

Tirana, 25 June 2024

## STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that ICC Albania reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Me respekt,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bilgen Aldan".

Bilgen Aldan

Chairwoman of the Executive Board



## **CONTENTS**

ABOUT ICC ALBANIA.....	1
RAISE AWARENESS .....	2
TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING .....	4
COLLECTIVE ACTIONS.....	5
TOOLS & INSTRUMENTS.....	7

## ABOUT ICC ALBANIA

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ICC Albania acts as the Albanian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) which is the world's largest business organization representing more than 45 million companies in over 100 countries.

ICC's core mission is **to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere.**

Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, ICC promotes international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. As part of its global network, ICC Albania engages in communicating ICC's views on business climate, international trade and investments and sustainability to government and business organizations across Albania.

### *What does ICC Albania do?*

ICC Albania collaborates closely with its network of businesses and policy experts, enhancing the capabilities of professionals and introducing international practices and tools to the local market.

ICC Albania works in partnership with local private and public sector stakeholders to provide expertise to ICC Global initiatives in:

- Developing effective public policies
- Establishing uniform rules and self-regulatory standards for international trade
- Ensuring the successful implementation of policy reforms
- Fostering consensus in support of new industry norms

Through its three Policy Commissions and associated working groups, ICC Albania leverages business insights and supplements expertise with special initiatives, partnerships, and research to swiftly address emerging policy challenges and opportunities, all while advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Throughout the year, ICC Albania focuses on three main areas:

- International Trade, Finance & Investment (ITFI)
- Arbitration, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Commercial Law and Practice (CLP)
- Sustainable Development and Integrity (SDI)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals present significant opportunities for businesses that prioritize sustainability. ICC Albania encourages companies and stakeholders in Albania to embrace the Global Compact and integrate its ten principles into their business models.

## RAISE AWARENESS

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ICC Albania has taken action through a range of activities and engagements in promoting the role business can and should play in respecting human rights, environment and approaching responsible business conduct practises.

Through our engagements, ICC Albania has supported the following SDGs.



Below, we are sharing some of the work we have undertaken in the last two years in this area.

### **Engaging with the network and promoting the UN Global Compact**

*1 September 2022*

ICC Albania in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's office in Albania organized a roundtable with private sector actors from the business associations and chambers of commerce in Albania. The main scope of this roundtable was to introduce to this network the UN tools and resources available for business to engage in sustainable development practices. Un representatives opened the floor with short presentations about the UN 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Global Compact initiative and the UN Women Empowerment Principles.

Following the executives of the chambers and business organizations took the floor to share examples of the current work with their members in promoting sustainable business efforts.

### **Women Entrepreneurs & Gender Perspective in The Business Value Chain**

*15 December 2022*

Women constitute half of the population, making a substantial contribution to both society and economic growth. In many sectors, particularly in Albania, women represent 50% or more of the workforce, playing a crucial role in advancing both the economy and society. While gender balance in Albania's workforce is generally positive, a persistent issue, similar to Europe, is the low representation of women in managerial and executive positions.

The Chair of ICC Albania participated in a panel discussion alongside other stakeholders, presenting an overview of the organization's efforts in the field of sustainable development and integrity both in policy advocacy and promotion of tools and international standards. During the discussion, she also highlighted the findings of the CGI pilot study to support their recommendations.

## **Roundtable with Chambers of Commerce in Albania**

*February 2023*

ICC Albania in collaboration with UN Albania organized a roundtable with private sector representatives with focus on Sustainable Development Goals. This event was joined by private sector representatives alongside the UN Resident Coordinator in Albania and the regional director of the UN Sustainable Development Group. During the event, numerous initiatives were highlighted wherein businesses in Albania are actively promoting women's empowerment and integrating sustainable development goals into their operational frameworks. ICC Albania presented the findings from the Corporate Integrity Index, being launched recently, which assesses the current practices of companies in Albania concerning social responsibility and good governance.

