



TELEGRAM DIPLOMATIK

ALBANIAN MFA NEWSLETTER

Meeting of **SEECP** Ministers of Foreign Affairs takes place in **Tirana**



On 22 May 2015, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati chaired the meeting of Foreign Ministers of participating countries of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), in the context of the completion of the SEECP Albanian Chairmanship, from June 2014 to June 2015.

The meeting was attended by representatives of 13 SEECP participating countries, as well as representatives of the European Union, the European Commission, Austria and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the latter as special guests of the Albanian Chairmanship.

Ministers discussed the political situation and recent developments in the region, the level of cooperation and good neighborly relations, as essential elements for the further development of Southeast Europe.

Under the auspices of Minister Bushati, Foreign Ministers of the SEECP also adopted a document on the improvement and adaptation of this initiative with regard to future challenges. In this context, Mr. Bushati encouraged the upcoming Bulgarian Chairmanship to continue working in this direction.

In the framework of our Chairmanship's priorities to strengthen the SEECP regional role, promote and boost dialogue between member countries and consolidate the sectorial importance of this initiative, Minister Bushati put the emphasis on activities organized under the Albanian Chairmanship and our achievements in this regard.

He underlined that the Albanian Chairmanship was dynamic and well-oriented, with a calendar of activities including areas such as safety, statistics, good governance and anti-corruption, networks of excellences, infrastructure, justice and internal affairs, culture, youth etc. These activities were held in cooperation with line ministries, international partners, civil society and the academic world.

Ministers gave messages of strong support to the process of integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. They stressed the positive impact that the EU integration has had in consolidating and maintaining peace and stability in the region as well as in enhancing its economic development.

Minister Bushati pointed out that the Albanian Chairmanship of the most important political forum in the region has been a significant political and diplomatic commitment for Albania, to further promote

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and confirm the role of our country's policy in the region and beyond. Furthermore, Minister Bushati stated that: "Neither peace nor stability should be taken for granted; they should become sustainable through our continuous efforts, concrete actions and above all, through our unwavering commitment to overcome bilateral differences inherited from the past and build the best future for our youth."

During the meeting, Foreign Ministers of member states supported the Tirana Summit Declaration, which will be adopted by the heads of state at the Summit to be held on 26 May 2015.

In the framework of the SEECP Ministerial, Minister Bushati held special bilateral meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, Mr. Fatmir Besimi, and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, Mr. Igor Lukšić.

During the meeting with Deputy PM Besimi the parties discussed the importance of finding a solution for the political crisis in Macedonia and the contribution to be given by politics in the safeguard and promotion of interethnic cohabitation. With regard to the tragic events in Kumanovo, Minister Bushati assured Albania's support for a full and transparent investigation process.

During the Meeting with Minister Lukšić, both counterparts pledged to advance the bilateral agenda and the agenda of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and committed to advancing bilateral and regional projects. Ministers Bushati and Lukšić signed an Agreement of Cooperation between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro in the context of EU accession.

The Annual Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) was also held in Tirana, in the framework of the Albanian Chairmanship of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP).

The meeting was jointly organized by the RCC Secretariat and the Albanian Chairmanship of the SEECP. The meeting was attended by representatives of about 50 countries and organizations which are members of this Council.

At the Annual Meeting of the RCC, co-chaired by Minister Bushati in his capacity as head of the SEECP Chairmanship and Goran Svilanovic, Secretary General of the RCC, talks focused on developments and achievements of regional cooperation in South East Europe, within the RCC framework.

In his speech, Minister Bushati praised the role of the RCC in transforming the common vision of regional cooperation into concrete projects. He stressed his belief that the RCC will continue to provide a substantial contribution to the joint efforts of our countries to deepen and further materialize this cooperation.

Minister Bushati stated that the RCC should act as an umbrella organization for all international and regional initiatives in our region. He expressed his firm belief that this meeting will provide a new impetus in our joint efforts to offer our people a peaceful and prosperous future in the common European family.

Minister Bushati participates in the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers



Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati attended the meeting of Foreign Ministers of NATO member countries, held on 13 - 14 May in Antalya, Turkey.

