

# donordialogue

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A Joint Effort of the Donor Technical Secretariat  
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Photo: Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini and Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha

## Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs visits Albania

On 27 October 2008, the Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini visited Albania in order to intensify bilateral relations. Minister Frattini met with President Topi, Prime Minister Berisha, Foreign Minister Basha and Speaker Topalli. He was the guest of honour at the conference of Albanian Ambassadors and assisted at the signing of a contract between the METE and Ansaldo T&D for the constructions of the new energy substation in Tirana financed by the Italian Cooperation through a 25 Million Euros soft loan. The realization of the 400/220/110 kV substation in Tirana is an important step towards further integration in the regional

market, connecting Albania with the European electrical system. He was also present at the consignment of an initial instalment (5 Million Euros) on a credit line to assist small and medium enterprises (SME) financed by the Italian Cooperation through a soft loan of 28 Million Euros. The Credit Line is intended to contribute to the development of the private sector by favouring SME access to credit and by contributing to create permanent interaction mechanisms between the SME and the banking sector. "Partnership between Albania and Italy exists in almost every sector and I am of the opinion that collaboration will further increase in the future," he said.

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## Italian Conference “Past, present and future of Mother Tereza Square”

On 24 October 2008, and as part of the 8th Annual Week of Italian Language in the World, the Italian Development Cooperation and the Tirana Municipality held a Conference entitled *Past, present and future of Mother Teresa Square*. The event offered the chance to present the project *Public competition for the planning of Mother Teresa Square* financed by the Italian Development Cooperation through a 500,000 Euros grant to enable the refurbishment of the Square. The event was attended by Italian and Albanian architects and representatives of the Tirana School of Architecture. A selection of historical and contemporary photographs of Tirana’s squares was presented, and is still being shown at the Polytechnic University.



Photo: Historical photographs presented at the Conference “Past, present and future of Mother Teresa Square”



Photo: Historical photographs presented at the Conference “Past, present and future of Mother Teresa Square”



Photo: Donor Coordination Conference, Brussels 23-24 October 2008 –EC DG Enlargement, Head of Unit for Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Mr. Dirk Lange (moderator) and DSDC Director Albana Vokshi (panellist) at the Working Group on “Socio-Economic Development” (Photo: DTS/Nevila Çomo)

### Donor Coordination Conference on Improving aid effectiveness

From 23 to 24 October 2008, the European Commission, Directorate General for Enlargement held a Donor Co-ordination Conference in Brussels for the Western Balkans and Turkey. The event gathered 170 professionals from candidate and potential candidate countries and donor organisations to exchange ideas on how to create synergies and on how best to avoid duplication of efforts in providing financial support. Participants made a series of recommendations on how to improve aid effectiveness through joint actions by donors. Three sectoral working groups in the areas of civil society, rule of law and economic and social development were a key part of the event. Mrs. Albana Vokshi, the Director of the DSDC was a panellist for the working group on Socio-Economic Development and presented the Albania case study. The Albanian model has often been cited as a best practice example in the area of donor coordination, especially for indicators related to increased national ownership and increased alignment of external assistance with national plans. It was agreed that interim monitoring events will be held in the region every six months to review progress made and Albania will be hosting the first of these meetings in the spring of 2009. To view materials from the conference, please click [here](#).

### Development results achieved in the Kukës region thanks to the EC-UNDP Partnership

The Head of the European Commission Delegation to Albania, Ambassador Helmuth Lohan and UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Mrs. Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett, were in Kukës to see the impact of the Kukës Regional Development Initiative (KRDI), funded by the European Commission (4.63 million Euros), the UNDP Albania (433,000 Euros) and local government structures (600,000 Euros). Through the EC-UNDP partnership, 185 community based organizations were formed, 75 small projects were implemented, and 81,500 local citizens now have access to better: roads, water irrigation and supply, access to better health care, education facilities as well as environmental conditions. Starting in 2005 and concluding in 2008, the Project looked to rehabilitate local

Photo: Kukës Regional Development Initiative (KRDI) funded by the European Commission, the UNDP Albania and local government structures.



