
Funded
by the European Union



Implemented
by the Council of Europe

PROJECT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN ALBANIA (PACA)

TECHNICAL PAPER

RISK ANALYSIS OF THE ALBANIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM (INCORPORATING ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM FOR THE RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION OF EDUCATION TEACHING STAFF IN THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION SYSTEM)

*Prepared by Professor Ian Smith and Tom Hamilton, Council of Europe experts,
April 2011*

CMU-PACA-13/2011

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 4 |
| 2 CORRUPTION WITHIN THE ALBANIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM | 11 |
| 3 GENERAL APPROACH TO TACKLING CORRUPTION | 12 |
| 4 RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION IN THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION SYSTEM..... | 15 |
| 4.1 The Quality of Entrants to Initial Teacher Education and the Teaching Profession | 15 |
| 4.2 Other Aspects of Initial Teacher Education..... | 17 |
| 4.3 Salary Levels for School Teachers..... | 18 |
| 4.4 Large Classes in Public High Schools..... | 20 |
| 4.5 Broader Issues of Teacher Workforce Planning..... | 20 |
| 4.6 The Open Advertising of Teaching Posts in the Public School Sector..... | 22 |
| 4.7 Other Aspects of Recruitment and Appointment to Teaching Posts in Public Schools..... | 22 |
| 4.8 Staffing in Public Schools: Contracts, Supply Lists, Probation and Teacher Appraisal, and Associated Staffing Instability | 24 |
| 4.9 Specific Issues with the Appointment of School Principals | 27 |
| 5 PRIVATE TUTORING..... | 29 |
| 5.1 The Nature of the Problem | 29 |
| 5.2 The Way Forward | 31 |
| 6 THE STATE MATURA | 33 |
| 6.1 Recent Positive Developments | 33 |
| 6.2 Problems with the State Matura..... | 35 |
| 6.2.1 Problems with the final examinations..... | 35 |
| 6.2.2 Problems with the internally assessed 'average grades' | 36 |
| 6.3 The Way Forward on the State Matura..... | 36 |
| 7 ISSUES WITHIN THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES | 38 |
| 7.1 The Comparative Strength of the Public Universities..... | 38 |
| 7.2 Challenges facing the Public Universities..... | 39 |
| 7.3 Issues of Corruption within the Public Universities | 39 |
| 8 THE ALTERNATIVE TEXTBOOK SYSTEM | 42 |
| 8.1 The Positive Development of the Alternative Textbook System | 42 |
| 8.2 Evaluating the Alternative Textbook System – Some Issues | 43 |
| 9 THE ROMA..... | 47 |
| 10 CONCLUDING REMARKS | 48 |
| 11 REFERENCES | 50 |

For any additional information please contact:

Corruption and Fraud Unit/Economic Crime Division
Directorate of Co-operation - DG-HL
Council of Europe , F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex,
FRANCE
Tel +33 388 41 29 76/Fax +33 390 21 56 50
Email: lado.lalicic@coe.int
Web: www.coe.int/economiccrime

This document has been produced
with the financial assistance of the
European Union. The views
expressed herein can in no way be
taken to reflect the official opinion
of the European Union or the
Council of Europe.

INTRODUCTION

Under Activity 2.1.1 of its Workplan, the PACA Project is to conduct a Risk Assessment of the Albanian Education System, and under Activity 2.2.1 the Project is to identify policy options to reform the human resource system (recruitment, appointments and promotion) for educational staff. This Technical Paper provides the 'Risk Assessment of the Albanian Education System (incorporating analysis of the system for the recruitment, appointment and promotion of education teaching staff in the compulsory education system)' submitted by PACA experts nominated by the General Teaching Council of Scotland, submitted in March 2011 and edited/revised in April 2011.

This Risk Assessment has been prepared by experts from the General Teaching Council for Scotland for the Council of Europe/EU Project against Corruption in Albania (PACA). The paper addresses two requests by the Project. Firstly, it provides an 'Analysis of the System for Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion of Education Teaching Staff in the Albanian Compulsory Education System' (Section 4). Secondly, it provides a wider 'Risk Analysis' of main corruption risks in the Albanian education system (Sections 5-9). Recommendations to address issues are made in each case. The wider Risk Assessment focuses on five aspects of the education system: private tutoring; the State Matura; the public universities; the 'Alternative Textbook' system; the Roma community within the education system. Evidence suggested these aspects require particular consideration. In this context, it is important to emphasise that a separate paper is being prepared on 'Licensing, Regulation and Inspection of Private Educational Institutions'. The current paper concentrates upon issues within the public education system. However, this does not imply that the public education system is 'inferior' to the private system. As the separate paper will indicate, there are also issues with the private education system. It is particularly important to emphasise this for the universities. While the current Risk Analysis will discuss issues with the public universities, evidence also indicates they are generally more highly regarded than the private universities in Albania (see Section 7).

The methodology for this study involved desk research on (a) general literature and web resources on approaches to corruption in education systems and on the background to the Albanian system (b) specific reports on Albanian education, and translated versions of Albanian government documents, provided by the PACA team; in this context, the visiting experts would note there appear to be difficulties encountered by PACA team in easily obtaining such documents from government sources. The reference lists include the materials used for this desk research.

However, the main methodology was content analysis of an extensive series of semi-structured interviews, usually with groups but sometimes with individuals, set up by PACA staff and conducted by the visiting experts. The importance attached to interviews, and the general approach taken to them, is consistent with the emphasis on this methodology in the PACA Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology Guide (PACA 2010c, pp.9-10). Over two field trips in November 2010 and February 2011,

totalling 9 days of interviewing, 31 interviews were conducted with a total of 86 interviewees. A broad range of stakeholders was interviewed, including: Ministry of Education officials, including the Minister of Education, Ministerial Advisers, Heads of Department, and members of the Textbooks Approval Commission; the Director and other senior staff of the National Exams Agency; Regional Education Directorate (RED) staff, including a Director and other senior staff; public university staff, including staff involved in teacher education in and outside Tirana, and other senior staff in Tirana; senior private university staff in Tirana; senior leaders from the national teachers' unions; high school Principals of public high schools in and outside Tirana, and of a private high school in Tirana; public high school teachers in and outside Tirana, and public Grade 9 teachers in Tirana; parents of school students in Tirana, including School Board members; high school students in and outside Tirana; public and private university students in Tirana; representatives of the Roma community; Alternative Textbook publishers. Interviews were conducted in Tirana, and in one other major city (with a university involved in teacher education). A local expert commissioned by PACA (Mr Endrit Shabani) provided assistance with arranging interviews and meetings, attended the interviews and provided comments on the draft final Risk Assessment.

The Assessment provides a set of findings and recommendations which are presented in collated form in Section 1.

1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

• General Approach

Currently, the Albanian approach to 'corruption' relies on mechanistic bureaucratic procedures, embodied in regulatory and legal documents which lack transparency for the general public. The prohibition on certain corrupt practices contained within these documents is widely ignored by the general public and key professional groups such as school teachers, who continue to view such practices as acceptable.

Recommendation 1: 'Corruption' within the Albanian education system should not be approached by relying upon the production of top-down mechanistic regulatory measures. The Albanian Government must establish a transparent basis of fundamental ethical principles for public and professional life, and ensure general public commitment to such principles through national awareness campaigns and public discussion. For the public education sector, this must include the confirmation and dissemination of a Code of Conduct, and Professional Standards, for school teachers.

Timescale: Major national campaign and public discussion launched during 2011 and 2012, and school teachers' Code and Standards legally confirmed, with associated dissemination and publicity campaign, by spring 2012.

- **High Quality Entrants to School Teaching**

The continuing development of Albania's compulsory education system will depend on recruiting the highest quality entrants to initial teacher education and the school teaching profession.

Recommendation 2: The Albanian Government should launch a high profile publicity and marketing campaign to stress the importance of school teaching as a career, and to attract the best students into initial teacher education. The Government should engage fully with university teacher education staff to consider how programmes and programme pathways can be developed to ensure the highest quality entrants to school teaching, and with the high school sector to provide positive careers guidance on school teaching as a career for the most able students.

Timescale: Government publicity and marketing campaign launched during school/academic session 2011-2012; inclusive Government discussions with the university sector on initial teacher education programme issues during academic session 2011-2012, with any new developments beginning from academic session 2012-2013 onwards; Government discussions with the high school sector on approaches to careers guidance during school session 2011-2012, with consequent careers guidance programmes fully launched from session 2012-2013.

- **Other Aspects of Initial Teacher Education**

There is clear evidence that the Albanian initial teacher education system within the public universities is developing towards general European approaches to aspects such as course structures, and it is important to continue building on this development .

Recommendation 3: The Albanian Government should adopt an inclusive approach in collaborating with the universities over the further development of initial teacher education, ensuring parity of consideration to the needs of Grade 9 and high school teaching, and to the needs of areas outside Tirana, as well as Tirana itself. In particular, no professional examination for entry to school teaching should be developed unless it is coherently linked with university initial teacher education courses, and involves university staff in its planning. Indeed, the Government should justify fully and publicly the case for having such a separate examination at all.

Timescale: Discussions with the universities during academic session 2011-2012; any professional examination should be delayed until these discussions are completed, and only implemented, if required, from session 2012-2013.

- **School Teacher Salaries**

Any campaign to recruit and retain the highest quality individuals to school teaching must address school teacher salaries.

Recommendation 4: The Albanian Government must ensure public school teachers' salaries are sufficiently high to attract the best entrants to the profession, and there is clear public understanding that teachers' core salaries are at such a level, with no need for school teachers to resort to private tutoring to achieve an appropriate overall professional standard of income.

Timescale: Full review of school teachers' salaries during school session 2011-2012; positive publicity campaign on school teachers' salaries, with any implementation of salary increases (if necessary), during session 2012-2013.

- **Class Sizes in Public High Schools**

The Government must recognise that high school classes beyond 30 students are larger than the class size appropriate for contemporary teaching and learning approaches with upper secondary certificate classes.

Recommendation 5: The Albanian Government should commit to all necessary teacher recruitment and school building programmes to reduce class sizes in high schools to a maximum of 30 (see also Recommendation 6 below).

Timescale: Comprehensive planning for all necessary action during school session 2011-2012, with implementation of actions and new class maxima from session 2012-2013.

- **Teacher Workforce Planning**

There appear to be major disparities in staffing levels across the Albanian public school system, with under-staffing in Tirana (particularly in high schools) and perhaps in other major cities, with over-staffing in some other areas, and with quantitative and qualitative challenges in securing appropriate staff in remote rural areas.

Recommendation 6: The Albanian Government should undertake a comprehensive national teacher workforce planning exercise to ensure that much closer parity in teacher/student ratios is achieved across the public school system.

Timescale: Workforce planning exercise undertaken during school session 2011-2012, with policy implementation beginning from session 2012-2013.

- **Open Advertising of Teaching Posts**

No transparent evidence is currently available that recruitment and appointment to public school teaching posts is based upon the open advertising of posts.

Recommendation 7: The Albanian Government must ensure as soon as possible that recruitment and appointment to teaching posts in public schools requires the open advertising of all posts.

Timescale: Implementation from start of school session 2011-2012.

- **Recruitment and Appointment to Teaching Posts**

Existing procedures on the recruitment and appointment to teaching posts in public schools lack transparency and are based on political influence/bias and personal contacts, especially at RED level, rather than on open competition and merit.

Recommendation 8: The Albanian Government should develop a new system for recruitment and appointment to teaching posts in public schools, devolving this to Principals and School Boards. Procedures at local level should be based on applicants being judged solely on merit in open competition, using clearly established professional criteria. Procedures for first teaching appointment should make systematic use of evidence on initial teacher education performance provided by the public universities.

Timescale: Details of new system fully developed during school session 2011-2012, with implementation from session 2012-2013.

- **Other Aspects of Staffing in Schools**

The system for the ongoing staffing of Albanian public schools exhibits a lack of clarity, and a potential for instability.

Recommendation 9: The Albanian Government should establish the framework for a clear, consistent and stable approach to obtaining and retaining a permanent teaching post. This should clarify the relationship between a probationary period (if any) and the full open, competitive process for appointment to a permanent post. It should also clarify the requirements on teachers if they are to retain their permanent post over time. These requirements should include a clear and specific commitment to Continuing Professional Development, both as a professional obligation and an entitlement. As a professional career in the public service, teaching should be based on individual, permanent contracts. This will also require the Ministry of Education to issue clear guidelines on the role of supply lists and supply teaching generally.

Timescale: Details fully developed during school session 2011-2012, with implementation from session 2012-2013.

- **Appointment of School Principals**

There are particular issues with the appointment of public school Principals in Albania.

Recommendation 10: The Albanian Government should ensure that school Principals are appointed through a transparent process based on open competition and merit, not political and personal connection. Criteria for appointment should include the requirement to demonstrate successful completion of advanced leadership study on an accredited public university course. Principals should be accountable for their ongoing performance against objective professional criteria. There should be further inclusive review with all relevant stakeholders on whether or not the use of fixed-term appointments enhances the quality of applicants for Principal posts.

Timescale: New appointments process implemented during school session 2011-2012; agreement on approach to fixed-term appointments reached during session 2011-2012, with any consequent implementation for session 2012-2013; details of performance review system fully developed during session 2011-2012, with implementation for session 2012-2013.

- **Private Tutoring**

In a contemporary European education system, it is not appropriate for a public school system to be distorted by the widespread private tutoring of their own students currently engaged in by Albanian public high school teachers. It is not enough for the Government simply to have a 'theoretical' legal ban on such activity, which is then ignored in practice.

