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Photo: The event that celebrated the installation of computers and connection to the internet in 2,107 schools

Albania in the internet age

On 3 December 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science celebrated the installation of computers and their connection to the internet in 2,107 schools. This initiative, known as e-schools, seeks to raise education levels to international standards, improve student learning, provide access to modern communication tools, link students to global knowledge, and increase the skills of students to enhance the labour market. The event was attended by Prime Minister Sali Berisha, the Minister of Education and Science Myqerem Tafaj, the World Bank Country Director, Jane Armitage, the UN Resident Co-ordinator, Gülden Türkoç-Coslett, along with MPs, donor representatives, academics and students. Dr Berisha said "The digital age is my most important priority, and

this is the way I have chosen to be close to you; the way I have chosen to assist you so that with your imagination you build an Albania of your dreams." This initiative is supported by the Education Excellence and Equity Project, funded by the Government, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, and the Council of Europe Development Bank. The total funding is estimated at USD 14.4 million, and the cost of the internet connection is estimated to be USD 1.05 million. The UNDP also provided technical assistance in support of the National Strategy for Information and Communication Technology that includes a plan to distribute computers and connect all schools to the internet with Albtelecom providing the internet connection. Ms. Armitage encouraged the Ministry to "use

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National Conference We can stop violence

In the context of a 16-day campaign against domestic violence announced by the UN, on 4 December 2009, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities organized the National Conference We can stop violence that was attended by the Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, the Assembly Speaker, Jozefina Topalli, ministers, members of the parliament, local government officials, and members from civil society. Dr Berisha said that this event was an appeal to all law enforcement institutions to improve their approach to domestic violence through adopting more punitive attitudes. He noted that domestic violence had not received proper formal answer. "The National strategy against domestic violence is being drafted, an important law against domestic violence is being approved; centres for rehabilitation, psychological treatment and reintegration of victims of violence are set up and functioning, but still we do not have a strong social opinion for stricter punishment for domestic violence offences," he said.



Albania in the internet age

these new technologies to strengthen the management of the sector itself, through the proposed new Education Management and Information Systems." She expressed the World Bank's

commitment "to advance this ambitious agenda for the digital age and to help Albanian children meet the challenges of the future."

Discussion of the draft of Civil Society Charter

On 10 December 2009, a meeting was organized to discuss the Draft of Civil Society Charter. It was chaired by General Secretary of the Council of Ministers, Gjergj Lezhja. The Political Document of Cooperation between the Government and Civil Society, was drafted by a joint working group of civil society and government representatives. The meeting was held as part of the project Strengthening Civil Society and democratic structures in Albania funded by the German Government and implemented by GOPA on behalf of GTZ. During June-November 2009, the draft was consulted through a process of regional meetings with some 201 government and civil society representatives. The document aims at establishing a partnership between the NGO sector and government. By means of this document both parties express their determination to: strengthen democracy through higher civic participation as well as putting more effort in raising social cohesion.

UN-Spain MDG Achievement Fund supports Child Food Security and Nutrition

With a fund of USD 4 million, the UN-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) supported the UN Joint Programme on Child Food Security and Nutrition in Albania targeting malnutrition among high risk child group. The agreement was signed on 14 December 2009 by the Minister of Health Petrit Vasili, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection Genc Ruli, the Ambassador of Spain in Albania Manuel Montobbio, UN Resident Coordinator, Gülden Türkoz-Cosslett and the heads of UN Agencies. The programme brings together the expertise of three United Nations Agencies, WHO, FAO and UNICEF and aims to improve the nutritional status of infants and young children, with a focus on the poorest sections of society. The aim of the programme is to contribute to the achievement of the MDG1 (eradication of poverty and halving malnutrition), MDG4 (reducing child mortality) and MDG5 (improving maternal health). The Joint Programme

Photo: Discussion of the draft of the Civil Society Charter on 10 December 2009





Photo: UN-Spain MDG Achievement Fund supports Child Food Security and Nutrition

will be implemented by the Ministries of Health, and Agriculture, INSTAT, regional authorities, and NGOs. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the achievement of programme objectives and its overall co-ordination with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Technical Consultation with the Federal Republic of Germany

