

# governmentdonordialogue

ISSUE No. 43, Monthly Newsletter - October 2010

A Joint Effort of the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination  
and the Donor Technical Secretariat

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■ Photo: Minister for Innovation and ICT, Genc Pollo, UN Resident Co-ordinator in Albania, Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun and the Austrian Ambassador, Florian Raunig in a signing ceremony on 25 October 2010.

## Austria furthers its support to UN reform

On 25 October 2010, an agreement was signed by the Austrian Government and the UN, in the presence of Minister for Innovation and ICT, Genc Pollo, and Director of the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, Valbona Kuko. The Austrian Government continues to provide vital support to UN reform by contributing 200,000 Euros to the One UN Coherence Fund. "We are here to sign the continuation of a very successful project and we reconfirm the engagement of the Albanian government in the One UN process. While signing this new agree-

ment with the Austrians, I would like to thank the Austrian Government for their assistance and readiness in difficult financial conditions," said Minister Pollo. "We are very proud to contribute to this pilot initiative, which is going very well, that's why the Austrian Government is making a third contribution of 200,000 Euros", said Austrian Ambassador, Florian Raunig. "Thanks to Austria and our other donors, for the first time we are able to provide truly predictable funding to UN Agencies. I hope this trend will continue in the years to come," said UN

Resident Coordinator in Albania, Zineb Touimi-Benjelloun. The One UN Coherence Fund contributes to increase the Government's leadership in development assistance. Having now contributed 650,000 Euros, the Austrian Government is one of the key donors to the UN Coherence Fund. In partnership with the Government, the UN, has been working 'to deliver as one' by bringing together the expertise of fourteen UN Agencies to enhance its service delivery and impact and help the country achieve Millennium Development Goals and EU accession.

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Photo: Presentation of the German-Albanian Development Cooperation during the German October

### Presentation of the German-Albanian Development Cooperation

As part of German October, the German Embassy together with GTZ (technical cooperation) and KfW (financial cooperation) organized two events with a focus on development cooperation: In the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Ilir Meta, GTZ and KfW highlighted the progress achieved by Albania in 22 years of Albanian-German development cooperation. As part of Germany's support of Albania's EU aspirations and development, GTZ and KfW are active mainly in the areas of economic development, energy and water supply, and waste water disposal and the cross-sectoral issue of European integration. As part of the German October the well-established annual Press Tour gave journalists the chance to visit various German-Albanian development cooperation projects in Southern Albania, get background information and hold interviews with the new German Ambassador, Carola Müller-Holtkemper. The journalists visited two rehabilitated hydro-power plants in Bistrica, two electric power transformation substations in Saranda and Gjirokastra and a German expert in Gjirokastra active in developing cultural tourism and preserving local arts and crafts.

Additional information was provided on further current and future projects in the region such as the construction of a 110-kV power line and a 20 kV distribution system in Saranda and the rehabilitation of the water supply and waste water disposal systems in Saranda and Gjirokastra. This year's edition of the German October took the 20th anniversary of German unification as a starting point to look back on the developments in Albania and Germany marking the last 20 years. Many of the some 40 events during the German October examined how both societies deal with the communist past and their respective experiences of dictatorship. The German October is made possible with the help of German and Albanian partners and the contribution of sponsors.

### Challenges and Development Opportunities for the Garment Industry

The Albanian garment industry offers abundant opportunities for businesses and investors wishing to take advantage of the proximity of Albania to the European Union market.

The prospects of development and opportunities for investment in the garment industry were the main topics discussed during all the events that took place on the occasion of the “Albanian Textile Week”. The week



between 26 and 29 October 2010 included a number of activities, which highlighted problems facing the sector of garment industry in our country. On 29 October, a Conference was held on the "Challenges and Development Opportunities for the Garment Industry in Albania". The Conference was greeted by the German Ambassador in Tirana, Müller-Holtkemper; GTZ representative in Albania, Ulrike Gantzer-Sommer, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy, Ilir Meta. The German Ambassador in Tirana, Carola Müller-Holtkemper, considered the garment industry in Albania a promising sector that should be developed further

"The coming weeks shall be important because they shall promote the EU integration of Albania, which will allow the domestic products to become more competitive in the European market", emphasized Holtkemper in the Conference on the "Challenges and Development Opportunities for the Garment Industry in Albania". Competitive prices, the favourable geographical position, readiness to produce on small orders, satisfactory level of creativeness, etc., are identified as some of the strong points of Albanian garment industry. "The Albanian Textile Week" was organized by the Ministry of Economy, with the support of the German Embassy, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and USAID, as well as Swiss Import Promotion Program (SIPPO).

