

British Ambassador to Kosovo's roundtable speech at the Group for Legal and Political Studies

Good morning to you all,

Honourable Chairman Hyseni,

Honourable Chief Prosecutor of the State Lumezi,

Dear Mrs Loxha,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I begin, I must say that I am sorry not to see any representatives of the Kosovo Judicial Council, but nonetheless I extend my greetings to them as well.

I am delighted to be here today at this roundtable organised by our implementing partner – Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS) – for the publication of their first report on the 'Latest developments in the justice system of Kosovo.'

The role of the civil society in democratic countries is key. This is why, I would like to believe that also in Kosovo, the constructive role of the civil society in general, and of the GLPS in particular, is highly appreciated.

This is the second round table I am participating in, and yet this day marks something special as well, as today is the opening of the electoral campaign.

I hope that, through this round table, we will send out relevant messages to political parties, which seem to have the rule of law as a priority.

Just as the GLPS report assesses, I want to echo as well the democratic and transparent practice the Prosecutorial Council has undertaken when drafting one of the most important Regulations on the appointment of chief prosecutors. Not only have the international partners been consulted with closely, the Council has even decided to hold, for the first time, a public hearing in order to take the civil society's assessment. This directly affects the increase of transparency and accountability.

Unfortunately, we have not seen the same readiness from the Kosovo Judicial Council. We remain committed to providing the same support equally to both Councils.

In this time of electoral campaign, I am delighted to hear and read that the rule of law, the fight against corruption and other negative phenomena are in the programs of almost every political party. It is not enough to only make statements about fighting corruption. The citizens of this country need to

hear concrete measures that political parties will undertake in this regard.

Until now, Kosovo accepted what it was served. I do not want to do this. However, I want to emphasize what is by now clear to everyone: Kosovo needs judicial reform! But, it has to come from your analysis of the context of your country. We will support you without any doubt!

I emphasize, that it is not right to talk too much about fighting corruption before the campaign and to say after the campaign that the executive body has no legal competencies in this regard.

GLPS has given tangible recommendations to the justice authorities. I would like to mention some of them: first, there needs to be efficiency, since 'Justice delayed is justice denied'; second, the Judicial Council and the Prosecutorial Council need to react strongly in cases where state prosecutors or judges are lynched publicly by powerful politicians; third, there need to be concrete results in the fight against corruption and high-profile organized crime.

However, democratic countries have three powers, where each one should check and supervise one another (checks and balances as we call it). Therefore, the executive and the legislative powers have the right to undertake legal initiatives for the improvement of the state of the justice system.

Finally, allow me to inform you that we have an emphasised interest in monitoring the process of appointing the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Chamber and the Basic Prosecution of Prishtina. So far, the Prosecutorial Council has shown readiness and willingness for this process to go as smooth as possible. We will monitor the process closely and we expect that candidates with most merit will take these highly important positions. This would be an important step towards achieving tangible results in the fight against high level corruption and organised crime.

I wish you success and thank you for your attention!