



WEEKLY NEWS

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Joint news conference of Premier Berisha and German Chancellor Angela Merkel

Prime Minister Sali Berisha and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel gave today a joint news conference in Berlin to reconfirm the very good relations between the two countries. Chancellor Merkel highlighted Premier Berisha courageous course of reforms and especially fight against corruption. Further on, Chancellor Merkel pointed to the results the reforms are yielding.

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German Foreign Minister Steinmeier highlights very good bilateral relations and GoA sweeping reforms

During his German visit, Prime Minister Sali Berisha had a very cordial meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Welcoming the Albanian premier, Mr. Steinmeier expressed his positive assessment of the very good relations between the two countries and the sweeping reforms the government of Albania (GoA) has undertaken.

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NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General Craddock: Albania to join NATO in 2009 summit

Premier Berisha received today the NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General John Craddock. Cordially welcoming him, Premier Berisha expressed to him deepest gratitude for support and continuous help provided by NATO, USA, President Bush and Pentagon, as well as NATO member countries to Albania, in the framework of the major project of Albanians for NATO membership.

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USAID praises Albanian government commitment for acceleration of integration reforms

Premier Berisha received today the U.S. Ambassador to John Withers II, who presented the new Director of USAID's Mission, Roberta Mahoney. During the meeting, Premier Berisha appreciated the proceeding of USAID's projects in Albania and the assistance the U.S. has been providing for Albania in consolidating democracy, institutions and market economy.

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Premier Berisha meets board of Albanian-American Enterprise Fund

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- Premier Berisha attends signing ceremony of Millennium Challenge Corporation Stage Two Threshold Program
- Premier Berisha: Establishment of Administrative Court, a real positive development for justice system
- Inter-ministerial Committee for Integration discusses fulfillment of obligations in the SAA framework
- Premier Berisha: Signing of Protocol of Albania's membership to NATO by President Bush, most crucial historical act since recognition of Independent Albania by USA

Premier Berisha: Eldercare, a major priority of government

In the framework of October 1, the International Day of the Elderly, Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended today the inauguration ceremony of the reconstructed Elderly Care Home located in “Ali Demi” St., in Tirana. At first, Premier Berisha visited the inner venues of this center and met with the elderly accommodated there. While considering the International Day of the Elderly as the Day of every citizen, irrespective of the age, PM Berisha said that this social stratum will constantly be a major priority of the government.

Premier Berisha: Companies exploiting natural resources to meet legal obligations toward local governments

Premier Berisha urged the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Finance to verify the fulfillment of the obligations of the companies that operate in the field of natural resources exploitation toward local governments. Raising this concern at the meeting of Council of Ministers, Premier Berisha urged the fulfillment of this obligation, otherwise, the local government will be authorized to deny the right to touch the assets of the area for those who do not meet the obligations toward the community.

Premier Berisha: Establishment of Administrative Court, a real positive development for justice system

During the routine meeting of the Council of Ministers, Premier Berisha highlighted the draft laws the Ministry of Justice has forwarded for approval. While considering these laws of extreme importance for the reforms, the premier said they will be the topic of an open debate at the Parliament with the opposition. The premier pointed to the draft law “On judgment of administrative differences and organization of administrative justice,” a project taken over to be finance by the United States Agency for International Development. This project, explained the premier, is implemented in the framework of the Millennium Challenge Account, which the Corporation accorded to Albania.

USAID praises Albanian government commitment for acceleration of integration reforms

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meeting, Premier Berisha appreciated the proceeding of USAID's projects in Albania and the assistance the U.S. has been providing for Albania in consolidating democracy, institutions and market economy.

In particular, Premier Berisha highly estimated the programs under the first stage of Millennium's Challenge, whose results ranked Albania high as regards the speed of reforms. On her part, USAID representative Roberta Mahoney expressed the best assessments for government commitment in acceleration of reforms that bring Albania closer to European Union and NATO. She expressed her conviction that they would jointly push ahead with the reforms.

Premier Berisha: Deep reforms accelerated rhythm of Albania's NATO membership process

The Inter-ministerial Committee for NATO Integration, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, adopted Wednesday important measures and reforms to be launched by the Albanian government under the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in the run up to Albania's full NATO membership. Premier Berisha said that during the first cycle of the MAP, the Albanian government had attained overall results, major reforms, which enhanced the governing performance.

Inter-ministerial Committee for Integration discusses fulfillment of obligations in the SAA framework

The Inter-ministerial Committee for Integration met Wednesday, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sali Berisha, to review some of the most important legal initiatives launched by the Albanian government in line with the Stabilization-Association Agreement (SAA), initiatives to be met before the EU Progress Report and the next steps after the Progress Report. At the beginning of the meeting, Premier Berisha stressed that a good part of SAA have been already realized, whereas others are under solution process. The following draft laws have been realized and were approved during the Wednesday meeting of Council of Ministers: “On Judicial Administration”, Changes to Penal Code, Approval of Strategy against organized crime, “On profession of Ombudsman”, “On Juridical Assistance”, “On State Advocacy” and “On judgment of administrative conflict and organization of administrative justice”, “On private judicial execution service”. Whereas, the following are under process of changes: law on functioning of prosecution, full functioning of some prisons, draft law “On Prisons' police”, law on payment agency, establishment port authority, draft law on mail services, completion of review of mineral law, etc.

Premier proposes appointment of new Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

In respect of item 1, article 98 of the Constitution, Prime Minister Sali Berisha proposed today to the President of the Republic Bamir Topi removal from the office of Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Mr. Koço Barka and appointment of Mr. Anastas Dhimitër Duro as the new Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Premier Berisha: Fight against child trafficking is a top priority issue

Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended today the conference organized by the Albanian coalition All together against child trafficking under topic: analysis on the trafficking situation of the children and coordination of the efforts for monitoring and efficiency in this fight.

Attending this meeting were the US ambassador in Tirana John Withers, UNICEF representative in Tirana Carrie Auer, members of the Cabinet, leaders of different organizations dealing with issues of child trafficking, representatives of the local government units etc.

Ambassador Withers positively assessed the activity of the coalition and its cooperation with the public and private sector in protection of the children. The ambassador promised the US embassy will stand by the Albanian institutions so that strategy for fight against trafficking of children presented today by the coalition All together against child trafficking becomes a reality.