On 9 December 2009, a consultation meeting was held between the German Delegation from the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development and a delegation from the Albanian Government composed of MoF, DSDC and concerned ministries, with the aim to prepare for 2010 negotiations. The meeting was co-chaired by Deputy Minister of Finance, Nezir Haldeda

and DSDC Director, Valbona Kuko. Mr. Haldeda thanked the German Government for their support towards EU integration, mentioning that this support for 2009-2010 amounted up to 100 million Euros. Both sides agreed to focus their co-operation in sectors like: potable water, sewage and waste management, energy, and sustainable socio-economic development. The German side proposed that the strategy of mutual co-operation should be reflected in the strategic documents for each sector and that Mrs Ute Rodrian, the Director of KfW, will be in charge for water, energy, sewage and waste management sectors, while Ulrike Gantzer-Sommer, the GTZ Director, will be responsible for the sector of sustainable socio-economic development. The meeting ended with signing of the protocol agreement.



Photo: Consultation meeting between Germany and Albania held on 9 December 2009

Working party on the Fast Track Initiative on Division of Labour

Mariarosa Stevan, from the Co-ordination Unit for EU Affairs in the Italian Development Co-operation, participated in a working party meeting on the Fast Track Initiative on Division of Labour held on 2 December 2009. The working party is led by the DSDC, with the participation of the EU Delegation, and gathered European donors from Italy (acting as facilitator), Austria, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland that are all in the process of launching new Country Strategies or Development Agreements based on the principles of the European Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy. The meeting agreed on how the European division of labour could contribute to improving donor co-ordination and enhanced aid effectiveness, with a focus on the pre-accession agenda. In related news, on 23 December 2009, a project funded by Italian Co-operation Support to the European Integration process of Albania assisting the Albanian institutions was approved. This project will provide technical assistance, through Albanian and Italian expertise, aiming at accelerating the EU integration process through: strengthening public and private partnerships, improving the capacities of private and public institutions to access to the opportunities provided by the Instrument of Pre Accession; promoting the facilitator role of the Fast Track Initiative on Division of Labour aimed at supporting the gradual implementation of the EU Code of Conduct in Albania.



Mr Pierre Mirel and Prime Minister Berisha in the opening of the EU Info Centre in Tirana

The opening of the EU Info Centre in Tirana

The new EU Information Centre was inaugurated in Tirana on 24 November 2009. The establishment of the EU Information Centre will help the Delegation of the European Union to Albania provide more information to the public on the EU and Albania's integration process and will bring these processes closer to the citizens. The Centre will provide free of charge materials on the EU and integration, internet access and reading corners. To improve understanding and enrich debate on the integration process, the Centre will also host informative events, complementing the current efforts of civil society actors to raise the understanding integration process, the benefits, steps, requirements and challenges. During the inauguration ceremony, Mr Pierre Mirel, Director of the Directorate for Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo in the European Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement, noted that "Integration into the EU is a matter for society as a whole, not simply the ruling elites. The conditions for membership, the required reforms and the functioning of the European Union and its policies regard all citizens of a potential candidate country. Informed citizens are instrumental for successful EU integration. And that is what we are investing in – Albania's successful integration."



The EU Info Centre is located at 32 Ismail Qemali Street in Tirana, and is opened Monday-Friday (09:00-19:00) and on Saturdays (09:00-13:00). For further information, please go to www.euinfocentre.al or telephone on +355 (0) 4 22 42 604.

Albania holds the 2nd Human Rights Debate

On 11 December 2009, Children's Rights Centre of Albania (CRCA/DCI) organized

the 2nd National Human Rights Debate. The event was funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Tirana. Some 200 participants from the Government, the Ombudsman, civil society and international community discussed children's, women's and sexual minority's rights, viewed documentaries and visited the NGO and a public institutions fair. The First Lady of Albania, Mrs Teuta Topi and the Dutch Ambassador, Henk G.C. van den Dool were among the key speakers. The participants endorsed the Declaration of the Debate with concrete engagements and goals aimed at the improvement of the human rights situation with regard to child protection, women's economic and political empowerment and the strengthening of the position of sexual minorities. A strategy to achieve the goals will soon be developed and shared with all stakeholders.



Photo: The 2nd National Human Rights Debate on 11 December 2009



Photo: Launching of National Centre of Continuing Education for health professionals, 10 December 2009.

