Roma living conditions continues to be slow, due to inadequate resources and insufficient coordination of institutions involved at local and central level. Local level action plans for implementing the strategy have not been developed and responsibilities have not been clearly devolved. Despite an effort by the Roma Technical Secretariat to strengthen the functioning of the regional committees on planning and evaluation of social needs by including the National Action Plan for Roma Decade into their agenda, there continues to be a general lack of awareness at local level. There have been no specific budgetary allocations for the provision of critical social services for Roma and there is excessive reliance on civil society and international donors in this field.” (page 20)

In coherence with these documents and in response to *The Strategy of Social Protection* which has specific focus on the Roma Population, MoLSAE, in cooperation with the donor community, and based on the SSSP action plan, must implement the following measures:

- Integration of Roma Children:
 - Create non-residential centres serving as tailored school centres for better development and integration of this group of children.
 - Inspection from Governmental institutions in relation to child labour.
- Supporting and assisting the Roma community in applying for social assistance for poor Roma families, through:
 - Organizing a media campaign to inform them of their rights to social benefits
 - The issuing of administrative acts to oblige communes and municipalities to support Roma families with legal aid
- Supporting and boosting Roma NGOs as the main representatives for their problems and issues, through:
 - Identifying and registering existing Roma NGOs
 - Creating a Roma NGO Network
 - Assisting Roma NGOs in setting up and increasing their cooperation with government and decision-making structures

Evidence shows that the Roma community still faces many difficulties in living conditions and frequent discrimination, particularly regarding access to education, social protection, health, employment and adequate housing.

Finally, the conclusion of the EU Report with regard to social protection issues states that: “*There has been some progress as regards **social protection** ... [but] implementation of policies also remains insufficient, particularly as regards vulnerable groups and social inclusion.*” (page 48)

4. Social protection services in national and local action plans

The process of decentralization needs to be further consolidated through continuous intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder dialogue and consultation, as the situation at the time of writing is uneven: while some municipalities are well advanced in this process, others are still lagging behind. Given increasing responsibilities at local level, as well as rising standards expected by citizens, it is necessary to further strengthen the capacity of local governments, which remain asymmetric and relatively weak.

The Ministry of the Interior's officials recognize that actual development on decentralization has already highlighted lessons to be learned, such as:

- Prior and ongoing assistance shows the need to shift efforts to implementation of action plans, to follow the decentralization strategy and EU recommendation, as well as to focus attention on projects that may have a more direct impact in building institutional capacities and sustainable resources at local/regional level.
- Many of the problems and issues related to improving local infrastructure and services may require a supra-municipal approach, implying multi-LGU levels of intervention.
- There is a need to promote and strengthen co-operation between municipalities and communes.

In the new challenges facing the reform of social protection, MoLSAE has reviewed the SSSP action plan in the framework of the decentralization process and has increased the responsibilities of LGUs to improve the provision of social services via the public and private sectors, through strengthening cooperation with line ministries, prefectures and state-level authorities, municipalities and communes. *Five technical working groups* were composed to do the analysis and give recommendations on the further institutionalization and effective management of social services which concern: **regulation; distribution of responsibilities; planning; financing and budgeting; human resources; and communication/reform promotion**. The actors attended a two-day conference, and the five technical working groups brought out an action plan for the period of January – December 2011, with a division of responsibilities between central and local authorities and civil society.

The action plan is driven by a holistic approach to provide integrated, equitable, qualitative, accountable, accessible and integrated social services from local government, in concert with the principles and vision of national social protection strategy. Emphasis should be given to qualitative and efficient training of the staff in charge of Social Services in a manner to enable them to undertake the tasks required. Service provision should not be provided only by local government, but may be offered in a mix of governmental and non-governmental providers which should be licensed, experienced, evaluated and regulated by a national standardised system through an independent body that the Albanian government should set up. Furthermore, the issues of the development of capacity, together with further consolidation of the decentralization process, need to be tackled in harmony. In many cases, such problems can only be addressed in an effective way at a wider scale, rather than just in a single municipality. So far the 'social welfare mix' is the most common system in the EU, as it has proved to be the most effective and efficient.