Premier Berisha receives Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, Chairman of NATO Military Committee

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, Chairman of NATO Military Committee. Following the talks, Premier Berisha and Admiral Di Paola told the media:

Admiral Di Paola: Mr. Prime Minister! Firstly, I would like to thank you for the reception. This is a great honor for me.

I would like to reconfirm the importance of support that Albania is offering to the Alliance and let us hope that Albania becomes a full member in the coming months. This is a positive assessment of the Albanians, Albania, government of Albania and the great job this country has made to become a respected member of the international community and a future NATO member. Albania is currently supporting NATO in many operations and not only the NATO, not only in

Afghanistan, but even some EU missions and following Albania membership its contribution will be even greater and we are grateful to you Mr. Prime Minister. I would like to thank you once again and we hope Albania becomes a full member and we work side by side for the security and prosperity not only in the region but even beyond.

Premier Berisha: I took the opportunity of meeting Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, Chairman of NATO Military Committee, to express my deep gratitude to the admiral in person who has testified to Albania and the Albanians the most friendly feelings even during the period he used to be Chief of Defense Staff of Italy, a friendly country to Albania and currently Chairman of the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Alliance. Also I thanked the Alliance, the Secretary General, the Military Committee and NATO mission in Tirana for the encouragement and very worthy assistance to Albania toward membership. Albania NATO membership is the most major achievement of Albania and of the Albanians as they join this Alliance as a free and independent country in which they will be safe for building their future and will consolidate a friendly cooperation with all the countries of this political and military Alliance, the greatest of all times. I ensured Admiral Di Paola that the reforms will be perpetual motion and they will be sweeping reforms covering all the fields, they will be political reforms as well, through which Albania will consolidate all the standards of a functional democracy, market reforms through which Albania will guarantee a free and functional market economy, the reform of the Armed Forces through which Albania hopes to make the AAF smaller, better trained so that it is capable of serving alongside NATO forces. I would like to thank once again Admiral Di Paola for this visit.

Premier Berisha: Independence of institutions, vital for fight against corruption

-Premier appeals to the opposition for cooperation in solving several important issues in fight against corruption.

Prime Minister Sali Berisha highlighted during meeting today of the Council of Ministers that fight against corruption should extend over all the institutions. Emphasizing that independence of the institutions is vital for fight against corruption; the premier said that no one is more interested than the majority in the independence of the institutions. In this context, said the premier, reforms in the judiciary will continue targeting consolidation of their independence and transparency of their activity. Further on, Premier Berisha appealed to the opposition for cooperation to solve several important issues and fight against corruption.

Premier Berisha condemns monstrous efforts at rehabilitation of Hitler of Albanians

During the meeting of the Parliamentary group of the Democratic Party today, Prime Minister Sali Berisha considered as inhuman and shameful the efforts made at rehabilitation of the figure of Enver Hoxha, the after Second World War Hitler, the most cruel dictator of the Albanians. The premier emphasized that monstrous and unimaginable efforts are being made at bringing out of history calendars of shame the most bloodthirsty monster that the Albanians have ever recognized throughout their history at a time when the country is becoming a more and more reliable partner of the Western allies and is in the threshold of full NATO membership. To vindicate at present-day these actions, said Premier Berisha, is to commit a heinous crime against Albania and the Albanians. The efforts to commemorate the 100-th birth anniversary of the dictator are attempts to vindicate the terror, atrocities, slavery and isolation that he imposed on Albania and the Albanians. In this context, the premier demanded from the Socialist Party to distance itself from the rehabilitation process of the figures of the most savage dictatorship that the Albanians have ever recognized throughout their history.

Joint news conference of Premier Berisha and German Chancellor Angela Merkel

Prime Minister Sali Berisha and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel gave today a joint news conference in Berlin to reconfirm the very good relations between the two countries. Chancellor Merkel highlighted Premier Berisha courageous course of reforms and especially fight against corruption. Further on, Chancellor Merkel pointed to the results the reforms are yielding. Expressing thanks for the worthy assistance Germany has provided Albania with in the course of the recent 20 years; Premier Berisha said that over a three year period government of Albania (GoA) has focused on surpassing the barriers that used to hamper the integration process of the country.

Chancellor Merkel: *Ladies and gentlemen,*
I am happy that Prime Minister of Albania Mr. Sali Berisha is invited guest to Germany today. Our political relations are very good, friendly and progress smoothly. While, the economic relations can improve further. The week of the German culture has taken place in Albania. It implies a broad spectrum of cooperation even in this field. The political cooperation is consolidated and other steps in support of Albania will follow. We wish further

success to Albania in its way. I believe you are picking the fruits of the reforms you have implemented. I believe Premier Berisha is pursuing a courageous course of reforms in fight against corruption and for economic success. We are building a sustainable ground of cooperation and Germany will assist Albania where there is an opportunity.

Premier Berisha: *Honored Chancellor Merkel, Ladies and gentlemen,*

I take the opportunity to express most cordial thanks and gratitude to Chancellor Merkel for the very warm and friendly reception extended to me during my visit in the Federal Republic of Germany. Also I express deep gratitude for the extremely worthy political, economic and all-round assistance that this great friendly country has provided Albania with in the course of the recent 20 years. Albania is at the top list of the assistance per capita Germany has extended. The assistance amounts to over 700 million Euro and covers all the fields. As you are aware of, Albania came out of extreme poverty and misery. Today, Albania has changed. It is not any more part of the group of low income countries. And the German assistance has played a substantial role in Albania achievements. Therefore, I am grateful for this. I acquainted Chancellor Merkel with GoA efforts over these three years to progress toward the two major projects of my nation: NATO integration and EU integration. In this context, firstly we dealt with surpassing of barriers that collapsing of walls that hampered the integration process of the country. Fight organized crime with zero tolerance has been at the core of my government platform. And at present Albania criminality record is the same with the average of EU member countries. Albania dismantled 206 organized crime groups, arrested 950 of their members and brought them to justice, speedboats and other small private vessels used for trafficking to Italy have been banned from coastal waters. This is a safe country. There is a boost to tourism industry with the number of tourists being increased from 300 thousand in 2004 into 2 million this current year. No incident has occurred and Albania is a safe country. Albania is implementing deep reforms targeting to make its democracy functional. We have made constitutional amendments and are working with the opposition at a new Electoral Code. We have introduced new market economy regulations and new standards for the fight against corruption. Speaking about results? The Doing business report ranked Albania the runner-up for market reforms and business environment. Albania was listed among the first 10 countries in the world and the first in the Balkans about fight against corruption. However, corruption is still a

cancer that should be fought every hour, every day, every week and every month.

