



TELEGRAM DIPLOMATIK

ALBANIAN MFA NEWSLETTER

► Minister Ditmir Bushati participates in Vienna Summit



Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati participated in the proceedings of Vienna Summit for the Western Balkans, as part of the delegation of the Republic of Albania headed by the Prime Minister, Edi Rama, including the Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship Mr. Arben Ahmetaj, as well.

This summit followed last year's Berlin Summit and aimed particularly at advancing the agenda on infrastructural, road and energy interconnection among regional countries and EU, deepening cooperation on issues dealing with youth education, qualification, employment and movement, addressing issues in bilateral relations, as well as challenges faced by Western Balkans and EU countries.

On the first day of activities in Vienna, dedicated to the role of civil society, Minister Bushati attended the proceedings of the first session on "The role of EU in solving bilateral disputes in the Western Balkans, tackling tomorrow's issues today".

In his speech, Minister Bushati highlighted that: "Bilateral issues in the past have hindered EU accession process and questioned its credibility and predictability. To avoid all ambiguity, it is crucial to tackle bilateral issues at an early stage of EU accession and couple solution mechanisms with EU incentives, including instruments to support economic development".

The same day, the Prime Minister Edi Rama participated in the Civil Society Forum, which focused on regional cooperation and the role of civil society. During this meeting, the agreement for opening the office of regional youth cooperation, on the initiative of Prime Ministers Rama and Vucic, was also promoted.

ISSUE NO.14, 31 August 2015

Table of contents

- **Minister Bushati participates in Vienna Summit**
- **Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati in the proceedings of the 2nd day of Western Balkans Vienna Summit**
- **Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati holds working visit to Macedonia**
- **Albanian Government granted a fund of 50.000 euro in support of the emergency situation caused by floods in #Tetovo**
- **Republic of Moldova abolishes visas for Albanian citizens**
- **Interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania Mr.Ditmir Bushati for Handelsblatt**
- **A library with books in Albanian language opens in the Albanian Embassy to the USA**
- **A Forum for the establishment of the Union of Students and Diaspora was held in Prishtina**
- **The energy-security nexus in south-east Europe, Ditmir Bushati, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania and an ECFR Council member**

➤ Foreign Minister Bushati in the proceedings of the 2nd day of Western Balkans Vienna Summit



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ditsmir Bushati, took part in the proceedings of the second day of the Western Balkans Vienna Summit.

Discussions on existing structures of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, how to address bilateral issues without affecting the European integration process, and youth cooperation as a promoter of reconciliation and normalization of relations, were held in the context of Foreign Affairs Ministers segment. In addition, Europe's and our region's current challenges, including those economic and humanitarian, were addressed in this segment.

In his speech, Minister Bushati underlined that "Berlin Process has produced concrete positive steps as Western Balkan countries have shown that they can deliver on their collective promises. Once we had a stability pact. Today, we have a connectivity pact and we need also a development pact".

Concluding the meeting with a joint declaration on bilateral issues, Foreign Affairs Ministers agreed that bilateral open issues must not hinder integrating processes of regional countries.

Foreign Minister **Bushati** holds working visit to **Macedonia**



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Mr. Ditmir Bushati, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Mr. Daniel Mitov, were guests of honor of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, Mr. Nikola Popovski, at the Conference of Ambassadors organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia.

Ministers Bushati, Popovski and Mitov, taking the floor at the Conference of Ambassadors, focused on the key issues of EU foreign policy and EU membership prospects, on issues concerning NATO cooperation, the perspective of preparations for the Warsaw Summit, importance of expansion of cooperation and interoperability for our region, as well as on good neighborly relations. The Ministers also held a trilateral meeting where they discussed on strengthening cooperation between countries and the latest developments in the region.

At the press conference, Minister Bushati focused on the latest developments in Macedonia and regional cooperation, highlighting that: "The full implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and improvement of interethnic relations are compass to democratic stability of Macedonia. It would be a positive impact on relations with Albania and sustainability of state-building reforms in Macedonia".

In addition, appreciating and supporting Macedonia's democratic aspirations and the path of development and Euro-Atlantic integration, Minister Bushati expressed support for the process of reforms agreed with EU, undertaken by Macedonia, and stressed the importance of such reforms for inter-ethnic relations, improving living conditions and better representation of Albanians.

At the end of the meeting, the three ministers signed a joint statement on the Euro-Atlantic integrating process in the region.

During his visit to Macedonia, Minister Bushati stopped in Tetovo where he was received by the Mayor, Mrs. Teuta Arifi. She informed the Albanian Foreign Minister on the current situation and the measures taken to cope with the flooding. She also thanked for the commitment and contribution of the Albanian government to assist in dealing with the situation. Minister Bushati together with Mayor Arifi visited the areas inhabited by Albanians in Tetovo, affected by the floods of the 2nd of August. During his meetings with residents, Minister Bushati showed Tirana's interest and attention on the situation and expressed deepest sympathy and condolences of Albanian Government and people to those who lost their lives.

In the framework of this visit, Minister Bushati held a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia for European Affairs, Mr. Fatmir Besimi. They discussed on the latest developments in Macedonia. Minister Bushati highlighted the need to fully implement, without any delay, the Ohrid Agreement, as the compass for the future and stability of Macedonia and anchoring it to the flows of Euro-Atlantic integration. Furthermore, Minister Bushati held a meeting with a group of Albanian civil society representatives with whom he discussed developments in the country and the contribution of civil society in the consolidation of democratic processes.