Some highlighted activities to be implemented at local level according to the themes are:

1. Regulatory Framework and the role of Central and Local Government in Offering Social Services
 - a. Local training in the methodology of the evaluation of needs
 - b. Reviewing and drafting of sublegal acts better to regulate the local bidding process with regard to community social services

2. Share of Responsibilities between Public and Private Service Providers
 - a. Mapping local social services for the entire territory of Albania
 - b. Evaluation and estimation of actual needs, and setting up of priorities
 - c. Review of sublegal acts of social services
 - d. Improve data collection of public/non-public service provider institutions/organizations
3. Budget Planning and Financing of Integrated Social Services
 - a. Improve the planning structure at local levels and enhance cooperation between this structure and service providers
 - b. Improve fiscal policy to encourage individual contributions or business service offerings
 - c. Setting up a monitoring/auditing budget system
 - d. Increase public budget to ensure a baseline service level for all LGUs following the evaluation of requirements
 - e. Determine clear criteria for the quality of services to be offered and their respective financial needs
 - f. Standardize the bidding procedures for public and non-public institutions and organizations
4. Human Resources Requirements for Social Services
 - a. Regulating the legal framework for social service employees
 - i. Clearly determine the status of social workers
 - ii. Produce a code of ethics
 - b. Define job descriptions for social employees in LGUs
 - c. Increase cooperation between the local universities of Social Science and service providers
 - d. Standardize the training curricula
5. Promotion of Social Services
 - a. Increase information about services provided by the respective LGUs
 - b. Increase cooperation and agreement between various service providers
 - c. Training of media staff who deal with social issues, in written and electronic communications
 - d. Build a human resources database about the quality of social services functions

To address the 12 priority areas of the Opinion of the European Commission on Albania's readiness for candidate status will require the government's commitment to achieve priority 11, for which the main body responsible is the MoLSAE. In order to harmonize policies, actors and social services at central, regional and local levels in the framework of the EC recommendation, the MoLSAE has further elaborated a Short Term Action Plan that requires actors to: *"Take concrete steps to reinforce the protection of human rights, notably for women, children and Roma, and to effectively implement anti-discrimination policies"*. To accomplish this action plan, other government line ministries, institutions and partners are also responsible for implementing particular activities (page 104) such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Economy Trade and Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, NGOs, gender experts, academic areas, media, and local government. The action plan stands in coherence

and convergence with the SSSP and MoLSAE action plan for the year 2011, as presented in the previous section.

Following the Action Plan and aiming to be efficient in addressing financial resources towards the activities according to the priority and the set timeline, MoLSAE has already provided evidence of evaluated outputs during the year 2010 and the first 6 months of 2011, with respective budgets allocated for the activities carried out – see table below (Annex 3).

5. Initiatives to improve the social protection institutional framework at the regional and local level in Shkodra

After the central level, the local level is also implementing activities and projects based on the national framework. The local strategic documents are in themselves an integral part of the national strategic paper, but in particular they address the specific need evaluated on the ground. So, as mentioned above, the Strategic Concept of Regional Development (2010 – 2015) is one of the main documents in the implementation of social protection reform. Various important interventions are ongoing in supporting this reform. The *Need Evaluation Commission* is a structure under the Social Services Department in the municipality to better coordinate the efforts and aggregate intervention in the territory. This commission evaluates and decides the best way to assist clients and accommodate them in residential centres, municipal structures such as orphanages for 0-3 year-olds, residences for schoolchildren between 6-15 years old, centres for the elderly, and development centres.

Under the initiative of MoLSAE and with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Regione Emilia-Romana, Regione Marche, Puglia Region and the Municipality of Forli and technical expertise of the Institute for Social Policy Renewal (IRPS), a national database on social services for the Municipality of Vlore, Elbasan and Shkodra is being built. This database is important in creating synergies between the institutional policies, which must rely on concrete indicators. Indicators from this database will serve as benchmarks to support planning in the social protection field.

This initiative will also enhance the accomplishment of the objectives set out in the MoLSAE agreement with Emilia Romagna to support the process of decentralization in the social sector by improving the institutional capacity for integrated and social planning of municipal and regional administrations (*Accordo di collaborazione operativa tra la Regione Emilia Romagna e il Ministero del Lavoro, Affari Sociali e Pari Opportunità della Repubblica di Albania*). This agreement is in the process of being signed by both partners and is planned to last until end of 2012.

Up-to -date information about the institutions offering social services in Shkodra is shown in the table below. With regard to the categories of Residential and Daily, many institutions offer both services in their centres.