Photo: UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Mrs. Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett and Ambassador Helmuth Lohan during their visit in Kukës to see the impact of the Kukës Regional Development Initiative (KRDI)

infrastructure (such as water supply and sewerage systems, and school reconstruction), strengthening local governments' capacities to identify and plan development projects; and at facilitating the creation of community based organizations. The KRDI was based on Kukës Millennium Development Goals Regional Development Strategy and contributed greatly in advancing the goals of the region. In this way, the EC-UNDP projects have complemented government efforts to integrate Kukës into the wider development process. "I am very glad to see that these projects have brought clear and tangible benefits to the citizens of the District of Kukës in essential areas of life, such as health and education. Furthermore, what is remarkable about this Initiative is that the citizens did not remain aloof of the development process around them. Quite the contrary, they were instrumental in pinpointing their needs and therefore shaping the project activities and implementation. It also ought to be noted that the projects have been sensitive to gender equality in their activities, making sure to engage women as much as possible", said Ambassador Lohan.



**EC-funded project to improve transparency in the use of taxpayers' money**

On 11 November 2008, the 1 million Euros Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC

II) twinning project was launched by the European Commission, that will run until July 2010. PIFC II follows a first EC funded project that was implemented between 2005-2006 and focused on strengthening the internal auditing structures in the state institutions. As noted in the 2008 Progress Report, Albania still lags behind with transparency in the use of taxpayers' money by state institutions. Apart from the absence of a sound system of controls, there is a lack of expertise at a managerial level. This new project will address these shortcomings, for example, through support with a Financial Management Control Law. In line with EU standards, this law should set clear roles in the public sector regarding the use of funds,

Photo: Albania's Minister of Finance, Ridvan Bode, and USAID Mission Director, Roberta Mahoney shake hands following the signing of the MCC Stage II Albania Threshold Program (Photo: USAID)



**USAID, Stage 2 in Albania's Fight Against Corruption**

In October 2008, Albania signed its second bilateral agreement with the United States to implement the two-year, \$15.7 Million "Stage 2" Threshold Program. Led by USAID, the new programme will improve the judicial system's capacity to handle administrative disputes, reduce corruption and inefficiency in tax administration, create a one-stop shop for business licensing, create a transparent construction permit system, and form Joint Investigative Units in six cities to investigate corruption cases. Delivering the keynote speech, Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, praised the MCC Threshold Program and cited the Government's accomplishments under the first stage, which, he said, had significantly improved Albania's position on global rankings for doing business and corruption perceptions. The Stage I programme focused on reducing corruption in public procurement, tax administration, and business registration. To learn more about the MCC Threshold I program, please click [here](#).



» a manual will be prepared to explain how the use of public funds can be controlled, seminars will be held in order to raise public awareness and training will be given to public administration officials. The project will be implemented by the UK National Audit Office and the Polish Ministry of Finance. At the launching ceremony, Ambassador Lohan spoke of the importance of the proper implementation and sustainability of this project and of well-formulated policies and laws in the area of public internal control. He stressed that "changes of power at government level should not lead to changes in the internal audit structures and staff".

**Senior European Commission official visits Gërdec and Vora**

On 3 October 2008, the Head of Unit for Albania in the European Commission Directorate General for Enlargement, Mr Lange, visited Gërdec village in order to consider ways of helping the community affected by the explosion in March. Accompanied by Ambassador Helmuth Lohan, and Ambassador Robert Bosch, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Mr Lange then visited the Civil Status Office in Vora to observe the results of the 2.5 million Euros EU assistance project for the modernisation of the civil registry and address system. The project is being implemented by the OSCE Presence, in partnership with the Council of Europe. The project is supported with additional funding from Statistics Norway and the United States Government. Mr Lange stressed the importance of having the electoral infrastructure completed well in advance of the 2009 parliamentary elections. He stressed the importance of achieving timely progress regarding the completion of the civil registry, the Electoral Code and the election administration. He said that "Albania



Photo: Visit of the Head of Unit for Albania in the European Commission DG Enlargement, at the civil registry office in Vora (Photo: EC Delegation in Albania)

should ensure that a reliable civil registry is in place and that identity documents in line with international standards are issued to all voters sufficiently in advance of the next parliamentary elections". Ambassador Bosch said that the OSCE Presence "sees the modernisation of Albania's civil registration system as an important and necessary instrument to support the electoral reform process. Clearly the voter lists will be a key outcome of the civil registration system. So data quality is a crucial element for the future modernisation and improvement of public service provision...That said, further efforts needs to be done. The Data Protection Authority needs to be established and the work on the address system should continue. But important steps are being made." he added.