The Textile Week will be followed from the visit of the representative of EURATEX - European Apparel and Textile Confederation, Mr. Francesco Marchi (General Director of EURATEX). Mr. Marchi will be in Tirana from 25 till 26 November 2010. The partnership with the European structures is an important step on the further development of the Albanian Garment Industry and therefore Mr. Marchi in his first visit in Albania will have meetings with representatives of the Albanian government, representatives of the association and chambers of the garment industry and will discuss the opportunities for future co-operation with the Albanian partners and their integration in the Apparel European structures and supportive projects.



Photo: Ambassador of Germany in Tirana, Müller-Holtkemper; representative of GTZ in Albania, Ulrike Gantzer-Sommer, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy, Ilir Meta, in the Conference on "Challenges and Development Opportunities for the Garment Industry in Albania", on 29 October 2010

## Switzerland finances a new project in support of Children with Autism

The Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania (SCO-A) signed on 21 October 2010 an agreement with the Albanian Children Foundation "Domnick Scaglione" (ACF) for financing a project that aims to improve lives of children living with autism and their families. The project will enable the preparation and publication of a book and a guiding material for parents and health professionals, about autism and influence public opinion about autism in

Albania. The agreement was signed by Swiss Cooperation's Country Director, Daniel Züst, and Mrs. Liri Berisha, President of the ACF "Domenick Scaglione". A total amount of over 2,000,000 Lek will be used to provide the latest guidance to be distributed free of charge among parents and health professionals. "There are many who stand to benefit from today's agreement. We look forward to seeing better treatment, empowered families and equipped health professionals for the sake of children suffering from autism", said Mr. Züst as he mentioned previous projects funded by the Swiss Cooperation. Mrs. Liri Berisha, expressed appreciation for the support



■ Photo: Daniel Züst, Swiss Co-operation's Country Director, and Liri Berisha, President of the ACF Domenick Scaglione sign the agreement for financing a project that aims to improve lives of children living with autism and their families

provided by the Swiss Cooperation. "We thank Switzerland for supporting this project, which will serve to the children, their parents and health professionals."

This support shows that the awareness raising work done during the last two years by the foundation got not only the attention of the Albanian institutions but also of the international agencies operating in Albania", said Mrs. Berisha after the signing of the agreement.

Autism has come under special focus recently as it adversely affects the lives of children and may impair them for the rest of their lives. Prevalence of autism is estimated at 1 in 100 which means there could be approximately 32,000 children and adults suffering from autism in Albania. However, there is inadequate treatment and therapeutic services directed at this disorder. In the absence of public health structures that deal effectively with autism, the burden falls on parents and relatives of autistic children.

### Health: USAID Conference Highlights Reform Options for Health Care

On 15 October 2010, in co-operation with the Albanian Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo, and Health Ministries of both countries, USAID held a conference on the challenges in the region's health care system. Emphasis was placed on the need to manage available resources through efforts to reduce waste and abuse, and improve efficiency.

USAID Mission Director Joseph C. Williams announced a new USAID five-year, 8.5 million USD health care improvement programme aimed at making health care services more affordable and accessible in Albania. Today, only 3% of Albania's GDP is devoted to health system, less than half the European average. More than half (60%) of expenditures are informally paid out-of-pocket -- disproportionately affecting low-income populations and those who are not enrolled in the country's national health insurance programme.



Photo: USAID Albania Mission Director, Joseph C. Williams, talks about health care management reform (Credit: USAID)

### Konferenca e 18-të Vjetore për Kirurgjinë, e promovuar nga Bashkëpunimi Italian për Zhvillim

On 22 October 2010, some 300 doctors and 130 medicine students met in Tirana on the occasion of the 18th Annual Conference on Surgery. Promoted by the Italian Development Co-operation and organised in co-operation with the Department of Surgery of the University Hospital Centre Mother Teresa, the workshop attracted international surgeons and medical professionals. During this 18th edition, special focus has been given to emergency surgery, identifying new practices and tech-

niques for first-aid interventions. The workshop is conceived as an annual exercise of vocational training and its proceedings have been divulged among Albanian surgeons in order to foster information sharing and clinic best-practices exchange. Francesco De Luigi, Chargé d'Affaires of the Italian Embassy, opened the workshop stressing the engagement of the Italian Development Cooperation in strengthening the National Health Service, an engagement that Italy is now undertaking with a financial commitment of 12 mill Euros for the rehabilitation of five polyclinics in Tirana, Korça, Gjirokastra and Peshkopi, the equipment of the National Traumatological Centre in Tirana and the restructuring of first-aid facilities in Shkodra and Puka.