Institutions for:	Total Number	Public	Private	Residential	Daily	Resid Daily +
Children	8	3	5	4	3	1
The Elderly	3	1	2	1	1	1
The Disabled	6	0	6	5	1	1
Women/Girls	5	0	6	1	3	1
Families in need	1	0	1	0	1	

To contribute to enabling staff of the LGUs successfully to face the challenges they face with regard to the management of multidimensional decentralization reform, as well as to integrate the central and local action plan in a wider scale than in a single Municipality, the “Strengthening the Local Government Unit Structure” Project is implementing activities which aim to improve the framework for Inter-Municipal Co-operation (IMC), to strengthen local governmental capacity in this area, and to develop and implement a set of modern Human Resources Management (HRM) tools on. This program, headed by the Ministry of Interior for the period of March 2010 – March 2013 under the assistance of Swiss Cooperation, includes the Shkodra Region, and it is focused on building the capacity of HR through: increasing awareness of IMC and its importance and developing and piloting a training programme on IMC tailored to the needs of Albania; development, introduction and piloting of modern HRM tools and methods relating to the definition of job profiles, selection and recruitment procedures, appraisal of staff performance and the evaluation of training needs.

As already indicated, with the aim of optimizing resources for the Shkodra Region Development, the *Strategic Concept of Shkodra Regional Development 2010 – 2016* is an important document on which the Shkodra Regional Council has detailed the Regional Action Plan for the period of 2010 - 2016 in the fields of education training and capacity building; infrastructure and services; tourism and agribusiness; interregional cooperation, and cooperation with other partners.

The following table shows the plan of action for the period 2012–2016, for two measures: improvement of social services and health.

	2012				2013				2014				2015				2016
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Improvement of social services																	
Strengthen social service offices in all LGUs																	
Financial need identification for social services institutions																	
Coordination between health, education structures and municipalities/communes offices																	
Expansion of the diversity of community services																	
Health																	

Increase professional levels through medical supply and professional training																				
Consolidation of Medical Network																				
Purchasing equipment for health centres																				
Support for health projects																				

Source: MoLSAE and Shkodra Municipality

6. The short-term perspective under the EU Recommendation

As the EU Progress Report notes, there have been some developments in *local government* legislation. In November 2010, Parliament approved amendments to the Law on Local Government Taxes, giving local government units a mandate to reimburse small businesses for the cost of purchasing and installing fiscal devices. However, it also contains some criticism of the performance of local governments and decentralization process. It states that “*The management of local government taxes remains weak. Local government authorities continue to lack the administrative capacity to improve revenue collection, increase their fiscal autonomy and improve their performance accordingly...*”⁶

The Albanian government has confirmed that accession to European Union is a strategic objective. The government is intensively trying to address and accomplish the 12 key priorities of the European Commission referred to by the EC’s Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union⁷, for which Albanian public institutions are taking action in appraising it thoroughly. As already mentioned, one of the 12 priorities (the 11th) requires Albania to “*take concrete steps to reinforce the protection of human rights, notably for women, children and Roma, and to effectively implement anti-discrimination policies*”.

The monitoring process of the EC’s Opinion aims to examine current weaknesses and formulate a systematic set of short-term measures, providing clear steps and responsibilities which should be implemented. The planning process was concentrated around lead ministries/institutions for each recommendation. Each leading ministry/institution is responsible for overseeing the activities of the other supporting ministries/institutions. Consultations with Albanian civil society were organized at two levels. MoLSAE is the line ministry responsible for the 11th priority. All activities are included in the Mid-term Budget of line ministries and institutions and are supported by IPA funds and/or other respective donors. Some of these activities started during the first half of the year 2011 but extended during the whole year (Annex 1). The budget to achieve priority 11 is estimated to be €1,283,857. In this budget the line ministries took into consideration the approved 2011-2013 Medium Term Budget as well as funding commitments from possible donors.

⁶ EU 2011 Progress Report on Albania, page 9.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint/publications/enlargement/47f_en.htm

Short-term measures to address this recommendation are as follows:

- Adoption of a National Strategy on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the period 2011-2015;
- Measures to enhance protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons;
- Enhancement of women's representative ability to participate in overall decision-making in various sectors;
- Promoting the economic empowerment of women, in order to increase their participation in the public sphere and effectively to protect the victims of domestic violence;
- Review of the National Children's Strategy 2005-2010 and Action Draft Plan for the period 2011-2015;
- Completion of a legal framework in line with *acquis* and international conventions aimed at the establishment of a functional system for the protection of children's rights;
- Completion of a legal framework for persons with disabilities, in line with standards and best practices of EU countries;
- Protection of Roma's community rights in line with legislation in force and international conventions;
- Ensuring effective implementation of anti-discrimination policies through an enhanced role of the Office of the Commissioner and concrete activities such as awareness-raising.