Recommendation 11: The Albanian Government must co-ordinate a multi-faceted strategy to end private tutoring of their own pupils by public high school teachers. This strategy should be based upon a national publicity campaign and national discussion (including teachers, parents, and students) to emphasise that the corrupt aspects of private tutoring are inconsistent with ethical principles in public life (including any Code of Conduct introduced for teachers), and that the public high school system must be based upon the commitment that the highest results can be achieved by students without the need to resort to private tutoring. The Government should also pursue all specific practical initiatives necessary to eliminate private tutoring of their own students by public high school teachers. These may include raising teachers' core salaries; reducing high school class sizes and extending class teaching hours (by a combination of teacher recruitment and a school building programme); offering free additional tutoring in public high schools, provided by teachers within their contract; ensuring there is a transparent basis in a confirmed Code of Conduct for teachers, and in legislation, for robust action, including dismissal, to be taken against teachers persisting with inappropriate private tutoring.

Timescale: Publicity campaign and public discussion during school session 2011-2012; details of practical measures fully developed during school session 2011-2012, with implementation from session 2012-2013.

- **The State Matura**

The development of the State Matura has been a very important achievement for the Albanian education system, and it is crucial there are continuing developments to ensure the full integrity of this national examination system.

Recommendation 12: The Albanian Government must initiate and co-ordinate a national campaign to persuade all members of Albanian society that the credibility of Albania's high school examination system (in particular internationally) depends upon the removal of cheating, including cheating involving corruption, in the final State Matura examinations, and upon addressing potential unreliability with the State Matura's internally assessed 'average grade' system. Certain punitive or mechanistic approaches will be useful in the short-term, e.g. the high profile 'prosecution' of individual supervisors and students involved in examination cheating, the external moderation of samples of 'average grade' work. Indeed, such approaches will remain helpful in the long-term, especially the external moderation of 'average grade' samples. However, a national campaign is necessary for all sectors of Albanian society to embrace the ethical principle in public life that cheating and associated corrupt practices are never acceptable in a national examination system (particularly, in this context, by supervising teachers and students themselves). In this national campaign, the Government must emphasise the major progress represented by the State Matura will be undermined, unless remaining abuses are eliminated (and this will prejudice the international opportunities of young Albanians if the credibility of their high school qualifications is doubted).

Timescale: National campaign conducted during school session 2011-2012 (making appropriate use of school teachers' Code and Standards, as confirmed and disseminated by spring 2012 – see Recommendation 1 above); any additional mechanistic measures implemented during session 2011-2012, to apply fully to 2012 examinations.

- **The Public Universities**

A healthy public university sector is essential to the overall development of education, economy and society in Albania. Generally, Albanian public universities appear more highly regarded than private universities (and private universities will be discussed in a separate report). There is much evidence of high quality commitment by many staff to the best ethical principles of the public university. However, concerns clearly exist in Albania's public universities that the method and level of public funding is inadequate to provide the highest quality provision

desired, and there is strong evidence of 'vulgar corruption' among staff within public universities.

Recommendation 13: The Albanian Government must ensure all funds allocated to public universities actually reach them, and should have full dialogue with university leaders on the level and methods of funding necessary to fulfil their mission. The Albanian Government must undertake a national dialogue with the senior leadership of the public universities. This should be directed to establishing honestly the extent of the problem with 'vulgar corruption', and to initiating major staff development with public university staff to ensure all embrace the ethical principle that corruption within the university is the antithesis of the values of a community of scholarship. Specifically, this must ensure the elimination of such corrupt practices as students paying academic staff to achieve good grades, or to secure pass grades; students being manipulated to pay academic staff for private tutoring; academic staff applying inappropriate pressure on students to purchase their authored textbooks; or academic staff colluding in cheating during university examinations. The Albanian Government must also co-ordinate an equivalent initiative with university students and their parents. As with the State Matura, this national initiative by the Albanian Government must emphasise the key point that the international opportunities of young Albanians will be prejudiced if the credibility of their public university qualifications is doubted because corrupt abuses remain endemic within the public university system. On the other hand, the Albanian Government must handle this initiative sensitively to ensure that any deficits of the public universities are only addressed at the same time as those of the private universities are highlighted. This will be necessary to avoid any unfair treatment of the public universities.

Timescale: Funding issues to be addressed to ensure implementation for any remaining aspects of funding for academic session 2011-2012, and for all aspects of funding for academic session 2012-2013; national dialogue and initiatives on corruption to be undertaken during session 2011-2012.

- **The Alternative Textbook System**

If there were previously major corruption problems with a non-competitive monopoly textbook system completely controlled by the Ministry of Education, clearly major efforts have been made through the Altertekst system to increase competition and reduce corruption.

Recommendation 14: If continuing, the Altertekst system should be kept under ongoing review by the Albanian Government for possible further refinements. For example, the membership of the Textbooks Approval Commission could be extended more beyond the Ministry of Education, the robustness of the objectivity of selection to the textbook evaluation commissions needs to be continually reviewed, and texts could usefully be anonymised when presented to school commissions. Consideration should certainly also be given to simplifying the distribution and payment system,

e.g. using the REDs as a conduit for aggregate ordering and payment (but aggregate ordering still based on school commission decisions). Consideration should also be given to simplifying the annual 'textbook by textbook' exercise by approving sets of books from a publisher for several years. More fundamentally, the Albanian Government should ask deeper questions about whether a disproportionate amount of time is absorbed in what is ultimately a rather traditional exercise. As teaching and learning approaches are increasingly based on a variety of resources, including IT resources, the 'prescribed text' approach may constrain innovation in teaching and learning. The Albanian Government should also reflect on whether the time and energy devoted to eliminating corruption in textbook systems may be better spent on combating other forms of corruption within the education system, such as those described elsewhere in this Risk Analysis.

Timescale: All relevant issues to be reviewed during school session 2011-2012, with any consequent developments implemented for session 2012-2013.

- **The Roma**

Achieving appropriate social inclusion of the Roma community is an important challenge for the Government.

Recommendation 15: The Albanian Government should commit fully to differentiated social policies for the Roma community, and to transparently spending on the Roma all external funding provided for this purpose. However, this should not mean directing Roma children to predominantly Roma schools. Rather, priority should be given to the development of social centres for the Roma, providing opportunities for pre-school education, supportive contexts for school attendees, and adult literacy support. Free provision of school textbooks should also be fully guaranteed for Roma families.

Timescale: Implementation during school session 2011-2012, including the opening of social centres.

2 CORRUPTION WITHIN THE ALBANIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

In analysing aspects of the Albanian education system, it is important to stress that there are significant issues of corruption to be addressed. There continues to be a background of general concern with corruption in Albania. The most recent general surveys on corruption are 'Corruption in Albania: Perception and Experience – Survey 2009', and 'Corruption in Albania: Perception and Experience – Survey 2010', both produced by The Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA), Albania, for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Institute for Development Research and Alternatives [IDRA], Albania, 2009 and 2010). Broadly, these surveys present continuing concern among the general public over levels of corruption. For example, in 2010 the average corruption level across

twenty institutional groups was rated at 62.4 on a scale where 0=very honest, and 100=very corrupt. Average trust across a range of fifteen institutions was rated 43.8 on a scale where 0=do not trust at all, and 100=trust a lot (IDRA 2010, Executive Summary, p.3).

Certainly, the education sector is not rated the most corrupt in these surveys. In 2010, on the scale where 0=very honest and 100=very corrupt, the general public rated public school teachers 46, against the average across the twenty institutional groups of 62.4 (with doctors, for example, at 79) (IDRA 2010, p.9). In 2009, only 9.6% of the general public indicated they had paid a bribe in relation to children at school, down from 29% in 2005, and compared, for example, to 37.1% who had paid a bribe to a doctor or a nurse (IDRA 2009, p.18). However, it must be emphasised that this should not imply complacency about an absence of corruption issues in the education sector. The 2010 'corruption' rating of 46 for public school teachers was a deterioration from the more positive rating of 43.1 in 2009 (IDRA 2009, p.9). As will be developed in subsequent sections, the issues with public school teachers do not centre around the direct payment of bribes, but rather around more indirect issues which the general public in Albania may not fully reflect in their corruption ratings. For example, significant inappropriate payments may be made by parents to public school teachers for the private tutoring of the teacher's own pupils. In answering a question which relates a 'corruption rating' to 'bribes', parents may not be taking account of such payments because they are not 'bribes' as such. Moving beyond payments, if primary school teachers acting as Matura examination supervisors allow cheating out of a 'desire to help students', but for no personal return, this may not be reflected in negative public rating of school teachers for corruption. However, if there is evidence of such practices, this paper will argue that these indicate issues of corruption which need to be addressed. In considering the education sector, it should also be noted that the national Corruption Surveys rate university professors much more negatively for corruption than public school teachers. For example, the 2010 Survey rated university professors 71 on the scale where 0=very honest and 100=very corrupt. This was the most 'corrupt' rating of university professors by the general public for five years (IDRA 2010, pp.9,10).

3 GENERAL APPROACH TO TACKLING CORRUPTION

The Council of Europe/EU Project refers to 'corruption' and the need to combat it. There is a considerable literature which addresses issues of corruption by taking a mechanistic approach, in which the emphasis is largely on top-down accountability systems and the use of prohibitive, disciplinary and punitive measures. This approach tends to focus on the elimination of negative behaviour, such as bribery. Even a wider and most fully developed analysis, such as Hallak and Poisson's *'Corrupt schools, corrupt universities: What can be done?'*, contains much of this approach (Hallack and Poisson 2007). Such an approach is rigorous and systematic in categorising types of corrupt activity, and comprehensive in much of its analysis on mechanistic measures for dealing with it. However, its first emphasis tends to be on establishing norms and regulations, with the principles of ethical and professional

behaviour merely reduced to one set of norms within a wider list of norms, and with more emphasis on the enforcement mechanisms for 'professional norms' than on the underlying positive principles of ethical and professional behaviour. This approach risks tackling the symptoms rather than the causes of corruption.

As this paper will develop subsequently, there appears to be a particular application of the mechanistic approach in Albania, impeding the more underlying attitudinal reform which will be called for. So much discussion with power holders involves recurring references to forthcoming 'Law', particularly the 'Reviewed Law on Pre-University Education', or the 'Draft Law', as it was usually described. This seemed to illustrate two problems. Firstly, something of a 'dependency culture' is being displayed, with individuals, groups and institutions evading positive initiative at their own level because the 'Law' will generate a top-down solution and way forward. Secondly, existing power holders appear able to manipulate this situation to their advantage. The proposed Reviewed Law seems to have been 'Draft' for an unusually long time. This allows power holders to evade pressing criticism of current practice by indicating that the issue under discussion will be addressed in the new Law. It also enables power holders to avoid clarity around future policy because there does not appear to be a transparent basis for general public understanding of the precise intended content of new Laws (as will be mentioned subsequently, this technique of evading transparency seems to be used with public policy documents more generally). (These particular issues with the Draft Law will be returned to, especially in Sections 4.6-4.9 below.)

The current paper is based on a broader and more positive approach to 'corruption'. The underlying argument is that Albania's education system will only move forward from certain 'corrupt' features if all relevant sectors of Albanian society commit fully to key ethical principles in public and professional life. This will require the Albanian Government to adopt transparent public positions on key principles, and engage in fully open public discussion about associated issues. Again, in the national Corruption Surveys, the education sector is not criticised as much as some others for a lack of transparency. For example, in 2010, the general public rated public institutions for transparency on a scale where 0=not transparent at all and 100=fully transparent. The Ministry of Education was rated 44, against an average of 38.7, and no other central government department received as high a rating (IDRA 2010 p.15). However, this rating still indicates a general view that the Ministry is less than satisfactory on 'transparency'. As will be detailed subsequently in this paper, this judgement corresponded with the experience of the external experts in progressing their analysis. Ministry positions on certain fundamental principles are not always easy to identify from official documents, which leads to an evasion of hard-edged public discussion of related issues. For example, it has not been easy to identify the precise documentary basis for the 'illegality' of private tutoring of their own pupils by public school teachers. In turn, this creates a sense that the central government has not turned the full focus of public debate on the inappropriateness of this practice. Rather than concentrate on producing very detailed mechanistic documents which appear to deal with issues, but are then apparently ignored in practice, the Albanian Government must concentrate on the most transparent identification of key

underlying principles, and the fullest public discussion on the collective necessity of all relevant individuals adhering to these principles. Where key principles of ethics in public life are being widely breached, this must be explicitly recognised. For example, if there is an issue with Matura examination supervisors allowing cheating in examinations, the public and the key professional groups should be asked to confront this in national discussion, rather than such a debate being evaded by reference to detailed bureaucratic regulations which evidence suggests are being ignored on the ground.

In this context, the Albanian Government must publicly confirm that school teachers are committed to specific principles of professionalism embodied in binding national codes and standards. As recent expert work for PACA has suggested, these principles should be presented as overarching principles identifying positive behaviours intrinsic to professional conduct (the language of 'you must'), rather than negative rules of conduct (the language of 'you are not allowed to'). This recent work contrasted the positive behaviours stated in an exemplar Western European Code of Professionalism and Conduct for school teachers from Scotland with the negative rules of conduct prepared in the recent (2008) draft Teachers' Code of Conduct and Its Regulatory Mechanism for Albania (see PACA 2010b, contrasting General Teaching for Scotland 2008 with Open Society for Albania 2008). More is needed than the rather narrow language of one Article (Article 14) of the May 2010 Collective Employment Contract, 2010-2014, between the Ministry of Education and the national trade unions (Independent Trade Union of Education in Albania [ITUE] and Federation of Trade Unions of Education in Albania [FTUEA]), which indicates agreement 'to initiate the legal procedures for approval of the Code of Ethics of the Teacher and its regulatory mechanism' (see Ministry of Education and Science 2010d). Rather than simply 'burying' any initiative on a teachers' Code as one item within a much more general document, the Albanian Government should have a high-profile launch of a teachers' Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct. This should be based on the principles of positive behaviour intrinsic to professional conduct, as proposed in the recent PACA expert paper. Indeed, such a Code should also be linked to broader positive standards for the school teaching profession, such as can be found in the existing Ministry of Education document 'Basic General Standards For Teachers' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010g). It is essential that both the Code and Standards move beyond their current draft status.

