

WEEKLY NEWS

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Premier Berisha: Law on Prosecution, result of a month-long cooperation between Albanian institutions and EURALIUS and OPDAT

In its routine meeting, Council of Ministers discussed draft law "On organization and functioning of Prosecution in the Republic of Albania, changed". Regarding this important draft law, Premier Berisha said that it is result of a month-long cooperating between Albanian institutions and two missions assisting our institutions in the field of law: EURALIUS and OPDAT. *(continues page 9)*



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Mr. Lange cordially thanked Premier Berisha for the brilliant cooperation in the course of these years and expressed his positive assessment of Albania impressive development and changes. Albania, said Mr. Lange, is progressing every day with the proper steps in the road of development and European integration. Likewise, Mr. Lange pointed to the significant achievements of the government of Albania last year that were highlighted even in the “Doing Business” Report, Transparency International Report, Albania successful receipt of the NATO membership invitation as well as the recent report of the European Commission about Albania. He thanked the government of Albania for the cooperation in drafting of this report and expressed the determination of the European Commission to promote this cooperation and provide full support for Albania EU integration. After extending welcome, Premier Berisha thanked Mr. Lange for the great cooperation with the government of Albania during all this period. Premier Berisha emphasized that the activity of the government has already focused on further efforts and reforms to meet the standards that the following steps of the European integration of the country require. During this electoral year, the premier said that the main target of the government is to hold elections in conformity with the International standards.

Therefore, said he, it is being created the best electoral infrastructure of IDs and Electoral Code. The premier pointed out even the progress made toward the economic development of the country and focused on the successful fight against corruption, the notable improve of a favorable business climate, the facilitation of all the procedures for the business, the move toward the e-taxes, e-procurements, the on-line registration of the businesses through the “one-stop-shop” etc. The consolidation of these procedures and fight against corruption will be government priority even on the coming year. The premier said that the economic development of the country is on the right track and emphasized that thanks to the reforms the government has implemented, the economy of the country is progressing on a safe basis. Premier Berisha congratulated Mr. Lange for the new office he takes over in the Unit for the negotiations and Croatia EU membership process.

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changed”. Regarding this important draft law, Premier Berisha said that it is result of a month-long cooperating between Albanian institutions and two missions assisting our institutions in the field of law: EURALIUS and OPDAT. Thanking all those who have contributed in its drafting, especially minister Alibeaj and his staff, Premier Berisha called in the opposition to review this draft and present all the remarks and suggestions, in order to approve it together.

Government approves draft law on national register of civil registry

At the meeting of Council of Ministers, Premier Berisha stressed the draft law on civil registry. Praising the great changes in the fundamental register of the state during this year, due to digital functioning, the Premier stressed that use of new technology and digital perspective of this service has brought out the necessity of a new law. Considering this law extremely important, the Premier said that this law precedes beginning of equipment of Albanian citizens with ID cards and biometric passports.

Premeir Berisha: Albanian government totally committed to guaranteeing free vote

Premier Berisha expressed his and government's commitment. There is a full dedication of mine for free vote. The Premier wished there would be a dialogue and best solution will be found. The Premier added, "It is not true that giving the necessary time for dialogue would harm the process, in the contrary; the process receives extra guarantees for this discussion". "I am neutral in this regard. I wish they find an understanding. I wish they find a solution," said the Premier adding that he does not interfere in internal issues of opposition.

News Conference of Premier Berisha on International Day of Human Rights

Today is the Day of Human Rights; it is the 60th anniversary of United Nations Organization Universal Declaration adopted in Paris on December 10, 1948. Today, Albania, the Balkans and Europe celebrate this day freer than ever in their history. A series of terrible dictatorships have been erased from earth. Slobodan Milosevic faced international justice, other war criminals are brought to justice. This is an extremely positive balance. We, Albanians should honor and celebrate this day more than any other nation in Europe and world, because no other nation has suffered as much as us for half century for freedom, dignity and human rights. Several European countries have witnessed during decades communist dictatorships, junta regimes, etc but the 45 year old regime of Enver Hoxha, as no other regime deprived totally the citizens of this country from the freedom of speech, free movement, trust in God, private property, and executed without law or through political law processes tens and thousand of innocent citizens just because the freedom of speech, their trust in God or their western vocation. He imprisoned and banished hundreds and thousands, whereas turned the other part of the population into real slaves of totalitarian