The MoLSAE started the review and assessment process of the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence and the Action Plan 2007-2010, which has come to an end. The four priority areas of the new "*Action Plan Addressing the Recommendations of the EU Opinion for Albania*" are:

- Strengthening of the Institutional and Legal Mechanism in order to ensure and monitor the implementation of the Law "On Gender Equality in Society" and the law on "Measures Against Domestic Violence";
- Greater participation of women in political and public life via special measures, to reach equal participation of men and women in the decision-making of all sectors;
- Social and economic empowerment of women further to achieve the social and economic security of women and girls;
- Reduction of violence against women and of domestic violence by improving the legal framework to strengthen condemnation of these phenomena by a zero-tolerance approach, supporting domestic violence victims through different social services, etc.

UN Women will fund the costs of the consultancy work. The Directorate of Equal Opportunities Policies and Family (DEOPF) and MoLSAE will provide overall technical guidance to actors as well as facilitating work with appropriate offices in line ministries and dependent institutions. According to the budget of the strategy, the activities of the action plan will be realised from the budget of the government (MoLSAE and line ministries), the budgets of local governments, and other national/international donors. All actors, including the LGU, are part of this process and are responsible for the commitment of their budget allocation.

As regards protection and respect for children's rights, MoLSAE has adopted for the first time in an integral law '*For Supporting Children's Rights*' (No 10347 on 4th November 2010). This law

defines the rights and protection offered to each child, the mechanisms responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of protection of these rights, and special care for the child.

MoLSAE has started to review the National Children's Strategy and draft the new Action Plan for 2011-2015, including specific measures on the protection of children's rights, as well as all the necessary legal sub-acts which enable the adjustment and functioning of the responsible structures that operate in this area at central and local levels. LGUs and other interested parties are part of the consultation process in designing and approving the action plan and policies, as well as defining the objectives to be achieved when related to LGUs' responsibilities and structures.

The approved sublegal acts deriving from Law No 10347 '*For Supporting Children's Rights*' are as follows:

1. Draft Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) "On the types, methods of exchange, and processing of information and statistics requested by the state agency and the responsible state structures at a central and local level",
2. Draft DCM "On the procedures of carrying out controls and imposing sanctions on those that violate the rights of children",
3. Draft DCM "On the coordination of the activity of mechanisms at a central and local on issues regarding the protection of the rights of children",
4. Draft DCM "On the cooperation with non-profitable organizations regarding the implementation of local policies for the protection of the rights of children",
5. Draft DCM "On the mechanisms that coordinate work among the state authorities responsible for referring cases of children in danger and the manners for it to proceed".

Conclusions

This Progress Report focuses its analysis on the implementation of the *Sectoral Strategy of Social Protection 2008–2013* and on its action plans at central and local levels, focused on the major steps required to be taken toward the objectives of social policy reform in convergence with decentralization and de-institutionalization processes.

At this point of analysis, citing the EU Delegation from the 2011 Progress Report, we should note that: "*The decentralisation reform process is adversely affected by the difficult relationship between central and local government. The management of local government taxes remains weak. Local government authorities continue to lack the administrative capacity to improve revenue collection, increase their fiscal autonomy and improve their performance accordingly.*"⁸

Reviewing and assessing the implementation of Sectoral Strategy of Social Protection, we find that the central level (MoLSAE) highlight that the strengthening of decentralization and the improvement of performance and standards of social protection services require better:

⁸ Commission Staff Working Paper; Albania 2011 Progress Report; Brussels, 12.10.2011

- Harmonization of decentralized social service functioning
- Increase in the promotion of inclusion and participation
- Qualification of human resources

In the current dynamic, the coordination of roles and responsibilities at local and central levels remain key to the success of the reform. Despite the difficulties, the Shkodra Region is taking steps to be the main actor in Policy Design with regard to Social Protection and Social Service Delivery. Being aware of the challenges of this task, the Action Plan of the Shkodra Region Strategic Concept gives special attention to building the capacity of human resources, and inter-regional and other partner cooperation. Service provision should not just be provided by local government, but may be offered using a mix of governmental and non-governmental providers, which must be licensed, experienced, evaluated and regulated by a national standardised system through an independent body.

Financial resources dedicated to achieving the Shkodra Region Development vision are still limited. However, regional staff are focusing their attention on the coordination and efficient use of financial resources, either from government budgets, their own sources, or donors. In this context the monitoring and management levels need to be improved and to become more professional. This process should be coordinated with the central level which still lacks evidence-based analysis and/or a clear picture of ongoing running projects, modalities and their types, as well as financial evidence to articulate social protection service planning. Both central and local levels of government seek to further strengthen and coordinate the priorities and financial allocation according to the priorities set.

