



TELEGRAM DIPLOMATIK

ALBANIAN MFA NEWSLETTER

► MFA hosts annual ceremony on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day



On 27 January 2015, under the auspices of Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati and in collaboration with UN Agencies in Albania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the annual ceremony on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

This ceremony was attended by ministers of the Cabinet, representatives of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Tirana, MPs, representatives of religious communities and civil society, as well as members of families who survived the Holocaust.

During this ceremony, the floor was taken by Minister Bushati, the UN Resident Coordinator in Tirana, Mrs. Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun and the Ambassador of Israel in our country, Mr. David Cohen, who in their speeches praised the Albanian example of interreligious tolerance, especially nowadays, when the world is endangered by extremism.

This year, the ceremony on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, held in the premises of the National History Museum, was accompanied by photographs of the Besa exhibition, whose main focus are Albanian protagonists that helped saving Jewish people during World War II.

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► Minister Bushati meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi

On 12 January 2015, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati met with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral cooperation and the further intensification of the excellent strategic relations between our two countries. The interlocutors exchanged views on areas of bilateral cooperation,

focusing on strengthening the comprehensive cooperation based on the strategic document signed in Prizren on 11 January 2014. Furthermore, they discussed the importance of establishing law and order throughout the territory of Kosovo in close cooperation with EULEX and KFOR, as a "sine qua non" condition for the consolidation and legitimacy of the state of Kosovo.

Once again, Minister Bushati reiterated the serious and concrete commitment and readiness of Albania to provide its experience and comprehensive support by strongly lobbying for the Euro-Atlantic integration of Kosovo, its international recognition and membership to regional initiatives and international organizations. Moreover, they discussed the possibility for our two governments to mutually engage in the spirit of



the Berlin Conference in 2014, which created the political framework to intensify regional cooperation and define a collective vision for the future of the Western Balkans, namely our two countries and especially with regard to our strategic partner, the European Union. Ministers expressed concern about recent events in France and took this opportunity to state that Albania and Kosovo will support the anti-terror coalition in the fight against terrorism, which is a threat to all peoples and states and it must be fought with force and without compromises. At the end of the meeting, the two ministers and the respective delegations focused on the level of cooperation between the two governments, on the eve of the second joint meeting which will be held in March 2015, aiming at setting up new goals for the future.

➤ Minister Bushati meets with Foreign Minister of Macedonia Nikola Poposki



Euro-Atlantic integration path of Macedonia, Minister Bushati described the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement as being of vital interest to the internal stability of Macedonia and a compass of democratic state-building and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Minister Bushati stated that "the full and rigorous implementation of the Ohrid Agreement serves the establishment of mutual trust between communities and the European and Euro-Atlantic future of Macedonia". For this reason, he asked for a greater commitment by the Government of Macedonia in this regard.

On 26 January 2015, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, Nikola Poposki. During the meeting, Minister Bushati assured his counterpart that Albania supports the integrity, sovereignty, stability and prosperity of Macedonia, and reiterated the special attention and importance that Albania attaches to the further development of friendly relations between our two countries.

By praising and supporting the democratic aspirations and

On his part, Minister Poposki appreciated Albania's support with regard to bilateral cooperation and the Euro-Atlantic integration of Macedonia. Moreover, he underlined the commitment of the government of Macedonia to continue implementing reforms that lead to this goal. The two ministers praised the current bilateral political progress,

noting that the level of economic cooperation does not match that of political cooperation. In this context, both ministers put the emphasis on the further intensification of cooperation in the economic field.

Furthermore, they discussed the commitment of our two governments, in the spirit of the Berlin Conference, to identify joint projects in infrastructure and energy, as well as to find ways for funding them. The two Foreign Ministers expressed concern about recent events in France, underlining that Albania and Macedonia will be standing alongside the anti-terror coalition in the fight against terrorism.

At the end of the meeting, the two ministers talked about the preparations for holding the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the SEECP member countries in Tirana, on 23-24 February 2015, a process which this year is chaired by Albania.

➤ Deputy MFA and MFA SG meet Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Emigration



The parties reconfirmed the very good level of relations between the two countries and the support and assistance of the Belgian government to the process of Albania's EU integration. They also underlined the efficient cooperation in all areas, including that between Albanian and Belgian authorities on immigration and asylum issues.

State Secretary Francken praised the cooperation with Albanian authorities. In this context, both parties agreed to take further steps in addressing problems encountered in this field.

Mr. Francken underlined that the aim of his visit was to exchange information and experience with a view to deal with issues of asylum seekers and repatriation of prisoners, for which he found the full understanding and support from Albanian authorities.

On 21 January 2015, MFA Deputy Minister Odeta Barbullushi and MFA Secretary General Qirjako Qirko met with the Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration, Theo Francken.

By reiterating that visa liberalization for Albanian citizens is not endangered, Mr. Francken underlined that addressing the asylum-seeking phenomenon remains an important goal in the cooperation between our two countries.

► First trilateral meeting between Italy, Albania and Serbia held in Rome

The first trilateral meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Italy, H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, Albania, H.E. Mr. Ditmir Bushati and Serbia, H.E. Mr. Ivica Dacic was held on 23 January 2015 in Rome.

This meeting was mainly focused on concrete cooperation of trilateral interest in the fields of energy, transport, infrastructure and fight against terrorism; addressing issues of common European perspective and development of regional countries through the promotion of regional projects; strengthening security in the region through cooperation and interaction with European and Euro-Atlantic institutions; regional cooperation and its all-inclusive character.

Some key issues discussed at this meeting were common challenges and processes of the European integration of Albania and Serbia and the entire Balkan region, with a view to coordinate further steps for the opening of accession negotiations for Albania and their continuation with Serbia, with Italy's support and a regional approach within the framework of the Berlin Process.