state. Therefore, today, if we consider where we were 18 or 20 years ago, we have the right to be proud of the great



achievements in this field. Albania today is the country of political democratic pluralist, freedom of speech, freedom of belief, free movement, free initiative and private property. The freedoms of citizens in Albania are guaranteed by the Law and Constitution. The institutions of the country make serious efforts for implementation of law and guarantee of these freedoms, but this today calls the Albanians more than any other nation to be extremely attentive, sensitive and devoted toward freedoms and rights of the individual. The progress is undeniable, but also the existing problems are undeniable and unacceptable. Even though, there are citizens being maltreated or even tortured by state representatives in pre-detentions centers or prisons. The standards in our penitentiary facilities are not at the right level. Many citizens do not manage to take their own property. Albanian citizens still do not have the same treatment, as guaranteed by law. They suffer the consequences of a long discrimination. There are officials with immunity that beat in public the journalist and are later on protected by the prosecution and do not face the law. Some media owners and politicians violate the freedoms of speech of journalist, Albanian citizens pay for free health service, pay to receive a legal decision. Thus, we should honor this day with a deep consciousness for our great achievements, but the problems still exist, and the issue of human freedoms and rights must be the priority issue of all the officials and institutions of this country. I want to guarantee the Albanian citizens that I will never be satisfied with the existing standards and I will do the utmost to prevent abuses with freedoms and rights.

Premeir Berisha: Greek government will not be influenced by extremist calls in relation with Albania

During a news conference, Premier Berisha said that Greek minorities rights is a process is a process under continuous improvement and many decisions have been taken in favor of minorities, like in no other region country. The Premier expressed the commitment of Albanian government for continuous improvement of these rights. Regarding the media statements on pressures to Greek government for SAA non-ratification, PM Berisha expressed the conviction that Greek government will not be influenced by extremists' calls and there is a constant dialogue with Albanian government.

Premier Berisha: Reform of justice institutions, top priority of ruling majority

Premier Berisha declared yesterday that reform of the justice institutions is the top priority of this ruling majority. The premier said that in every free country, the justice power pillar is listed prior to the other powers, the freedom and the human rights.

Premier Berisha: Fight against corruption is government major priority

During a joint news conference with the visiting Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Prime Minister Sali Berisha answered whether the government has managed to



deliver to its promise regarding combat against corruption. The premier said that this fight has been the government most major priority and thanks to this fight over 4 billion USD are saved and Albania in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index leaves behind 95 countries and is not any more part of the group of 24 most corrupted countries.

Following the negotiations, the two dignitaries gave a news conference:

Premier Berisha: “I would like to extend once again cordial welcome to the PM of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a friendly country, Mr. Nikola Špirić.

I believe that this extremely important visit makes a major contribution to the brilliant relations that exist between our two countries.

We had an open and constructive discussion with Premier Špirić, first of all on the opportunities of cooperation between Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. We notice that the political relations between the two countries are brilliant, but there is a lot of work to be made so that these relations improve and there is made rapid progress in all the fields. Hence, we agreed to draft a common action plan so that to mark concrete results in intensification of relations.

Our foreign affairs and interior affairs offices will get committed to sign all the relevant readmission agreements so that to lift the visa regime for the citizens of our two countries. We believe that visa liberalization is of paramount importance about cooperation between the two countries as it will facilitate the economic cooperation and especially cooperation in the field of tourism.

Albania offers great tourist potentials for the summer. Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the countries of the most developed winter tourism of the region, naturally not just winter tourism, but also of the other kinds.

The stimulation of investments between the two countries is of very great interest, therefore even the respective ministries of economy, trade and finance will sign all the agreements about successful economic cooperation between the two countries.

Other fields of importance are education, science and culture. There are ethnic minorities living in both our countries. In Bosnia-Herzegovina is living an Albanian minority respected and enjoying all the rights the international conventions guarantee. There is a Bosnian minority living in Albania which has made its worthy contribution to this country and enjoys all the rights that belong to it. Both our countries are working intensively on the major projects of this century, NATO and EU integration.