Switzerland Supports the Continuing Medical Education in Albania

On 10 December 2009, the Ministry of Health and the Swiss Co-operation Office in Albania launched the National Centre of Continuing Education, established under Swiss funded project on Professional Development System. The Swiss Ambassador, Yvana Enzler, the Minister of Health, Petrit Vasili and Deputy Chair of Health Parliamentary Committee delivered opening remarks in the presence of representatives from health system. The Swiss Government is funding the project Professional Development System in the Health Sector (2007-2010) with over 1.7 million CHF with the aim of strengthening the continuing education of health sector

workers. The creation of the National Centre of Continuing Education creates a sustainable platform for the continuing education of healthcare professionals and contributed to a long-term perspective of strengthening the skills of health providers, improve the quality of care of the health system and thus increase patient satisfaction.

Switzerland Supports Implementation of the Decade on Roma Inclusion (2005-2015)

The Swiss funded project Alternated Education and Vocational Training, implemented by the "Ndihmë për Fëmijët"/Help for Children Foundation, organized with the Romani Baxt association a training seminar from 6

Photo: Roma professor Marcel Courthiade trains Roma trainees on the Roma ABC Book, in Tirana.



National conference: ICPD @15- Albania: Goals, achievements and challenges

On 17 December 2009, UN Population Fund and the Albanian Centre for Population and Development (ACPD) held a conference entitled: ICPD@15- Albania: Goals, Achievements and Challenges to mark the 15th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. The meeting brought together 200 officials from government, civil society and donors. The event analysed the goals achievements and challenges for Albania towards reaching objectives set at Cairo for the next 5 years. In Cairo, 15 years ago, 179 countries, including Albania, endorsed the 20 year-Programme of Action for the achievement of universal access to education, especially for girls; to reduce infant, child and maternal mortality; and to guarantee reproductive health, including family planning by 2015. The UN Resident Coordinator, Gulden Turkoz-Coslett, and UNFPA representative in Albania, Christine Arab who expressed the UN commitment to support the Government in drafting programmes that ensure that every pregnancy is planned, that every birth is secure, that every young person is protected by HIV/AIDS and that all women are treated with respect. Minister of Health, Petrit Vasili, said that the objectives for the easier access to reproduction health, maternal care, prenatal and child care are priority issues and will form part of the national Health strategy that reflects NSDI priorities and represents the challenges ahead towards reaching Millennium Development Goals.

World AIDS Day Conference in Tirana

Some 100 participants met in an event in Tirana for World AIDS Day Conference on 1 December 2009. The keynote speakers were the UNICEF representative, Detlef Palm, Minister of Health, Petrit Vasili and the Director of Public Health Institute, Alban Ylli. Minister Vasili commended the work done so far by all HIV prevention groups, but said that there was a lot more to do. "Our challenge is to improve treatment management and make it patient friendly," he said. Palm said that "more and better placed information" would help prevent HIV from spreading so rapidly. "Young people will only be safe, if they know about AIDS, if they know how to assess the level of risk in their behaviours, if they know how to protect themselves and if they are equipped to enter healthy relationships and talk to each other openly," said Palm. Outside of the conference hall, the NGO Network on HIV/AIDS organized exhibition stands that provided medical information on upcoming projects.

to 16 December 2009 on Roma ABC Book Teaching Methodologies with the participation of 12 Roma persons in Tirana. The trainer was the Roma professor at the University of Sorbonne in Paris, Marcel Courthiade who is also the author of the Book. Trainees will serve as teachers of Roma language for Roma children, as an extra curricular activity in the school. Swiss Co-operation in Albania has supported the social inclusion activities as well as the organizational development of NPF Foundation since 1998 through funding six phases of a project called Alternated Education and Vocational Training also known as CEFA. The aim is the integration of children and Roma families in need through formal/vocational education, protection and social inclusion.

New Systems Improve Public Services in Fushe-Kruja

In December 2009, Fushe-Kruja City, with the support of USAID's Local Governance Programme in Albania (LGPA), launched a new computerized municipal tax system and a computerized Public Information Office. The new systems will provide greater public access to information in a more user friendly environment. Computerizing the tax system will help the city improve tax collection and increase tax revenues

Photo: US Chargé Deborah Jones and Mayor Ismet Mavriqi officially open the Municipal Tax office in Fushë-Kruja.



so that Fushe-Kruja can deliver higher-quality public services to its citizens. It will also reduce the number of one-on-one interactions with tax officials which are cited as a source of corrupt practices. The new Public Information Office provides an easy and convenient one-stop-shop where citizens and businesses will receive professional and efficient assistance on an array of issues from up-to-date information on laws and procedures to investment and business opportunities in the city. The office which was developed with the assistance of LGPA grantee the Albanian Socio-Economic Think Tank.