There exists a favorable climate for FDI in Albania. A great effort is underway regarding infrastructure. The German Development Bank KfV projects and others are of special importance. Albania Southern electricity network was restored thanks to assistance of this bank and German government. KfV is also financing Tirana Podgorica interconnection line as well as that between Tirana and Prishtina. Tens of other projects are being implemented in the waterworks, sewers, sewage treatment, lake protection, protection of Ohrid Lake, Shkodra Lake and protection of environment. The projects are giving positive results.

Also I am pleased with the growing interest of the German business to invest in Albania. Hochtief, Siemens have a fine work tradition in Albania. Other companies are showing an interest to invest in the country. Albania has great water resources. About 400 hydroelectric power stations are to be build. Albania has great resources in minerals like chrome, nickel, copper etc. It is a country with great tourist potential to be developed. A legal framework exists along with a friendly climate to business.

The regional situation was another topic in the agenda of talks with Chancellor Merkel. Germany has made a key contribution to peace and stability in the region filled with conflicts as well as to open a new chapter of peace, stability and integration. We shared the same view that changes taking place in Belgrade are positive and President Tadic and Serbian government will pave the way to a new page of cooperation. I consider of extreme importance a new page in the history of cooperation between the Albanians and the Serbs in the Balkans. Looking toward the future is the only alternative. I am determined to make a contribution in this direction. We discussed other problems with Chancellor Merkel.

I reiterate my profound gratitude to Chancellor Merkel for the great support and I assure her that the reforms will be perpetual mobile in Albania.

Chancellor Merkel assesses positively bilateral relations and Berisha government reforms

Prime Minister Sali Berisha, on an official visit to Germany, was granted an audience today by noon by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In the beginning, PM Berisha and Chancellor Merkel inspected the guard of honor, an official ceremony held in honor of heads of states and governments of friendly countries. Further on, PM Berisha attended the lunch put on in honor of the Albanian delegation. During the lunch, the premier held a cordial and friendly talk with the German chancellor. Welcoming Premier Berisha to Germany, Chancellor Merkel congratulated him for Albania progress during the recent years in all the

fields especially in fight against organized crime and corruption. A great courage is needed to fight corruption, said Chancellor Merkel and praised Premier Berisha and the government of Albania for showing it.

In this framework, -said Chancellor Merkel, - the whole region and Europe hold you in high esteem for the progress made in fight against corruption as it goes beyond Albania.

Mrs. Merkel said that Germany and European countries know beyond doubt the significant results GoA has achieved in fight against corruption, crime, economic development and other major reforms. We, - said Chancellor Merkel- assess positively the determination of GoA and its leadership as the source of these results.

Chancellor Merkel considered bilateral relations as very good. And she expressed the willingness to further cooperation between the two countries in all the fields.

Chancellor Merkel expressed special satisfaction that prestigious German companies like Hochtief, Siemens have implemented major projects in Albania and have been success story.

Also the chancellor expressed positive assessments of Albania economy growth and the economic reforms that GoA has implemented. And she said that economic development has yielded very positive results. Premier Berisha cordially thanked Chancellor Merkel for the invitation, the hospitality extended and the very worthy assistance that the government of Germany has provided Albania with during all this period, being classified as the first country benefiting German assistance per capita in the world.

Premier Berisha said that the Albanians are grateful to Chancellor Merkel, the German state and government and the German taxpayers. The assistance amounts to over 700 million Euros over these years.

Premier Berisha said that no other country has been transformed more in the region of Western Balkans than Albania. And this has been even thanks to the great assistance and solidarity demonstrated by Germany and the other countries.

Three years ago corruption and organized crime had turned into a system and were the biggest problems Albania faced with as they blocked Albania EU and NATO integration process.

GoA announced fight with zero tolerance against organized crime and corruption that over these three years has yielded very significant results and has realized the substantial transformation of the country. In this context, the premier presented to Chancellor Merkel the reforms and the achievements of the government of Albania in very important fields like the economic field, facilitation and creation of a favorable business climate etc. The premier acquainted the chancellor even with assessments of the international reports like Doing Business, WB, and Transparency

International etc.

Chancellor Merkel expressed her interest to know more about corruption problems that still exist in the justice and health system while expressing at the same time the support of the German government to important reforms of fighting corruption in these two vital sectors as well as the willingness of Germany to back these reforms.

The Albanians have been more isolated than the other countries and this adds to the achieved results of the government of Albania. The premier thanked the chancellor for the support that Germany gives for NATO integration, for the fast completion of this process and support to EU integration. On this occasion, Chancellor Merkel gave the promise to Premier Berisha that Germany will ratify EU SAA with Albania within 2008 and soon even Albania NATO Accession Protocol.

Chancellor Merkel ensured the premier for the commitment of the German government to assist Albania in many fields especially in building the necessary infrastructure like projects on electricity transmission, waterworks, sewers etc. Likewise, she promised to Premier Berisha that Germany would assist Albania in the field of vocational education. Also the premier demanded the support of the chancellor for visa liberalization and the free movement of the Albanians over EU space. This would be a great help and a very important step to approach the Albanians feel as EU citizens.

While assuring the chancellor that GoA is taking all the measures and is building the entire necessary infrastructure, the premier said it is meeting all the standards about emigration, border control thus moving toward facilitation of the visa regime with the EU. Both dignitaries also discussed regional developments, especially Kosova as well as the role that Albania has played for shaping security in the region. Premier Berisha thanked Chancellor Merkel for the support that Germany has given for Kosova and recognition of Kosova independence.

Following the first visit that Mr. Berisha paid to Germany in the quality of the President of the Republic, at invitation of the then Chancellor Helmut Kohl, this is the second and most successful visit that Premier Berisha pays to Germany.