I expressed the great satisfaction that Bosnia-Herzegovina signed its participation in the Adriatic Charter having the deep conviction that this step will accelerate as a whole the process of full Bosnia-Herzegovina membership into the North Atlantic Alliance.

Both countries have signed the Stabilization Association Agreement and will work seriously for its implementation. We expect visa liberalization next year. But, we consider rather important this process of regional cooperation. We back EULEX expand in Kosovo and the regional cooperation as a whole. I would like to thank once again Premier Špirić and I believe that this official visit makes a substantial contribution to the future relations between the two countries and peoples.”

Premier of Bosnia-Herzegovina Špirić: “I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart the prime minister of Albania and all the Cabinet members for this warm hospitality to Albania.

This was a very good opportunity for us to exchange our experience regarding integration into the North Atlantic Alliance. Both sides agreed that cooperation in the framework of NATO integration will pave the way to cooperation even in other fields between our two countries.

The ultimate goal in the relations between our two countries is that we have very friendly relations in political level and EU and NATO integration is what we share. These two common goals we have for NATO and EU integration constitute the basis of our further cooperation in the framework of the bilateral relations between the two countries. It would be out of place we demand visa liberalization of the Schengen area while we have not yet liberalized the visas between our two countries.

Thus, we have set the task to the two relevant ministries, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Albania and the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina

to sign the readmission agreement and also work on the agreement for liberalization of the visas between the two countries. The liberalization of the visa regime between the two countries will contribute a lot to the free movement of the people and businesses.

This will bring more Bosnia-Herzegovina investors into Albania and vice versa.

Also we should increase cooperation in other fields like energy, customs, culture, science and sports. We should make agreements not simply in appearance, but they should be such as in the essence they produce more facilities for the citizens of both our countries.

Albania will open its embassy to Bosnia-Herzegovina and our recommendation is that Bosnia-Herzegovina also opens its embassy in Tirana. Bosnia-Herzegovina hopes that solution of the international and local crisis can be made only in a democratic way. We are the country with a very bad experience regarding solution of the crisis through non-democratic forms.

This is the reason we are paying much importance and attention to solution of the crises in our region and we hope that these crises are resolved only through democratic ways.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that I extended an invitation to Premier Berisha to hold an official visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina and I hope that following this visit we will discuss soon the concrete achievements between our two countries.”

Address of Premier Berisha delivered to meeting with youth on National Day of Youth, December 8



I am happy of being here today because among the young people I feel myself better, more glad, safer, more proud and more powerful. Nowhere am I more inspired, more indebted and more grateful than among you,

the young people of this country. I am not your age. You are fortunate to be as old as freedom, whereas I have lost more than four decades under the dictatorship. But, still I am happy because I am and shall forever be of the same age with your freedom ideals, targets, aspirations, dreams, in the projects for my country which 18 years ago we would baptize all together as “Albania like the rest of Europe!” Today, we celebrate December 8, the real birthday of my personal freedoms and dignity; the birthday of freedoms and rights of all the Albanian citizens who emerged in December 1990 as the most oppressed creatures, the most alienated ones, the poorest and

the most isolated of the European continent.

On December 8, 1990 the students of Tirana

University led

by their immortal hero Azem Hajdari, in a battle that will remain a real legend of bravery and human courage, confronted in Tirana streets and squares the most savage dictatorship, the most barbarous of Europe; they brought it to its knees with the vigor of their spirit; they bashed into the closed doors of freedom with lightning speed; they brought about the big change, the Albanian Big Bang, they marked the end of an epoch and changed the course of history.

Azem, you are alive!

Credit forever to liberator students!

On December 8, 1990 I saw, felt and believed that the ideal, the aspiration of my freedoms was becoming a reality. Thus, since that day and on, for me and for every Albanian, youth and freedom will always be the synonyms of each other. Since that blessed day, I believe in freedom as much as I believe in youth. Since that happy day I shall constantly feel the same age as you in our ideal of European freedom. Today and forever, the Albanians will mark this day.

The youth did it!

The Albanian youth has constantly been the angels of freedom of the Albanians. God bless them. A happy day of freedom and youth! In December 1990, our freedoms and rights were born in a reality plunged into the deepest despair, the greatest exploitation of the human dignity, the most extreme misery and the most savage oppression, the worst terror and fear and the total isolation.