Magistrates School celebrates its 10th anniversary.

On 23 December 2009, the Magistrates School held a ceremony to celebrate the 10th anniversary of its creation. The Magistrates' School Director, Marjana Semini and other invited guest from the Albanian judiciary and international partners delivered remarks. The Deputy Chief of Mission of US Embassy, Deborah Jones, recognized the school's contribution to improving the quality of the judiciary and stressed the US Government's commitment to judicial reforms. "The path towards a strong judiciary starts from this School. This School and its students have the opportunity and responsibility to work for both judicial and prosecutorial independence and accountability," she said. The Magistrates' School is charged with the education of Albanian magistrates. To-date, 125 judges and 83 prosecutors have graduated from the School. Since its creation, USAID has helped the Magistrates' School with its continuous training curricula by setting up joint training programmes in areas such as legal research, reasoning and decision writing and intellectual property.

Albania's One-Stop-Shop Licensing Centre Expands to Regions

Businesses in cities across Albania will soon be able to enjoy the ease of the one-stop-shop for applying for



Photo: The Director of Albania's National Registration Centre (NRC), Tomi Kola (left), and the Director of the National Licensing Centre (NLC), Eneida Guria (right), signed a co-operation agreement that will allow the existing NRC service windows to process business licenses. USAID representative, Sean Huff (upper left) and Minister of Economy, Dritan Prifti (upper right), witnessed the signing.

commercial licenses, an important milestone that will make doing business in Albania easier. On 14 December 2009, the Directors of National Licensing Centre (NLC), Eneida Guria and the National Registration Centre (NRC), Tomi Kola, signed a co-operation agreement that will allow the existing NRC service windows to process business licences. The service windows in Korça, Shkodra and Vlora are the first cities where the licensing services will be available. Co-locating the two offices will not only save the government significant overhead costs, but will also provide added convenience to businesses. Both NLC and NRC were established with support by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Albania Threshold Programme as e-government initiatives that save investors time in establishing business operations, while increasing transparency and reducing opportunities for corruption. The second stage of the MCC Albania Threshold Programme (MCCA2) is a two-year, USD 15.7 million agreement between Albania and the United States, funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation and administered by USAID that aims to strengthen the rule of law,

reduce corruption, and increase public oversight, thereby improving the business environment through IT solutions and technical assistance.

USAID, OSCE, and Tirana Court of Appeals improves Access to Information

On 7 December 2009, a Public Information Office in the Tirana Court of Appeals was officially opened with US Ambassador John L. Withers II, OSCE Deputy Head of Presence, Renate Herrmans, Minister of Justice, Bujar Nishani, and Deputy Chair of High Council of Justice, Kreshnik Spahiu all delivering remarks at a public ceremony held at the court. The remodelling of the space in the Tirana Court of Appeals for the Public Information office was a cooperative effort by the USAID, OSCE Presence and the Tirana Court of Appeals. The Public Information Office will give litigants, lawyers and citizens one office at which information and assistance will be available, removing the need to go to several offices in the Courthouse. The Court's Public Information Office will improve access to information for citizens, increase transparency of court procedures, and increase trust in the Court and the judicial system.

International Consortium Working Group on Legal Reform

On 14 December 2009, the International Consortium Working Group on Legal Reform held a meeting at ICITAP premises. Representatives from Ministry of Justice, Directorate of Witness Protection at State Police, OPDAT, OSCE, EURALIUS, and High Council of Justice took part in this meeting. "Anti-mafia Law" and the Law on Witness Protection were introduced in the meeting. Marsida Xhaferllari, Director at Codification Department, at Ministry of Justice informed the participants on the status of two strategies: Justice and Property Right Strategy. Two groups were set up in the Ministry to work closely with the DSDC for the preparation of both strategies. The Property Rights strategy is expected to be finalized in February 2010, while the Justice Reform strategy is expected to be finalized by March 2010. The meeting gave an update of the work done on Civil Procedure Code and discussed issues related to Legal Aid Law and EURALIUS assistance for 2010 under IPA framework.



Photo: Albania's new address system database was launched in a ceremony on 10 December 2009.