German Foreign Minister Steinmeier highlights very good bilateral relations and GoA sweeping reforms

During his German visit, Prime Minister Sali Berisha had a very cordial meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Welcoming the Albanian premier, Mr. Steinmeier expressed his positive assessment of the very good relations between the two countries and the sweeping reforms

the government of Albania (GoA) has undertaken. The Foreign Minister Steinmeier showed high regard for the major achievements in fight against organized crime and corruption as well as for the fast pace of economic growth, fight against informality, improvement of the business climate etc which have opened new vacancies and increased the well-being of the citizens.

While congratulating GoA for the progress of the integration process, the Foreign Minister Steinmeier ensured Premier Berisha for the support of the government of Germany for Albania quick NATO integration as well as for EU integration.

On his part, Premier Berisha thanked cordially Foreign Minister Steinmeier and shared with him the same opinion about the high level of relations between Germany and Albania. The premier appreciated the very worthy and constant assistance of Germany to Albania NATO and EU integration process. Both dignitaries voiced their willingness to consolidate further cooperation in all the fields especially for increase of German investments in Albania.

Further on, Premier Berisha made a presentation of the sweeping reforms GoA has implemented in fight against organized crime, trafficking and corruption as well as the achievements in the economic field, business activity etc. The premier focused especially on the measures GoA has taken for creation of a favorable climate for the business and pointed to the increase of foreign direct investments in Albania as a result of this. In this context, the premier acquainted Mr. Steinmeier with the concrete steps for facilitation of all the procedures for the business and focused on e-taxes, e-procurements, e-customs etc.

The premier emphasized that thanks to fight against corruption and fiscal evasion GoA has managed to increase revenues to the state budget during the last three years with about 1, 4 billion USD annually. Premier Berisha pointed to international reports that have already reflected these achievements like WB Doing Business that ranks Albania the runner up in the world about progress of reforms last year and TI report that recognizes Albania has left behind 95 countries about fight against corruption. Speaking about the recent developments in the region, Premier Berisha thanked the foreign minister for the contribution that Germany has made to peace and stability in the region as well as for recognition of Kosova independence by Germany. The two dignitaries appreciated further the importance of recognition of Kosova independence as necessary condition for peace and stability in the region. Further on, Premier Berisha demanded from Foreign Minister Steinmeier Germany support for liberalization of visa regime and free movement of the Albanian citizens over European space while ensuring that GoA is undertaking all the steps to meet the criteria and the EU required standards about the necessary infrastructure.

Two 30 million euro Germany-Albania agreements on economic cooperation signed in Berlin

During his two-day formal visit to Germany, Premier Berisha attended the signing of two agreements on economic cooperation between Albania and Germany and between Albania and Germany's state-owned KfW Bank for Reconstruction.

For the Albanians the agreement was signed by Finance Minister Ridvan Bode and for the Germans by the President for Europe of the KfW Group, Roland Siller. These two agreements envisage the allocation of 30 million euro fund for projects to finance the small business in the country and sewage works in the district of Korçe.

During his address at the ceremony, Premier Berisha expressed gratitude for the assistance and support the German government had been providing for the Albanian economy and said that German investors were welcomed to Albania and would have the Albanian government's full support.

In this framework, the Premier stressed that the government is launching deep reforms in economy and the fiscal system as well as a powerful fight against corruption for Albania to have the most favorable climate possible for German and other foreign investments.

Following the signing of the agreement, Siller hailed the success of the Albanian government in reforms and the excellent progress of economy. The President of KfW expressed the conviction that the 30 million euro fund along with a fund of 90 million euros the German government had provided for Albania for projects on power infrastructure and interconnection lines with Kosova would bring more change, employment and ideas in the friendly Albania.

Press Release

Prime Minister of Albania, Prof. Dr. Sali Berisha cordially hailed the recognition of Independence of Kosova by Portugal, Macedonia and Montenegro, as a strong support and major contribution to Kosova and its citizens in the road of development and integration, as well as an essential contribution to peace and stability in our region.

Albania signs act of membership in Fund of Southeastern Europe for small and medium enterprises

At Friday meeting of Council of Ministers, Premier Berisha informed that Albania signed the act of membership in Fund of Southeastern Europe for small and medium enterprises. "Albania signed the act of membership in Fund of Southeastern Europe for small

and medium enterprises, which will play a great role in crediting, financing and supporting of these enterprises", the Premier said.

In this context, the Premier invited the neighbor countries to sign as soon as possible this act and create a joint fund in the best interest of businesses in respective countries and cooperation among them. In continuation, expressing gratitude for German bank KfW, which has provided up to now an aid of over 450 million euro, the Premier informed of the signing of another important loan with this bank for future projects.

Premier Berisha hails receiving of "Nobel" prize by President Ahtisaari

Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Sali Berisha congratulated President Marti Ahtisaari for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, as the fairest and most merited selection by the commission to award this prize.

President Martti Ahtisaari, with his precious virtues of an outstanding statesman, his wisdom, determination, farsightedness and honesty has given a great contribution to peace and stability in various regions of the world. Thus, conveying most cordial congratulations for this merited honor, Premier Berisha expresses once again the assessment and his deepest gratitude for the help President Ahtisaari has given to peace in the Balkans and other regions.

Berisha government reduces by 20% tariffs for high education programs

Under the proposal of Premier Berisha, Council of Ministers decided to reduce by 20 per cent the tariffs for all the high education studies of the first and second level for 2008-2009 academic year.

Premier Berisha stressed that his government will continue to make all the efforts to support education, as one of the major priorities of the government.

Premier Berisha: Chancellor Merkel appreciates immunity limitation as collapse of a wall in fight against corruption

Premier Berisha said that another topic discussed during meeting with Chancellor Merkel was fight against corruption about which Chancellor Merkel has encouraged further steps in this fight.

Press statement of Majlinda Bregu, spokeswoman of government

While condemning the stance of Socialist Party Chairman Edi Rama, GoA expresses the highest assessment and the most sincere gratitude to the

former US Secretary Tom Ridge for his worthy contribution and assistance to the government of Albania in the field of security.