## **Business#2030: Sustainable Development as business opportunity in Albania**

*31 May – 1 June 2023*

UN in Albania and the Embassy of Sweden in Albania hosted a 2-day Conference focused on empowering Albanian companies for sustainable initiatives.

The Conference comprehensively addressed sustainability across various dimensions, including sustainable fashion and textiles, organic farming, the circular economy, and shared experiences and best practices from both Albanian and Swedish businesses.

ICC Albania participated with the Secretary General as a speaker in the plenary alongside senior company executives, EBRD representatives, and other organizations. They deliberated on current business practices related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Albania. Also, ICC Albania attended a focus group discussion discussing experiences and insights of operating and doing business in Albania by sharing available international tools that business can refer for implementing robust compliance frameworks and ethical business practices.

## **National Conference on Anti-corruption**

*14 June 2023*

The Government of Albania hosted the National Conference on Anti-corruption on 13-14 June 2023. We contributed to the agenda by having our Chair participate as a speaker in a panel discussion focused on the private sector and efforts in the fight against corruption. Representatives from chambers of commerce and business organizations provided perspectives, best practices, and recommendations from private enterprises aimed at combating corruption and promoting integrity. During her presentation, the Chair of ICC Albania highlighted our organization's initiatives and collaborative efforts with businesses to address pressing challenges related to integrity and sustainable development. She emphasized our advocacy with businesses towards the adoption of international best practices and tools in these crucial areas including the Global Compact.

## TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

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### **Implementing the UN Convention against Corruption in South East Europe: private sector integrity**

*10-11 May 2022*

The International Chamber of Commerce in Albania (ICC Albania) partnered with the UNODC Civil Society Unit and the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) for a two-day workshop held on 10-11 May 2022. This workshop focused on exploring the private sector's role in fostering integrity and combating corruption.

Discussions revolved around several key themes:

- The involvement of the private sector in developing and implementing effective anti-corruption measures and policies following the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).
- Best practices in compliance tailored to the Balkans region.
- Principles of the UN Global Compact and UNODC e-learning modules.
- Collective actions: addressing challenges, exploring opportunities, and strategies for sustained engagement.

The workshop gathered 20 representatives from businesses, Chambers of Commerce, business associations, and other organizations from across the region to exchange experiences and insights. This exchange was pivotal for advancing initiatives that promote integrity and transparency within the private sector.

### **On Whistleblowing and Whistleblower Protection**

*7 December 2022*

We collaborated with the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative to co-host a workshop session on Whistleblowing and Whistleblower Protection as one of the most effective means to prevent, detect and fight fraud and corruption. This session was dedicated to exploring whistleblowing practices, highlighting RAI's partnerships with governmental entities like HIDAACI, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Education and Sports, as well as non-governmental partners such as the SEE Coalition on Whistleblower Protection. Together, we aimed to advance a working agenda focused on enhancing transparency and accountability measures.

During this workshop, experts presented pragmatic approaches in regulatory frameworks and capacity building to support the implementation of efficient whistleblowing systems. Additionally, the session included a screening of a Human-Interest Story featuring a whistleblower from the region, followed by discussions involving both experts and participants.

## **Compliance Effective Management**

*4 December 2023*

In cooperation with Transparency International Nederland, Ministry of Justice in Albania we organized a training session focused on compliance measures and dedicated to the private sector. Held in a conducive environment, the training aimed to equip attendees with essential knowledge and practical strategies to ensure adherence to regulatory requirements and ethical standards. Led by experts in compliance and legal affairs from TI Nederland, the Ministry of Justice and the private sector, the session covered topics ranging from international regulatory frameworks to industry-specific best practices. Participants engaged actively in discussions, case studies, and interactive exercises designed to enhance their understanding and application of compliance principles. By the end of the training, attendees gained valuable insights and tools necessary to navigate the complex regulatory landscapes effectively.

