



TELEGRAM DIPLOMATIK

ALBANIAN MFA NEWSLETTER

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



In the framework of the Albanian Chairmanship of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), Minister Bushati chaired the informal meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of participating countries in this initiative.

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

This event was greeted by Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, who emphasized the constructive role of the Albanian Chairmanship in this initiative. The Prime Minister underlined the importance of this meeting in the regional integration processes, as well as in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration and conveyed messages of cooperation for the region.

The Foreign Ministers discussed recent developments, the political situation, the level of regional cooperation and good neighborly relations, as essential elements to the development of Eastern Europe.

At the initiative of the Albanian Chairmanship, during this meeting a Joint Declaration on Terrorism was approved, giving the message of unity and seriousness in tackling common challenges through joint actions.

Minister Bushati reiterated the priorities of our Chairmanship, such as strengthening of SEECP regional role, promoting and encouraging dialogue between participating countries and the consolidation of important sectors through this initiative orienting its aims towards tangible results for the public. Minister Bushati introduced the activities undertaken so far under the Albanian Chairmanship and briefed his counterparts on the activities forecast during the first half of the year.

Ministers present at this meeting gave messages of strong support to the process EU and Euro-Atlantic integration. They stressed the positive impact that EU integration has had on consolidating and maintaining peace and stability in the region and in enhancing economic development. The integration process based on merit should not be stopped, despite "enlargement fatigue" and southeastern European countries should be encouraged in this regard.

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

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the role of our country's policy in the region and beyond.

During our Chairmanship we will continue to develop a range of activities at expert level in Tirana, in cooperation with civil society and the academic world, and also, three ministerial meetings are due to take place in the fields of energy, agriculture and tourism, in accordance with the priorities of our Chairmanship.



SEECP ALBANIAN CHAIRMANSHIP
REGIONAL OWNERSHIP IN ACTION

SEECP JOINT STATEMENT ON TERRORISM

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the SEECP participants, meeting in Tirana on February 24, 2015, in the presence of the representatives of the Latvian EU Presidency, European Commission, Austria and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

Cognizant that terrorism poses a direct threat to the peace, security and stability in our region, Europe and the rest of the world and pledging to unite our forces to fight against it, as demonstrated most recently by the tragic events in Paris;

Conscious that terrorism constitutes a serious obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms;

Recalling the declarations and resolutions on counter terrorism in the framework of: UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, EU and NATO;

Expressing our heartfelt solidarity and sympathy to the victims of terrorism;

Concerned about the spread of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and terrorist cells in Europe and elsewhere;

Agreed to:

1. Strongly condemn all acts, methods and practices of terrorism and reaffirm our determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
2. Strongly condemn the horrendous terrorist acts and atrocities committed by ISIL/DAESH and other terrorist organizations, as well as other grave violations of human rights and international law.
3. Emphasize that terrorism has no justification, whatever its motivation or origins, and cannot and should not be associated with any particular nationality, religion or ethnic group.
4. Express our full conviction that common threats and challenges require common responses and actions.
5. Reaffirm our commitment to intensify cooperation in the fight against terrorism and to address the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, through coordinated efforts in all relevant areas.
6. Request RCC to work on the preparation of a regional cooperation platform that would bring together all relevant national, regional and international stakeholders with an aim of developing a common approach on the issue of terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters.
7. Express support to the Global Coalition against terrorism and commit ourselves to strengthening cooperation through all appropriate mechanisms with the European and international partners in order to prevent and counter terrorist acts.
8. Express our grave concern for the escalation of the terrorist threats, in certain parts of Europe's southern neighbourhood, calling for genuine political solutions, addressing the main roots of instability and extremism.
9. Reiterate that the fight against terrorism is a multidimensional issue, not only a matter of national and international security, justice and intelligence; reaffirm our strong will to further enhance regional cooperation for strengthening the rule of law and for implementing policies promoting economic development, youth, education, equal opportunities, equal access to health and the job market.
10. Strongly promote religious tolerance and coexistence as direct contributions to democratization, the protection of human rights, security and stability in our region and the prevention of radicalization and extremist acts.

Minister **Bushati** meets First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia **Vesna Pusić**

Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati received the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, Vesna Pusić.

