

Gent Sejko: Empowering internal audit

Special address by Mr Gent Sejko, Governor of the Bank of Albania, at the IIA Albania (Institute of Internal Auditors Albania) International Conference 2026 "Empowering internal audit", Tirana, 11 May 2026.

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Dear participants,

Dear Mr Anthony Pugliese, President & CEO, The IIA Global

Dear Ms Barlow, CEO, ECIIA

Honourable Minister Malaj,

Dear representatives of national and international institutions,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address you at this international conference, which is of particular importance for the future of internal auditing in Albania and across the region.

The fact that Albania is hosting, for the first time, such high-level representation at the global, European, and national levels in this field is a clear testament to the progress achieved in strengthening institutions, advancing good governance, and reinforcing the transparency framework.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Institute of Internal Auditors Albania (IIA Albania), the Albanian Association of Banks, and the Internal Audit Committee for their active and sustained commitment to strengthening the profession and advancing its standards in our country.

The presence today of senior representatives of the Institute of Internal Auditors at both global and European level lends particular significance to this Conference, by helping to build a stronger bridge of cooperation between Albania and the most advanced international practices.

For the Bank of Albania and the broader banking system, internal audit represents a fundamental pillar of financial stability, institutional integrity, and trust. Law on banks and our regulatory framework place particular emphasis on internal governance, risk management, and independent control functions, with internal audit serving as a key mechanism for safeguarding the soundness and sustainability of financial institutions.

In a financial environment undergoing rapid transformation-from digitalisation and technological innovation to emerging cyber risks and broader global challenges-the role of internal auditing is becoming increasingly strategic. It is no longer solely a control function, but a crucial component in preventing risk, improving process, and supporting the sound decision-making.

Against this backdrop, the Bank of Albania has continued to strengthen its internal audit function as a key component of the third line of defence, demonstrating a high level of professional maturity and alignment with international standards.

Through external quality assessments (EQA) and periodic self-assessments, the strengthening of reporting lines and cooperation with the Audit Committee and the Supervisory Council, as well as active engagement in strategic initiatives such as Operational Risk Management (ORM) and Business Continuity Management (BCM), internal auditing has contributed to enhancing institutional transparency, accountability, and resilience.

In this context, Albania's progress towards the harmonisation of internal auditing standards with European and international best practices represents a development of significant importance. The 2025 Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) represent an important step towards the modernisation of the profession and the strengthening of institutional quality and effectiveness. This conference demonstrates Albania's firm commitment to building stronger, more transparent, and more accountable institutions, in line with the country's European integration aspirations.

I am confident that the cooperation among public institutions, the banking sector, professional organisations, and international partners will continue to deliver tangible results in strengthening governance and safeguarding financial stability.

On behalf of the Bank of Albania, I congratulate the organisers on this important initiative and wish you a successful and fruitful conference.

Thank you!