During the recent days, Edi Rama, via slander on the media organs he controls, has launched an evil campaign of denigration against Mr. Tom Ridge, one of the politicians and personalities held in high esteem in the field of security, a former Governor of Pennsylvania and the former Secretary of State for National Security Affairs of the US President Bush. As it is already known, at a rather important moment for Albania security and its image in the world, the government of Albania contracted Mr. Tom Ridge in line with the laws of the country as an advisor of the prime minister and of the government on security affairs.

Thanks to his long experience as Governor of one of the most important states of the USA and Secretary of State for National Security Affairs, Mr. Ridge has given a great assistance and support to GoA and Albania as whole in the field of security and improvement of the country image in this direction with his advice, suggestions and worthy ideas expressed during several talks with heads of different institutions and agencies of Albania.

Rama targets to convince the Albanians that Tom Ridge has been a menace to Albania and a threat to the country security with his actions. Thus, Rama proves he chimes with the views of his spiritual father, Enver Hoxha, who for 45 years described the USA, the great country of freedom, as the main threat.

While condemning these attitudes, the government of Albania expresses the highest estimation and sincere thanks to Mr. Ridge for the worthy contribution and assistance to GoA in the field of security.

The government has full trust that all the Albanians share the same opinion on Mr. Ridge except for a small group of nostalgic people led by Rama who has chosen attacks against Mr. Ridge as a celebration of the 100-th birth anniversary of Dictator Hoxha, Hitler of the after Second World War, as Hoxha has been qualified in Paris EDU statement in 1991.

Press Conference of Premier Berisha

Premier Berisha: I come in front of you today to inform the citizens of Albania that the government has decided to demand international investigation into the problems that have arisen during the recent days. This decision is not taken, absolutely no, because of the numerous slanders against whatever person in concern. This decision is taken because of two reasons: Firstly, if it is proved that the government of Albania has paid even a single penny from the public funds to businessman Damir Fazlic, and then it is taken for granted this government has paid him billions. Therefore, this is obligatory to be explained.

Secondly, during the recent 4 days very grave actions have taken place, the reasons behind which should be clarified. The Albanian and international business has been hit, in the most unbelievable way, accounts have been frozen as well as assets of the companies and firms that in no country have any crime record.

These are the two main reasons why the government should demand an international investigation.

This is not the first time that I demand such a thing, but during the meetings with top officials of the friendly countries, I have demanded their full support for investigation into Grdeci event. My wording to this requirement has been that the biggest assistance they can give to my government is the contribution they can make into the investigation and bringing Grdeci event to light. I am grateful to these countries because I am convinced that they have constantly given this help. I have done the same thing even in the accident case of Kosta Trebicka because Mr. Trebicka had the undeniable merit of denouncement of Diveroli affair and as a consequence it was indispensable that his death be clarified as a whole. The Interior Minister, to whom I asked to demand from the friendly agencies to come and investigate into this event, informed me that the General Prosecution Office has already presented such a requirement. In this case, I have asked the minister not to continue further as the proper decision had already been taken.

I would like to inform the Albanians that along with the great commitment to bring the truth to light on Trebicka case and beyond every political trend, at the General Prosecution Office were made numerous efforts to distort the truth.

The reporter of a national television station was asked by one of the main prosecutors of this case to inform the Albanians that it will not be the expertise of the US expert that will define the decision as we have already recruited an independent expert. I would ask this national television station to be so polite as to broadcast this story so that all the Albanians listen to it. I was one of the viewers of this television station and following the broadcast of this story I talked with the manager of the TV and asked how was it possible such a thing.

The country has demanded an international expert on the issue. Following our conversation, the manager asked explanations by the journalist and she told the name of the

prosecutor who had asked the wording of the news. I didn't make public such a thing, but naturally I have taken down notes.

The people acting in this way are the ones who are ruining the independence of a vital and decisive institution for the rule of law. I remain determined to make every effort for the independence of this institution. Naturally, political actions of this type will take the deserved response.

Here are 2 statements of 2 police officers who have been ordered on October 8 by phone to detain Citizen Damir Fazlic, by verbal order, in violation of all the laws and the Constitution of the country. The demand has been given to them by Prosecutor Shtylla and Prosecutor Mazreku, who as it is said, is even Tirana deputy Prosecutor.

I would like to make you aware that even if the cruelest enemy of this prime minister, if he had been detained in such a way, it would be the greatest shame on this country. I share no other view when it happens that this gentleman is a friend of the premier, a person who has made a contribution to my electoral campaign, about whom I also emphasized that he will be investigated if he has benefited even a single penny from the public funds.

The government will proceed by decree on this decision as this is urgent matter. It will issue a decree to demand international investigation. This does not imply that the Albanian prosecutors will be expelled from the investigation. Absolutely No! This means that foreign prosecutors will take part in the investigation as well.

They will tell to the Albanians and the friendly countries, EU, the USA, our partners as well the evil-doing, the truth on blocking and illegal sequestering of the assets of the companies that used to be pillars of success of the domestic Albanian business. Likewise, the Parliament will set up an investigative Parliamentary commission, not on the respective file, because the laws of the country does not allow even the minimum intervention into an issue that is under investigation, but the Parliament will focus on the relations created between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior and the General Prosecution office. Ours are legal institutions and act in line with the laws therefore everything will be made transparent in front of the Albanians.

Yesterday, I got informed that Mr. Rama, the chairman of the Socialist Party, had demanded the same thing. If true, I am happy with this. I do not absolutely defend anybody, but I adhere to principles that are worthy for every Albanian citizen and domestic and foreign investors. I am not defending Fazlic because he has all the opportunity to make his defense, but I defend two fundamental principles of a free country. And I am going to realize this, whatever the cost; the government will pay the cost of this investigation on behalf of the great interests of the country.

Premier Berisha meets with representatives of AC Milan

Premier Berisha held today a cordial meeting with representatives of Milan Italian football prestigious team, who are currently visiting Albania in the framework of a friendly football match against Tirana SK, as well as some other charity activities.

Premier Berisha meets board of Albanian-American Enterprise Fund

Prime Minister Sali Berisha held a meeting today afternoon with Mr. Michael Granoff, Chairman of the Albanian-American Enterprise Fund, the Executive Manager of Hochtief Company as well as administrative leading board of Tirana Airport. The meeting focused on discussions about development of Tirana Airport concession project. Premier Berisha expressed government of Albania full support for airport smooth activity and appreciated it as one of the most successful concessionary projects in Albania.