Photo: Mr. Francesco De Luigi, Chargé d'Affaires of the Italian Embassy, opening the 18th Annual Conference on Surgery.



## USAID Donates Equipment to Albania's Maternity Hospital

In October, Albania's first national training centre for obstetrics and gynaecology opened at the Queen Geraldine Maternity Hospital in Tirana. The centre, which is operated in cooperation with the University of Tirana Medical Faculty, received 10,000 USD worth of medical equipment from USAID that will allow medical students to practice safer and more effective clinical procedures for delivering babies and caring for mothers in Albania. According to Ministry of Health 2008 figures, maternal mortality is still high compared with other European countries, with an estimated 21 deaths per 100,000 live births. In partnership with the Ministry of Health and its institutions throughout Albania, USAID has worked for several years to support programmes to improve the quality of maternal and child healthcare in order to reduce in maternal and infant mortality rates.

## Millennium Challenge Corporation: AmCham Study Analyses Usage of the e-Procurement System

In October, the American Chamber of Commerce in Albania (AmCham) published the findings of a monitoring report on the usage of Albania's Electronic Procurement System (EPS). According to the report, EPS users, businesses and contracting authorities assessed the system as both effective and user-friendly, particularly in terms of savings in time and money, transparency and secure procedures. Yet internet service, particularly outside Tirana, remains an issue. The report was conducted with the support of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Albania Threshold Program II (MCCA2), administered by USAID. AmCham conducted 300 face-to-face interviews and focus groups with businesses in all 12 districts, with contracting authorities' procurement experts and with members of bid evaluation commissions. Interviews focused on access to EPS for public officials at the



Photo: Dr. Elton Koroveshi, a doctor at the Queen Geraldine Hospital, demonstrates how to use the simulation equipment to resuscitate a newborn infant (Credit: Galina Stolarsky, ACCESS-FP).

central and local government level and businesses that participate in public tenders, as well as on the system's fairness, user-friendliness, transparency, and effectiveness. AmCham presented its findings and recommendations the Albanian Public Procurement Agency that manages the EPS, to representatives of the business community and public institutions that use the system, and to civil society organizations and international donors. "U.S. assistance to Albania through both stages of the MCC Threshold Programs has aimed to improve the business and investment climate in the country by establishing a series

of e-government systems that streamline burdensome administrative procedures and increase transparency. And while the reforms have made a substantial impact, in the long-term Albania's civil society will increasingly play a more prominent role to ensure that services are continuously improved and are sustainable." said the Director of Threshold Programmes for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Bruce Kay. "To view the report, please click [here](#).

## Jour Fixe on Vocational Education and Training and ICT

On 27 October 2010, under the lead of GTZ, DACH-Plus organised the 4th Jour Fixe dedicated to Human resources in ICT: How to match offer and demand in the labour market? Among the participants were senior representatives of Albanian IT businesses, banks, telecommunication companies, and policy makers from the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, public agencies and donors. The event was addressed by the Minister of Education and Science, Myqerem Tafaj. The Jour Fixe pinpointed the need for supporting IT on post-secondary level eventu-



ally by opening an IT academy to train students that would supply the market with various specialisations. Minister Tafaj ensured the support of the Government in such an initiative through teaching staff, whilst the companies would enable internships and premises for students.

DACH-Plus is a group of implementing agencies, representing national, bi- and multilateral partners supporting the Albanian VET system. In the framework of joint donor activities, since January 2010, the DACH-Plus Group organises the Jour Fixe as a discussion forum that brings together policy makers, donors and relevant partners in the sector.