## **Foreign Direct Investment Screening Mechanisms**

*5-6 December 2023*

On 5-6 December 2023, the International Chamber of Commerce in Albania, supported by CIPE Europe & Eurasia, hosted a pivotal workshop focused on Investment Screening Mechanisms. Guided by a seasoned expert, the workshop focused on a wide array of international perspectives concerning investment screening mechanisms, international contracts, sanctions, and related topics. Attendees explored the strategic tools and policies that nations employ to protect their interests while promoting economic development. The sessions provided deep insights and practical knowledge essential for navigating the complexities of global investment environments and ensuring compliance with international standards.

## **COLLECTIVE ACTIONS**

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### **Week of Integrity 2022 and 2023**

ICC Albania organized the 4th and 5th editions of the Week of Integrity, a national campaign aimed at raising awareness and fostering collective action among various sectors of the economy to advance integrity promotion efforts.

This initiative serves as a unified platform bringing together a diverse array of partners from the private and public sectors, as well as educational and civil society institutions, who organize their activities to highlight the significance of integrity. Known locally as “Java e Integritetit,” the Week of Integrity in Albania runs from 1 to 10 December, coinciding with the UN Anti-corruption Day on 9 December.

This multi-stakeholder platform typically involves around 50 partners including government bodies, media outlets, businesses, youth organizations, and civil society. Throughout the year, the network engages in regular meetings to exchange insights and discuss integrity policies and practical challenges, fostering dynamic dialogues.

The Week of Integrity itself features a series of partner-led events and initiatives throughout the week, collectively emphasizing the importance of integrity.

## **Promoting Integrity: The Individual, the Organization and Beyond | 4<sup>th</sup> edition**

*1-16 December 2022*

The fourth edition of the “Week of Integrity in Albania” took place from 1 to 16 December 2022. During this period, ICC Albania collaborated with various partners to host numerous events focusing on integrity and anti-corruption issues, including the annual conference titled “Promoting Integrity: The Individual, the Organization and Beyond.”

More than 45 partners participated, including government officials, media representatives, members of the business community, youth organizations, and civil society, both onsite and online. This multi-stakeholder initiative continued its tradition of providing diverse platforms for dialogue and discussion among societal and economic actors, addressing the persistent challenges in promoting integrity and combating corruption.

At the end of the fourth edition, a series of recommendations were directed towards all stakeholders involved in this field.

- ▶ **In Albanian:** [Recommendation paper Wol 4](#)
- ▶ **In English:** [Recommendation paper Wol 4](#)

## **Schools for Integrity**

*7 December 2022*

ICC Albania collaborated with the Council of Europe in Albania and the Albanian Institute of Public Administration to organize the flagship event "Schools for Integrity," involving more than 20 students from four local high schools. Divided into teams, these students engaged in a mock debate analyzing two ethical dilemmas and then presented their conclusions to an audience of professionals.

This session offered a platform for young participants to showcase their critical thinking abilities and ethical reasoning in practical scenarios, underscoring the significance of ethical awareness and integrity in educational settings.

## **Collaborating for EU Accession: Strengthening Integrity through partnerships and Good Governance**

*1-13 December 2023*

The theme of the 5th edition focused on Albania's journey towards EU accession. Titled "Collaborating for EU Accession: Strengthening Integrity through partnerships and Good Governance," the half-day conference featured speeches and discussions by political figures, policymakers, private sector representatives, civil society members, academics, and other stakeholders. They explored strategies for forging stronger partnerships and enhancing governance across all levels as part of Albania's national agenda for EU negotiation.

Once again, this initiative underscores the significance of ethical conduct, transparency, and accountability across public and private sectors. Involving a collaborative network of 38 partners including government entities, businesses, civil society organizations, and educational institutions, the initiative strives to cultivate a societal ethos centered on



integrity. By doing so, it seeks to foster sustainable development and bolster trust in institutions for the collective benefit of society.

### **Human Rights and Business**

*13 December 2022*

ICC Albania, in partnership with the Faculty of Law at the University of Tirana, hosted a public lecture attended by students and faculty to explore the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The main goal was to introduce these international standards to the Albanian audience. By sparking discussions on these guidelines, the aim was to raise awareness among stakeholders about how Albania should approach this issue.