Optimizing the resources allocated to social protection services, and having a results-oriented vision on public expenses, the Municipality of Shkodra highlights the requirement that the budget formulation process be characterized by a participatory approach. More frequent reporting (i.e. monthly and quarterly performance reporting) is needed in order better to track expenditure trends and the results achieved. Additionally, the municipality needs to target more indicators in its own financial reporting. It is imperative that the municipality adopt more appropriate monitoring systems and take corrective steps when under-spending is recorded.

To be effective, regional development must be seen as a common objective for all actors/stakeholders at all levels. Coordination between institutions at local and central levels needs to be increased in a sustainable manner. In addition to the need to harmonise action plans using a bottom-up approach, there is also a clear need for a monitoring mechanism to optimize the results and add value to existing investments in order to boost them. Moreover the monitoring of deadlines and indicators set for respective action plans, in line with other needs mentioned, requires technical support and assistance where territorial cooperation can assist. Territorial/decentralized cooperation can also be essential in assisting the horizontal context of *harmonization of integrated decentralized social services*, thus reducing fragmentation of the project at a local level. For all actors, improving the involvement, participation and dialogue between partners - including local communities, civil society and the business/private sector - requires special efforts, via cooperation and assisting the decentralization process, to help those actors synergise their efforts and increase the sustainability of investments through an increased sense of ownership.

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Annexes

1. Short -Term Action Plan - in response to the European Commission Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
Effective Implementation of Domestic Violence Strategy	<p>1. Adoption of the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence for 2011-2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation on draft strategy with the responsible line ministries. - Consultation on draft strategy with the Civil Society. - Consultation on draft strategy with donor community. - Reflection on the recommendations - Pursue the adoption of procedures in the National Council of Gender Equality. - Pursue the adoption of procedures in the Council of Ministers. <p>2. Establishing a national coordination mechanism for the fight against domestic violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the Decision of the Council of Ministers on the Establishment of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of domestic violence. - Informing local government (municipalities) on the establishment of this mechanism. - Monitoring of the DCM implementation for NRM 	<p>May 2011</p> <p>1 April</p> <p>1 April</p> <p>1 April</p> <p>3 April</p> <p>5 April</p> <p>May 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>16 Feb 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MOLSAEO - (DEOPF), MoH, MoI, MoES, MoJ, METE, MoAFCP, DSDC, NGOs, gender experts, academic area, media, local government.</p> <p>NCGE, DEOPF</p> <p>Council of Ministers</p> <p>MoLSAEO</p> <p>GDSP</p>
Effective Implementation of Domestic Violence Strategy	<p>3. Putting into operation national shelters for the victims of domestic violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of standards - Strengthen building capacities that offer services in these shelters - Training of shelter staff by an international expert. <p>4. Imposing harsh penalties through a zero-tolerance legal framework against domestic violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings with institutions responsible for the promotion of legal initiatives on imposing harsh penalties against domestic violence. <p>5. Conducting a study on the phenomenon of domestic violence during 2008-2010 and preventative measures</p>	<p>February 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>17- 23 May</p> <p>Mar.-July 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Jan.- May 2011</p>	<p>Albanian Parliament, MoLSAEO - (DEOPF), MoH, MoI, MoES, MoJ, METE, MoAFCP, DSDC, NGOs, gender experts, academia, media, local government.</p>

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
	taken by the Police. 6. Training of 120 Police officers of crime investigation and prevention units on ‘Treatment and protection of victims of domestic violence’.		
Enhancing the protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a working group. - Revision of legislation in labour and social protection fields by the working group. - Development of a concrete work programme, awareness, and activities for LGBT persons. - Survey on the LGBT situation in the employment field. 	<p>April 14, 2011</p> <p>December 2011</p> <p>December 2011</p>	MoLSAEO, National Employment Service, State Social Service, Office of the Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination
Social and Economic Empowerment of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize information and training sessions on: management of existing enterprises, establishment of new enterprises, use of loans; - Promote women’s enterprise through organization of annual national fairs on women’s enterprise - Review the legislation on social insurance with regards to paternity leave in compliance with recommendations of CEDAW and EU 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MoLSAEO, METE, Bank of Albania, NGOs, International organizations</p> <p>MoLSAEO, METE, MoAFCP</p> <p>Associations of women’s enterprises</p> <p>Trade Chamber</p> <p>M0LSAEO, NGOs, Media</p>
Upgrading women’s representation level in every field of life (in decision-making structures)	<p>1. enhancement of women’s representation and their ability to participate in decision-making structures to more than 30%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness of the participation of women and girls in policy with particular focus on local election in May 2011 - Monitoring of the application of the 30% quota at the highest decision-making levels of politics and administration 	<p>March 2011 –in progress</p> <p>May 2011 – in progress</p>	MoLSAEO (DEOPF), Local Government, line ministries, INSTAT, Associations of area Media
Effective Implementation of the Strategy on the Rights of the Children	<p>1. Drafting the national strategy on the rights of children 2011-2015 and its action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The approval of the order of the Labour Minister ‘On the establishment of the inter-institutional working group with regard to drafting the national strategy on the rights of children 2011-2015’ and its action plan; -The distribution and gathering of preliminary 	<p>April 2011</p> <p>January 2011</p>	MoLSAEO