However, this broader ethical commitment must be society-wide. In particular, the Albanian Government must address through public debate certain ambiguities in public attitudes to corruption. The 2010 national Survey on Corruption contains particularly interesting questions which illustrate a key point here. Members of the general public are presented with various scenarios and asked whether the 'givers' of a 'bribe' are 'corrupt and must be punished', 'corrupt but justified' or 'not corrupt', as well as the same questions being asked about the 'receivers' of the bribe. One example given is of 'a student who gives a shirt to a teacher with the hope of receiving a better grade'. Certainly, 72.9% responded that the teacher accepting the shirt was 'corrupt and must be punished' (although, rather worryingly, as many as 19.8% said the teacher was 'corrupt but justified' and 7.2% 'not corrupt'). However,

it is particularly interesting that only 32.2% responded that the student giving the shirt was 'corrupt and must be punished', with as many as 48% saying the student was 'corrupt but justified', and 19.8% that the student was 'not corrupt' (see IDRA 2010, p.21). While the number identifying the student as 'not corrupt' has declined over the last five years (from 27.6% to 19.8%), with a corresponding increase in the 'corrupt but justified' response, the number saying the student was 'corrupt and must be punished' has not increased (the 2005 figure of 32.2% being identical to the 2010 figure). The Albanian Government must push for public recognition of the principle that giving, as well as receiving, bribes is corrupt and unjustified, and that there must be a universal commitment to the ethical principle of eliminating such corruption from public life.

In the education sector, such a commitment is essential if Albania's education system is to become a truly contemporary European one. While recognising the hugely challenging constraints which Albanian history has placed on achieving such approaches to date, further alignment with Europe requires fundamental developments. Only these developments will translate the undoubted commitment which Albanian society shows to the importance of education into educational achievements which will have full credibility in contemporary Europe.

Currently, therefore, the Albanian approach to 'corruption' relies on mechanistic bureaucratic procedures, embodied in regulatory and legal documents which lack transparency for the general public. The prohibition on certain corrupt practices contained within these documents is widely ignored by the general public and key professional groups such as school teachers, who continue to view such practices as acceptable.

Recommendation 1: 'Corruption' within the Albanian education system should not be approached by relying upon the production of top-down mechanistic regulatory measures. The Albanian Government must establish a transparent basis of fundamental ethical principles for public and professional life, and ensure general public commitment to such principles through national awareness campaigns and public discussion. For the public education sector, this must include the confirmation and dissemination of a Code of Conduct, and Professional Standards, for school teachers.

Timescale: Major national campaign and public discussion launched during 2011 and 2012, and school teachers' Code and Standards legally confirmed, with associated dissemination and publicity campaign, by spring 2012.

4 RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION IN THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION SYSTEM

4.1 The Quality of Entrants to Initial Teacher Education and the Teaching Profession

A range of evidence suggests Albania faces problems in recruiting the highest quality entrants to initial teacher education and the school teaching profession. In a number of meetings with a range of able Albanian young people, both high school students and university students, it was concerning that there was a complete lack of interest in school teaching as a career. This applied equally among high school and university students, and among young people in Tirana and outside Tirana. In meetings with Tirana parents, it was commented that weaker students enter school teaching. Public university staff in Tirana involved in teacher education expressed strong views that the best students do not enter school teaching (their particular focus was on high school teaching). The university staff linked this to low school teacher salaries (see Section 4.3 below) and large class sizes in high schools (see Section 4.4 below). These staff also commented that they had recently been asked to increase student intakes to initial teacher education programmes. Their view was they had been required to take too many students, and this had compounded problems with the quality of intakes. High school teachers outside Tirana, including a Principal, were also critical of the poor quality of students entering initial teacher education, and this criticism was applied to students training to work up to Grade 9, as well as in high schools. These high school teachers felt too many teachers are being produced, and the consequent unemployment among initial teacher education graduates is the main reason teaching is not attractive to the most able young people.

On the other hand, high school staff in Tirana seemed generally happy with the quality of new teachers recruited recently to their school, and university staff involved in teacher education outside Tirana seemed much less concerned than those in Tirana about the quality of students attracted to initial teacher education. National teacher trade union officials also presented a more positive picture on current teacher recruitment. They identified 1990-2000 as a difficult period of low salaries and poor working conditions, when teaching was unattractive. However, they said there had been improvements since 2000, particularly with salary increases in the last four years.

Despite some contrasting positive claims such as these, the balance of evidence suggests there is a problem currently in attracting the most able young people into teaching (in a sense, the strongest evidence for this is the testimony of the impressive young Albanians who attended various meetings). It was also noticeable that a significant number of older Albanians (including university teachers, school teachers and parents) commented strongly that in the past (perhaps they were alluding to the period before 1990 here) school teaching had been attractive to the highest quality students. Given the international research stressing the crucial importance of high quality teachers for the strength of a nation's educational, economic and social systems (see, e.g., OECD 2005; McKinsey and Co. 2007), action to secure the highest quality entrants to initial teacher education and the teaching profession is essential. This may include exploring the use of an equivalent to the postgraduate route into school teaching used in a number of Western European countries. Such a route in Albania could give high quality students the option of delaying a choice of school teaching as a career option entirely until Master's level study, when all study of education, pedagogy, practicum experience etc. would be overtaken (when this route

was explained to them, Tirana high school students agreed they could see attractions in such a route).

Therefore, the continuing development of Albania's compulsory education system will depend on recruiting the highest quality entrants to initial teacher education and the school teaching profession.

Recommendation 2: The Albanian Government should launch a high profile publicity and marketing campaign to stress the importance of school teaching as a career, and to attract the best students into initial teacher education. The Government should engage fully with university teacher education staff to consider how programmes and programme pathways can be developed to ensure the highest quality entrants to school teaching, and with the high school sector to provide positive careers guidance on school teaching as a career for the most able students.

Timescale: Government publicity and marketing campaign launched during school/academic session 2011-2012; inclusive Government discussions with the university sector on initial teacher education programme issues during academic session 2011-2012, with any new developments beginning from academic session 2012-2013 onwards; Government discussions with the high school sector on approaches to careers guidance during school session 2011-2012, with consequent careers guidance programmes fully launched from session 2012-2013.

4.2 Other Aspects of Initial Teacher Education

In meetings with teacher education staff in public universities, both in and outside Tirana, staff showed a strong commitment to developing initial teacher education to meet the standards and approaches of the Bologna process and EU benchmarks more generally. Reference was made to recent interesting examples of innovation, including collaboration with universities within the EU.

On the other hand, there is also evidence of some issues and tensions around initial teacher education, apart from the problems with quality of entrants already discussed. There is some evidence within the initial teacher education sector of tensions over the respective preparation of high school teachers and teachers who work up to Grade 9. Public university staff in Tirana, responsible for the initial teacher education of high school teachers, seem to have issues with the subject expertise of Grade 9 teachers. Public university staff outside Tirana, currently providing initial teacher education up to Grade 9, want to provide initial teacher education for high school teachers. In practice, it seems that initial teacher education graduates in areas outside Tirana, trained for working up to Grade 9, are being employed as teachers in high school anyway. This evidence emerged from university staff and at high school Principal level. Tension over national policy on the location of initial teacher education for high school teachers reflects more general tensions in the relationship between Tirana and the rest of Albania, over education and other matters. For example, high school teachers in the major city visited outside Tirana in

turn referred to additional significant problems with poorly qualified teachers in remote areas beyond any of the cities and towns.

Tirana public university staff involved in teacher education highlighted that there had been no consultation with university staff on the forthcoming professional examination for entry to school teaching. In meeting with senior staff from the National Exams Agency, very little detail was forthcoming on these new examinations for the 'regulated professions', apart from the clear statement that the Agency would be responsible for them.

The Albanian initial teacher education system clearly exhibits a number of important strengths, particularly the commitment of public university staff to developments consistent with the Bologna process and EU best practices. However, there is a need for national policy to address issues around the relationship between initial teacher education for high school teachers and Grade 9 teachers, and the relationship between initial teacher education for Tirana and for the rest of the country. The connection between university initial teacher education and any professional examinations must also be thoroughly explored.

There is clear evidence that the Albanian initial teacher education system within the public universities is developing towards general European approaches to aspects such as course structures, and it is important to continue building on this development.

Recommendation 3: The Albanian Government should adopt an inclusive approach in collaborating with the universities over the further development of initial teacher education, ensuring parity of consideration to the needs of Grade 9 and high school teaching, and to the needs of areas outside Tirana, as well as Tirana itself. In particular, no professional examination for entry to school teaching should be developed unless it is coherently linked with university initial teacher education courses, and involves public university leadership and staff in its planning. Indeed, the Government should justify fully and publicly the case for having such a separate examination at all.

Timescale: Discussions with the universities during academic session 2011-2012; any professional examination should be delayed until these discussions are completed, and only implemented, if required, from session 2012-2013.

4.3 Salary Levels for School Teachers

There was some ambiguity in the evidence presented on the salary levels of school teachers. Parents in Tirana seemed clear that salary levels are low, and they associated the high prevalence of private tutoring by public school teachers with low salaries (see section 5 below). Tirana public university staff involved in teacher education also linked low salaries with the inability to recruit the best students into teaching.

However, more positive views were expressed on teachers' salaries. High school staff in Tirana were generally happy with salary levels (however, this was in the context of a 90% female staff who linked their satisfaction with salaries to their description that they were 'supported by their husbands'). High school staff outside Tirana also stated that teachers' remuneration and working conditions are generally comparable with other professions. A Ministry of Education adviser argued that teacher salaries had doubled in the last four years, and consequently government relations with the trade unions are good. High school teachers outside Tirana also mentioned salaries doubling in the last four years. Information provided by a local adviser to the PACA team indicated the range of teacher salaries in public schools is 37,000-42,000 ALL per month net, i.e. c. 260-300 Euros. This adviser judged that these are not low salaries by general Albanian standards.

On the other hand, these teachers also referred to the parallel move from 13 salary payments to 12 salary payments within the year, which had the effect of falsely inflating apparent salary increases if these are presented in terms of monthly salary. National trade union officials conceded salaries may not have doubled in real terms in the last four years, but they did argue there had been significant salary increases in this period, and these had been better than in other parts of the public sector.

This ambiguous interview evidence on school teachers' salaries is consistent with evidence from a recent World Bank 'Albania School Stakeholder Survey' conducted in 2009 with a sample of Albanian primary schools. This survey found c.50% of teachers satisfied with their salary and c.50% unsatisfied, but with higher satisfaction in rural areas (65%) than urban areas (35%) (World Bank 2010 Appendix: pp.13-15).

There is a need to establish clearly the relative position of schoolteacher salaries within Albanian society, both in comparison to the rest of the public sector and to the workforce more generally. As will be discussed subsequently, such analysis must lead to outcomes which ensure that public school teachers are remunerated appropriately, to reduce the incentive to engage in the type of private tutoring which is currently prevalent (see Section 5 below). Outcomes must also ensure the general public perceives teacher salaries as appropriate. The May 2010 Collective Employment Contract, 2010-2014, calls at Article 8.1 for a salary system which 'enables a better evaluation of the image and work of the teacher' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010d). However, there needs to be a much stronger emphasis on this policy aim.

Therefore, any campaign to recruit and retain the highest quality individuals to school teaching must address school teacher salaries.

Recommendation 4: The Albanian Government must ensure public school teachers' salaries are sufficiently high to attract the best entrants to the profession, and there is clear public understanding that teachers' core salaries are at such a level, with no need for school teachers to resort to private tutoring to achieve an appropriate overall professional standard of income.

***Timescale:* Full review of school teachers' salaries during school session 2011-2012; positive publicity campaign on school teachers' salaries, with any implementation of salary increases (if necessary), during session 2012-2013.**

4.4 Large Classes in Public High Schools

There seem to be particular issues with very large class sizes in Tirana public high schools. Tirana public university staff involved in teacher education identified this as a major factor discouraging the best students from entering teaching. High school students in Tirana referred to Matura classes as large as 46. The high school teachers in Tirana described Matura classes in the high 30s/low 40s, and said these class sizes had risen from c.30 within five years. They described a Tirana high school situation in which schools face increasing pressure from rising student numbers, with shift systems being operated to accommodate these student numbers. National trade union officials also recognised the problem of large class sizes in Tirana high schools.

There is clearly a problem with excessively large classes in Tirana high schools, and, of course, this relates to classes studying for the State Matura. While there were suggestions that the problems outside Tirana are much less severe, high school students outside Tirana still described Matura classes in the mid-30s. The national trade union officials indicated that the trade unions had reached an agreement with the government to reduce class sizes to a maximum of 32 within two years (Article 6.13 of the Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014 states the Ministry of Education is aiming that 'within 2-3...years the classes have no more than 32 pupils' – see Ministry of Education and Science 2010d). It will be crucial to ensure the implementation of this maximum and move to further reductions, if class sizes in Tirana high schools are to reach levels which are more consistent with contemporary teaching and learning approaches for upper secondary certificate classes.

Therefore, the Government must recognise that high school classes beyond 30 students are larger than the class size appropriate for contemporary teaching and learning approaches with upper secondary certificate classes.

***Recommendation 5:* The Albanian Government should commit to all necessary teacher recruitment and school building programmes, especially in main cities like Tirana, to reduce class sizes in high schools to a maximum of 30 (see also Recommendation 6 below).**

***Timescale:* Comprehensive planning for all necessary action during school session 2011-2012, with implementation of actions and new class maxima from session 2012-2013.**

4.5 Broader Issues of Teacher Workforce Planning

There are broader issues of teacher workforce planning which need to be addressed if the Albanian school system is to achieve an appropriately even distribution of teaching staff to ensure parity of experience for its young learners.