During the meeting it was discussed among other things the potential of building another international airport in Saranda Southern resort.

Premier Berisha ensured that the government of Albania is willing to fully support projects on airport development. He also demanded to commission a consultancy firm to examine the proposals that would lead to modification of the terms of this agreement, targeting a fair business operation for both sides.

NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General Craddock: Albania to join NATO in 2009 summit

General Craddock: You have our full political support in the field of defense

Premier Berisha received today the NATO Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General John Craddock. Cordially welcoming him, Premier Berisha expressed to him deepest gratitude for support and continuous help provided by NATO, USA, President Bush and Pentagon, as well as NATO member countries to Albania, in the framework of the major project of Albanians for NATO membership. Heartily thanking PM Berisha for the warm reception, Craddock said that Albania will join NATO in the next summit, which will be held in Strasburg and Kehl, in the 2009.

General Craddock expressed highest estimation for the progress achieved by Albanian government in the course of the last years. "You have our full political support in the field of defense", underlined General Craddock, addressing to Premier Berisha.

Later on, Commander Craddock thanked PM Berisha for contribution of Albania in NATO and U.S. peacekeeping missions, as well as praised the reforms of Albanian government in all fields, particularly in transformation of Albanian armed forces into a professional army, considering them impressive. In the bilateral framework, Commander Craddock voiced the readiness of USA and Pentagon in intensification of cooperation particularly, for training, financial aid, as

well as cooperation in joint missions. Further on, Premier Berisha informed Commander Craddock of the reformat and results achieved during this period by the Albanian government, focusing in particular on the achievements in field of defense with a completely professional army, well-trained and equipped with the modern technology of NATO standards. Albanian government increased the defense budget by 2% of GDP, and will back the transformation of Albanian Armed Forces with other financial possibilities, Berisha said. The Premier emphasized the willingness of Albanian government to increase its contribution in Afghanistan. Both personalities discussed also developments in the region. Commander Craddock thanked the Premier for the important role of Albanian in stability and security in the region.

Premier Berisha: EU countries, optimistic of international financial crises solution

Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended today the proceedings of the European People's Party (EPP) Summit held in Brussels. The Summit proceedings were mainly concentrated on the financial crisis in international markets. Following the proceedings, PM Berisha stressed that the most important achievement of this summit were the participants' optimistic tones in coping with the crisis. Likewise, the participants in the summit shared the same opinion on necessity of intensive contacts with government of United States for a greater cooperation. PM Berisha said that the highlight of all discussions by the senior authorities participating in the summit, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French Prime Minister Françoise Fillon, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, the Chief of the Euro-group Jean Claude Juncker, was their optimism about the solution of the crisis. Premier Berisha availed himself of the opportunity to converse with the prime ministers of the participating countries and other personalities and ask from them to speed up the ratification of the NATO protocol by their countries.

Premier Berisha: Banking system in Albania not at risk

On the sidelines of European People's Party Summit in Brussels, Premier Berisha answered to the interest of media on issues discussed in the summit. Asked about the financial situation in Albania and the effect of international economic crisis, the Premier said: "In Albania operate banks, which are part of major banks, and every positive development in Europe has absolutely a positive effect in Albanian banking system. A few days ago, I was informed that one of the Departments of the Committee has expressed a

written opinion, where is noticed that situation in Albania, not only in Albania, but also in the region, does not present any special risk. Thus, the situation of banks operating in Albania, such as Raiffeisen Bank, San Paolo Intesa, Greek banks, Society General, etc is secure". "On the other hand, the banks in Albania have a specific. The crediting level of these banks is not higher than 60 or 70 per cent of the deposits, whereas in the western countries this level amounts to 130 per cent of deposits, causing a big problem with liquidities. Bank of Albania and Bankers Association monitor this situation continuously and the situation is normal".

Premier Berisha acquaints with security features of IDs and e-passports in accordance with standards

Prime Minister Sali Berisha held a meeting with representatives of the Sagem Securite and the Albanian-American Fund of Enterprises and OVD Kinegram, manufacturer worldwide of the exclusive optical security device. During this meeting were presented several components of the e-passports, the digitally personalized and non-personalized documents, all high security features incorporated. Also it was presented the document carrying detailed technical explanations on every element of the passport as well as e-passport and ID design of the kinegram. It was also confirmed that in a matter of days will be presented the Kinegram version and the personalized and non-personalized ID elements, all high security features included. After he got acquainted with the e-passport and its elements in accordance with the required European standards, Premier Berisha demanded full support of all the state institutions for implementation and smooth progress and in time of this major project of the government of Albania, i.e. the production and distribution of the IDs to the Albanian citizens.

Premier Berisha attends signing ceremony of Millennium Challenge Corporation Stage Two Threshold Program

Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended today the signing ceremony of Millennium Challenge Corporation Stage Two Threshold Program held at the venues of the Sheraton Hotel. This agreement, totaling \$15.7 million, builds upon the substantial successes of the current program which focuses on controlling corruption in public procurement, tax administration, and business entry and registration. The program will provide for new activities focused on building capacity of the judiciary to deal with administrative differences, to improve corruption control and reduce inefficiency of

the tax administration, to build a national one stop shop center for business licenses, to create a transparent system of issuing building permits and to set up joint investigation units in six towns to deal with corruption cases. Expressing thanks and gratitude for the US President George Bush, the US administration and the Millennium Challenge Corporation for the assistance provided, Premier Berisha emphasized that Albania has radically changed owing to these projects implemented. Three years ago together with the US authorities, the US embassy in Tirana and the representatives of the Millennium Challenge Corporation agreed to fund with the amount of about 15 million USD the projects on modernization of several vital sectors, but fight against corruption being the main target, said the premier. Premier Berisha highlighted GoA achievements in the course of the first stage of this agreement like a better position in the world ranking for doing business and in the corruption perception index. The premier demanded from the donors and the international institutions to constantly assist Albania in fight against corruption through such projects and assistance. The US ambassador to Albania H.E. John L. Withers also delivered a greeting message. The ambassador pointed to the partnership between the USA and Albania in the framework of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Program that has pushed to notable reforms. Ambassador Withers added that during Stage Two of the program, the United States will assist Albania to achieve successes in fight against corruption as this is what the Albanians want. Following signing of the agreement by Minister of Finance Ridvan Bode and USAID Mission Director to Albania Roberta Mahoney, Premier Berisha, ambassador Withers and Development Policy Director at Millennium Challenge Corporation Ms. Sherri Kraham visited an exhibition of achievements during the first stage of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Program.