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
	<p>comments by members of the working group on the assessment report of the national strategy for children 2005-2010;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first meeting of the inter-institutional working group regarding the preliminary discussion of the assessment report of the strategy; - Finalization of the first draft of the national strategy on children 2011-2015; - The definition of priority fields on the new action plan. - Comments and recommendations from working groups and other actors regarding the new action plan 2011-2015; - The compilation of the draft-decision of the council of ministers on the approval of the national strategy for children 2011-2015 and its action plan; - Approval by the Council of Ministers 	<p>January – March 2011</p> <p>March 2011</p> <p>May 2011</p> <p>June 2011</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>August 2011</p> <p>Sep. 2011</p>	
<p>Establishing a Functional Child Protection System</p>	<p>1. The approval and drafting the sub-legal acts that will be approved and implemented based on Law No 10347 of 4th November 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approved a decision of the council of ministers on the organization and functioning of the national council on the protection of the rights of children - Approved an order on the structure of the state agency on the protection of the rights of children - The draft order of the Albanian prime minister on the establishment of the national council on the protection of the rights of children; - The process of drafting the Decision of the Council of Ministers ‘On the organization and functioning of the state agency on the protection of the rights of children’ has been completed and sent for opinion to the line ministries <p>Staff recruitment of the State Agency for protection of the rights of children.</p> <p>2. Building capacity of the National Mechanism on Human Rights Protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summon the first meeting of the National Council on Child Rights Protection. - Coordination of local actors to prevent and moderate domestic violence. 	<p>February- March 2011</p> <p>January – March 2011</p> <p>May 2011</p> <p>April 2011</p> <p>June 2011</p>	<p>Council of Ministers MoLSAEO</p>

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
The approval of other sublegal acts deriving from the Law No 10347 of 4.11.2011	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Decision of the Albanian Council ‘On the kinds, way of exchange and processing of information and statistics requested by the state agency and the responsible state structures at a central and local level. 2. Draft Decision of the Council of Ministers “On the procedures of carrying out controls and imposing sanctions on those that violate the rights of children”. 3. Draft Decision of the Council of Ministers “On the coordination of the activity of mechanisms at a central and local on issues regarding the protection of the rights of children”. 4. Draft Decision of the Council of Ministers “On cooperation with non-profitable organizations regarding the implementation of local policies for the protection of the rights of children”. 5. Draft Decision of the Council of Ministers “On the mechanisms that coordinate work among the state authorities s responsible for referring the cases of children in danger and ways it can proceed”. 	<p>During 2011</p> <p>During 2011</p> <p>During 2011</p> <p>During 2011</p> <p>During 2011</p>	
Effective implementation of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drafting integral law in line with the EU Strategy on the Right of Persons with Disabilities and EU Action Plan, the Revised European Social Charter and Directive 2000/78/EC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting an overall assessment study for the identification of compatibility in legislation, policies and institutional areas with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. - Establishing and functioning of the Inter-institutional Working Group on drafting the draft Integral Law on the rights of people with disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of round table discussions in four districts of the country, with the participation of civil society and interest groups to attract opinions regarding the shortcomings in legislation, in order to respect of persons with disabilities rights. • Identify capacity needs of relevant Government departments, local government, judiciary, media, business and civil society on disability rights 	<p>April 2011</p> <p>May 2011</p> <p>May-June 2011</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>June-Dec. 2011</p> <p>June-Dec. 2011</p>	<p>MoLSAEO, MoH, MoES, MoJ, MoPWT, MIE</p>