**Italy signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the WHO on food safety**

Italy has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the WHO on the project Strengthening food control institutions. Funded by Italy through a grant of 2 Million Euros and implemented by WHO, the project aims at contributing to the modernization of the food control system through the strengthening of food control laboratories. The project will look: to revise the national legislative framework on the collection and

analysis of food safety samples based on the EU standards; to improve the technical capacities of the laboratories and management of food safety; to strengthen the food safety systems of SMEs involved in the production, processing and distribution of food through an improved knowledge of EU standards and other relevant procedures. The project will be coordinated with other related EC project on the creation of the Food Safety Authority.

**European Commission offers 1.7 Million Euros to enhance the Free Movement of Goods**

On 23 September 2008, a launching ceremony was held for two European Commission projects that will assist the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy to develop institutional reforms that support the free movement of goods between Albania and the EU as part of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. 800,000 Euros is allocated to support accreditation, standards and certification activities in the form of support to the National Accreditation Body and the National Standards body. A further 900,000 Euros will address technical regulations, market surveillance and consumer protection issues in the form of support to the Market Surveillance Directorate in the Ministry, the consumers associations and the General Technical Inspectorate.



Photo: Meeting of the women parliamentarians in Tirana under the auspices of the Albanian Assembly and the OSCE Presence (Photo: OSCE PiA)



The projects will run for two years. It is hoped that the national authorities will benefit from capacity building and training support in order to align national legislation with the EU acquis. By the end of both projects, it is expected that 80% of EU standards will have been adopted. The projects will further the development of consumer protection and market surveillance strategies, so that the public can access higher quality goods. The ceremony was followed by a visit of Ambassador Helmuth Lohan to the electrical market in Tirana to show the concrete results that are expected from these projects. "The free movement of goods is a fundamental building block of the internal market in the European Union. The projects that were launched help Albania prepare for participation in the internal market, and they give a boost to all economic operators wishing to exploit the opportunities offered by the trade provisions of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement" he said.

### Women MPs call for 30% female representation in South-Eastern Europe parliaments

On 24 October 2008, female parliamentarians from South-Eastern Europe issued a declaration urging their respective parliaments and governments to adopt electoral codes that ensures that at least 30% of seats for women candidates will be guaranteed in all Parliaments. The women parliamentarians met in Tirana under the auspices of the Albanian Assembly and the OSCE Presence. Participants said that democratic standards had to be observed in their countries to fully integrate into the Euro-Atlantic family, and that a higher female representation was just and fair for any democracy. In the meeting, Ambassador Bosch said that the encouraging signals received from the Albanian political class on this issue should now be firmly and irrevocably converted into actions to

## Albanian, Montenegrin MPs to exchange experience on EU integration process

On 17 October 2008, as part of a two-day event was held by the parliamentary support programmes of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and the OSCE Presence, members of the Montenegrin and Albanian parliamentary committees for EU integration met in Vlora to discuss legislation in line with existing EU laws, outreach activities, co-operation with civil society, bilateral and economic relations, anti-corruption, and organized crime matters. Experts on EU integration from the region attended the meeting, as well as representatives of civil society and delegations from the European Commission Delegations in both countries.



Photo: Visit of Ambassador Helmuth Lohan to the electrical market in Tirana, following the launching ceremony for two European Commission projects aiming to enhance the Free Movement of Goods (Photo: EC Delegation in Albania)



## Work Begins on Collection of National Demographic Health Statistics in Albania

Minister of Health, Anila Godo, alongside officials from other international agencies such as USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and Swiss Development Cooperation launched the second stage of Albania's first Demographic Health Survey activity on 31 October 2008. Starting in November, hundreds of interviewers from INSTAT will visit households across Albania to collect information about people's health, education, lifestyles from a standardized questionnaire. The survey results will provide up-to-date information on characteristics of households that will be comparable with international social statistics. The final results will be ready for dissemination by September 2009. The ADHS is made possible with the support of several international agencies, including Swiss Cooperation, USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO. Technical assistance to ensure the quality of the survey and build local capacity is being provided by MACRO International.