Evidence suggests the very large class sizes in Tirana are certainly not caused by teacher shortages. Tirana parents referred to significant numbers of unemployed teachers in Tirana. The national trade union officials agreed there are unemployed teachers in Tirana, including both new graduates unable to find jobs and other teachers who had lost their jobs. They also indicated that the real challenge in building new high schools in Tirana (and therefore reducing class sizes across the Tirana high school system) is not in constructing schools so much as developing the related transport structure in Tirana.

The national trade union officials described complex challenges in national teacher workforce planning. They contrasted Tirana, with its growing population due to inward migration, and other areas, where there are much smaller class sizes, and 'teachers who cannot be declared redundant'. On the other hand, there seem to be some mixed messages on this. These trade union officials also referred to salary enhancements for teaching in rural areas, and free transportation from Tirana to such areas. Certainly, the Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014 includes Article 8.8, which refers to 'teachers who work far from their residence' receiving a bonus, and Article 11.1, which refers to the state subsidising the 'expenses for transportation' of teachers 'who work and teach far from their place of residence' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010d). This would seem to indicate that the challenge is partly in staffing very remote rural areas appropriately. This would be consistent with comments made by high school teachers outside Tirana that there is a problem with poorly qualified and poor quality teachers in remote areas. On the other hand, these high school teachers also reported on significant unemployment of teacher education graduates in their city. The high school Principal outside Tirana also argued that too many teachers are being produced. In overall national terms, the trade union officials suggested Albania has an employed teaching workforce of 39,000, with a teacher/student ratio of 1:17 in pre-school, 1:16 in Grades 1-9, and 1:15 in high school. However, they did talk of ratios of 1:8 in some areas (but it was not clear which stage of schooling this referred to).

The problem may be that there is understaffing in cities, both Tirana and the other more major cities outside Tirana, and qualitative and quantitative issues with teacher supply in the most remote rural areas, but some overstaffing in certain 'middle' areas such as medium size and smaller towns. These complexities must be worked through to ensure national parity in school staffing.

Therefore, there appear to be major disparities in staffing levels across the Albanian public school system, with under-staffing in Tirana (particularly in high schools) and perhaps in other major cities, with over-staffing in some other areas, and with quantitative and qualitative challenges in securing appropriate staff in remote rural areas.

Recommendation 6: The Albanian Government should undertake a comprehensive national teacher workforce planning exercise to ensure that much closer parity in teacher/student ratios is achieved across the public school system.

Timescale: Workforce planning exercise undertaken during school session 2011-2012, with policy implementation beginning from session 2012-2013.

4.6 The Open Advertising of Teaching Posts in the Public School Sector

Parents in Tirana gave particular emphasis to the fact that there is no open advertising of teaching posts in public schools. Others, such as national trade union leaders, also implied that the absence of such open advertising is a particular problem, although they suggested this issue is addressed in the trade unions most recent Contract with the Ministry of Education, and will be addressed in the new Draft Law. However, neither the version of the Draft Law made available, the Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014, the Ministerial Instruction No. 22 of July 2010 on the appointment of academic and management staff for pre-school and school education, nor the Ministry of Education document on 'Existing criteria and procedures relating to the recruitment and promotion of education sector employees', contain explicit statements on the advertising of posts (Ministry of Education and Science 2010c; 2010d; 2010e; 2010f). Therefore, no transparent evidence was available to re-assure that recruitment and appointment to public school teaching posts is based upon the open advertising of posts.

Recommendation 7: The Albanian Government must ensure as soon as possible that recruitment and appointment to teaching posts in public schools requires the open advertising of all posts.

Timescale: Implementation from start of school session 2011-2012.

4.7 Other Aspects of Recruitment and Appointment to Teaching Posts in Public Schools

All relevant groups presented a consistent set of concerns about how school teachers are recruited and appointed in public schools. Teachers are appointed by the Head of the Regional Education Directorate (RED), and there was a consensus among respondents that appointments are based on political influence/bias and personal contacts with the RED heads – or at least that the system is vulnerable to such practices. A number of respondents spoke of the phenomena of teachers losing jobs as political administrations change, and bribes were also mentioned as a way of securing posts. This description was provided by Tirana parents, public university staff outside Tirana, high school teachers (including at Principal level) outside Tirana, and national trade union officials. Public university teacher education staff in Tirana also stressed that they have no involvement in the subsequent appointments of their graduates to teaching posts, e.g. no profiles or references on graduates are requested from them by REDs when making appointments. One high school teacher outside Tirana, who was a former RED Director, specifically mentioned that she had received and used university grade reports on initial teacher education graduates when appointing new teachers, but that current RED processes do not involve this. Public university teacher education staff outside Tirana specifically highlighted that

the current appointments system is demoralising for initial teacher education graduates.

In general terms, all relevant groups called for recruitment and appointment through selection procedures based on open competition, clear criteria and unbiased selection. For example, national trade union officials stressed this and again claimed such approaches are included in their most recent Contract with the Ministry (see below), and will be included in the new Draft Law. Parents in Tirana called for the involvement of school boards in the appointment of teachers, and argued parents will not be party political in undertaking this role. They also suggested this approach will be in the new Draft Law. Public university teacher education staff in Tirana welcomed the suggestion that they should be asked to produce professional profiles on their graduates for subsequent use in selection for teaching posts. Public university teacher education staff outside Tirana (a group including a number of former RED Directors) argued that recruitment and appointment of teachers should move from RED Directorates to 'appropriately professional' school Principals (as discussed below, they suggested that Principals should be licensed by the universities, and should not be party appointments, as they are currently). A high school Principal outside Tirana suggested that teachers should be recruited by the Principal and the School Board, perhaps with criteria being defined by another institution such as the RED.

Certainly, the Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014 stresses in Article 4.3a that vacancies at all levels of pre-school and school education are to be filled 'through competition based on the criteria defined by the Ministry', and also interestingly mentions that trade union representatives will be present 'in the procedure of competition and evaluation of candidates' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010d). The Ministerial Instruction of July 2010 on the appointment of academic and management staff for pre-school and school education states at par. 12 that 'Concerning vacancies, in case two or more candidates are running, competition will be applied' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010e). The Ministry document on 'Existing criteria and procedures relating to the recruitment and promotion of education sector employees' also claims there is a competitive process for appointments, based on criteria such as educational attainment, 'where two or more candidates compete for the same vacancy' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010f). However, the concerns of other stakeholders about current processes, as described above, seem so strong as to suggest the absence of advertising of posts may allow the manipulation of the recruitment situation by RED staff, so that only one candidate, pre-identified by criteria other than merit-based, is effectively being considered, i.e. the 'two or more candidates' phrase in the other Ministry documents is being used as a point of reference for evading the more general commitment to competition apparently made in the Collective Employment Contract.

It should also be noted that the version of the Draft Law made available refers to appointment of public school teachers by the school Principal, with selection based on qualifications and professional suitability. However, while indicating there will be an input from the school's teaching staff, it does not mention a role for parents

from the School Board, and the Principal's appointments are to follow recommendations from the RED (Ministry of Education and Science 2010c: Article 91b).

Therefore, it seems clear that the recruitment and appointment of school teachers must move to a new fully transparent system based on open competition and merit, and free from biased and corrupt practices. Of course, there is an argument that a decentralised system increases the potential for such bias and corruption (see Hallack and Poisson 2007: 165-166; PACA 2010a: 17), and one high school teacher outside Tirana (a former RED Director) specifically argued that moving recruitment to school Principals will increase the risks of inappropriate influence. However, this Risk Analysis would argue that the way forward is decentralised empowerment of Principals and School Boards to recruit and appoint, provided all individuals at this level embrace an approach based on ethical principles in public and professional life, as outlined in Section 3.

Recommendation 8: The Albanian Government should develop a new system for recruitment and appointment to teaching posts in public schools, devolving this to Principals and School Boards. Procedures at local level should be based on applicants being judged solely on merit in open competition, using clearly established professional criteria. Procedures for first teaching appointment should make systematic use of evidence on initial teacher education performance provided by the public universities.

Timescale: Details of new system fully developed during school session 2011-2012, with implementation from session 2012-2013.

4.8 Staffing in Public Schools: Contracts, Supply Lists, Probation and Teacher Appraisal, and Associated Staffing Instability

It has not been possible to obtain clear evidence on a range of issues associated with the ongoing staffing of public schools. The nature of teachers' contracts remains unclear. As mentioned above, Tirana parents described teachers as losing their jobs when political administrations change, and they appeared to be referring to classroom teachers here, not just school Principals. High school students in Tirana also suggested recent staffing instability in their schools, with problems being encountered with inexperienced teachers. High school teachers outside Tirana described teachers' contracts as collective, and stated that teachers do not have individual contracts. On the other hand, this evidence suggesting non-permanent and unstable staffing appeared to be contradicted by some other evidence gathered. High school teachers in Tirana stated that staff turnover is not excessive in their school, and high school teachers outside Tirana described the teachers' collective contract as without time limit. The Head of the Tirana RED claimed that it is very difficult to dismiss teachers once they have a 'permanent contract', and a school Principal outside Tirana also argued that even the REDs find it difficult to dismiss teachers. This led this Principal to propose that teachers should be appointed on initial fixed-term contracts, e.g. for six months, so that they can 'prove themselves'

suitable for permanent appointment. In the context of teacher unemployment (see Section 4.5 above), supply lists operate, but how these are used is not clear. The national trade union officials emphasised the need for the best teachers to be selected from the currently available pool of unemployed teachers. Particularly given the comments already highlighted about the lack of clarity on whether teachers are required to 'prove themselves' and how difficult it can be to dismiss teachers, there is an associated lack of clarity on how teachers are appraised (if at all), and what requirements/entitlements there may be on teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (if any).

Other evidence appears to confirm these issues which emerged from the interview evidence. The World Bank 'Albania School Stakeholder Survey' indicates that 13% of teachers experience no appraisal at all, 49% say there is no 'penalty' for 'poor' teacher performance, and 66% say there is no 'reward' for 'good' teacher performance (World Bank 2010: Appendix, p. 9). A 'Basic General Standards for Teachers' document was made available to the visiting experts (Ministry of Education and Science 2010g through PACA). This seems to provide much of the basis for appropriate standards against which teachers' professional competence and development can be judged. However, almost universally, interviewees seemed unaware of the existence of this document.

These issues where clarity is lacking are not fully resolved by the Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014, the Ministerial Instruction No. 22 of July 2010 on the appointment of academic and management staff for pre-school and school education, the Ministry document on 'Existing criteria and procedures relating to the recruitment and promotion of education sector employees', or the Draft Law as made available.

The Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014 in Article 4.3b states that, on completion of the first one-year contract, 'if the employee has fulfilled all the tasks assigned by the employer in the one-year employment, the employee is entitled to employment for an indefinite time period'. In discussing the link between qualification levels and contractual entitlements, Article 4.4a appears to open up the possibility of 'indefinite' contracts to all pre-school and class 1-5 teachers who have a 'higher school diploma with specialisation in teaching'. However, no further detail is provided on how employers will assess that a teacher has 'fulfilled all the tasks' in the one-year employment contract. It is also not clear if 'indefinite time period' can be unambiguously equated with 'permanent'. Although Article 4.7 states the employer 'may not terminate the employment contract without reasonable grounds', there is then a complex cross-reference to points within article 146 of the Labour Code. (see Ministry of Education and Science 2010d).

The Ministerial Instruction No.22 of July 2010 appears to distinguish between pre-school/elementary teachers and secondary teachers. Par. 4 seems to suggest that some pre-school/elementary teachers can never obtain permanent contracts unless their qualifications are at a certain level, and does not appear to be consistent with the Collective Employment Contract on this point. Par. 6 seems to indicate

secondary teachers are all appointed initially on a one-year contract. However, the Ministerial Instruction does not appear to make any clear reference to how staff move from one-year to permanent contracts, e.g. it is not clear if the competitive process referred to in Par. 12 concerns this move, or initial appointment to one-year contracts (Ministry of Education and Science 2010e).

The Ministry document on 'Existing criteria and procedures relating to the recruitment and promotion of education sector employees' talks of all initial contracts being one-year, and then rather vaguely of teachers 'who have met all the obligations set out by the employer' securing an 'open-ended' contract. Again, the criteria associated with this move are not detailed, and there is no reference to further approaches to staff development etc. after the initial gaining of an 'open-ended contract', nor indeed an explicit indication that 'open-ended' means permanent (Ministry of Education and Science 2010f).

Similarly, the Draft Law calls for 'clear criteria' to evaluate teacher performance, and the use of a 'commission' headed by the RED, and comprising the school Principal and teacher representatives, to terminate employment of teachers whose Principal has assessed their performance as not meeting such criteria (Ministry of Education and Science 2010c: Articles 92, 94). However, these criteria are not explained, and ongoing assessment of teachers performing positively is not detailed, with only a brief reference to 'in-service' credits being part of a 'merit based' salary structure (ibid: Article 89).

The external experts were provided by PACA with documents from the Albanian Government on the Annual Appraisal of Civil Servants. These comprised a Ministerial Instruction of 2007 (updating a previous Instruction of 2000) and an actual Annual Appraisal Form, which appeared to be an Appendix of the Ministerial Instruction (Albanian Government 2007; Albanian Government 2011). If these documents apply to the annual appraisal of school teachers, as presented they are not tailored in any way for teachers. For example, the 'Basic Skills' listed in Section C of the Annual Appraisal Form use very general terms such as 'Exploitation of resources' and 'Technical skills', rather than the much more appropriate teaching-specific competences within the 'Basic General Standards for Teachers' document (Ministry of Education and Science 2010g). There are many details within the Ministerial Instruction which do not sit easily with school teaching, e.g. Section 2 indicates the appraisal year runs from 1 November to 31 October, which are clearly not the dates of the school session. If the annual bonus system described in Section 10 applies to teaching, this was not mentioned in any of the stakeholder interviews. If the approach to probation outlined in Section 9 is the relevant procedure used to move teachers forward from one-year to permanent posts, this needs to be made explicit in other related documents, and the suitability of these procedures for teaching needs to be specifically demonstrated.