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public buildings identified and renovated to ensure improved accessibility for persons with disabilities • Accessibility guidelines reviewed and, where necessary, established and respected in line with CRPD 		
Protection of Roma Rights	<p>1. Monitoring of the objectives of the National Strategy and National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2010-2015</p> <p>Establishment and functioning of the technical working groups in 10 regions of the country, which will inform on the real situation of the living conditions of Roma community at regional level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regions of Tirana, Elbasani, Fieri and Durrësi. - Regions of Berati, Gjirokastra and Vlora - Regions of Shkodra, Lezha and Korça <p>2. Design a database and data collecting computerization at central and local levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of training workshops for technical working groups at regional level on data collection. - Drafting of Progress Report 2008-2010, on the assessment of the implementation of the National Strategy and National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2010. 	<p>June-Sep. 2011</p> <p>November '11</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>July-Aug. 2011</p> <p>Sep. 2011</p> <p>Sep. 2011</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>Sep.-Oct. 2011</p>	<p>MoLSAEO, Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination, MoES, State Social Service</p>
Establishing adequate administrative capacities of the "Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination"	<p>1. The development of staff recruitment procedures according to Law No 8549 of 11th November 1999, 'Civil Servant Status'.</p> <p>2. Improvement of institution infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The reconstruction of offices and providing them with necessary equipment in order to fulfil the function stated by the law. <p>3. Drafting the development Strategy of the Commissioner's Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultative meetings with SOROS <p>4. Strengthening of administrative capacities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in training in collaboration with NGOs <p>Measures already in place:</p>	<p>September 2011</p> <p>September 2011</p> <p>Sept. 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination</p> <p>Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination and SOROS foundation.</p>

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A series of training courses, supported financially from UNDP, on 'National and international legal standards for the protection from discrimination', held in Lezha, Elbasani, Durres and Tirana. - The 'Tolerance and Diversity, principles which guarantee the equality of citizens' project supported by the SOROS foundation, is in progress. - Participation in conferences and workshops with other public institutions and with NGOs. 	<p>January- March 2011</p> <p>September 2011</p> <p>September 2011</p>	<p>UNDP</p> <p>Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination and SOROS foundation.</p>
<p>Awareness raising campaigns for Law No 10221 of 4th February 2010 'For the protection from discrimination' and the institution of the Commissioner</p>	<p>Participation in TV debates and interviews.</p> <p>Preparation and distribution of posters, booklets, etc.</p> <p>Activities of the Office in different regions.</p> <p>Concrete projects with NGOs</p> <p>Organisation of the round table discussions with NGOs which have on their focus the protection of human rights.</p> <p>In cooperation with OSCE, is in process of realization the official Website of the Commissioner.</p> <p>Information Session on the Law 'On Protection from Discrimination' held in the Information Centre of the European Union in Vlora.</p> <p>Measures already in place:</p> <p>Round table discussion on the topic of 'Civil Registration in Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania'</p> <p>National Conference on the topic of 'Non-discrimination, challenges and commitment to Albania'</p> <p>Round table discussions regarding the Complaint Form and Register of Complaints</p> <p>Information Session on the Law 'On Protection from Discrimination' held in the Information Centre of the European Union in Shkodra.</p> <p>Awareness seminars held in Vlora, Saranda and Gjirokastra, with participants from schools and Universities.</p> <p>Activity on the topic of 'Discrimination: perception and current challenges', in cooperation with OSCE.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>May 2011</p> <p>On 22.2.2011</p> <p>On 23.2.2011</p> <p>On 1st and 29th March 2011</p> <p>3.3.2011</p> <p>23-25 March 2011</p> <p>11.4.2011</p>	<p>Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination</p> <p>Commissioner and OSCE</p> <p>EUIC and Commissioner</p> <p>Ministry of Interior, MoLSAEO, UNDP.</p> <p>MoLSAEO, Commissioner and UN Albania</p> <p>Albania Helsinki Committee</p> <p>EUIC Albania and the Commissioner</p> <p>Albanian Helsinki Committee</p> <p>OSCE and Commissioner</p>
<p>Setting collaboration</p>	<p>1. Signing the cooperation memoranda with line ministries which have obligations according to Law</p>	<p>September 2011</p>	<p>Commissioner for the Protection against</p>

SHORT-TERM MEASURE	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS
with public institutions and NGOs	<p>No10221 of 4th February 2010 'For the Protection from Discrimination', such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Justice • Ministry of Education and Science • Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities • Ministry of Health <p>2. Signing the cooperation memoranda with NGOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memoranda signed by the Commissioner with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Commission for Legal Aid - Albanian Helsinki Committee 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2011</p> <p>March 2011</p>	<p>Discrimination and the Ministries of Lines</p> <p>Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination</p> <p>Commissioner for the Protection against Discrimination</p> <p>State Commission for Legal Aid</p> <p>Albanian Helsinki Committee</p>

