

**Question for written answer E-001365/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**David Lega (PPE), Michael Gahler (PPE)**

**Subject:** Proceedings against high-ranking public officials and politicians in Albania

In its conclusions of 25 March 2020<sup>1</sup>, the Council stated that prior to the first Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), Albania must further strengthen its fight against corruption, organised crime and vote-buying by addressing five key priorities, 'including initiation of proceedings and completion of first proceedings against high-ranking public officials and politicians' and 'the initiation of proceedings against those accused of vote-buying'.

While we welcome Albania's new judicial structures, such as the Special Anti-Corruption Structure, we remain concerned that high-level officials still seem to enjoy immunity. In its 2020 report the Commission stated that 'overall, corruption is prevalent in many areas and remains an issue of concern...convictions in cases involving high-level officials remain limited' and 'Investigations have so far not resulted in a substantial number of final convictions of high-ranking state officials. This fosters a culture of impunity within the higher levels of the State.'

To our knowledge, no high-level official is currently under investigation for vote-buying. Those prosecuted in case 184, referred to in Written Answer E-006292/2020<sup>2</sup>, are administrative staff at junior/mid-level.

Could the Commission please present the current evaluation of proceedings against high-ranking public officials regarding corruption, organised crime, and vote-buying, as the commissioner responsible, Mr Varhelyi, has stated that all conditions for the first IGC are fulfilled?

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<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions on enlargement and stabilisation and association process - Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/25/council-conclusions-on-enlargement-and-stabilisation-and-association-process/>).

<sup>2</sup> Answer for question E-006292/2020 ([https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-006292-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-006292-ASW_EN.html)).