During the meeting, Foreign Ministers of Albania and Croatia discussed issues of bilateral cooperation and mutual interest, Albania's EU integration, regional development and cooperation between our two countries with a view to strengthening their spirit of understanding, security and stability, as well as European and international developments, common challenges and ways of addressing them.

Both Ministers praised the excellent level of bilateral relations, strong ties and intensive political dialogue, which are crucial not only for relations between Albania and Croatia, but for the entire region.

Minister Bushati extended his gratitude to his Croatian homologue for the generous assistance that Croatia has provided to families affected by recent floods in southern Albania.

"This assistance is a confirmation and living proof of the warm friendship between our two peoples and countries," Minister Bushati stated.

Relations between Albania and Croatia have been further consolidated thanks to the role of the Albanian diaspora in Croatia, which has been highly praised by Croatian authorities as a bridge of friendship, strong ties and fruitful cooperation between our countries.

Furthermore, by thanking Croatia for the assistance provided with regards to Albania's EU integration, Minister Bushati expressed his confidence that this support will further continue during the opening of accession negotiations.

The two ministers also talked about the need and mutual interest of our countries to enhance and intensify economic cooperation.

Moreover, they discussed security and stability issues in the region and beyond.



Ministers expressed their mutual concern on recent developments in Ukraine and strongly condemned the serious and heinous acts of terror, highlighting their commitment to strengthen cooperation as an active part of the international coalition in the determined and uncompromising fight against ISIS and the so-called "foreign fighters".

Minister **Bushati** receives Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, **Didier Reynders**



Minister Bushati received the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, Didier Reynders. This visit took place in the framework of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

During the meeting, they discussed the deepening of bilateral cooperation as well as the further intensification of the very good relations between our two countries. The interlocutors exchanged views on the need to improve the increasing presence of Belgian investments in Albania, focusing on the TAP, where Belgian company FLUXYS is the third most important shareholder.

Special attention was paid to the Albanian diaspora in Belgium and addressing problems of Albanian citizens. Minister Bushati asked for the quick ratification of agreements which facilitate the citizens' conditions. Mr. Reynders praised the cooperation with Albanian authorities and agreed to take further steps in addressing problems encountered in this field.

Furthermore, they discussed the prospects of Albania's EU integration, in particular the process of opening accession negotiations after receiving the candidate country status. Minister Bushati praised the extremely important role of the Kingdom of Belgium in Euro-Atlantic integration processes as well as the ongoing support to Albania for receiving the candidate country status.

Moreover, Minister Bushati highlighted the concrete steps taken by the government with regard to the reforms' progress in Albania and its firm commitment to continue on the path of reforms and integration.

On his part, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Reynders praised Albania's role in the region and assured his Albanian counterpart on the continued support of Belgium to the EU integration process of Albania. He also commended the reforms undertaken by the government, considering them impressive and very positive for Albania's advancement towards integration processes. At the end of the meeting, Ministers Bushati and Reynders held a joint press conference.

► Minister Bushati holds bilateral meetings in the framework of the Munich Security Conference



Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati attended the 51st Security Conference held in Munich, Germany. Present at this conference were Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Defense, regional leaders, international organizations and dignitaries of world politics.

This year, the conference was focused on international security challenges, world order, peaceful geopolitics, the future of terrorism, the Middle East, etc.

During the proceedings, Minister Bushati held several bilateral meetings with counterparts from Georgia, Qatar and with the United States Assistant Secretary of State, Mrs. Victoria Nuland.

During the meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Mrs. Tamar Beruchashvili, Minister Bushati expressed satisfaction with the level of relations between Albania and Georgia, and underlined that there is a solid base for these relations to further develop.

As main priorities for the further development of bilateral cooperation, Minister Bushati noted the completion of the legal framework and coordination of efforts to promote the development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Minister Bushati reiterated Albania's support to Georgia's territorial sovereignty and congratulated Mrs. Beruchashvili on Georgia's aspiration for NATO integration. On her part, she thanked Minister Bushati for the continued support given to Georgia, to its sovereignty and territorial integrity and also extended an invitation to Minister Bushati to conduct an official visit to Georgia.