The local adviser to the PACA team also referred to 'qualification exams' (after 5, 10 and 15 years' teaching) as a way of appraising teachers, but linked only to salary progression, rather than wider professional development. Tirana school teachers

also mentioned these exams. However, the external experts could find no reference to these in Ministry documents they were provided with.

Therefore, the system for the ongoing staffing of Albanian public schools exhibits a lack of clarity, and a potential for instability. New and clear systems need to be identified and developed which establish a consistent and transparent relationship between a teacher's demonstration of early professional competence and obtaining a permanent post. For example, the national system needs to clarify if the full competitive process to obtain a permanent post comes at first appointment, with the outcome simply 'endorsed' by the completion of a probationary period, or whether the full competitive process is only used with teachers who have first completed a probationary period, with performance during that probation a key part of the evidence used in the competitive process for permanent appointment. Thereafter, the national system also needs to develop a consistent and transparent position on how teachers demonstrate ongoing entitlement to retaining their permanent post (e.g., through some system of staff personal and professional development which both requires teachers to undertake appropriate CPD and gives them an entitlement to supportive CPD necessary to sustain their professional competence).

Recommendation 9: The Albanian Government should establish the framework for a clear, consistent and stable approach to obtaining and retaining a permanent teaching post. This should clarify the relationship between a probationary period (if any) and the full open, competitive process for appointment to a permanent post. It should also clarify the requirements on teachers if they are to retain their permanent post over time. These requirements should include a clear and specific commitment to Continuing Professional Development, both as a professional obligation and an entitlement. As a professional career in the public service, teaching should be based on individual, permanent contracts. This will also require the Ministry of Education to issue clear guidelines on the role of supply lists and supply teaching generally.

Timescale: Details fully developed during school session 2011-2012, with implementation from session 2012-2013.

4.9 Specific Issues with the Appointment of School Principals

In addition to the general issues with the appointment of teaching staff in schools (see above), there appear to be specific issues with the appointment of school Principals. For example, public university staff involved in teacher education outside Tirana suggested that 'appropriately professional' school Principals should be licensed, and that the universities could carry out this licensing. They contrasted such an approach with the current system of 'party appointments'. A high school Principal outside Tirana advocated fixed-term contracts (e.g. five years) for Principals. One major area of concern for the public school system was actually raised by a private high school Principal (who had previous experience in the public school system as a Principal and a RED Director). He described a new Ministry regulation on school Principals (produced one month previously) which states that

every Principal must undergo a qualifications test by Ministry-accredited training agencies, with 90 out of 100 points within this test based on four months agency training (in contrast to only 5 points given for an university M.Admin. degree). He anticipated two/three agencies will be set up to deliver this training, with participants paying 500-600 Euros. He strongly implied there will be corruption in the establishment of these agencies.

The Draft Law, as made available, would appear to address a number of these issues (Ministry of Education and Science 2010c: Articles 78-84). The law proposes that School Boards and 'Local Government' will be involved in the appointment process for Principals. There will be clear criteria on eligibility for Principal, and the aim of developing training programmes for the certification and licensing of Principals provided by 'accredited academic institutions'. Principals will be appointed for five years, with the possibility of a second five-year term. Principals will have their performance evaluated on a yearly basis against clear criteria by a commission of School Board and Local Government representatives, and may have their employment terminated by the RED on the recommendation of the Inspectorate or the School Board and Local Government, following failure to meet performance criteria. On the other hand, these proposals leave some issues remaining. Much power rests with the Ministry to pre-define criteria for appointment, evaluation of performance, and dismissal. It seems the formal appointment of Principals will still be made by the REDs. The wording of the Article on training and licensing will not necessarily eliminate the potential abuse described by the Tirana private high school Principal, if there is 'corrupt' accreditation of inappropriate institutions. Potential new issues of 'corruption' may emerge with the role identified for Local Government in relation to school Principals.

Such continuing evidence suggests the importance of truly transparent procedures for the appointment of Principals which are based on merit and competition, not political connection. It will be important for such processes to include the need for aspiring Principals to complete further 'leadership' study, but this should be based on public university awards rather than some inappropriate training agency system. It will also be important for Principals to be accountable for their performance against genuinely objective professional criteria, with their continuation in post depending on this, and not on their political connection to parties currently in power. Fixed-term appointments, possibly renewable, may be a useful element within such an approach, but their use should be monitored to ensure they are not a disincentive to people applying for Principal posts.

Recommendation 10: The Albanian Government should ensure that school Principals are appointed through a transparent process based on open competition and merit, not political and personal connection. Criteria for appointment should include the requirement to demonstrate successful completion of advanced leadership study on an accredited public university course. Principals should be accountable for their ongoing performance against objective professional criteria. There should be further inclusive review with all relevant stakeholders on

whether or not the use of fixed-term appointments enhances the quality of applicants for Principal posts.

Timescale: New appointments process implemented during school session 2011-2012; agreement on approach to fixed-term appointments reached during session 2011-2012, with any consequent implementation for session 2012-2013; details of performance review system fully developed during session 2011-2012, with implementation for session 2012-2013.

5 PRIVATE TUTORING

5.1 The Nature of the Problem

Evidence from a range of sources indicates that private tutoring for public school education is widespread in Albania. This was confirmed by high school students in Tirana and outside Tirana, by parents in Tirana, and by University students in Tirana (referring back to their own high school experiences). Evidence suggests that almost all State Matura students have private tutoring, and parents also mentioned private tutoring is particularly significant at Grade 9, especially second semester. Private tutoring at Matura level seems to be particularly significant for Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Literature and English.

There was reference to some private tutoring being provided by 'educational centres'. Senior staff at the Ministry of Education's Private Education Institutions Department did refer to a separate licensing process for tutoring centres, and parents made some reference to tutors needing licences. However, this seemed to refer to tutors working for tutoring centres, and these centres appear to concentrate upon modern languages, especially English. The overwhelming evidence indicates that private tutoring is provided by public high school teachers, and that this certainly involves the widespread practice of teachers giving private tutoring to their own high school students.

There seemed a general recognition by interviewees that public school teachers are 'breaking the law' if they tutor their own pupils. For example, this was mentioned specifically by Tirana parents. However, the legal position on private tutoring needs to be more transparent. No reference to private tutoring seems to be included in the Draft Law, as presented to the external experts. The Teachers' Code of Conduct explicitly prohibits private tutoring by teachers of pupils attending their own school (see Open Society Foundation for Albania 2008: Part I, Section 3, Rule 5), but this document currently only has draft status. When the external experts requested that PACA staff seek confirmation from the Ministry of Education on the legal position on private tutoring, Ministry officials referred to the Normative Dispositions on Pre-university education in force since school year 2002-2003, specifically Article 44 (Duties and tasks) (2) q. 'it is forbidden to the teacher to conduct private courses for his pupils'. The illegality of the practice must be made unambiguously explicit in up-to-date law.

As mentioned in Section 2, the general public may not connect school teachers as strongly as some other groups with corruption in the sense of paying bribes etc. It was already noted that the 2009 Corruption Survey indicated only 9.6% of the general public had paid bribes for their children at school, down from 29% in 2005, and compared to 37.1% who had paid a bribe to a doctor or a nurse (see Institute for Development Research and Alternatives, Albania 2009, p.18). As argued previously, this may contribute to the general public ranking public school teachers as better than average on corruption measures, compared to other major groups (e.g., as already mentioned in Section 2, in the 2010 Corruption Survey on a scale from 0=very honest to 100=very corrupt, teachers were rated 46 against an average for 20 institutional groups of 62.4, with doctors at 79 – see Institute for Development Research and Alternatives, Albania 2010, p.9). However, this may reflect a failure of the public to define private tutoring of their own pupils by public school teachers as corruption. In contrast, this Risk Analysis assumes such private tutoring is a corrupt, systemic breach of the legal position, as well as the relevant ethical principles of public and professional life.

High school students said that most of their teachers work as private tutors. The general impression was that this is normally with the class teacher, and this was also confirmed by university students recollecting their high school experiences. Evidence was presented of tutoring sessions being held in the teacher's house, generally with groups of pupils. High school students recognise the current type of private tutoring is a form of corruption. These students described a situation where students will obtain better marks in the internally assessed Matura work (referred to as the 'average grades' in Albania) if they attend private tutoring, and correspondingly these grades will be poorer if students do not attend private tutoring. Tutoring sessions may explicitly cover what will be included in forthcoming Matura internal assessments. The clear implication was that students will obtain better grades in internal Matura assessments not just because they will be better prepared through private tutoring, but that favouritism in marking will be shown to those students attending private tutoring, and bias will be shown against those who do not. (Section 6 on the State Matura will return to these issues with the 'average grades'.)

Students and parents recognise the heavy cost of private tutoring. A range of costs was mentioned. The minimum figure quoted was 500 ALL (c. 4 Euros) per hour (outside Tirana), with the figures in Tirana ranging from 500 to 1050 ALL (c. 4-8 Euros) per tutoring session. Parents emphasised that these costs are heavy for families. Representatives of the Roma community indicated that their community is effectively 'priced out' of private tutoring (see later Section 9 on the Roma community).

On the other hand, parents said they should have the right to pay for private tutoring, and students emphasised their parents want private tutoring and see its beneficial impact.

5.2 The Way Forward

The desire of parents to do the best for their children is understandable, and the ultimate right of parents to arrange some type of private tutoring cannot be denied in a free economy and society. However, it seems clear that the current form of private tutoring operating in Albania is a systemic corruption of the kind of relationship between public school teachers and their students which should be found in a contemporary European educational system. Parents and students are entitled to public school provision which guarantees them the quantity and quality of teaching sufficient to achieve the highest possible results within the public examination system, without having to resort to financially very burdensome private tutoring. Public school teachers should not be creating an environment in which their students feel full success can only be achieved by participating in private tutoring. In particular, it is unethical for teachers to pressurise their own students into receiving private tutoring from them, and to manipulate public high school teaching, learning and assessment approaches around such private tutoring.

It is not enough simply to have a 'notional' legal prohibition on public school teachers giving private tuition to their own pupils. What is required is the public school teaching profession showing a full commitment to ethical principles in professional and public life, one of which is the principle that all teaching and learning provision necessary to achieve the highest possible success in national examinations is provided free within the contractual hours of public school teachers.

If the problem is that public school teachers have to resort to private tutoring to achieve an appropriate overall salary because public school teacher core salaries are inadequate, then the issue for public policy becomes the need to increase public school teacher salaries to appropriate levels.

If the problem is that private tutoring is resorted to because there are insufficient teaching hours in Albanian high schools (e.g. because pressure of student numbers requires the operation of a 'shift system'), or because very large class sizes prevent adequate individual feedback to students, public policy solutions should be sought for these problems. These solutions may include increasing teacher numbers in high schools, or a programme of building more high schools, as a way of reducing class sizes and increasing teaching hours through eliminating the 'shift system'.

There is some lack of clarity on teachers' hours, and therefore on any potential to increase teaching hours. The Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014 is not completely clear on teachers' hours. Article 6.2a refers to school teachers spending a maximum of 6 hours per day in school premises, but Article 6.2b then talks of 'the norms of the annual and weekly academic work' being decided by the Minister of Education in consultation with the trade unions. There is also a reference in Article 6.6 to 'academic hours of teachers over the norm defined in the Instruction of the Minister of Education' being paid as extra hours, and a reference in Article 6.9 to teachers entitled 'to extra paid work up to 30% of the academic/teaching load'.

However, these particular references seem to apply to specific categories of teachers, Article 6.6 to teachers who direct artistic activities or sports, and Article 6.9 to teachers qualified as 'disabled people'. If these Articles actually refer to all teachers, then there is clearly an issue about how many hours public school teachers are working, and how available they may be for publicly funded additional duties, as opposed to private tutoring. (see Ministry of Education and Science 2010d)

The issue of teachers' working hours is also relevant to the potential solution of providing free additional tutoring sessions within public high schools. Tirana university students recollected these being provided in some subjects in some schools. The external experts were also provided with Ministry of Education documents by the PACA team which appear to prescribe set hours for 'consultation' between teachers and students preparing for Grade 9 examinations and the State Matura, and indicate these consultation hours 'are calculated in the annual workload of teachers' (Ministry of Education and Science 2010a; 2010b). However, if this 'consultation' is intended as publicly-funded tutoring, the overwhelming evidence from interviews appears to suggest either that such 'consultation' is not happening, or that it is inadequate and insufficient (possibly because its usefulness is being undermined by teachers continuing to direct students towards their private tutoring 'as what really matters').

In a contemporary European education system, it is not appropriate for a public school system to be distorted by the widespread private tutoring of their own students currently engaged in by Albanian public high school teachers. However, it is not enough for the Government simply to have a 'theoretical' legal ban on such activity, which is then ignored in practice.

Recommendation 11: The Albanian Government must co-ordinate a multi-faceted strategy to end private tutoring of their own pupils by public high school teachers. This strategy should be based upon a national publicity campaign and discussion (including teachers, parents, and students) to emphasise that the corrupt aspects of private tutoring are inconsistent with ethical principles in public life (including any Code of Conduct introduced for teachers), and that the public high school system must be based upon the commitment that the highest results can be achieved by students without the need to resort to private tutoring. The Government should also pursue all specific practical initiatives necessary to eliminate private tutoring of their own students by public high school teachers. These may include raising teachers' core salaries; reducing high school class sizes and extending class teaching hours (by a combination of teacher recruitment and a school building programme); offering free additional tutoring in public high schools, provided by teachers within their contract; ensuring there is a transparent basis in a confirmed Code of Conduct for teachers, and in legislation, for robust action, including dismissal, to be taken against teachers persisting with inappropriate private tutoring.