At this meeting, ministers of NATO member countries discussed a series of issues relevant to NATO and Euro-Atlantic security, such as the progress in the framework of the new NATO-led "Resolute Support" mission in Afghanistan, the political situation in Ukraine and NATO cooperation with this country, ways to respond to threats and security challenges in the eastern and southern flank of the Alliance, as well as expectations for the next NATO summit, to be held in Warsaw in summer 2016.

During the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), member countries expressed their solidarity with Ukrainian authorities and reaffirmed NATO's support to this important partner country. Talks focused on the political situation in Ukraine, as well as opportunities to expand the NATO-Ukraine cooperation.

On the second day, Foreign Ministers widely discussed key challenges facing the Euro-Atlantic security and optimal ways to respond to them. Special attention was paid to security challenges in the east and south of the Alliance, possibilities of increasing cooperation between NATO and the EU in this context, an all-inclusive approach of NATO towards security threats, as well as the prospect of the Alliance's enlargement.

Talks also focused on the fragile security situation in the Western Balkans, brought to the attention of the NATO Foreign Ministers as a result of the recent disturbing developments in Macedonia, a country which aspires to join NATO and the EU.

In his remarks, Minister Bushati highlighted the necessity of an international investigation, in order to fully shed light on what happened last weekend in the neighboring country.

Regarding the prospect of NATO enlargement, he called for a comprehensive commitment of the Alliance towards all Western Balkan countries based on clear criteria, with a view to consolidate our region from a security standpoint.

Underlining the fact that any further escalation of the situation does not serve the democratic stability and prosperity of Macedonia, Minister Bushati stated that the language of hatred and extremist actions must be replaced by the commitment towards basic human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the Euro Atlantic perspective of Macedonia.

Furthermore, Minister Bushati underlined that inter-ethnic harmony sanctioned in the Ohrid Agreement is essential for democratic stability and for the Euro Atlantic future of Macedonia.

Minister Bushati also reiterated Albania's active support for Montenegro's membership to NATO and the institutionalization of the Alliance's relations with Kosovo.

➤ Seventh meeting of SA Council between Albania and EU held in Brussels



On 18 May 2015, the Stabilisation and Association Council (SA Council) between Albania and the European Union held its seventh meeting in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the country holding the current EU Presidency.

The European Commission was represented by Mr Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, whereas the Albanian delegation, composed by Minister of European Integration Klajda Gjoshaj and Mrs Majlinda Bregu, Head of Parliamentary Commission on European Integration and of the National Council on European Integration, was headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati.

The SA Council gathers once a year to analyse the implementation of the SA Agreement and to review the progress of key reforms undertaken by Albania in the framework of the European integration process.

The council highlighted the progress of Albania towards meeting the political criteria for membership, in the fight against corruption and organised crime, as well as in the reform of the judiciary.

However, despite the achievements, Albania faces significant challenges and needs to intensify reforms in the five priority areas, especially those reforms dealing with the rule of law and the legal rule of economy.

The SA Council also noted that that constructive and inclusive political dialogue among all political actors in the country is essential for the sustainability of state building reforms.

With regards to economic criteria, the SA Council noted satisfactory record in the implementation of most assistance projects and the full engagement of the Albanian authorities in preparing IPA II.

In his address, Minister Bushati expressed the commitment of Albania to fulfilling the measures and criteria identified jointly with the European Commission in the roadmap on the five key priorities. He also stressed that “the accession process is a guide for the state building reforms as well as for the economic entrepreneurship in the country”.

Minister Bushati assessed that, in this context “we are keen to discuss with the commission a sequence and a timetable of steps that need to be undertaken, which can lead to the recommendation for the opening of accession talks. This gradual approach will help pace reforms and maintain the motivation of the public administration”.

“Recent events in our region have demonstrated the risk of a stalled EU integration process. In such a challenging geo-political context we expect the EU to send a strong political signal for the reform process and the reform minded political forces in the region”, said Minister Bushati.