### Ministria e Arsimit dhe Shkencës rishikon Projektin “Cilësi dhe Barazi në Arsim”

On 22 October 2010, the Ministry of Education and Science organized in support of the “Quality and Equality in Education” Program the eighth conference on the 6-month review of the fulfillment of the annual reform program. In his presentation, “Main Reform Achievements in the Educational System for 2010”, the Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Myqerem Tafaj, considered the “Quality and Equality in Education” Program as a synonym of educational reforms and highlighted the educational reform categories to date: laws, by-laws and regulations on higher and undergraduate education, curricular reform, institutional reform, improvement of learning conditions and enhancement of professional capacities.

Further on, Minister Tafaj elaborated on the CBA Project goals for 2011 and the future of cooperation with the World Bank, viewed from the perspective of its strategies on education up to 2020. The Minister pointed out that the goals of our strategies for the development of education at all levels are entirely in line with the World Bank strategies on education till 2020. Further on, the Secretary General and representatives of the relevant directorates of the Ministry made a detailed overview of the progress achieved to date in the program and planning for 2011.



Photo: “Jour Fixe” on Vocational Education and Training and Information Communication Technology organised by the DACH-Plus on 27 October 2010

### PINK Embassy Launched

Albania's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender (LGBT) community will now have a safe place called PINK Embassy that besides being a safe place for them will also be an instrument to emancipate the Albanian society on respecting human rights. PINK Embassy was introduced on 5 October 2010 to the members of LGBT community, civil society representatives, diplomats, public institutions etc., in a ceremony held at the Tirana International Hotel. PINK Embassy is funded by the Government of the Netherlands

through MATRA programme and implemented through a partnership between CRCA/DCI Albania, COC Netherlands and LGBT PRO Albania. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Henk G.C. Van Den Dool said that “time has come for the rights of the LGBT community to be respected and that this community should be recognized as equal in society.” He called on politicians not to politicize the issue of homosexuality as it was an issue that belongs to the whole society and requires the input of everyone so that human rights are respected. He also donated to the PINK Embassy the book “Just Different. That's all!”, a book that speaks about the whole



Photo: Left to right: K. Pinderi (Pink Embassy/LGBT PRO), Altin Hazizaj (Pink's Ambassador), Elga Mitre (Embassy of Netherlands), Henk Van Den Dool (Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands and Pink's Ambassador)



process that Netherlands had to pass until they reached to accept as equals among them the LGBT community. The Ambassadors of this Embassy will be Altin Hazizaj, Mary Pone, Delina Fico, and Belioza Coku, who all stressed that it is now unacceptable to violate the rights of LGBT community. Altin Hazizaj was proud that CRCA together with COC Netherlands decided to under-take such a project. "It's all be-cause of human rights," "and I feel proud that despite the pressures and regardless the different reactions we can continue to fight for this cause that actually serves the whole society to understand that the human being is born with rights and that these rights are the same for any-one, whether a child, a female, people with disabilities, or LGBT community members", said Hazizaj,

### "ALO 116" presents its Ambassadors

On 9 October 2010, the National Child Helpline – ALO 116, presented its first two Ambassadors, Assembly Speaker Jozefina Topalli, and Mr Lorik Cana, a member of the Albanian National team. During a ceremony organized by CRCA/DCI Albania and UNICEF, Mrs Topalli expressed her appreciation for the work done by the

staff of "ALO 116". She said that working with children today is an investment that will bring benefits for the entire society. She appeals to the entire society to be engaged in the protection and respect of the rights of children. Lorik Cana said that he was touched by the fact that he was chosen as an Ambassador of the Child Helpline "ALO 116", and that the helpline always stays with children, counselling them and referring them to institutions that can help. The rep-

resentative of UNICEF, Detlef Palm and the Director of CRCA, Altin Hazizaj, stressed that this service needs to be made sustainable. The UNICEF representative appealed to the civil society, the state structures, government, and the business community to find bridges so that "ALO 116" continues its activity and that such initiatives for children become more frequent.

### International Human Rights Film Festival

The 5th International Human Rights Film Festival Albania took place from 5 to 10 October 2010, at Marubi Academy of Film & Multimedia. At the opening of the festival, UNICEF Representative, Detlef Palm, in his capacity as the chairperson of the Board of the Festival, said that the discussion of human rights is a hallmark of democratic and modern states. The Festival covered a wide range of human rights themes. Many screenings were attended by the film director or the Ambassador of the country where the film was made. The European Commission and the Austrian Development Cooperation were among the biggest contributors. The festival enabled a screening in one of the prisons in Tirana, which included discussions with high school students.