OSCE and EURALIUS organize roundtable discussion on media, judiciary co-operation

Journalists, court spokespersons and other representatives of the judiciary met on 8 December in Tirana to discuss how to improve ways of working together at a roundtable discussion organized by the OSCE Presence in co-operation with EURALIUS. The event aimed to strengthen the relationship between media and courts in Albania. The roundtable provided a platform for discussing their mutual expectations and requirements. The Head of the OSCE Presence's Democratization Department, Hartmut Puerner, gave the opening speech and EURALIUS expert on Case Management and Court Administration, Wilhelm Treiber, moderated the discussion.

OSCE and Ministry of Defence conclude the disposal of toxic rocket fuel component, agree on surplus ammunition dismantling

On 8 December 2009, the Head of the OSCE Presence, Ambassador Robert Bosch, handed an official certificate to Defence Minister Arben Imami in a ceremony that marked the official conclusion of the disposal of 34 tonnes of

a toxic rocket fuel component known as melange. The OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation assisted Albania - at the government's request - dispose of its melange in a project, financed by the Governments of Greece, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. The toxic liquid was incinerated in Sweden. During the ceremony, Denmark also donated six cutting machines that increase the country's capacity to dismantle ammunition. They will soon be used at the dismantling sites in Poliçan and Mjekës.

Albania launches address system database

Albania's new address system database, based on a digital map, was launched in a ceremony on 10 December 2009. The

database was created by the Ministry of Interior and local authorities with the assistance of the OSCE Presence, with the financial support from the EU. The new web-based address system will enable accurate registration of citizens in the National Register of Civil Status. It also provides for online searches of addresses. The EU has allocated 2.5 million Euros to the creation of the address system, and 1.5 million Euros to the installation of street signs. Both projects are implemented by the OSCE Presence. Head of the European Union Delegation, Helmuth Lohan and Head of the OSCE Presence, Ambassador Robert Bosch, participated at the event. Ambassador Bosch and the Mayor of Saranda, Edmond Gjoka, signed an agreement on the installation of street name signs in the city.

Photo: Ceremony that marked the official conclusion of the disposal of 34 tonnes of disposal of toxic rocket fuel component





Photo: The forum on Enhancing Women's Role in Governance organised on 18 December 2009

Donors support network of women leaders in Tirana region

Women who are leaders in the political and public life of the Tirana region discussed ways to increase co-operation and information exchange at a forum organized by the OSCE Presence on 18 December 2009. This was the first in a series of events to be held countrywide, bringing together female members of Parliament, active women from central and local government and women involved in civil society. Speeches were delivered by the Head of the OSCE Presence, Robert Bosch, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Henk G.C. van den Dool and the Swedish Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, Elisabeth Stam. The forum was part of the OSCE Presence project Enhancing Women's Role in Governance, funded by the Swedish and Dutch Governments.

USAID, Community Support Environmental Clean-up

Dozens of citizens, civil society organizations, businesses and students, volunteered in December to join the Municipality of Librazhd and USAID, in a city-wide clean-up effort to jump-start the city's new service improvement action plan. The Municipality of Librazhd, with the support of USAID's Local Governance

Programme (LGPA), has embarked on an effort to improve public services for the community, particularly in waste collection and disposal. With the co-operation of local citizens and community stakeholders, the city developed a Service Improvement Action Plan for improving solid waste collection and disposal services that established, for the first time a set of performance indicators based on recent public opinion polls. The improved services have been approved in the current municipal budget. USAID's Local Governance Programme works with ten municipalities to foster local

economic growth, improve local governance, and strengthen civic and private sector engagement in local development. LGPA's partner municipalities are: Fier, Fushe-Kruje, Gramsh, Himara, Korça, Kukes, Lezha, Librazhd, Pogradec and Shkodra.

Italy supports the Communes of Kelmend and Shkrel, in Malesia e Madhe

The cross-sectoral rural development project in the Communes of Kelmend and Shkrel (Malesia e Madhe) promoted by VIS NGO, is funded by the Italian Co-operation with a contribution of 1.650.000 Euros for three years. The project refers to the EU rural development approach, based on Agenda 2000 and it is in line with the Albanian Rural Development Policy. It is based on a credit line for private profit activities and a grant line for community needs. On 17 December 2009, the official inauguration has been set in Shkodra with the participation of the Italian consul, Stefano Marguccio, local authorities and local partners.

UNODC closes second phase of ALBG70 project

Through the support of the German Government, the UNODC Project Office

Photo: City workers in Librazhd unload new bins purchased with the support of USAID.