Premier Berisha: Fiscal performance and successful privatization brought about several investments in important road axis

Premier Berisha said today during the routine meeting of the Council of Ministers that within the current year will be put out to tender and will begin construction work on major national roads and the important segments throughout the country.

Premier Berisha receives Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology of Federal Republic of Germany

Prime Minister Sali Berisha on Monday held a meeting with Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal

Ministry of Economics and Technology of the Federal Republic of Germany, Hartmut Schauerte, who is on an official visit to Albania in the framework of Albania-Germany economic conference heading a delegation of 80 leading German entrepreneurs. Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology of the Federal Republic of Germany underlined that the economic conference is a clear evidence of German investors' great interest to invest in Albania and a fruit of Albania's admirable progress and consolidation of legal framework in the country. Premier Berisha expressed deepest gratitude to German government, Chancellor Merkel, and German people for the assistance provided for the development of Albania. The Premier highlighted extraordinary financial assistance Germany has provided in all fields considering it a great contribution to vital fields for Albanian people like water supply, energy, security, education, etc. Premier Berisha singled out also the fact that prestigious German financial institution Deutsche Bank is one of the greatest investors in Albania. On his part, the visiting German official confirmed large Germany's economic assistance to Albania saying that this was a result of Albania's sustainable economic progress, successful reforms, fight against organized crime and corruption, and government support to foreign investments. Such results, he said, have convinced Germany that its financial assistance to Albania was fully deserved.

Premier Berisha offers condolences to family of Elvira and Klara Jaho after Butrint accident

Prime Minister Sali Berisha sent a condolences message to the family and beloved people of Elvira and Klara Jaho, who died in Butrint Lake in a tragic accident after the capsizing of the boat.

In his message, Premier Berisha:

"Dear parents, family members of Elvira and Klara Jaho, husband and father, Feeling deeply sad for the tragic loss of your innocent family members, I share my deepest sorrow, express you the most sincere condolences and pray that their spirit may rest in merited peace. "

Premier Berisha attends ceremony of Berat inscribed on UNESCO world heritage list

Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended today the ceremony organized in Berat town on occasion of this town being inscribed on UNESCO world heritage list. In the beginning, Premier Berisha and UNESCO deputy Director General Mrs. Francois Riviere, also accompanied by Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Ylli Pango, inaugurated the plaque confirming Berat on UNESCO world heritage list. Premier Berisha considered this a marked and historic

day not only for Berat but for the whole Albania. Berat is actually a diamond in the wreath of the world cultural heritage. While congratulating Berati citizens, Premier Berisha said that he is proud of this town and its citizens.

Premier Berisha attends second Albania-German conference “Market perspective in Albania; Energy-Environment-Building”

Premier Berisha attended the second Albania-German conference “Market perspective in Albania; Energy-Environment-Building”. The guests to the conference were Hartmut Schauerte, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology of the Federal Republic of Germany, the ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany Bernd Borchardt, representatives of the Chambers of Commerce of both countries, domestic and foreign big entrepreneurs etc.

Process of major concessions to continue quickly and with transparency

Premier Berisha said during meeting of the Council of Ministers that the government will continue quickly and with transparency the process of big concessions. Premier Berisha mentioned some of the major concessions in ports and energy field. Premier Berisha emphasized that Albania targets to become a major energy producer from different resources and these concessions are expected to increase energy resources in the country.

Statement of Mrs. Juella Meçani, spokeswoman of prime minister

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania Mr. Sali Berisha, rather sad about the news of Butrinti tragic accident, expresses once again his most sincere condolences to the families of the 4 victims for the loss of their beloved people.

From the very first moment of boat capsized news in Butrint, Premier Berisha has followed step by step all the developments and has expressed his interest in providing all the medical assistance to the survivors. And he has also demanded from the relevant authorities to stand by the relations of the people drowned to ease their great pain.

Premier Berisha has followed the rescue operation and has demanded urgent action for identification and bringing to justice the responsible people of this criminal act of grave consequences in which 4 Albanian citizens lost their lives.

Six persons have been cuffed up to now charged for trafficking and several others are declared wanted. Likewise, the premier has ordered continuation of the

rescue operation. The reaction of Mr. Edi Rama and of the other Socialist Party exponents on this event is in line with their empty charges and of the efforts to make political credit from death. This is in accordance with their moral and right, but what is unacceptable are their calls for allowing speed boats the same as if they were the spokespersons of the boatmen and not representatives of the main opposition political force in the country. On this occasion, Premier Berisha cannot help expressing his concern about not pure interests in these opposition calls. Naturally, he does not agree with them because restore of the speed boats implies not just the potential of more terrible tragedies at sea, but punishment of Albania and of all the Albanians for visa liberalization. And such a thing cannot and will not happen because of the interests of a group of individuals to get rich through criminal activity or of the politicians that want to share the trophy of this trafficking.

The government of Albania gets committed for an increasingly better border control and for meeting all the criteria and standards that would give the opportunity of visa liberalization and free movement of the Albanian citizens over the EU space.

GoA and KfW sign agreement for construction of Tirana-Prishtina energy line and Southern line

Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended the ceremony of opening of the regional office of the German Development Bank KfW in Tirana as well as signing of two agreements with this bank; the agreement for construction of the 400 kW Tirana-Prishtina electricity line and the 110 kW Southern line. Attending the ceremony were the deputy Premier Genc Pollo, the ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Tirana Bernard Borchardt, Minister of Finance Ridvan Bode, Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy Genc Ruli, GTZ representatives in Albania, representatives of the German Development Bank KfW in Tirana etc. The German ambassador in Tirana appreciated the very good cooperation with the government of Albania and said that this cooperation is not simply an accord of funds, but has become concrete in works the citizens can see on their own. The ambassador mentioned several projects implemented with German investments like the Mother Teresa Airport as the most important, but also the project realized successfully by a KfW company. Likewise, he mentioned several projects KfW has implemented in Shkodra, Kora, Saranda, and Kavaja etc. He said that the two agreements signed today about power lines are strategic projects and of importance for Albania economic development. Premier Berisha emphasized that the 20-th anniversary of Albania-Germany cooperation is celebrated in the framework of very good relations between the two countries and a record

of successes. Further on, the premier pointed to opening of KfW Tirana Office as a great event for Albania and the region. He emphasized that financing of the electricity line with Kosova and of the Southern line is a great assistance in the energy field that would optimize electricity consumption.