Photo: New Services of Migrant Service Centre (Sporteli i Migracionit) promoted at the First Tirana Job Fair (Photo/IOM)



Photo: Launching ceremony of the Albanian Demographic Health Survey (Photo: Swiss Development Cooperation)

» secure 30% of the seats in the next Assembly for women. "I will continue talks with Albanian political parties in order to see that the approved Electoral Code leads to a significant increase in the number of women elected representatives in the Assembly," he said. With OSCE support, the parliamentarians decided to create the Forum of Women Parliamentarians in the Western Balkans for better co-operation and further empowerment of women in parliaments. The meeting was held a day after the OSCE Presence held a forum where parliamentarians from Skopje, representatives from Albanian political party women's forums and two civil society coalitions discussed gender equality quotas in electoral codes. Participants agreed that women should work across political

lines to promote gender equality.

### New Services of "Sporteli i Migracionit" (Migrant Service Centre) promoted at the First Tirana Job Fair

From 23-24 October 2008, IOM Tirana participated in the first Tirana Job Fair held at the Palace of Congresses, organised by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, the National Employment Service and the Regional Employment Directory Tirana, under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Albania. As the main partner of the Regional Employment Directorate in promoting regular migration through provision of information, advice and referral services in the framework of recently established Migrant Service Centres (Sporteli i Migracionit), IOM participated in the Tirana Job Fair to further promote these services supported by the project Capacity Building, Information and Awareness Raising towards Promoting Orderly Migration in the Western Balkans funded by the EC in the framework of AENEAS 2006 and co-funded by the Governments of Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Liechtenstein.

IOM activities in Albania were displayed through a stand at the fair, where promotional material were distributed showing the new services offered through the National Network of MSCs (Sportele Migracioni) that are part of the Regional and Local Employment Directorates in 14 areas of Albania. A TV spot informing the



public about where to seek information on regular routes of migration was also launched. To further expand the information about the services offered, IOM invited a group of Tirana University students to visit the stand. The students were introduced to new study opportunities abroad, such as the Balkans Academic Scheme for the Internationalization of the Learning in Co-operation with EU Universities, an ERASMUS Mundus EU funded programme offering scholarships for bachelor, master and PhD degrees, the DAAD scholarship programme and Open Society Institute, as well as to the top 27 occupations in the UK shortage list for immigrants. The students were briefed by the Italian NGO, ACLI/IPSIA who offer assistance on application issues for students wishing to study in Italy.

### USAID Sponsors 2nd National Conference on the National Strategy for People with Disabilities

On 23 October 2008, the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation held a National Conference to announce the results of a report on the implementation by the Government of the National Action Plan of the National Strategy on People with Disability (NSPD). As the second in the series of the monitoring reports, this year's report acknowledges the increased awareness of the Government, its engagement in taking more responsibilities for improvement of disability legal and policy framework. The findings from the monitoring process revealed unrealized tasks in all the five areas of the Action Plan of the National Strategy on People with Disability. The full report can be found [here](#).



Photo: A young boy in Elbasan takes a break from his lessons and after-school activities. BKTf's 2008 Situational Report outlined ways the Government of Albania can support these centres that are on the front lines of fight against child trafficking and exploitation. (Photo Credit: Kelly Cronen/USAID)

### USAID, First Phase of Assessment of Albania's Tourism Sector Completed

In October 2008, a team from the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance (GSTA) completed the first phase of an assessment of the tourism sector. The information gathered will be used to design a three-year Albanian Sustainable Tourism Alliance (ASTA) programme. GSTA programmes aim to create economic opportunities for communities through the development of sustainable tourism, protect cultural heritage and biodiversity. The team will return to Albania in January to meet with donors and complete the assessment. ■

## USAID, New Report Finds More Needed to Fight Child Trafficking

"There is an urgent need to increase efforts to curb and prevent the phenomenon of child trafficking and protect children victims in Albania," said Ms. Rajmonda Bozo, President of Albania's coalition of NGOs BKTf (All Together against Child Trafficking) at its national conference held on 2 October 2008 in Tirana. In light of the latest sobering data from the organization's report on child trafficking for 2007, senior government officials, including the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and international donors gathered to discuss what needs to be done to fight this issue. The report finds that since 2003 there has not been a decrease in the number of trafficking victims, citing difficulties in identifying child victims and the inadequate assistance provided by the local and national state institutions. In response, the Deputy Minister of Interior Ms. Iva Zajmi presented the Government's new National Strategy on fighting human trafficking for 2008-2010, that takes into account the need for coordinated action among all actors to implement the key objectives of the strategy. The publication is available [here](#).