At the end of the meeting, after exchanging views on the current situation in the Western Balkans, the SA Council welcomed Albania’s constructive role for the stability in the region and alignment to CFSP declarations and Council decisions.

During the press conference, Commissioner Hahn expressed his belief that Albania will continue its sustainable progress in its path towards EU integration.

➤ Minister Bushati participates in the Regional Cooperation Day



Minister Bushati took part in the Regional Cooperation Day, organised in Brussels by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and by the Baden-Württemberg representation to the EU.

In his address Minister Bushati introduced the performance of the SEECP Albanian CiO, underlining the appraisal of the EU Council for the role the SEECP plays in promoting regional cooperation and EU integration. “EU integration and regional cooperation are two interconnected processes that cannot avoid one-another, and in this respect all countries of the region need to align their development policies in the framework of the regional connectivity agenda”, said Minister Bushati.

➤ Conference on "Freedom of Expression and Media" held at MFA



On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the accession of the Republic of Albania to the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Council of Europe Office in Tirana and civil society, organized a conference entitled "Freedom of Expression and Media".

The conference was attended by personalities from the field of media, such as the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatovic, Deputy General Director of UNESCO, Mr. Getachew Engida, etc.

This conference aimed at discussing issues related to the freedom of expression and other fundamental rights, such as the right to belief and religion, as well as the role of the media and the fundamental values of a democratic and pluralistic society.

In his speech, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati, praised the 20-year long cooperation with the Council of Europe and the contribution of this organization in terms of freedom of expression, while in the meantime highlighting the indisputable importance of media freedom in the democratic development of societies and in the continuous improvement of standards.



Minister Bushati also underlined the comprehensive commitment of the Albanian government in improving the legal framework related to the freedom of media, as a vital instrument for the further democratization of the country.

Before the conference, Minister Bushati held a meeting with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatovic, during which he informed her about the state of freedom of expression in general and freedom of the media in particular, as well as on the reform of the legal framework on media, which upholds the highest international standards.

Ms. Mijatovic expressed her appreciation for the very good cooperation with the Albanian government, which she sees as an example to be shared with other Participating States to the OSCE. She also praised Albania's willingness to seek the expertise of her office, in light of our country's European integration.

Economic and Public Diplomacy ↓

➤ Fourth session of the Joint Albania-Croatia Commission on economic cooperation held in Tirana



In the framework of Economic Diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship organized the fourth session of the Joint Albania-Croatia Committee on economic cooperation.

Heads of delegations made a general assessment of the economic and commercial developments in Albania and Croatia and exchanged data and statistics on the performance of macroeconomic indicators, the inflow of foreign direct investments, measures taken by the respective governments to achieve sustainable economic growth, the main resources which will support this growth as well as the performance of economic policies in the development of the private sector. Parties also discussed issues of bilateral cooperation, putting the emphasis on the importance they attach to this cooperation and partnership, also in the framework of regional initiatives such as the Berlin Process, the Regional Cooperation Council, the Adriatic - Ionian Initiative, the Central European Initiative etc.

At the end of the fourth session, parties decided that the fifth session of the Joint Committee on economic cooperation be held in Zagreb, on a date to be decided between the parties, through diplomatic channels.

Second session of the **Albania-Hungary** Joint Commission on **economic cooperation** held in Tirana



In the framework of Economic Diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship held in Tirana, on 20-21 May 2015, the Second Session of the Albania-Hungary Joint Intergovernmental Committee on economic cooperation.

The Albanian delegation was headed by the Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship, Mrs. Brunilda Paskali and the Hungarian delegation by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. László Szabó.

Heads of delegations assessed the economic and trade developments in both countries, reiterated their objectives and achievements in their economic policies and discussed issues of bilateral cooperation, the further boost of economic and trade relations, encouragement and promotion of investments, recognition and diversification of markets and improvement of the structure of goods.

Parties reaffirmed their full commitment to intensify cooperation in all fields of economy, especially in the promotion of economic cooperation and mutual investments, concrete joint projects in the fields of energy, railway infrastructure, water management, agriculture and food industry, where the Hungarian expertise is very important.