Photo: "ALO 116" Ambassadors Jozefina Topalli and Lorik Cana during the ceremony organised on 5 October 2010

## National Conference of the National Coalition for the Environment

National Conference of the National Coalition for the Environment (NCE) was held on 26 October 2010 in Tirana with participation of 120 invited guests, members of the Bells Movement in Albania, in the region, and other guests. The event focused on EU Environmental Values and Standards and environmental issues affecting the public. The event was opened by the Minister of Environment Fatmir Mediu who said that the NCE and Bells Movement is a group that gives the necessary emancipation to society to work together, to ensure transparency and the necessary expertise on environmental issues. The conference honoured with the Award of Honourable Environmental Ambassador Xhemal Mato, Mr. Jemin Gjana, Regional Environmental Centre (REC) Albanian Office, Regional Council of Elbasan, Bardhyl Baltëza, and Ina Kasimati. The event honoured with a "Gratitude Award" the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Lek Gjijnuri with the Award of "Honourable Environmental Ambassador", Post Mortem.

## EU, OSCE project launches campaign to promote use of new address system by Albanian citizens

A public awareness campaign to



Photo: National Conference of the National Coalition for the Environment held on 26 October 2010

promote the use of Albania's new standardized address system was launched on 27 October 2010, in framework of the project "Modernisation of Administrative Address and Civil Registration Systems", funded with EUR 2.5 million by the EU, and additional funds by the OSCE and US government and implemented by OSCE.

The campaign informs about the new address system and about the benefits of using official addresses instead of the informal reference points used so far. The launch of this campaign comes at the end of a long project of most tangible results on the modernisation of Albania's civil registry and address system. Albania's

new civil registry and new address system will improve public services for Albanian citizens by way of improving communication. To that end, citizens need to be made aware of the new system, of their new addresses and need to use them. Citizens will be informed of how to employ the new system through newspaper and television advertisements.

Luigi Brusa, Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union Delegation to Albania, declared that "The quality of the state services is highly dependent on a sound address system that can be referred to and learned by all. Albania now has such a system. But it needs to be used and learned in order to bring the promised benefits".

Ambassador Eugen Wollfarth, Head of the OSCE Presence, emphasized that "The new system will ensure better quality and faster public services. The addresses contribute toward better election and rule-of-law processes, and help businesses prosper. The address system will be connected to the National Register of Civil Status in order to provide a unique address to every registered person."

The long-term success of the new address system and related undertakings, such as the 2011 Census depend on government will on inter-institutional cooperation, and on the collaboration authorities, such as the General Directorate of the Civil Status, Civil Status Offices and Urban Planning Offices.



Photo: Minister of Interior, Lulzim Basha and Head of the OSCE Presence, Ambassador Eugen Wollfarth, launching the public awareness campaign promoting the use of Albania's new standardized address system, as part of an EU-funded project implemented by the OSCE Presence in Albania, October 2010 (Photo/LSA).



## Albanian Journalists meet to discuss issues related to consumer protection in Albania

On 11 October 2010, some 20 representatives from the print and electronic media in Albania participated in a three days meeting on the topic of consumer protection organized by the General Directorate of Trade Policy of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy and the United Nations Joint Programme on Economic Governance, Regulatory Reform and Pro-Poor Development. The meeting was opened by the General Director of the Trade Policy Directorate, Besian Pesha, and the UNDP Programme Officer, Mr. Eno Ngjela. The meeting aimed to familiarize participants with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Law and discuss how to build public awareness about their rights as consumers, better report cases of violations of these rights and thus be one of the actors in the protection of consumer rights. The Law on Consumer Protection, adopted in April 2008, is aligned with EU consumer protection legislation and aims at protecting the rights of consumers in the market place. However, there is a perception that breaches of the law are common and more needs to be done to inform consumers about its provisions so they protect themselves from unfair commercial practices. One of the aims of the UN Joint Programme on Economic Governance, Regulatory Reform and Pro-Poor Development is to support the work of the Ministry in the area of consumer rights protection and the implementation of the Law. The discussions on



Photo: Representatives from the print and electronic media in a meeting on consumer protection.

consumer rights with media representatives will be extended to the 12 regions with the support of the UN. The Economic Governance Programme is funded by the Spanish Government through the MDG Achievement Fund. It is implemented jointly by the World Bank and UNDP in partnership with the Ministries of Economy, Trade and Energy, and the Ministry of Public Work and Transport. The programme is expected to enhance capacities of the electricity and water policy makers and regulatory bodies to better monitor the provision and efficiency of service delivery, provide a national voice for consumers by strengthening the relevant consumer associations and state bodies. The programme also aims to promote pro-poor utility policies.

