

**Address by Mrs. Lindita Milo
Head of the Competition Authority**

Honorable Mr. Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy!
Honorable colleagues and participants!

On its fifth anniversary, the Competition Authority is honored by the attention and the presence of senior representatives of national and international actors.

On the 3rd of March 2004, the Competition Authority adopted its first decree. That date marks the starting of its activity and its functioning as an independent public institution, voted by Parliament and accountable to it.

The Competition Authority is not merely an institutional designation, but its very existence testifies the importance of competition as an inevitable phenomenon of market economy. Our Constitution defines the Albanian economy as a market-oriented economy. It has been argued in theory and verified in practice that the competition is a necessity for the functioning of the market, the promotion of innovation and productivity, and the creation of opportunities for economic growth and social welfare. But markets do not always operate according to their laws. The anti-competition behavior of market players produces either directly, or indirectly an impact on consumer welfare. The market is not a "jungle", but has rules, and one of the main institutions that monitors the observance of these rules is the Competition Authority.

After five years of experience, the Competition Authority has at its records many cases of interference in the market, but not only that. The positive response to the requirements of the institution for the protection of competition and the increasing the number of complaints filed with the Competition Authority by market players, show that the business considers us as its partner. The increasing number of assessments and reviews by the Competition Authority in the drafting process of normative acts, demonstrate the continued growth of advocacy and culture of competition. Furthermore, the confirmation of the most important decisions of the Competition Commission by the judiciary suggests that the enforcement of competition law can not be accomplished with efficiency if not properly taken into account by all the institutions and the market players.

Like the economy itself, the institution of competition has continuously improved the tools of law enforcement, but above all, we have considered the increase of professionalism and transparency as the main directions of our activity.

Cooperation with all the market players, public institutions and consumer protection bodies is considered as important element in the achievement of our objectives for fair play in the market and for a better welfare.

The media is our permanent ally, as a receptor of public concerns and as a conduit of our activity. The cooperation of our institution with the media is a necessity under the

conditions of the involvement of our economy into an increasingly global economic system.

After these five years we are more objective in assessing our activity and are in a better position to define more clearly the difficulties and problematic of the development of our institution. We are supported by the Albanian Government and the Parliament in our objective to enhance the professional capacity of our human resources. Also, we are backed by our international partners that have enabled us to participate in regional forums.

Personally, I feel privileged and honored to chair of the Competition Authority in this anniversary, a truly independent institution, but with many challenges ahead.

Dear friends! While thanking you for your presence, I invite you to join in the discussion as programmed in today's agenda.