Most of the Albanian citizens would consider the newborn freedom as a vision, a light that the fearful winter of despair would extinct.

But, we thought otherwise. The newborn freedom carried in itself courage, bravery, glory and dignity, but even the burning hope as its shield, the hope of its development and that was deriving from trust in us, one another, Albania.

I reiterate that I am of the same age with your hope that derives first of all from my unwavering trust in you, the eternal spring of my nation.

Therefore, the ones who opened the closed doors of freedom in December 1990 would be the angels of hope of a nation in despair and hopeless.

Together with a group of Tirana intellectuals, workers and citizens they would move like a hurricane



countrywide, in the towns, villages, plains, hills, mountains, squares, its streets would plant the hope in their hearths, the minds and hearts of the Albanian oppressed citizens, do away with implanted fear during half a century of



barbarous communist regime.

During our march of freedom we succeeded to topple the most savage dictatorship of Europe and on March 22, 1992 we inaugurated the first season of freedom for Albania and the Albanians.

In our common journey toward the deserved future, I feel safer among you than wherever and whenever. This happens because I feel of the same age with you regarding the ideal of our brilliant European future which has its most wonderful project in the dream, spirit, minds and hearts from where like an unabated fountain energy, enthusiasm and force generates for its transformation into a reality. Our way toward the future is a brief history, just 18 years; it has the same age as you, the age of our freedom. Only the free people and nations can build the future. Freedom and the future are one and indispensable. The previous generations of the Albanians answered with their survival to the occupations, partitions, dictatorships; while the nations we would like to join have marched free on the road toward the future for decades and centuries on end.

We should join them. Our journey has been hard, but the difficulties do no discourage us; we see an opportunity in every challenge ahead. We have courage; the dictatorship did not frighten us 18 years ago. The difficulties ahead are just challenges to face. They can just multiply our reason, devotion and goal. Today, we are free. We are the people that developed the newborn freedom in December 90 and at present it is just like 18 year old beautiful lass. We shall teach a good lesson: Albania like a lady in Europe. We are doing this!

Three years ago, the kleptocratic regime –created by the people we toppled on March 22, 1992- had got its claws into your youth projects, the finest noble dreams. Albania of your beautiful dreams was fading every day. Three years ago few were the people in Albania and abroad who had trust that by our votes we could manage to overthrow the kleptocratic system. But me, the same as in the '90-ies, believed that still we could change Albania. In spring 2005, the same as

in 1992, every day and in every meeting, in your beautiful faces and your hopeful eyes I could read our certain victory.
You won it!

The recent three years was the time of the greatest decisive role of the youth in the history of freedom of our country. Over these three years, we succeeded to give step by step to Albania of the crime stories the new image, shape of your face and made it run safely toward the deserved future. In accordance with the promises taken, I and my government have made education a top priority, given that education is the most worthy present

that the family and society can make to everyone of you. Together we opened the doors of the universities and over doubled the number of students and we are moving safely toward tripling their number. We launched the initiative « Internet in all schools of Albania! » and this is becoming a reality. I am here to promise that I shall do my best for every child to attend school, every young man to attend secondary school; every young man to graduate from the university studies.

I shall also do my best that following Internet connection in every school; the youth can use the Internet even in the house where they live.

Your employment is our major priority.

This current year Albania ranked the runner-up in the world for the market reforms implemented. At present Albania is the country of the fastest economic growth in the region, the country in which its citizens and the world have the greatest trust, the most attractive country to investors, the country with the greatest and most distinguished friends as never before in the USA and Europe. I am here to promise that I shall do my best the young people get employment in Albania; devote their abilities and energies to Albania and do not leave the country.

My dear friends, Albania is changing!

My great goal is you get powered; you get educated and trained; this is a condition that Albania runs toward the deserved future. Together with you I signed the EU Stabilization Association Agreement, the historic contract of your « Albania like the rest of Europe » dream. Together we shall sign for our free movement and full implementation of our European dream.

Together in Bucharest we received Albania NATO membership invitation; we turned into a reality your beautiful Atlantic dream. Together we shall make Albania a member of the greatest alliance of freedom ever recognized throughout times. Together we march safely toward a second mandate for the youth of my country, the total transformation of its dreams into reality. We shall win it! I love you so much!