This trilateral meeting comes as a natural and supporting dynamic result of the Berlin Process itself, initiated last year under the auspices of Chancellor Angela Merkel.



During the meeting, Foreign Ministers underlined the importance of Italy's active engagement in the region, as a catalyst for the establishment of a constructive climate and promotion of regional cooperation.

This meeting was preceded by a special meeting of Minister Bushati and his Italian

counterpart, Paolo Gentiloni, where they discussed various issues of bilateral and multilateral interest, regional developments as well as current issues of international importance.

► Minister Bushati holds official visit to Singapore



On 19-20 January 2015, MFA Ditmir Bushati held an official visit to Singapore. The focus of this visit was to develop political dialogue and intensify economic cooperation with Singapore, as one of the most developed Asian countries, with strong investment potential.

During this visit, Minister Bushati was received by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Kasiviswanathan Shanmugam, and held meetings with the Executive Director of the Board of Tourism, Mr. John Conceicao, the Group President of the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC), Mr. Lim Siong Guan, and the CEO of the Singapore Business Federation, Mr. Ho Meng Kit.

During the meeting with the Prime Minister, they assessed the very good existing relations and emphasized the need to further intensify them. Minister Bushati underlined that Albania holds a strategic position in the Balkans and serves as a gateway for foreign investments.

At the meeting with the Foreign Minister of Singapore, both parties discussed bilateral cooperation and its strengthening, especially in the field of economy and trade. Minister Bushati praised the excellent relations between the two countries and underlined the importance of further developing them in the future. The interlocutors concluded that parties should work together to explore all opportunities for investment and enhance economic cooperation.

Minister Bushati asked his counterpart for the recognition of Kosovo's independence, by reiterating that Kosovo is a reality recognized by a significant number of countries and its independence has increased stability and security in the region.

In the framework of bilateral cooperation, after their meeting, the two Foreign Ministers signed the "Agreement on Air Services". In the framework of his visit to Singapore, Minister Bushati also held meetings with the Board of Tourism and the Business Chamber. During these meetings, he provided an overview of the entire investment climate in our country and key points and sectors of the industry and economy, to which Albania offers many investment facilities

➤ Albanian Embassy in Paris organizes event to promote Albanian tourism

On 15 January 2015, in the premises of the Albanian Embassy in Paris, Minister Gjermani held a special meeting with representatives of the most prominent tourism operators from France and Albania, French media and representatives of Adria Airways and Transavia France (two airlines that will provide direct flights between Paris and Tirana starting respectively in March and July). Minister Gjermani made a presentation of the tourism opportunities Albania has to offer, responded to questions and held special meetings with some of those present, who were interested to know more about Albania.

The Minister invited a number of French journalists and tour operators to visit Albania in spring 2015, in a study visit organized and sponsored by the Albanian government, in cooperation with the abovementioned airlines and the Society of Albanian Tourism Operators.



➤ MFA and US Embassy in Tirana organize training on public diplomacy and media



On 28 – 29 January 2015, the Directorate for Economic and Public Diplomacy of the Albanian MFA, in cooperation with the Embassy of the United States to Albania, organized a training on public diplomacy and media.

The training aimed at introducing the importance of public diplomacy with regards to the promotion of a country and at reinforcing the skills of the participants when it comes to dealing with traditional and social media.

The training was attended by diplomats of the MFA as well as by Media Advisors of the Ministries of the Albanian Government.

➤ Five Albanian artists hold exhibition in Kuwait

"Reflections from Albania" was the title of a painting exhibition of five Albanian artists in Kuwait. This exhibition was organized by the Albanian embassy in cooperation with Kuwait NCCAL and the Albanian National Gallery of Arts. The exhibition was organized as part of the Al-Qurain Cultural Festival in Kuwait and will remain open until 17 January 2015.

Present at the opening ceremony were the NCCAL Secretary General, Mr. Ali Johua, NGA Director Artan Shabani, Kuwaiti citizens, business representatives, the media, the Albanian community in Kuwait, etc. Twenty-eight works by painters Shyqyri Sako, Ardian Isufi, Dhimitër Theodhori, Fani Zguro and Gazmend Leka were exhibited. Guests were very impressed with the art works of Albanian painters, which included landscapes, portraits, various installations, mixed media, graphics etc.



➤ Besa exhibition in Lucerne



On January 27th 2015, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birchenu, the embassies of Albania, the US, Kosovo and Israel to Switzerland held a joint commemorative ceremony.

The ceremony was held against the backdrop of the “Besa – A Code of Honour” exhibition, which has been touring Switzerland, showing portraits of Muslim Albanians who saved Jews during the Second World War. The Besa exhibition features portraits of Albanian Muslims or their descendants who saved Jews during World War Two, as collected by photographer Gershman during six years of trips to Albania.

The ceremony, which was attended by representatives of political parties, civil society and the diplomatic community in Switzerland, put an emphasis on the extraordinary role that Albania has played in saving Jews from Nazi persecution.

According to Yad Vashem, the World Centre for Holocaust Research in Israel, unlike other European nations, almost all the Jews living within the Albanian borders during the German occupation were saved. There were even more Jews in Albania at the end of the war than beforehand.

➤ Albania from the air and underwater in the Hague

On 15 January 2015, the Embassy of the Republic of Albania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in cooperation with the National Tourism Agency of Albania, opened the exhibition “Albania from the air and underwater” in the premises of the House of Europe in the Hague.

This exhibition portrays works from photographers Alket Islami and Igli Pustina and aims at introducing the yet to be discovered beauties of Albania to the broad public in the Netherlands.

The exhibition will remain open until 15 February 2015.