2. Unconditional transfer for the commune and municipality of Shkodra for the year 2011 (in 000 lek)

Region	District	LGU	Comm/Municipal	2011	2012
Shkodra	Malësi e Madhe	Gruemirë	C	30,074	30,525
Shkodra	Malësi e Madhe	Kastrat	C	23,522	24,333
Shkodra	Malësi e Madhe	Kelmend	C	25,715	26,335
Shkodra	Malësi e Madhe	Koplik	M	30,618	31,353
Shkodra	Malësi e Madhe	Qendër	C	15,882	16,121
Shkodra	Malësi e Madhe	Shkrelë	C	22,297	22,832
Shkodra	Pukë	Blerim	C	12,287	12,471
Shkodra	Pukë	Fierzë	C	12,507	12,695
Shkodra	Pukë	Fushë-Arrëz	M	19,855	20,153
Shkodra	Pukë	Gjegjan	C	20,224	20,527
Shkodra	Pukë	Iballë	C	16,397	16,643
Shkodra	Pukë	Pukë	M	33,857	34,537
Shkodra	Pukë	Qafë-Mali	C	14,650	15,002
Shkodra	Pukë	Qelëz	C	11,403	11,574
Shkodra	Pukë	Qerret	C	18,271	18,809
Shkodra	Pukë	Rrapë	C	13,169	13,366
Shkodra	Shkodra	Ana e Malit	C	11,142	11,309
Shkodra	Shkodra	Bërdicë	C	16,930	17,184
Shkodra	Shkodra	Bushat	C	40,551	41,524
Shkodra	Shkodra	Dajç (Bregbune)	C	16,021	16,704
Shkodra	Shkodra	Gur i Zi	C	22,061	22,392
Shkodra	Shkodra	Hajmel	C	12,185	12,672
Shkodra	Shkodra	Postribë	C	32,790	33,282
Shkodra	Shkodra	Pult	C	14,182	14,523
Shkodra	Shkodra	Rrethinat	C	42,184	42,817
Shkodra	Shkodra	Shalë	C	17,261	17,520
Shkodra	Shkodra	Shkodra	M	324,527	348,633
Shkodra	Shkodra	Shllak	C	10,248	10,494
Shkodra	Shkodra	Shosh	C	9,337	9,477
Shkodra	Shkodra	Temal	C	10,539	10,792
Shkodra	Shkodra	Vau i Dejës	M	35,819	36,697
Shkodra	Shkodra	Velipojë	C	15,574	15,948
Shkodra	Shkodra	Vig-Mnelë	C	11,307	11,476

3. Output derived from activities undertaken in accomplishing the action plans (SSSP and EU) for the time reported (In thousands lek)

Nr.	Output	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent
		Year 2010	Year2010	6 months of 2011	6 months of 2011
1	Strengthening of gender officers network	1,261	1,261		
2	Awareness campaign to increase women's participation in politics	1,244	1,244	660	620
3	Community awareness regarding women and girls at risk	1,261	1,261		
4	'Fushate sensibilizuese' awareness campaign for the prevention of domestic violence	1,062	1,062		
5	Creation of network against domestic violence at the local level	829	829		
6	Increase staff capacity in shelters	829	100		
7	Recognition of the domestic violence situation	895	895		
8	Assessment of environmental suitability of PAK	1,161	1,161		
9	Draft evaluation report for PAK objectives	1,294	1,294	1,308	1,229
10	Promoting children's rights	1,095	1,095		
11	Preparation of legal framework for the Children's Law	1,260	1,260		
12	Establishment of local units for the protection of children	1,260	489	1,306	1,227
13	Monitoring report for the Roma community strategy	1,493	1,366	1,306	1,227
14	Recognition of the situation of the Roma population throughout the country	1,493	1,493		
15	Draft progress report for the social inclusion strategy	2,803	2,803	1,306	1,227
16	Seminars and publications for women and girls at risk			1,308	1,229
17	Gender Equality Strategy and domestic violence			1,304	1,230
18	Research on domestic violence			646	607
19	Strategy for Children's rights			1,306	1,227
	TOTAL	19,240	17,613	4,564	4,293

4. Unconditional Transfer for All Albanian Regions - 2011 (In thousands lek)

Nr	Qarku	Unconditional Transfere
1	QARKU BERAT	63,971
2	QARKU FIER	69,145
3	QARKU ELBASAN	113,200
4	QARKU KORCE	82,046
5	QARKU KUKES	81,320
6	QARKU SHKODRA	83,428
7	QARKU TIRANE	56,586
8	QARKU DURRES	53,881
9	QARKU VLORE	62,565
10	QARKU GJIROKASTER	71,991
11	QARKU DIBER	98,573
12	QARKU LEZHE	71,785
TOTAL		908,492