► **Albanian Government** granted a fund of **50.000 euro** in support of the emergency situation caused by floods in **#Tetovo**



► **Republic of Moldova** abolishes visa for **Albanian citizens**

Starting from the 31st of July 2015, Albanian Citizens can travel without visas in the Republic of Moldova.

➤ Interview of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania Mr. **Ditmir Bushati**, with **Handelsblatt**



Mr. Foreign Minister, according to a survey by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, almost two-thirds of Albanians aged from 14 to 29 want to migrate. Why?

I do not consider this number as an absolute and immediate wish to emigrate. It rather is an expression of the desire for improvement of the existing conditions and a rapid accession to the EU.

What are the measures the government is taking to lower/ reduce the number of people departing and crossing borders illegally to reach Central and Northern Europe?

It is already one year that this immigration phenomenon exists in such a considerable dimension. We are making all endeavors, in close cooperation with our neighboring countries, but also with the target countries, especially Germany, to tackle this problem.

What does this mean?

Currently we are developing an awareness campaign in the country to inform potential applicants from Albania. There are certain groups in our country, who try to do business with the departure of our citizens and therefore manipulate public opinion. We are active on several fronts. We contrast towing gangs supporting police forces and want to bring all those responsible behind bars.

How big is the potential of refugees in Albania?

I cannot refer to exact figures. But the potential of immigrants is a big concern to the Albanian Government. Thus, we are looking for a full and comprehensive cooperation with Germany in particular, to put an end to such a practice as soon as possible. We have agreed on this with Chancellor Merkel as well, on her visit to Albania, a few weeks ago. While cooperation between police forces has taken the right direction, we should

What do you tell to your citizens who are willing to migrate through this awareness campaign?

People need to understand that there is a difference between unrestricted travel in the Schengen area, and illegal immigration. There are many people in Albania, who are driven by criminal forces to leave, because supposedly there are so many job opportunities and social services in Central and Northern Europe. We strive to make clear to our citizens that every applicant will be sent back, that appropriate job opportunities and a decent life are not possible/ not given to refugees in destination countries.

Original Interview for Handelsblatt here:

<http://www.handelsblatt.com/>

► A library with books in Albanian language opens in the Albanian Embassy to the USA



Active, united and very devoted, the Albanian community in Washington DC and surrounding areas wants to contribute to bring to life initiatives to the benefit of the community and the whole nation. Connected spiritually with Albania, although too far, they want to talk as much as possible in their mother tongue, teach it to their children, preserve, cultivate and follow art, culture and customs of the Albanian heritage.

In this contexts, on 6 August 2015, during an event at the premises of the Albanian Embassy to the USA, a library with Albanian books was inaugurated thanks to the commitment and cooperative spirit of the staff of the Embassy, but above all to the support of the Albanian community in DC who contributed with various books.

► A Forum for the establishment of the Union of Students and Diaspora was held in Prishtina

A Forum for the establishment of the Union of Students and Youth in Diaspora was held in Prishtina, in the framework of the Migrant Day.

The participants were welcomed by Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Isa Mustafa and Diaspora Minister, Valon Murati. Albanian Minister of Welfare and Youth, Blendi Klosi, was also among the guests.



► The energy-security nexus in south-east Europe

Ditmir Bushati, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania and an ECFR Council member

Energy was one of the tools the European Union's founding fathers used to initiate the reconciliation of the old continent more than 60 years ago. Today as ever before, energy remains one of the most pressing challenges for both the EU and its candidate countries.

Looking back at energy security developments in the past decade, it seems that Europe has been able to overcome much of the East-West divide. But the North-South gap remains, especially when one considers energy investments and infrastructure.

This is probably one of the hidden fragilities of Europe's energy set-up. As recent crises in Europe's Eastern and Southern neighborhoods have consistently confirmed, energy security has become one of the most important geopolitical parameters of influence for third actors in south-east Europe.

It is against this background that on 20th July the Council of EU welcomed the EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan proposed jointly by the High Representative and the Commission. This Action Plan seeks to initiate new synergies with EU partners and facilitate the diversification of energy connections and providers.

The Council Conclusions on EU Energy Diplomacy rightly point out that "diplomatic support should focus on the Southern Gas Corridor and the strategic potential of the Eastern-Mediterranean region". Indeed, as the Nabucco and South Stream sagas have taught us, virtual pipelines can create uncertainty, disappointment and geopolitical stress among regional, European and global actors. Furthermore, the euro-crisis also needs to be factored in when it comes to the way countries react to the regional energy security conundrum.

In this muddled context, the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) currently remains the only tangible project of the wider South Corridor.

TAP's first stage of construction started only few weeks ago in Albania and with its completion the country will be in a position to become an energy hub, enabling the supply of neighboring countries through the much needed Ionian Adriatic Pipeline (IAP), a missing piece in south-east Europe's energy security toolkit.

These pipelines will considerably diversify South-east Europe's energy supply whilst helping to avoid high prices and unpleasant events such as the epic standoffs Eastern Europe has been witnessing over the past decade.

The fact that the EU is currently focusing on the consolidation of the European energy market and sees the SEE countries as important partners in this process, is certainly a further step in the right direction. Moreover, the Action Plan of Energy Diplomacy underlines the necessity of taking advantage of existing financial instruments, such as the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, to support energy diversification policies and the transformation of the energy systems. But this is not enough.

Article published at: ecfr.eu

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Blv. Gjergj Fishta, No. 6, Tirana, Albania. www.punetejashtme.gov.al;
Follow us on FB / Ministria e Puneve te Jashtme; Twitter @AlbanianMFA; Instagram: AlbanianMFA**