Timescale: Publicity campaign and public discussion during school session 2011-2012; details of practical measures fully developed during school session 2011-2012, with implementation from session 2012-2013.

6 THE STATE MATURA

6.1 Recent Positive Developments

It is clear that the development of the State Matura over the last six years has been very important for the Albanian education system. A senior Ministerial adviser presented the State Matura as a key part of the general move from an input-driven to an output-driven system, with the Matura being a national examination which gives 'reliable information on pupil achievement, comparable school results, and a basis for University admissions'.

More specifically, senior staff at the National Exams Agency detailed a series of practices developed specifically to address any potential for corruption in the Matura system (and generally the details presented correspond to the specifics within the Ministry of Education document 'Regulation on the Conduct of the 2011 State Matura Examination in the Republic of Albania' Ministry of Education and Science 2011c):

Timing of the examinations: It was indicated that examinations are sat on the same day all over the country, and, as far as possible, at the same time (this was explained as 'within the practicable time frame', which appeared to refer to the travelling time for the dispatch of papers, see below, and may also have referred to the travelling time for pupils in more remote areas).

Setting of the examination papers: This involves National Exams Agency staff and working groups of teachers (with the teachers drawn from a data base of 'best teachers'). The system appears to involve the working groups preparing banks of questions, with a Ministerial nominee selecting from these in a secret process on the day before the examination. Papers are then photocopied and distributed to schools under police escort (it was implied this was on the examination morning, but see comments below by high school students outside Tirana).

Evaluation (i.e. marking) of the examinations: The evaluation of examination papers ('evaluation' appears to be the term used in Albania for marking) involves the selection of markers by the REDs, with the Ministry having final approval. Marking then takes place in six evaluation centres, during teachers' vacation time, in one concentrated week, with teachers receiving extra payment for involvement in marking. Teachers mark papers from other geographical areas, and papers are bar coded to ensure anonymous marking. It was indicated there is double-marking of every script, with third marking also if required.

Supervision (i.e. invigilation) of examinations: The National Exams Agency staff admitted that supervision of examinations is a problem area ('supervision' is the term used in Albania for invigilation). They described measures taken to address possible corruption issues. Specific rules have been set for candidates, e.g. no mobile phones are allowed in examination rooms. Fairly elaborate procedures were detailed around supervision. Apparently, supervisors for an area report to a particular location at 7.00a.m., when lots are drawn to allocate supervisors to particular schools. Examinations begin at 10.00a.m. to enable supervisors to travel from the location of the ballot to their supervising sites. Assurances were given that 'action has been taken' against pupils and supervisors who have engaged in inappropriate activity during examinations. For teachers, this has included dismissal, warning of possible future dismissal, and removal from supervision.

As mentioned, specific details consistent with these comments can be found in the 'Regulation on the Conduct of the 2011 State Matura Examination in the Republic of Albania' (Ministry of Education and Science 2011c). Article 9 refers to special commissions for the examination of tests where copying is suspected (KOPOTED). Article 12, par.11, instructs the Regional Educational Directorate/Educational Office (DAR/ZA) Matura Commission to 'consider and establish measures against the violation of rules of Matura examination administration, based on the written information sent by the person in charge of the examination administration, DAR/ZA representatives or MoES monitors-representatives'. Article 49 lists twelve specific duties of the person in charge of the examination administration (PAP), and Articles 50 and 51 list twenty-five specific duties of the examination administrators (AP), the term used for examination supervisors. These include a range of actions which should eliminate cheating. Under Article 49, par.7, the person in charge of the examination administration (PAP) is required to report to DAR/ZA State Matura Commission (KMSH) 'every irregularity observed during the conduct of the examination'. Under Article 50, par.7 and 9, the examination administrator (AP) is required to keep a record of any irregularities observed during the conduct of the examination, and report these to the PAP. Under Article 51, the AP is required to supervise all exam premises rigorously and continuously' (par.6), and, for example, is not to allow Matura candidates to 'communicate with and copy from each other or persons outside of the examination premises/room' (par.8). Article 64 par.1a, b then very precisely links violation by PAPs and APs of particular aspects of Articles 50 and 51 with either 'Warning of dismissal from employment' or 'Dismissal from employment'. Regarding Matura students, Article 56 lists a range of offences which will lead to Matura candidates being dismissed from the exam and their result not being recognised. These include such offences as exchanging information, copying or communicating between candidates (par.3), or keeping a 'mobile phone, radio or communication instrument in the examination premises' (par.5).

The internally-assessed 'average grades': The National Exams Agency staff explained they were happy with the position on the internally-assessed 'average grades'. Partly, this is because only 20% of the overall Matura results are based on the 'average grades', which Agency staff feel is appropriate to avoid any excessive weighting to these grades, given that there may be some risk to national reliability of

these grades through possible subjectivity in teacher marking. Agency staff also indicated that the 'average grades' are compared statistically with external examination results to detect any inconsistencies which may suggest lack of reliability in a school's internal assessment.

Other evidence was also available indicating that students do not necessarily sit the Matura in their own school. Tirana university students mentioned that students sometimes sit the Matura in their own school, but sometimes in another school. A Tirana private high school Principal indicated that private high school students go to public schools to sit their Matura, and public high school students generally sit the Matura in different schools, not their own. Parents in Tirana, and high school students outside Tirana, also explained that supervisors are from 'primary schools', not high schools.

The above evidence, particularly that provided by the National Exams Agency, demonstrates that conscientious efforts have been made to establish procedures designed to eliminate major sources of potential corruption in the State Matura system. In particular, very considerable work has been undertaken to secure appropriate approaches to the setting and marking of final examinations. In this connection, both high school students and parents expressed confidence in the integrity of the marking of the final examinations. However, despite these initiatives, there appears to be very strong evidence of two systemic corrupt abuses which undermine the credibility of the State Matura.

6.2 Problems with the State Matura

6.2.1 Problems with the final examinations

Overwhelming evidence was presented for systemic problems with the supervision of final Matura external examinations. Parents in Tirana commented strongly on supervising teachers colluding in cheating during final examinations. A high school Principal outside Tirana conceded that cheating took place during supervised examinations in his school, but he explained the Principal has no responsibility over supervision, and supervisors do not report incidents to him. High school students outside Tirana were particularly outspoken in describing cheating in the final examinations. They spoke of students helping each other, and of students using mobile phones during examinations, even to contact their teachers. They explained this is not a problem of supervisors 'missing' cheating (mention was made of good supervisor to student ratios, perhaps as low as 1:8/1:9). Rather, they described a general situation where supervising teachers (usually from primary schools) permit cheating because they 'genuinely' want to help. As will be discussed below, this is not a specific issue of high schools teachers supervising their own students and colluding with them in cheating (e.g., the measures taken by the National Exams Agency appear to ensure high school teachers are not involved in supervising their own students). Rather, there is a much wider issue to address over the commitment of all school teachers and students to values in public life which condemn cheating within any examination system.

All of this suggests that the apparently comprehensive rules on examination supervision in the 'Regulation on the Conduct of the 2011 State Matura Examination' are not being adhered to, and reporting of consequent irregularities is not taking place. There are also some aspects of the Regulations themselves which are not fully clear. For example, there is no real detail on how special commissions for the examination of tests where copying is suspected (KOPOTED) will operate. It is also not completely clear if 'dismissal from employment' under Article 64 refers to dismissal from the post of examination administrator for the future, or actually dismissal from the employee's underlying permanent post (which generally seems to be that of primary teacher, from the evidence presented). Clearly, dismissal from underlying permanent post is the much more meaningful sanction.

High school students outside Tirana also mentioned problems with the content of examination papers being made available the day before an examination. This raises possible questions on whether papers are dispatched from Tirana on the morning of examinations (as described by the National Exams Agency), or actually the night before (perhaps unavoidably because of journey times). In this context, it should also be mentioned that some Albanian sources doubted the feasibility of supervisors reaching examination schools in some areas between a 7.00a.m. drawing of lots and a 10.00a.m. start of examinations (again because of some of the journeys which may be involved).

6.2.2 Problems with the internally assessed 'average grades'

While less condemnatory of the integrity of the State Matura than evidence over the final examinations, evidence was also presented of significant concern with the 'average grade' system. High school students, both in and outside Tirana, argued that teachers tend to mark 'average grades' too severely. They implied this is partly to ensure students take private tuition from the teachers (the suggestions to students probably being both that private tuition is needed to achieve good grades in severely marked internal assessments, and that severely marked internal assessments emphasise how difficult it will be to obtain good grades in the final examinations without private tuition). High school students outside Tirana also implied that teachers may show 'subjectivity' (by which they mean favouritism) to certain students, especially those with 'powerful parents'. Parents in Tirana also expressed the view that teachers in some areas of the country are less strict in assessing 'average grades' than in other areas. While emphasising their use of statistical comparison of 'average grades' with external examination results, National Exams Agency staff conceded that they do not undertake any direct external moderation of samples of internally assessed 'average grades'.

6.3 The Way Forward on the State Matura

A superficial response to the problems identified with the State Matura, especially the issues over supervision of external examinations, is simply to suggest additional mechanistic and punitive measures. For example, the high school Principal outside

Tirana suggested explicitly treating cheating as a 'criminal offence', involving dismissal where appropriate (this may or may not happen already in some cases, but he seemed to be implying a much more widespread use of this sanction). He also suggested that the Exams Agency should prepare a number of 'tests' for each examination, only one of which is chosen on the day in the examination room (presumably by the supervisor); that the distance between students in the examination rooms be increased; and that students should be more rigorously 'checked' before entering examination rooms (presumably for mobile phones etc.). Such measures may help address abuses. Clearly also, in relation to the internally assessed 'average grades', a system of external moderation of samples of these internal grades would increase the reliability of this form of assessment.

However, while such mechanistic responses may help reduce some incidents of cheating or other malpractice, they do not address the underlying issue. A great deal of admirable work has been undertaken in developing the State Matura. However, the Matura will not be able to establish itself fully as a credible public examination by contemporary European standards unless systemic cheating is eliminated from its final examination system, and unless the reliability of its internally assessed 'average grades' becomes more secure. In turn, this will only be achieved if the entire Albanian school teaching profession unequivocally commits to an ethical approach to professional and public life and condemns all undermining of the integrity of the public examination system as completely unacceptable. This applies to collusion of supervising teachers in examination cheating; to any teacher assisting their own students, e.g. on a mobile phone, as part of that cheating; to any teacher sharing the content of final examinations with students in advance of examinations; and to teachers undermining the reliability of internally assessed 'average grades', e.g. as part of an inappropriate approach to private tutoring. Further, this commitment to an ethical approach to public education must also be embraced by the whole of Albanian society, including parents and students, as well as teachers. In particular, it is essential that the corrosive effect of unethical behaviour does not continue to penetrate the next generation of Albanian young people. As mentioned in Section 3 of this paper, it is not helpful if Albanians see those who offer bribes (the 'givers') as either 'not corrupt', or 'corrupt but justified'. Similarly, Albanian young people who take advantage of opportunities to cheat because of supervisors who 'turn a blind eye' during examinations should not see themselves as either 'not corrupt', or 'corrupt but justified'. These young people are very impressive, but their chances of flourishing fully within modern Europe will be fatally undermined if their qualifications are associated elsewhere with results achieved under a cloud of suspected widespread cheating and other forms of corruption.

Therefore, while the development of the State Matura has been a very important achievement for the Albanian education system, it is crucial there are continuing developments to ensure the full integrity of this national examination system.

Recommendation 12: The Albanian Government must initiate and co-ordinate a national campaign to persuade all members of Albanian society that the credibility of Albania's high school examination system (in particular

internationally) depends upon the removal of cheating, including cheating involving corruption, in the final State Matura examinations, and upon addressing potential unreliability with the State Matura's internally assessed 'average grade' system. Certain punitive or mechanistic approaches will be useful in the short-term, e.g. the high profile 'prosecution' of individual supervisors and students involved in examination cheating, the external moderation of samples of 'average grade' work. Indeed, such approaches will remain helpful in the long-term, especially the external moderation of 'average grade' samples. However, a national campaign is necessary for all sectors of Albanian society to embrace the ethical principle in public life that cheating and associated corrupt practices are never acceptable in a national examination system (particularly, in this context, by supervising teachers and students themselves). In this national campaign, the Government must emphasise the major progress represented by the State Matura will be undermined, unless remaining abuses are eliminated (and this will prejudice the international opportunities of young Albanians if the credibility of their high school qualifications is doubted).

Timescale: National campaign conducted during school session 2011-2012 (making appropriate use of school teachers' Code and Standards, as confirmed and disseminated by spring 2012 – see Recommendation 1 above); any additional mechanistic measures implemented during session 2011-2012, to apply fully to 2012 examinations.

7 ISSUES WITHIN THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

7.1 The Comparative Strength of the Public Universities

Evidence from a range of groups indicated clear support for the public universities in Albania, especially in general comparison with the private universities. High school students in Tirana see the public universities as 'better' than the private universities, as do high school students outside Tirana (although their interest is clearly in attending public university in Tirana specifically). Tirana parents also judge the status of public universities to be higher than private universities. Tirana university students expressed the view that young people generally regard the public universities as 'better' than private universities, as do employers.

Senior public university staff in Tirana mounted an eloquent defence of public universities and their mission, in contrast to private universities, and again argued that students prefer public universities. Detailed descriptions were provided of new student 'assessment' systems within public universities. These referred to 'evaluation' systems by students of the quality of courses and staff, with reliability of data ensured by linking student returns with monitoring of student attendance, so that only those students with sufficient attendance are providing evaluations. Such systems were seen as part of a strong commitment to the quality enhancement of the student experience within the public universities.