Based on comparative advantages of each country and on the value chain, parties agreed that it is necessary to increase efforts and work towards the exchange of information on products, markets and requests aiming at diversifying and improving the structure of bilateral trade of goods and reducing the trade balance deficit.

Conclusions were reflected in the document of the Protocol on Economic Cooperation, which was signed at the end of the meeting by Mrs. Paskali and Mr. Szabó.

Parties also agreed to hold the third session of the Albania-Hungary Joint Intergovernmental Committee on economic cooperation, in Budapest, 2016, on a date to be decided between the parties, through diplomatic channels.

The proceedings of this committee were also accompanied by the business forum, organized in cooperation between the chambers of commerce of Tirana and Hungary. Participants in this forum were welcomed by Deputy Minister Paskali and Deputy Minister Szabó. This was later followed by B2B meetings with the aim of recognizing and sharing data by building promising bridges of cooperation and partnership in the future.

Week of **British-Albanian** Culture in **London**

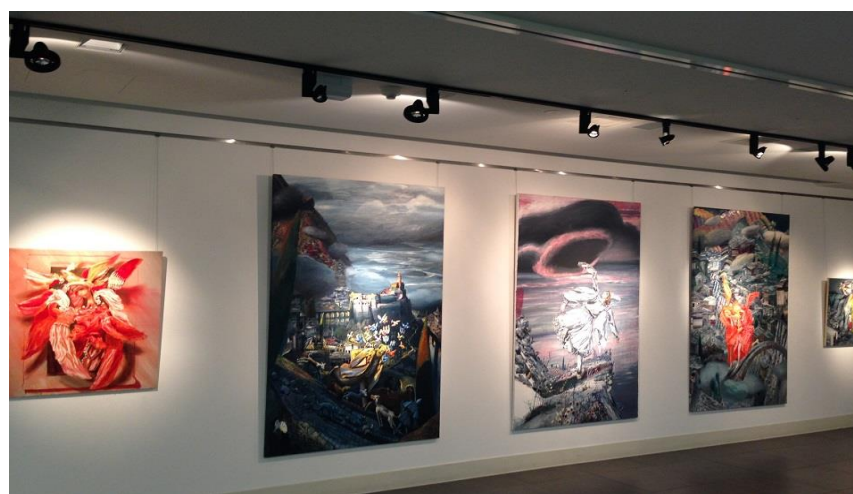
The Albanian Embassy in the UK, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo, is organizing the week of British-Albanian Culture, which takes place in London.

This event started on 28 May with the personal exhibition of Bashkim Ahmeti Izano, entitled "Homage to Edward Lear" at the premises of Europe House.

On 29 May, Dr. Enver Bytyçi, Executive Director of the Institute for South-East European Studies, promoted his book "Coercive Diplomacy of NATO in Kosovo" at the premises of the Kosovo Embassy to the UK.

On 31 May a ceremony for the donation of the album "Songs of Motherland" was organized at the Albanian Embassy in London. This album, comprising of some of the most well-known Albanian songs, was brought to life thanks to musician Adelina Hoxha and Maestro Robert Radoja.

The week of British-Albanian Culture, which will come to an end on 4 June 2015, will continue with activities such as the promotion of the book "Agents of Empire, knights, corsairs, Jesuits and spies in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean World", an Albanian story of the 16th century written by sir Noel Malcolm,



and the presentation entitled "Life of US Ambassador Herman Bernstein and the Albanian Jewish Relations as a model of religious tolerance", a history of Jewish-Albanian relations in the context of the tragic events of Paris and Denmark.

➤ 45 years of diplomatic relations between Albania and Denmark



On 29 May 2015, the Albanian Embassy in Copenhagen organized different events to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Denmark.

The activities organized on this occasion gathered high representatives from the Danish Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, the Danish MFA and Ombudsman, representatives of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Denmark, members of Albanian organizations operating in Denmark, etc.

One of the activities organized in the framework of the events for the commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Denmark was the exhibition of the Albanian painter Elidon Haliti, entitled "Taste of Albania", which met the interest of all those present.