## SWG on Water and Sanitation

A Sector Working Group on Water and Sanitation was held on 5 October 2010. The meeting was chaired by Director of Water Policies in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Taulant Zeneli, who gave a presentation of the current situation. His presentation was followed by a World Bank presentation on the strategy revision process, focusing on tariffs and subsidies policy, ownership of assets, management and licensing policies in the water and sewerage Sector, and inputs from other donors working in the sector. Projects include: Optimization framework (World Bank); Master Plan financed by KfW that is expect-

## National Campaign – Act Now!

On 27 October 2010, Milieucontact International Albania organized a National Conference as a closure of National Campaign for a Change in Environment – Act Now! Representatives from Government, civil society organizations, media, and donors participated in the meeting. The event was greeted by Minister of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Fatmir Mediu, the Deputy Head of the Dutch Embassy,

Noeke Ruiter and REC Albania. Campaign was running for more than one year expanded nationwide and involving partners focusing on water, air, waste and public participation problems and was characterized by diversity in activities implemented, materials produced, topics dealt and areas involved. Environmental agencies guaranteed their engagement in environment protection, contributing in improvement of the situation in the Albania.



Photo: National Conference organised to mark the closure of National Campaign for a Change in Environment – Act Now



Photo: Landfill in Bushat

ed to be tendered and implemented in fourth quarter 2010 until fourth quarter 2011; Programme of demand management (World Bank); Strengthening enterprises' capacities, supported by ADA-GTZ. The World Bank continued with suggestions for optimizing the regulatory and legal framework, on energy efficiency, demand management, while ending its intervention in giving statistics and targets for 2015 for meter connections, loss reduction and the use of energy. The time schedule of the strategy until it goes into the approval process is: end-October - discussion with internal partners and working group; November - Discussion with donors and other actors; End December - Strategy is finalized.

### **Austrian expertise in Bushati Landfill**

Austrian Development Cooperation organised a study visit to Austria on Solid Waste Management for technical staff of the Ministry of Environment Forest and Water Administration, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and representatives from Bushat. As a follow up of this study visit in June a waste management/landfill expert visit Bushat during the third week of October. The aim of this consultancy was to provide technical assistance and recommendations to the commune in regard to environmental, operational, financial and monitoring aspects related to the management of the landfill Bushat which should be adopted by the respective landfill enterprise. Crucial elements such as proper planning, landfill security, control and monitoring, human resources and landfill end of life warranty, etc has been brought to the attention of the in-

involved decision makers. The expert's visit demonstrate another example of the commitment the Government of Lower Austria to support Albania's effort in the environment sector as well as to contribute to the improvement of solid waste management in North Albania.

### **Donor Forum on SME and Private Sector Development**

On 27 October 2010, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy held a round table with donors, as part of the consultation phase for the Business Innovation and Technology Strategy and action plan. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Ilir Meta and moderated by Deputy Minister, Eno Bozdo. Minister Meta stressed the importance of this strategy which is harmonised with other sectors, e.g. science and technology.

*A major change, is the new Albanian Agency for Investment Development (replacing the existing Albinvest) that will cover the role of Mediation Centre for Business Innovation*

The private sector development is a cross-cutting issue and affects the employment rate and the overall economic development. He provided statistics as the increasing number of SMEs and the dynamics that they represent in the country's economic structure. In describing the strategy, he said that it is complete in itself and that an action plan will direct donors and investments in the future. He said that the cost of implementing the strategy was an estimated 10.3 million Euros. The Business Innovation and Technology Strategy and Action Plan are enabled through IPA 2007 project Supporting SMEs to Become More Competitive in the EU Market. Introducing Strategy contents, the project experts presented the situation of the sector, the main pillars of the Strategy, measures and activities. The aim will be: to raise awareness among enterprises of the benefits of innovation and technological improvement; to initiate, import, modify and diffuse new technologies among enterprises and improving enterprises' positions in supply chains; to increase the capacity of business support organisation to assist enterprises in innovating; Direct servicing with technical information; to assist enterprises in gaining external finance for innovative actions; Build innovation into the key sectors of the economy; Enabling innovative new firms to start, survive and prosper.