7.2 Challenges facing the Public Universities

On the other hand, senior public university staff in Tirana also raised strong concerns about the funding position of public universities. It was argued that investment is needed in infrastructure to provide the necessary capacity to meet student numbers. The need for transparency was stressed, to ensure that funds allocated by Parliament reached the public universities (reference was made to a current shortfall of 19M dollars between what Parliament has allocated the public universities, and what the Government has passed on). Certainly, Tirana university students commented on the poor physical conditions in public universities, indicating under-investment (students made particular reference to under-investment in IT). Senior public university staff also expressed opposition to the student voucher system, which they see as an inappropriate system of university funding. Opposition was also expressed to the ranking of public universities, although strong support was given to external quality assurance and accreditation.

7.3 Issues of Corruption within the Public Universities

However, despite the general preference for public universities over private universities, there is strong evidence that the public universities face more serious challenges than those just described. A range of groups raised very major concerns about corruption in public universities. These strong comments came from university students themselves, but also from parents and high school students. These comments came from groups within Tirana, but they were directed at Albanian public universities generally, not only those in Tirana.

Very strong comments were made that you have to 'pay' for a public university education by making corrupt payments to university staff. Payments are made to academic staff (professors and lecturers) to ensure passes in examinations and assessments, and to achieve 'better marks' in these. A particular issue was highlighted with 'inflated' failure rates to increase the number of re-sit students on courses. This means the university gains additional re-sit fees. However, much more significantly, it enables professors and lecturers to set up private tutoring for re-sits, with students paying the academic staff for this. Claims were made of entire classes of students paying to ensure pass grades. It was indicated that some professors and lecturers use 'middle men' for such payments. Interestingly, university students mentioned parents will be involved in the making of payments. Criticism was also made that professors apply inappropriate pressure to insist all students on a course purchase particular textbooks which they have authored, effectively as a condition for successfully completing the course. There were also comments that there are widespread examples of lecturers helping students while supervising examinations, with the implication that this is linked to 'corrupt favouritism'.

Other issues were mentioned. For example, parents have a perception that there are significant numbers of public university academics who spend more of their time working in private universities than in the public university which employs them. Students also mentioned this issue, and they commented that some academic staff,

especially perhaps some professors, are appointed because of their political connections. However, it was the set of issues around payment which was highlighted most strongly.

Senior public university staff in Tirana argued that there is no 'vulgar corruption' in public universities. They described the introduction of mechanisms such as students being assessed throughout the year, thus preventing end of course 'corruption' over final examination marking, and different staff being involved in setting and marking examinations. As mentioned earlier, some senior staff also detailed new systems for students to evaluate their course experiences and staff, and there was an implication these mechanisms can pick up issues of corruption. It is also important to stress that public university students indicated corruption 'depended on the professor', i.e. not all staff engage in the corrupt practices described. The State Quality Standards of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) also appear to contain specifics which should deal with some of the issues highlighted. For example, Chapter I, Standard II.2, Criterion 3 calls for universities to ensure 'Anonymity is preserved during the correction of exams'. Chapter III, Standard I.2, Criterion 7 states that an 'Ethics Council is set up at the higher education institutions and discusses ethics-related issues of the university life. It submits proposals to the rector on these issues'. Presumably, such Councils could address issues of corruption as a central part of their remit. (See Ministry of Education and Science 2011a.)

However, the strength of comments from different groups clearly indicates such potential measures are not being implemented effectively in practice, and major concerns persist over a significant incidence of corrupt practices in Albania's public universities. It should be mentioned that a 2005 Survey 'Regarding the perception and experience of the Albanian Student Community concerning the level of the Corruption, Abuses and Transparency in the Albanian Public Universities' was made available to the visiting experts (Albanian Student Government supported by Open Society Institute Budapest and Tirana 2005). The findings of this survey were broadly consistent with interview evidence of a significant scale of corrupt practices within public universities. More generally, it should also be repeated that the Albanian Corruption Surveys of 2009 and 2010 both rate university professors significantly less favourably than public school teachers. In 2010, on a scale where 0=very honest and 100=very corrupt, university professors were rated 71 in 2010, their 'most corrupt' rating in five years, and 63.4 in 2009 (public school teachers were rated 43.1 in 2009 and 46 in 2010) (see Institute for Development Research and Alternatives, Albania, 2009 and 2010). Of course, it is not explicitly stated in the Corruption Surveys that these ratings refer only to public university professors, as opposed to both public and private university professors.

Corrupt practices are totally incompatible with contemporary European ethical principles within university education. It is certainly not being suggested here that practices in Albania's private universities are above criticism, and that issues only relate to public universities. However, a separate report is being produced to cover private universities (and private schools). Indeed, in the context of the present report, it is crucial to re-emphasise that evidence clearly indicates the general view

within Albania that public universities are superior to private universities. Therefore, as one senior public university leader in Tirana so powerfully argued, the overall future of university education in Albania depends on a healthy public university sector. However, this will require not only the public resource support called for by that leader, but also the total commitment of all public university staff to embrace ethical principles in their professional practices, and abandon disconcerting forms of 'vulgar corruption'. As already discussed in relation to high school students and the State Matura, it is also essential that the whole of Albanian society embraces such an ethical approach. The main concern is again the corrosive effect that unethical behaviour will have on Albania's young people, and their chances of flourishing within modern Europe, in this case if their university qualifications are associated elsewhere with results achieved under a cloud of suspected widespread cheating and other forms of corruption. As mentioned in Section 3, the attitude that the 'giver' of a payment is either 'not corrupt', or 'corrupt but justified', must not lead students to think that it is appropriate for corrupt payments and other corrupt practices to become embedded in future university life in Albania. Parents also must engage with appropriate ethical approaches, if, as was suggested, they are involved in corrupt payments to their children's professors and lecturers.

Short-term, university leaderships and administrations should also consider more mechanistic measures to address corruption, such as bar coding to underpin anonymous marking of examinations, and departmental approval of booklists to reduce arbitrary prescribing of personally authored textbooks by academic staff.

A healthy public university sector is essential to the overall development of education, economy and society in Albania. Generally, Albanian public universities appear more highly regarded than private universities (and private universities will be discussed in a separate report). There is much evidence of high quality commitment by many staff to the best ethical principles of the public university. However, concerns clearly exist in Albania's public universities that the method and level of public funding is inadequate to provide the highest quality provision desired, and there is strong evidence of 'vulgar corruption' among staff within public universities.

Recommendation 13: The Albanian Government must ensure all funds allocated to public universities actually reach them, and should have full dialogue with university leaders on the level and methods of funding necessary to fulfil their mission. The Albanian Government must undertake a national dialogue with the senior leadership of the public universities. This should be directed to establishing honestly the extent of the problem with 'vulgar corruption', and to initiating major staff development with public university staff to ensure all embrace the ethical principle that corruption within the university is the antithesis of the values of a community of scholarship. Specifically, this must ensure the elimination of such corrupt practices as students paying academic staff to achieve good grades, or to secure pass grades; students being manipulated to pay academic staff for private tutoring; academic staff applying inappropriate pressure on students to purchase their authored textbooks; or academic staff colluding in

cheating during university examinations. The Albanian Government must also coordinate an equivalent initiative with university students and their parents. As with the State Matura, this national initiative by the Albanian Government must emphasise the key point that the international opportunities of young Albanians will be prejudiced if the credibility of their public university qualifications is doubted because corrupt abuses remain endemic within the public university system. On the other hand, the Albanian Government must handle this initiative sensitively to ensure that any deficits of the public universities are only addressed at the same time as those of the private universities are highlighted. This will be necessary to avoid any unfair treatment of the public universities.

Timescale: Funding issues to be addressed to ensure implementation for any remaining aspects of funding for academic session 2011-2012, and for all aspects of funding for academic session 2012-2013; national dialogue and initiatives on corruption to be undertaken during session 2011-2012.

8 THE ALTERNATIVE TEXTBOOK SYSTEM

8.1 The Positive Development of the Alternative Textbook System

A great deal of effort has gone into developing the Alternative Textbook (Altertekst) system since it was introduced in 2006. The Altertekst system is presented by officials as a major achievement in removing the corruption of a previous approach in which the Ministry of Education had a monopoly on textbooks.

In meeting with a senior adviser to the Minister of Education, and the Ministry's Textbooks Approval Commission/Committee, overall emphasis was placed on competition being ensured within the Altertekst system, with the Ministry not involved in the actual evaluation of textbooks. The different levels of the Altertekst system were described (this description of detail in meetings corresponded to the details subsequently made available in the Ministry Information Package "Altertekst 2010-2011" Ministry of Education and Science 2011b):

The Ministry's Textbooks Approval Commission

(The various Altertekst groups were normally referred to as 'commissions', although they were sometimes described as 'committees'. The term commission will be used in this paper.) This overall Commission appeared to comprise six Ministry officials. The role of this Commission is to confirm the members of the various textbook evaluation commissions (see below).

The Textbook Evaluation Commissions

A textbook evaluation commission is established for each major subject area. Each commission has five members, one from the university sector (presumably the public universities), three 'best teachers' for the subject, and one linguistic expert. The

names for the University sector come from the Rectors' offices, and they cannot be textbook authors. The teachers are identified by the REDs, and again cannot be authors (and there are criteria for identifying these 'best teachers'). The 'linguistic expert' will be a 'good teacher' of language and literature. The Textbooks Approval Commission appears to make the final selection from the names provided for membership.

Textbooks are 'anonymised' when considered by the evaluation commissions. The evaluation commissions work with clear criteria. After due consideration, they announce the 'winning textbooks' (i.e., more than one at each Grade for each subject).

Ministry officials from the Textbooks Approval Commission indicated that c.30 publishers are involved each year offering textbooks for consideration. Within this total, it was suggested there are c.10-12 'powerful' publishers, c.4-5 'specialist educational publishers' and 2 'very specialist' educational publishers. Essentially, these are Albanian publishing houses, although the Ministerial adviser mentioned that some use had been made of translated Italian textbooks (see below).

Pricing of Textbooks

It was emphasised that the Textbook Evaluation Commissions do not deal with the prices of textbooks. Prices are determined by a published formula made available through the Ministry's Textbooks Approval Commission.

Textbook Selection Commissions

The national shortlists of 'winning textbooks' are then considered by school-based Textbook Selection Commissions. Each has ten members, covering a particular subject, and may involve teachers from a grouping of schools, not just a single school. In meeting a group of Tirana high school teachers, a more detailed description of the operation of these school commissions was provided. The Commissions evaluate textbooks using clear criteria. Textbook authors from the school staff cannot have their textbooks considered. Voting on the textbooks is secret. Once selected for a school, the textbooks are sold to parents in schools by agents of the relevant publishing houses.

In meeting with a major textbook publisher, he confirmed he saw the Altertektst system as a major step forward from previous systems, and generally as the 'only way' of providing school textbooks.

8.2 Evaluating the Alternative Textbook System – Some Issues

While the system described above contains many conscientious efforts to ensure a corruption-free, competitive process, it still contains some potential flaws in this respect.

There are still possibilities for 'top down' bias in the identification of members of the Textbooks Approval Commission and the associated textbook evaluation commissions. As indicated, members of the Textbooks Approval Commission appear to be drawn exclusively from Ministry officials. In turn, they seem to have the final power to select and confirm members of the textbook evaluation commissions from the names forwarded to them. These names emerge from other power holders, particularly the REDs in proposing school teachers (and terms like 'best teachers', even if linked to criteria, contain the potential for subjective bias, including political bias).

More specifically, the explanation of the recent adoption of translated Italian textbooks was not fully convincing in terms of due process. It seems possible that the Ministry may have approached these publishers directly and outside the full textbook evaluation process, effectively 'fast-tracking' them. Although these textbooks have now been withdrawn, they had clearly presented problems when used in schools. For example, high school students in Tirana were critical of badly translated textbooks, and this clearly seemed to be a reference to these Italian textbooks.

More widely, there may also be an issue at the school commission level. In meeting Tirana high school teachers, they indicated that the names of authors and publishers are visible on the books being considered at their level. While printing issues will be involved, there may be a case for anonymising textbooks at this level, as well as at the textbook evaluation commission level.

Apart from such issues on ensuring a completely unbiased selection process, evidence emerged of other issues around the Altertekst system. In meeting Tirana parents, it was claimed that more than 40% of parents are unhappy with the quality of textbooks. It should be stressed that this view was not necessarily shared by other groups. Tirana high school teachers said that parents are comfortable with individual textbooks and the Altertekst system generally, and high school pupils outside Tirana said their parents' views are similar. However, a number of the concerns of Tirana parents were forcefully made, and seemed consistent with some potentially systemic issues in the Altertekst scheme, particularly relating to the annual nature of the Altertekst exercise, and to textbook costs.

The Tirana parents commented on superficial (and they implied unnecessary) changes to textbooks being made from one year to the next. When questioned, Ministry officials defended the annual nature of the Altertekst exercise as necessary to keep textbooks up to date. In meeting a major publisher, he also supported the idea of annual update. However, a case can certainly be made that annual revision of textbooks may be excessive, and unnecessary in many cases. Indeed, some mixed messages emerged on this from evidence. Ministry officials seemed to indicate textbooks are 'licensed' for three years, and Tirana high school teachers appeared to say that there are some years when no change is made for a particular subject Level (thus enabling, for example, textbooks to be handed down from one sibling to the next). This would suggest that school commissions effectively are considering the

winners from each new annual exercise against the possible continuation of any texts still 'licensed' from the previous two years. All of this would imply that the continuation of the very time-consuming Altertekst exercise as an annual one should be reviewed. This may help re-assure parents who have concerns about the cost implications of the unnecessary purchase of marginally amended texts. Reviewing the annual nature of the Altertekst exercise may also be consistent with addressing issues of coherence across levels with textbooks. Such issues were suggested to be a problem by Tirana parents. The major publisher also saw attractions in a publishing house being granted approval to produce texts across a number of subjects, and for more than one year, but as part of a single approval decision. These points all suggest that there could be flexible variation beyond the current annual 'textbook by textbook' exercise.