Photo: UNODC Project Office in Tirana finalized the second phase of the project on Strengthening of enhanced Border control capacities and criminal justice response to fight illicit trafficking and organized crime in Albania.

Italian – Albanian SMEs Development Program: One year from its inauguration

The Italian–Albanian SMEs Development Programme aims at supporting SMEs access to credit through two financial facilities: a 25 million Euros Credit Line and a 2.5 million Euros Guarantee Fund. The Credit Line component was formally launched in January 2009. Since then, 19 investment projects of local SMEs have been financed by participating banks to the total value of some five million Euros. Beneficiaries include those less developed areas beside the more industrialized Tirana-Durres axis. Sectors involved include: food processing, leather and shoes production, construction materials, wood and furniture. The Programme Management Unit composed by Albanian and Italian experts has completed the procedure to activate the Guarantee Fund; the facility will be aimed at further support access to credit for a wider range of SMEs.

in Tirana finalized the second phase of the project on Strengthening of enhanced Border control capacities and criminal justice response to fight illicit trafficking and organized crime in Albania. The assistance aimed at stopping a variety of cross border security threats. Such assistance has enhanced the ability of the border police, customs authorities and anti organized crime entities to deal with threats to cross border security and has led to some notable successes. The ceremony was attended by the Ambassador, Bernd Borchardt, the General Director of the Albanian State Police, Hysni Burgaj, General Director of the Customs Directorate, Endri Pema and representatives from the international

community. The ceremony marked the handing over of various equipment donated under ALBG70 Project such as hard and software for police, vehicles equipped with anti contraband equipment as well as equipment and supplies for the Border Police Training Facility in Durres. Ambassador Borchardt said “Despite of achieved success to make its borders less porous, it is always possible to hope for even greater results, better co-operation among anti drug related entities, better performance of each entity and fight against corruption.” UNODC’ assistance in the area of border control and fight against organized crime will continue in 2010 through the assistance of the Italian Government.





Photo: The 2nd National Human Rights Debate on 11 December 2009

2009 UNDP Human Development Report: Albania in the context of international migration - benefits and barriers

On 18 December 2009, the UNDP and IOM co-launched the UNDP's Human Development Report 2009 with the participation of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The report highlighted the benefits of and barriers to migration, and ranked Albania in 70th place among 182 countries in the Human Development Index - the summary indicator of people's well-being, education and GDP per capita. According to this year's report "Migration – both across and within national borders – has the potential to greatly improve human welfare. The 2009 HDR explores how better policies towards human mobility can enhance human development – by maximizing the benefits of migration and supporting the very human desire to move in pursuit of a better life and minimizing the downsides", said Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett, the UN Resident Co-ordinator. "We live in a highly mobile world, where migration is an important dimension of human development", said Nicoletta Giordano, Chief of Mission,

IOM. The Report argues that nearly one out of seven people are migrants; in the case of Albania, one third of its total population is estimated to live abroad at any one time. To make migration work for development, common misconceptions about migration need to be demystified and countries should consider the positive effects of migration in combination with social and economic policies. The package of reforms proposed by the Report revolves around six major pillars: from opening existing entry channels to more workers to adding migration as a component of origin countries' development strategies.

Opening of the Turkish Cultural Centre Yunus Emre

On 11 December 2009, Tirana Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre was opened with the participation of Turkish President Abdullah Gül, State Secretary for Industry Nihat Ergin, Ministers of State Zafer Çağlayan and Selma Aliye Kavaf, and President of TİKA Musa Kulaklıkaya. In his opening speech, President Gül said that keeping alive cultural heritage is the greatest strength of a country, saying that the opening of the Centre will help in the development

DoPA reform discussed in a roundtable

On 9 December 2009, AKSES Albania in co-operation with DoPA held a roundtable to discuss the performance of public administration. The first study on legislation for the sustainability of public administration, part of the project For a stable public administration supported by the German Embassy in Tirana was introduced in this meeting. Irene Eidelmüller, the German Embassy spokesperson, drew attention to problems relating to public administration, such as the politically-motivated intimidations and non-transparent procedures in the recruitment process. She said that Albania needs stable and efficient public service in order to reach its EU goals. The study is a starting point to address these issues and to suggest positive changes in policy and legislation, aiming to achieve higher standards in public service.