God bless Albania youth!

Premier Berisha meets Secretary General of Regional Cooperation Council Biscevic

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received Mr. Hido Biscevic, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

After extending cordial welcome to the guest, Premier Berisha considered it important that the countries of the Southeast Europe continue with promotion of cooperation especially on concrete projects in fields of importance like energy, regional and European infrastructure. This will consolidate the functioning of the free market economy in these countries and increase their integration, thus bringing them nearer to the aspirations of Euro-Atlantic integration. In this context, emphasized PM Berisha, it is of importance to make every effort for the total liberalization of the free movement of the citizens, commodities and services throughout our region.

Mr. Biscevic thanked Premier Berisha for the reception. He highlighted the fact that Albania is among the most important factors in regional cooperation, in the framework of the Regional Cooperation Council.

Also Mr. Biscevic highly assessed the support that the government of Albania and Premier Berisha in person has constantly given to the Regional Cooperation Council and its major projects for consolidation of the regional cooperation.

The region is making progress in all the fields, said Mr. Biscevic. And he considered it important that the peace and security process in the region is successfully concluded.

The two dignitaries shared the same view that EULEX expanding in the entire territory of Kosovo is essential for peace and security in the region. Further on, Mr. Biscevic forwarded to Premier Berisha the draft programs of the Regional Cooperation Council for the coming period in fields like energy and infrastructure which are supported by the European Commission and major donors like the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Mr. Biscevic said that work is underway for establishment of a permanent mechanism of cooperation between the EU institutions, the Regional Cooperation Council and the focal points in the regional countries as well as for developing projects of this Council in fields like regional transportation, prevention and dealing with emergencies etc.

Premier Berisha hailed adherence of Bosnia-Herzegovina AND Montenegro in A3

Premier Berisha hailed the signing of Adriatic Charter and participation in this agreement of two friendly region countries, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. Premier Berisha considered this

development extremely positive and important for peace, stability and Euro-Atlantic integration of the region countries.

Task Force meeting on Regulatory Reform convened

The Premier chaired the meeting of the Task Force for Regulatory Reform, where was discussed widely on the progress of this reform.



During the meeting was analyzed the work done for the legalization of procedures, stressing the necessity of further facilitation of unnecessary procedures, as well as reduction of cost for business. In this framework, it was decided the reduction of property registration deadline from 30 days to 7 days, as well as facilitation of procedures for property registration. Among other things, during the meeting was discussed and decided the halving of required documentation for customs clearance procedures for imports and exports. The meeting also focused on registration of online procedures, as another step toward facilitation of doing business in Albania and fight against corruption.

Premier Berisha receives Ombudsman, Ermir Dobjani

Premier Berisha received the Ombudsman, Ermir Dobjani. The Ombudsman informed PM Berisha of all his efforts for implementation of Constitution and law in protection of rights and freedoms of citizens. Dobjani expressed his estimation for the cooperation between the institution of Ombudsman and State Police, but focused on several problems appearing in the last weeks, problems that are totally avoidable. Premier Berisha praised the activity of Ombudsman and his institution in guarantying and protection of rights and freedoms of citizens. The Premier assured Dobjani for his full support in this aspect. PM Berisha urged the Ombudsman hold legal stands toward all those who violates or does not protect rights and freedoms of citizens, as well as to use all the legal mechanisms in protection of the citizens, whose rights

are violated by some segments of the administration.

Premier Berisha demands creation of a special structure to follow implementation of concession contracts

During the presentation made at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the concessions to the hydropower stations and projects in this field, Prime Minister Sali Berisha said that the process has made it indispensable the creation of a special structure to follow enforcement of the concession contracts.

Council of Ministers approves final design of IDs

The Council of Ministers approved in its routine meeting the decision “On approval of the final design of the identity documents: electronic identity-cards and electronic passport.” Prime Minister Sali Berisha informed that this design will have the figure of our national hero George Kastrioti Scanderbeg on the background. Appreciating this figure as the most worthy representative of the Albanian nation, the premier emphasized that this symbol is the proper finding to be placed on the new documents of the Albanians in accordance with the European standards.