Of course, this is not to argue for a system which inappropriately ignores the need for on-going update of textbooks. On this point, evidence was not clear on the completeness of current systems for evaluating textbooks. Ministry officials indicated that schools complete evaluation forms on textbooks. The Ministry can then ask publishers to 'revisit' textbooks in the light of this feedback. These officials implied textbooks can be withdrawn if feedback from schools suggests sufficiently serious problems. These approaches appeared to be generally confirmed by Tirana high school teachers. These teachers mentioned the RED organising monthly meetings for teachers, which can cover feedback on textbooks. However, it was not absolutely clear that this involved written reports going from the RED to the Ministry. In addition, while Tirana high school teachers talked of gaining feedback from students on textbooks, Tirana high school students suggested there should be an increased role for themselves in giving feedback on textbooks. This would enable them to highlight issues such as their view that there needs to be a better match between textbook coverage and Matura examination questions.

There seemed to be some difference of views on the price of textbooks. Ministry officials indicated textbooks cost 2-3 Euros each. The major publisher argued these prices are low, and that parents should pay the full price. On the other hand, Tirana parents indicated that the overall cost of textbooks for a family can be very burdensome. The Ministry perhaps implied there is a genuine issue about cost when they described the current attempt to provide books free for all pupils at Grades 1-5, in addition to previous subsidies for those on 'economic assistance' and minorities, including Roma (see Section 9 on the Roma).

In addition to the price issue, there appear to be issues with the financial and other aspects of the distribution system. Aspects of the distribution system seem unclear. The major publisher explained that publishers must find 2,000 agents and cash machines for distribution in schools. This seems to create the potential for major problems with missing receipts etc.. For example, Tirana parents suggested this is a major issue with those trying to claim re-imburement (which implies those entitled to free/subsidised textbooks have to pay first, which may be a problem for them in itself, before re-imburement). An alternative approach may be to retain decisions on textbooks at school evaluation commission level, but for the RED to 'aggregate' these

decisions and act as a 'conduit' for distribution (this could be combined with public funds paying the publishers, or the RED processing the payments to the publishers, but the original payment being made by the parents). Without giving publishers undue influence, such complexities suggest there is merit in the major publisher's suggestion that publishers are fully included in discussions about how the Altertekst system develops.

More generally, it is important to propose that the general approach to prescribed textbooks within the Albanian school system is continually reviewed to ensure that the overall approach to learning and teaching resources is consistent with contemporary pedagogical principles. There is a systemic risk that a prescribed textbook approach leads to narrow 'teaching to the text'. High school students, both in and outside Tirana, and Tirana university students (recollecting their previous high school experience) suggested they had encountered this. On the other hand, there was re-assuring evidence from a number of groups that prescribed textbooks are being supplemented by teachers' own learning and teaching materials, including internet resources, PowerPoint and other IT resources. This was confirmed by Ministry officials, Tirana high school teachers, high school students in and outside Tirana, and Tirana university students (recollecting their previous high school experience). In reviewing future developments on Altertekst, it will be important to consider whether such a prescriptive textbook system is required, even one based on 'non-corrupt' competition, as the use of a contemporary variety of learning and teaching resources becomes embedded in the pedagogy of Albanian teachers.

If there were previously major corruption problems with a non-competitive monopoly textbook system completely controlled by the Ministry of Education, clearly major efforts have been made through the Altertekst system to increase competition and reduce corruption.

Recommendation 14: If continuing, the Altertekst system should be kept under ongoing review by the Albanian Government for possible further refinements. For example, the membership of the Textbooks Approval Commission could be extended more beyond the Ministry of Education, the robustness of the objectivity of selection to the textbook evaluation commissions needs to be continually reviewed, and texts could usefully be anonymised when presented to school commissions. Consideration should certainly also be given to simplifying the distribution and payment system, e.g. using the REDs as a conduit for aggregate ordering and payment (but aggregate ordering still based on school commission decisions). Consideration should also be given to simplifying the annual 'textbook by textbook' exercise by approving sets of books from a publisher for several years. More fundamentally, the Albanian Government should ask deeper questions about whether a disproportionate amount of time is absorbed in what is ultimately a rather traditional exercise. As teaching and learning approaches are increasingly based on a variety of resources, including IT resources, the 'prescribed text' approach may constrain innovation in teaching and learning. The Albanian Government should also reflect on whether the time and energy devoted to eliminating corruption in textbook systems may be better spent on combating

other forms of corruption within the education system, such as those described elsewhere in this Risk Analysis.

***Timescale:* All relevant issues to be reviewed during school session 2011-2012, with any consequent developments implemented for session 2012-2013.**

9 THE ROMA

Specific attention was given to the position of the Roma community in relation to the Albanian education system. Roma leaders demonstrated an impressive commitment to raising awareness among the Roma people of the importance of education. However, they recognise they face major challenges in connecting their people fully with the education system. Generally, the involvement of the young in Roma business (such as second hand clothes, scrap metal etc.) limits the time they can make available for education. There are also particular challenges with the two (of five) tribes who travel most and settle least. Therefore, very few Roma young people attend high school, their objective being to finish Year 9. Currently, there are no Roma school teachers, although some Roma young people are now attending university.

More particularly, the Roma leaders highlighted financial issues with accessing textbooks. Effectively, they appeared to claim these are never provided free. What seems to happen is that publishers charge the Roma, but there then appears to be an assumption publishers should issue receipts which the Roma can use to reclaim costs of textbooks. It appears these receipts are not being issued. The Roma leaders emphasised strongly that the desired level of Roma school attendance will not happen 'until the textbook problem is solved'.

In addition to the financial issues associated with textbooks, the Roma leaders emphasised their people cannot access private tutoring because it is too expensive. This consequently disadvantages Roma young people, especially 'as their teachers lose interest in them'.

The Roma leaders also raised the issue of Roma children being directed to 'predominantly' Roma schools, thus creating a barrier to equality of treatment and social integration.

The Roma leaders called for differentiated social policies for the Roma, and that the World Bank and other external funding provided for such purposes must be demonstrably spent on the Roma. Their key request is for the establishment/re-establishment of social centres for the Roma. These centres would provide pre-school education; a place for school attendees to work on school work outside school hours (including the opportunity to meet teachers); and adult literacy support. These centres had been provided before (Swedish funding was mentioned) and had been very successful, including with the travelling tribes. However, they have not existed for the last two/three years.

Achieving appropriate social inclusion of the Roma community is an important challenge for the Government.

Recommendation 15: The Albanian Government should commit fully to differentiated social policies for the Roma community, and to transparently spending on the Roma all external funding provided for this purpose. However, this should not mean directing Roma children to predominantly Roma schools. Rather, priority should be given to the development of social centres for the Roma, providing opportunities for pre-school education, supportive contexts for school attendees, and adult literacy support. Free provision of school textbooks should also be fully guaranteed for Roma families (e.g., through the Government issuing Roma families with purchase coupons equivalent to the price of the textbooks).

Timescale: Implementation during school session 2011-2012, including the opening of social centres.

10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

As emphasised in the Introduction, this paper focuses on an analysis of issues within Albania's public education system. Subsequently, a separate paper will be produced analysing issues with the Albanian private education system. Longer-term, it will be important for both papers to be considered together. This will avoid any false impression that there are only issues with Albanian public education, and none with private education. This is particularly relevant when considering the public universities. Despite any issues identified with the public universities, evidence gathered showed a clear general preference in Albania for public over private universities in terms of quality.

Regarding the public education system, this paper has identified a wide range of issues to be addressed. The Albanian Government will need to create the most positive conditions possible to recruit and prepare the highest quality public school teachers, who must be able to work in an environment which guarantees them appropriate staffing levels, and within which staff appointments and career development are treated in a transparent and fair fashion. The credibility of the public secondary school system must be strengthened by the elimination of private tutoring of their own students by public school teachers, and the elimination of cheating and other corrupt practices within the State Matura. Similarly, while the public universities are generally more highly regarded than the private universities, strong measures are required to eliminate 'vulgar corruption' within them. While aspects of the Alternative Textbook system should be kept under ongoing review, the time and energy which to date has been devoted to developing this system may now be better spent addressing other forms of corruption within education. Finally, the Government must pursue appropriately differentiated social policies towards the Roma community, if this community is to be fully included within the education system.

Underlying these specific actions, the Government must ensure it demonstrates a commitment to respecting the integrity of the Albanian public education system, i.e. that the public education system exists to provide the highest-quality educational experiences for its students at all levels, and that it should be staffed on this basis. The Government must make clear it is inappropriate to use the education system as a means of allocating jobs and other favours on the basis of personal and political connection. In particular, the Government must ensure it sets a framework for an education system based on ethical principles in public life. For example, central to this will be the clear establishment of a positive Code of Conduct, and Standards, for the teaching profession, which must ensure the total commitment of all teachers to the highest standards of professional ethics. This will include recognition of the inappropriateness of private tutoring, and of inadequate supervision of public examinations, both of which undermine the integrity of public education. Of course, this 'bottom up' commitment to ethical principles in public life from the teaching profession must be matched by a similar commitment from all sectors of society. As discussed in Section 3, all Albanians must recognise that it is not justified to be either the 'giver' or the 'receiver' in seeking corrupt advantage. While requiring this universal 'bottom up' commitment to ethical principles in public life, it must finally be stressed that this does not remove the need for the Government to take specific responsibility in initiating and supporting such developments.

11 REFERENCES

General Literature and Resources

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) (2008) *Code of Professionalism and Conduct*, Edinburgh: General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Hallack, J. & Poisson, M. (2007) *Corrupt schools, corrupt universities: What can be done?*, Paris: The International Institute for Educational Planning.

McKinsey and Co. (2007) *How the World's Best-performing School Systems Come Out on Top*. Available online at

http://www.mckinsey.com/App_Media/Reports/SSO/Worlds_School_Systems_Final.pdf

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005) *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*, Paris: OECD Publications. Online at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/39/47/34990905.pdf>

Scottish Executive (2005) *Ambitious, Excellent Schools – Standard for Headship*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Specific Documents on Albania, especially as made available by PACA staff

Albanian Government (2007) *On the System of Appraisal of Civil Servants' Annual Individual Achievements – Instruction No. 2 of 7 July 2000, Updated with Instruction No. 5 of 19 December 2007*, Tirana: Albanian Government.

Albanian Government (2011) *Annual Appraisal Form (for Civil Servants) – Appendix A*, Tirana: Albanian Government – no date, but made available to external experts by PACA staff, April 2011.

Albanian Student Government supported by Open Society Institute Budapest & Tirana (2005) *Survey: Regarding the perception and experience of the Albanian Student Community concerning the level of the Corruption, Abuses and Transparency in the Albanian Public Universities*, Tirana: Albanian Student Government Supported by Open Society Institute Budapest & Tirana.

Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA), Albania (2009) *Corruption in Albania: Perception and Experience - Survey 2009*, produced for United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA), Albania (2010) *Corruption in Albania: Perception and Experience – Survey 2010*, produced for United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Ministry of Education and Science (2010a) *Order No. 120 of 25.02.2010 on The Holding of Consultation to the Benefit of Pupils of IX Class of the Main Education*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science.

Ministry of Education and Science (2010b) *Order No. 121 of 25.02.2010 on Conducting a Consultation Meeting to the Benefit of Matura Pupils*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science.

Ministry of Education and Science (2010c) *Reviewed Law on Pre-University Education ('Final Draft' of May 2010)*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science.

Ministry of Education and Science (2010d) *Collective Employment Contract 2010-2014 (signed with Independent Trade Union of Education in Albania [ITUE] and Federation of Trade Unions of Education in Albania [FTUEA] on 25 May 2010)*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science.

Ministry of Education and Science (2010e) *Instruction No. 22 of 29 July 2010 "On Appointment of Academic and Management Staff for Undergraduate Education"*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science (Note: the term translated as 'Undergraduate' in the title of this document clearly refers to pre-school and school education, i.e. pre-university).

Ministry of Education and Science (2010f) *Existing criteria and procedures relating to the recruitment and promotion of education sector employees* – no date, place of publication and author, but made available by PACA staff to external experts, November 2010.

Ministry of Education and Science (2010g) *Basic General Standards For Teachers* – no date, place of publication and author, but made available by PACA staff to external experts, November 2010, as one of a set of Ministry documents.

Ministry of Education and Science (2011a) *State Quality Standards of Higher Education Institutions (HEI)*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science – no date (although relates to article 61 of the law no. 9741 of 21.5.2007), but made available by PACA staff to external experts, April 2011.

Ministry of Education and Science (2011b) *Information Package: "Altertekst 2010-2011"*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science – no date, but made available by PACA staff to external experts, April 2011.

Ministry of Education and Science (2011c) *Regulation on the Conduct of the 2011 State Matura Examination in the Republic of Albania, 6.01.2011*, Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science.

Open Society Foundation for Albania (The SOROS Foundation) (2008) *The Teachers' Code of Conduct and Its Regulatory Mechanism (Final Draft)* – no place of publication, but made available by PACA staff to external experts.

Project Against Corruption In Albania (PACA) (2010a) *Technical Paper on Corruption in the Albania Education System prepared by Pellumb Karameta, Council of Europe Expert, Council of Europe/European Union.*

Project Against Corruption In Albania (PACA) (2010b) *Technical Paper on the Albanian Teachers' Code of Conduct and its Regulatory Mechanism prepared by John Anderson (General Teaching Council for Scotland), Council of Europe Expert, Council of Europe/European Union*

Project Against Corruption In Albania (PACA) (2010c) *Technical Paper on Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology Guide prepared by Quentin Reed, PACA Team Leader, and Mark Philp, Council of Europe Expert, Council of Europe/European Union.*

World Bank (2010) *Albania School Stakeholder Survey and Field Experiment* – no date and place of publication, but the Appendix was made available by PACA staff to external experts in November 2010.