Premier Berisha: Budget 2009, about 5 billion USD, is the biggest in country history

Prime Minister Sali Berisha chaired a joint meeting of the government and Strategic Planning Committee to discuss draft budget 2009. While presenting budget 2009, Premier Berisha said that the 5 billion USD budget is the biggest in the history of the country. Budget 2009, - said the premier- observes program of the government. It ensures macro-economic stability of the country and the economic growth that during the first 6 month period of the current year, is two-digit. Naturally, the annual growth will be finalized in the first months of the coming year.

Turkish Foreign Minister Babacan praises very good bilateral relations and GoA major reforms

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey Ali Babacan. Premier Berisha welcomed cordially the Turkish minister and pointed to the very good relations and the long and traditional friendship between the two countries. Also he expressed the determination of the government of Albania to consolidate further these relations in the future. The Turkish foreign minister thanked the premier for the warm reception and for the successful organization of the Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Likewise, he fully shared the assessment of the prime minister that the bilateral relations are very good and consolidated throughout a long historical tradition and that the Turkish people keeps the warmest and most fraternal feelings for the Albanian people. The Turkish minister said he was impressed by the achievements of the government of Albania during this period and the major reforms that Berisha government has undertaken and that have transformed Albania image in the world. Both dignitaries appreciated the high level of economic cooperation and trade exchanges, the level of Turkish entrepreneurs' direct investments in Albania that in total record the value of 860 million USD. They expressed the determination of both governments to intensify and extend further cooperation in all the fields. The Turkish foreign minister expressed Turkey full support for Albania NATO membership before the next summit and positively assessed Albania role as a factor of stability and security in the region. Premier Berisha ensured government of Albania support for all Turkish

investments in Albania and both sides expressed the willingness for close cooperation even in other fields like public order, security etc. Both dignitaries also discussed regional developments and reconfirmed the common stand that Kosova independence is a substantial factor for peace, security and stability in the region.

Premier Berisha meets Armenia Minister for Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia Edward Nalbandian. Premier Berisha and Foreign Minister Nalbandian expressed the willingness for raising into a higher level the relations between the two countries. They shared the same opinion that both countries offer great potentials for cooperation.

The Armenian foreign minister expressed his positive assessment of all-round development of the country and considered impressive the results of the reforms the government of Albania has implemented in different fields.

The Armenian foreign minister expressed his willingness for increasing the level of economic cooperation between the two countries being based in the very good cooperation of the regional organizations in which Albania and Armenia are members. Also the Armenian foreign minister conveyed to Premier Berisha the wish of the top authorities of his country to visit Albania and watch its progress. On his part, Premier Berisha made an expose of the achievements and reforms the government of Albania has implemented as well as pursue of policies towards increase of FDI.

Premier Berisha: Digitalization and e-government, a Budget 2009 priority

Prime Minister Sali Berisha said that the digitalization process and e-government, two major objectives of the government of Albania, will be supported by Budget 2009 with priority. Considering the reform as extremely important, Premier Berisha emphasized that digital age spends less, but to achieve that investments are needed.

Premier Berisha attends signing ceremony of agreement between GoA and religious communities in Albania

Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended the signing ceremony of the agreement between the government of Albania and the religious communities in Albania. Attending the ceremony were heads of religious communities in Albania, the Chairman of the Muslim Community in Albania Eng. Selim Mua, Archbishop Dr Anastasios Giannoulatos of Tirana and All Albania, the

Head of the worldwide movement of Bektashi Baba Dede Reshat Bardhi and for the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Tirana and Durrs Mgr. Rrok Mirdita. The ceremony was also attended by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports Ylli Pango and the Chair of the Committee of Cults at the Ministry of Culture Mr. Rasim Hasanaj. The premier said that this agreement signed today between the government of Albania and the top religious authorities in the country marks opening of a new chapter in the relations between the Albanian state and the religious communities in Albania.

At a time when the religious differences provoke clashes, said further the premier, the Albanians offer the model of how it brings about cooperation, good understanding and harmony.

The signed agreement creates fiscal facilities through excluding the religious communities from the taxes and makes possible acceleration of the work for restitution and compensation of their properties.

Premier Berisha meets Charge d'affaires of Kosova to Albania, Gazmend Pula

Premier Berisha had a meeting with the Charge d'affaires of Kosova to Albania, Gazmend Pula. Welcoming Mr. Pula, Premier Berisha said that it was a great pleasure to meet with the representative of independent Kosova and wished him success in his diplomatic mission in Albania.

Gazmend Pula thanked the Premier for the reception and stressed that he considered a great honor and historical moment the meeting with Premier Berisha in the quality of the representative of independent Kosova.

Conveying the most cordial and heartily greetings of President Sejdiu, Premier Thaçi, Foreign minister Hyseni, the Charge d'affaires thanked Premier Berisha for the extraordinary and continuous support of Albanian government in the journey of Kosova for freedom and independence.

Premier Berisha: Signing of Protocol of Albania's membership to NATO by President Bush, most crucial historical act since recognition of Independent Albania by USA

Premier Berisha hailed today the signing of Protocol of Albania's membership to NATO by President George W. Bush, which took place yesterday night in the White House.

During a special news conference on this issue, Premier Berisha said that the signing on October 24 by President of United States of Albania, George W.

Bush, of the law of U.S. Senate for Albania's membership in North Atlantic Alliance is the greatest legal act in the history of relations between our two countries, after the recognition of independent Albania by the country of freedom.

PM Berisha added that this act constitutes a great vote of confidence for Albanians and Albania and its successful reforms.