Moreover, Minister Bushati held a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Dr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah. The two ministers discussed bilateral cooperation and possibilities of intensifying this cooperation mainly in the fields of economy and Qatari investments in Albania. Furthermore, Minister Bushati informed him on the current difficult situation in southern Albania due to severe weather conditions and floods, and received support from the Qatari authorities in tackling the situation.

During the Munich Security Conference, Minister Bushati met with the United States Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland. Both parties commended the excellent bilateral relations and their primary strategic importance. Minister Bushati expressed the commitment of the Albanian government to stand alongside the United States in maintaining stability, peace and prosperity in our region and beyond. Minister Bushati and Mrs. Nuland discussed the latest developments in the Western Balkans, the security situation in Europe and beyond as well as new challenges in the fight against terrorism and the protection of human rights.

Focusing on the economic bilateral cooperation, Minister Bushati highlighted the measures taken by the Albanian government to improve the investment climate and reiterated that Albania welcomes the increased presence of US companies and expertise in the country and the region.

Mrs. Nuland praised Albania's progress, its reforms to strengthen the rule of law and advancement towards the European Union, reaffirming its continued support to Albania in all democratic and integrating processes. Mrs. Nuland praised Albania for its commitment and stand alongside the United States on a series of issues and international challenges, as well as Albania's constructive and dynamic role in the region.

► Minister Bushati meets Speaker of Swedish Parliament, Urban Ahlin



On 25 February 2015, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati held a meeting with the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Urban Ahlin.

Both interlocutors praised the excellent level of relations between the two countries, underlining the importance of their further intensification with particular focus on economic cooperation.

During the meeting, parties discussed the prospects of Albania's EU integration, particularly the process of opening accession negotiations after receiving the candidate country status. Minister Bushati appreciated the important role of Sweden in the enlargement process and its continuous support to Albania in terms of receiving the candidate country status. Furthermore, Minister Bushati focused on concrete steps taken by the government with regard to the reforms' progress in Albania and its firm commitment to advance in the path of reforms and integration.

By assessing reforms undertaken by the Albanian government, Speaker of Parliament Ahlin, on his part, reassured Minister Bushati of Sweden's continued support in the process of Albania's integration into the European Union.

Minister Bushati and Mr. Ahlin discussed the continuation of the Berlin process with a view to enable a higher interconnectivity in the region through concrete infrastructural projects which strengthen regional cooperation.

Praising the role of Albania in the region, Mr. Ahlin commended the Albanian SEECF Chairmanship and the adoption of the Joint Statement on Terrorism.

Economic and Public Diplomacy ↓

▶ Albanian embassy in Japan introduces Albania to young Japanese students



On 27 February 2015, The Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Tokyo organized a presentation about Albania at the Akashi elementary school in Tokyo. This served as a great incentive not only for the students but also for the teachers, who had the opportunity to learn about the history and culture of Albania and its most prominent national figures, such as mother Teresa. Many students and teachers expressed interest in our country, its language and traditions. Many questions were asked about same aged children of Albania, their education and life in general. All the information presented in class was given as homework so that each student may reflect on what they learned about Albania.

▶ Slovenian Newspaper publishes article on Albanian Bruti family



On 25 February 2015, the Slovenian Newspaper Primorske Novice published an article on the Albanian Bruti family, who constructed the famous Bruti Palace in the Brolo square of Koper, Slovenia. The article tells the story of the Bruti family, originating from Durrës, Albania, and the mark this family has left in the history of Koper.

The Bruti palace, one of the most prominent buildings of Koper, is home to the library of the city and the anniversary of its creation is marked every year by the publication of different booklets that tell the story of its building. This year marks the 300th anniversary of the construction of this palace and on this occasion a book, telling the story of the palace as well as the story of one of the most prominent figures of the Bruti family – Bishop Agostino – was published.

► Delegation from Ministry of Tourism visits Switzerland



On 24 – 27 February 2015 a delegation headed by the Deputy Minister for Tourism, Ms. Brunilda Pakali, visited Switzerland. This visit was meant to introduce the Albanian delegation to the Swiss system for tourism promotion, its managing and developing policies and its tourism rating system.

During this visit the Albanian delegation held meetings with representatives of Swiss Tourism and SECO and travelled to structures of alpine tourism in order to better get acquainted with the best practices in Switzerland.