Photo: In Dardhe in the Korça region, home-style 'byrek' is still made by open fire, coupled with handicrafts and artisan and organic products, rural communities in Albania can become attractive draws for tourists.

## In-country Missions

### Italy

From October to December, an expert from the General Directorate for Development Cooperation in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will support the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science as part of the project Realization of a telematic network and services centre, financed through a 4 Million Euros grant. The expert will contribute to the formulation of a new Italy-funded project of 1.5 Million Euros in the IT sector aimed at strengthening secondary school education through the reduction of the digital divide. From October to December, an expert from the General Directorate for Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will provide support to the Albanian Ministry of Health in the implementation of the Italy-funded Programme of Rehabilitation and Equipment of five Policlinics (Tirana, Korca, Gjirokastra and Peshkopia). The project, funded by Italy through a soft loan of some 5 million Euros, is aimed at improving secondary health services in 5 policlinics (Tirana, Korça, Peshkopia and Gjirokastra) in terms of the access and quality of the services provided.

### IMF

An IMF Fiscal Affairs Department technical assistance mission led by Mr. Allan Jensen visited Albania from 22 October to 4 November 2008, to review the status of the tax administration reforms and to provide strategic advice to further improve the revenue agency's efficiency and effectiveness. An IMF Review mission visited Tirana from October 29 to November 11 2008 to conduct the sixth and last review mission under the PRGF/EFF (Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility/ Extended Fund Facility) arrangement. The review mission, headed by Mr. Gerwin Bell, met with the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Finance, Economy, Transport, the Governor of the Bank of Albania, MPs and other senior state officials, as well as representatives from civil society and the international community. A press conference was held at the Ministry of Finance on 11 November 2008. To review the concluding statement of the mission, please click [here](#).

### World Bank

A World Bank Supervision Mission for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-up Project visited from 13 to 29 October 2008. The mission was focused on the: procurement process for the preparation of the Local Development Plan; progress on procurement and implementation of the civil works component under the project; and follow-up to assist the national and local construction inspectorates.

A World Bank Supervision Mission, for the Business Environment Reform and Institutional Strengthening Project (BERIS) visited from 15 to 22 October 2008. The BERIS team met with Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy as well as with the institutions of the Metrology, Standards, Testing and Quality to discuss the progress of the project.

A World Bank Supervision Mission for the Social Protection Policy Note, visited from 21 to 24 October 2008. The aim of the mission was to continue the work on the preparation of the Albania Social Protection Note. In this framework, a workshop with the key national actors in the social protection areas (mainly social assistance) was held.

A WB Supervision Mission for the

Albania Integrated Water and Ecosystems Management Project visited from 20 to 24 October 2008. Its aim was to review: the progress in the construction of the wastewater treatment plants in Durres, Lezha and Saranda, and the related sewerage investments financed by the European Investment Bank and the environmental protection component in the Kune Vaine Managed Reserve.

A World Bank Implementation Completion Report (ICR) Mission for the Community Works II project took place from 7 to 22 October 2008. Its primary objective was to gather the information to evaluate project impact as part of the ICR. Meeting with key stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as visiting project sites were part of the mission.

A World Bank Exploratory Mission for future Bank involvement in strengthening the agriculture sector took place from 13 to 17 October 2008. Its aim was to discuss areas where the World Bank may be able to provide support in the future, especially towards strengthening agriculture institutions, increasing competitiveness in the agriculture sector, improving food safety systems, and preparing the institutions for accessing and managing EU rural development funds. ■

## donor*dialogue*

As of October 2008, the UNDP is the current Chair of the Donor Technical Secretariat.

Any comments regarding Donor Dialogue (both positive and negative) are strongly encouraged – and we promise to print all such comments received!

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If you would like to contribute, send your text to the Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS) Office ([nevila.como@aidharmonisation.org.al](mailto:nevila.como@aidharmonisation.org.al)) by the 1st of every month. An ideal word count for submissions is around 100 words.

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