Furthermore, the initiative sought to underscore the importance of academic involvement in this field, encouraging scholars to delve deeper. This inaugural effort is expected to pave the way for future governmental actions and scholarly research dedicated to Business and Human Rights. The lecture culminated in a set of recommendations incorporated into a policy paper.

### **Business for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

*11 December 2023*

A forum dedicated to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in the private sector convened industry leaders, stakeholders, and experts to address pressing issues and strategies within the realm of workplace diversity. The forum aimed to foster dialogue on creating inclusive environments, promoting equity in opportunities, and advancing diverse representation at all organizational levels. Participants exchanged insights on best practices, challenges, and innovative approaches to embedding EDI principles into corporate culture and operations. Key outcomes included actionable steps for companies to enhance their EDI initiatives, ensuring they reflect and support the diverse communities they serve while driving sustainable business growth.

## **TOOLS & INSTRUMENTS**

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ICC Albania, with the assistance of numerous partners and in cooperation with other stakeholders, developed several resources that offer a detailed overview of various topics. These include transparency and accountability in EU public consultations, private sector practices in governance, and the social aspects of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) alongside the management of screening foreign direct investments.

### **Whitepaper**

*Participation and involvement of the business fora in the EU negotiation process*

ICC Albania, in collaboration with ACIT and with the support of the Dutch Embassy in Albania, introduced a new study and whitepaper concerning the engagement of the business community within Albania's EU negotiation framework.

Emphasizing the necessity for increased transparency and accountability in public-private consultation processes, ICC Albania commissioned this study.

The study aims to examine the involvement of business forums in the European integration process, identifying current structural issues and proposing practical recommendations to enhance interface and ensure effective participation in the negotiation process.

- ▶ Report in English: "[Participation and involvement of the business fora in the EU negotiation process](#)"
- ▶ Report in Albanian: "[Konsultimi dhe pjesëmarrja efektive e biznesit në negociatat për anëtarësim në BE](#)"

## **Pilot Study**

### ***Corporate Governance Index***

In December 2022, we initiated a pilot study involving 50 companies operating in Albania to examine their social and governance practices.

The pilot study aims to test an effective methodological approach, create an educational platform on ESG, and establish a foundation for assessing the long-term sustainability of economic activities among companies in Albania.

The methodology is structured around environmental, social, and governance principles aligned with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards, focusing primarily on two dimensions: Social and Governance.

Here are a few key findings from the study:

- 54% of the companies do not have a Gender Equality policy.
- 12% of the companies have an internal document ensuring equal pay for equal work.
- 64% of the companies have an Anti-corruption policy.
- 44% of the companies conduct annual anti-corruption training for employees.
- 70% of the companies allocate less than 1% of their budget to CSR activities.

- ▶ Report in [ALBANIAN](#)
- ▶ Report in [ENGLISH](#)

## **Study Report & Whitepaper**

### ***FDI Screening Mechanisms in Albania***

Foreign direct investment (FDI) screening mechanisms play a crucial role in addressing anti-corruption and integrity concerns by ensuring that investments do not compromise national security or ethical standards. These mechanisms typically involve thorough assessments of potential investors and their proposed investments, examining factors such as the investor's reputation, funding sources, and past business practices. By scrutinizing these aspects, countries can mitigate risks associated with corruption, bribery, and unethical business practices that may accompany certain investments.

ICC Albania with the support of CIPE Europe & Eurasia commissioned a study report in the format of a whitepaper on the Foreign Direct Investment Screening Mechanism.

This document takes the form of a research paper and whitepaper concentrating on the legal and regulatory framework governing Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Albania, as well as trends observed in the European Union and globally. Additionally, the report delves into the complexities of screening processes, examining how countries strategically oversee and regulate foreign investments to protect their national interests.

- ▶ Report in [Albanian](#)
- ▶ Report in [English](#)