A major change, is the new Albanian Agency for Investment Development (replacing the existing Albinvest) that will cover the role of Mediation Centre for Business Innovation. Donors gave very positive feedback on this document as it will provide a roadmap and overall orientation for further development where their assistance can focus on.



Proposed Albania Development Policy (DPL) Operation on Social Sectors, Pre-appraisal Mission, took place from 13 to 22 October 2010. The aims were to: review progress in implementing the policy reforms in health and social assistance included in the draft Policy Matrix prepared during the March 2010 visit; discuss the supporting evidence that will be used to show that the policies have been implemented; and agree on the timetable for processing the DPL and for the evidence to be presented to the World Bank.

Business Environment Reform & Institutional Strengthening Project, Supervision Mission, visited from 7 to 13 October 2010. The team met with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy (MoETE) to discuss the overall progress of the project, focusing on the inspection law, construction of metrology laboratory and buying of the laboratory equipments. The team met with General Directorate of Metrology, Department of Standards, and Department of Accreditation to follow up on implementation progress.

Water Sector Investment Project (WSIP) Preparation Mission, took place from 4 to 8 October 2010. The main aim was assessing progress and providing support in preparing the investment project, including preparation of tender documents and facilitating the contracting of consultants to carry out feasibility and design studies, an environmental and social assessment, and policy and institutional analysis assignments that will be prepared as inputs to the design of the proposed new investment operation. The mission carried out an assessment of progress and provide support in establishing institutional arrangements for project implementation, including procurement and financial management arrangements, agency co-ordination issues.

Education Excellence and Equity Project, Joint EIB and WB Mission, visited from 18 October to 5 November 2010. The main aims are to: (i) review the Project's overall progress; (ii) discuss with the Government and Co-Funders the proposed 2011 Annual Reform Programme, including the Government's strategy to complete project implementation in the context of a 12 month extension; (iii) supervise safeguard implementation compliance, including visiting sites of civil works and reviewing draft Environmental Impact Assessments for new sites; (iv) supervise progress with civil works

## In-country Missions

### World Bank

through site visits; and (v) carry out the procurement supervision work.

Social Services Delivery Project, Supervision Mission, took place from 14 to 22 October 2010. The main aim was to: review the project's overall implementation progress, including discussions with all related counterparts; with focus on agreed actions during last project supervision; discuss with the Social Insurance Institute (SII) the proposed regional offices for physical rehabilitation, to be supported under the Project, ensuring compliance with the requirements of Project Loan Agreement; and visit the site of civil works in the SII archive and supervise its progress;

Integrated Planning System Trust Fund, Change of Task Team Leadership and Supervision Mission, took place from 18 to 22 October 2010. The aims were: (i) to meet with the Ministry of Finance, Department of Public Administration, National Agency for Information Society to discuss progress in the implementation of the Fund activities since the last mission in June 2010, the revised results framework under the Fund's pending restructuring, and plans for the last year of the Fund's implementation; and, (ii) to

meet with representatives of the six donors: Austria, European Delegation, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland to discuss results achieved.

JSDF Grant for Youth Empowerment through Community Development in Albania, Supervision Mission took place from 28 till 29 October 2010. The aim was to follow up on the implementation progress and institutional settings for the project implementation;

Land Administration and Management Project, Implementation Support Mission visited from 13 September to 8 October 2010. The aim was to: (i) review progress in preparing for restructuring based on prior agreed actions, such as preparation of the emergency recovery and flood protection sub-projects, (ii) finalize implementation arrangements and agree an action plan in order to proceed with advance procurement of the emergency reconstruction and flood protection works and goods proposed to be financed under the proposed Component D (Emergency Response), and (iii) carry out overall implementation support and supervision of Components A, B and C of the project and agree a time bound action plan for the coming months.

## governmentdonordialogue

As of 15 June 2010 until 15 November 2010, the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania is the Chair of the Donor Technical Secretariat.

Any comments regarding Government-Donor Dialogue (both positive and negative) are strongly encouraged

From January 2010 Government-Donor Dialogue will be available in both English and Albanian language.

### Want to contribute?

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