Photo: Opening of the Turkish Cultural Centre Yunus Emre on 11 December 2009

A green arrow between the Adriatic and the Black Sea: Corridor VIII

On 11 December 2009, a conference was held in Tirana to present the project Italbalk, funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project involves Italian regions and state institutions from Albania, Serbia and Montenegro through technical assistance, training and research activities. The project contributes to the launch of the Corridor VIII that foresees to create connections from the seaports of Bari and Brindisi to the Bulgarian ones on the Black Sea, passing through Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria.

of a deep-rooted Turkish culture. He underlined the important activities done by TIKa. He met the students and received information related to the Centre from the authorities. The aim is to teach the Turkish Language, introduce the Turkish Culture, and will hopefully be seen as a meeting point for those interested in the Turkish language and culture. In this context, various artistic events performed in the Centre will be opened to anyone who is interested in Turkish language and who wishes to reflect Turkish culture in handicrafts, paintings, music etc. Turkish courses being held at TIKa are planned to be controlled and performed in a coordinated schedule with Turkish Cultural Centre.

Support provided by TIKa for the I.H. high school of Shkodra

I.H. high school in Shkodra was founded in 1991 by the Istanbul

Fellowship Contribution and its general administration is being followed by Cultural Association. TIKa provided the school with 450 student benches and 900 single chairs. I.H. high school has approximately 900 students who take free of charge education. Turkish lessons are also included in the curriculum. The Schools Director said that this co-operation shows the strong historical and cultural ties between Albania and Turkey.

Western Balkans Investment Framework launched

On 9 December 2009 the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Council of Europe Development Bank launched the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) to finance priority projects in the Western Balkans. The aim is to co-



Photo: Renovated classes of the H.I. School of Shkodra with TIKa support

ordinate different sources of finance and leverage loans with grants for priority projects in the countries of the Western Balkans. An initial focus on infrastructure sectors will be expanded to include support to small and medium-sized enterprises, energy efficiency and other investment sectors. A first meeting of the WBIF steering committee decided to allocate 26 million Euros of grants for technical assistance support to 26 projects across the region in various sectors. The projects are expected to attract 2.2 billion Euros of loans from

International Financial Institutions. The WBIF consists of a joint grant facility and a joint lending facility to finance priority projects in the Western Balkans. The joint grant facility will contribute to financing the preparation and implementation of priority projects in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), Montenegro and Serbia. The European Commission has so far allocated some 110 million Euros to support the financing of municipal infrastructure projects and technical

assistance projects in the region. The EIB, EBRD and CEB have each pledged €10 million for technical assistance or other grant support. EU Member States and other donors are also invited to make grant contributions via a European Western Balkans Joint Fund co-managed by the EIB and EBRD, which is built around the pre-existing EBRD Western Balkan Fund and benefits from its experience. All these different sources of funding are now pooled together in the Joint Grant Facility. The joint lending facility will complement the grant facility.

In-country Missions

World Bank

Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP), Restructuring Mission, 16-18 December 2009: The aim was to follow up on the implementation of this project, and discuss about potential changes in the project design.

Albania Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Cleanup Project (ICZMCP), Restructuring Supervision Mission, 7-11 December 2009: The aim was to discuss the restructuring of the ICZMCP following the Government's request. The mission jointly with the respective implementing agencies reviewed the project components, activities, and project implementing arrangements. On this basis, the project restructuring paper will be further developed for processing.

Water Resources management Project, Implementation Completion Report (ICR) Mission, 2-9 December 2009: The aim was to evaluate the project impact as part of the ICR. Meetings took place with key stakeholders as well as visits on the project sites.

Mining Sector, Draft Mining Law and Mission Announcement, 14-19 December 2009: The mission team met with Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative steering committee to discuss and make

arrangements for World Bank Multi Donor Trust Fund support; discuss with the Government the recently completed study on small-scale mining with an emphasis on safety and development prospects for

chromite mines, transparency issues for industrial mineral operations; and to introduce a consultant who is expected to conduct a study on tax avoidance and transfer pricing as it relates to the mining industry.

governmentdonor**dialogue**

As of 15 November 2009 until 15 May 2010, the OSCE Presence in Albania will be the Chair of the Donor Technical Secretariat.

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

Want to contribute?

If you would like to contribute, send your text to the Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS) Office (nevila.como@aidharmonisation.org.al) or the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (DSDC) (agerxhani@km.gov.al) by the 5th of every month. An ideal word count for submissions is around 100 words.

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