



WEEKLY NEWS

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

YEAR 2/ NUMBER 70

JANUARY 2009

PM Berisha: Ratification of SAA by 27 EU member countries, evidence of GoA successful reforms

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PM Berisha: Building of the southern road axis, a major project of the coming four years

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implementation plan of Lushnje-Berat road. Prime Minister Sali Berisha took the opportunity to reiterate the importance of building the southern road axis.

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Deputy PM Asselborn expressed full support of Luxemburg for visa liberalization regime between Albania and EU

PM Berisha received today the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn. Welcoming him, PM Berisha expressed his pleasure over the second visit of Asselborn to Albania, which testifies his friendship and interest for Albania.

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PM Berisha meets Elbasani students: A second mandate for youth

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PM Berisha: E-cards provide a modern election infrastructure



Prime Minister Sali Berisha followed from very close today by noon the first applications of Tirana citizens for getting the new e-cards. While present at the municipal units No.3 and No.4 in Tirana, PM Sali Berisha congratulated the first applicant for the new identification document and considered the beginning of this process an extremely important moment for introduction of a new system, among the most modern in the world, regarding the identification of the citizens.

Through this system, the citizens of this country get high quality documents about their identity, something that will make it easy for them when it is a question of their identification and about which they will be in need of and allows traveling quietly regarding their identity worldwide, said the premier.

Further on, the premier highlighted that the process is progressing in line with schedule while he appreciated that as a rather important mission regarding modernization of the election infrastructure.

I would consider the process a mission for identification of the coming Parliamentary elections with the most modern infrastructure of electors identification, electronic lists, the totally new system of addresses and electronic documents. These are obligations of the government in front of the country and society, said the premier.

Naturally, said further the premier, I should say that for the people who for 3 years and a half built their alternative on idle things and cheating, June will be a time of despair, but this is their own affair.

PM Berisha receives Mr. Hanno Soravia, General Managing Director of Soravia Group

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today afternoon Mr. Hanno Soravia, General Managing Director of Soravia Group

The Austrian major company presented the draft project on building of a tourist center in Novosela area in Vlora.

The project also undertakes running of a School of Tourism and Hospitality Management. The total investment is estimated at about 200 million Euros. Thanks to this investment 2 thousand new jobs will be opened as it will also have an impact on the economic development of the area.

During the meeting with Premier Berisha, the Soravia Group representatives demanded acceleration of the procedures to implement the project as well as support for the infrastructure network: road and electricity supply.

Premier Berisha assured the Austrian investors he will closely cooperate with the local authorities so that to accelerate the procedures and also promised to accord the necessary funds for development of the infrastructure in the area where there is planned to be built the tourist center.

PM Berisha demands Council of Territory Adjustment agrees with new town-planning law



PM Berisha demanded today at the meeting of the Council of Territory Adjustment of the Republic of Albania that this institution agrees with the new city-planning law on

account of the transparency over the meetings of this council.

On account of the potential transparency of the Council of Territory Adjustment, this institution will continue to exist even in the light of the new city-planning law. The new town-planning law stipulated another form; instead of the Council of Territory Adjustment all the attributes were extended to the Council of Ministers. But, the Constitution of Albania is strict about the obligation of the confined meetings of the government. But, to discuss territory affairs while the groups of interest are not present, this implies the process is damaged and instead of more transparency, we move in the opposite direction, said the PM.

In this context, the PM said he has demanded from the Ministry of Public Works that the Council of Territory Adjustment of the Republic of Albania continuous to function in the same way. Attending its meetings will be even representatives of the local authority associations, municipal, commune and region associations.

This would add to the transparency of this forum and I think we should keep it as it actually is, said PM Berisha.

PM Berisha receives Italian State Police Director General, Prefect Antonio Manganelli



PM Berisha received today the Italian State Police Director General, Prefect Antonio Manganelli, which was accompanied by the Italian ambassador

in Tirana Saba D'Elia and his staff.

Welcoming him, PM Berisha said that today is an historic day for State Police, due to celebration of 96th anniversary of creation. The PM underlined that the visit of the Italian delegation on this festive day testifies the excellent level of relations and cooperation between two institutions. Both parts shared the same opinion of the absolutely excellent cooperation between two countries.

On his part, expressing the highest consideration for the Albanian police, Italian State Police Director General extended thanks for the high level of cooperation. Manganelli praised the help given by Albanian police to the neighboring police in destroying of criminality and organized crime. He stressed that the relation between two police institutions are not only work relations, but also relations of reciprocal aid and characterized by friendship feelings. Direct Manganelli stressed that the accompanying group of experts are cooperating with the Albanian part for the coordination of fight against corruption, organized crime, drug traffic and mafia.

Italian State Police Director General Antonio informed PM Berisha of the decision of Italian part for transformation of Italian police interconnection office into the basic office of all the Balkan region offices.

He said that in the future Tirana and Bucharest will become points of reference for Italian police in the Southeast European region.

Likewise, Director Manganelli informed PM Berisha Italian part is working with other European partners on establishment of a task force with officers of contact of these countries in Albania, stressing that cooperation between our police institutions should turn into a model of reference for other countries. According to him, the

cooperation and coordination process will push Albania ahead toward European Integration.

On his part, the PM expressed his pleasure and thanked the Italian friend for choosing Albania as a point of reference for the establishment of this office, stressing that this decision is of extraordinary importance for fight against organized crime across the borders. The PM said that we are absolutely open to cooperation, while listing the achievements of the Albanian police in destroying hundreds of criminal groups.

PM Berisha asked the support of Italy for program of witnesses' protection, and the interlocutors welcomed this request. The interlocutor agreed on the establishment of joint investigating groups to face criminal phenomena.

PM Berisha calls on Tirana Mayor to finalize town planning of capital as soon as possible



During the meeting of the Council of Territory Adjustment of the Republic of Albania, PM Berisha called on Tirana's Mayor Edi Rama to finalize the city

planning as soon as possible as it is exceeding every limit.

"I would like to call upon Tirana mayor to finalize the town planning of the capital as soon as possible as it is exceeding every time limit. Every postponement is very harmful to the capital. I am aware that ill-gotten gains nail him down as there is no other compelling reason, but that plan should be implemented," said PM Berisha.

Also PM Berisha highlighted that the approval of the plan is to the best interest of Tirana city.

"The Assembly has voted for the new town-planning law which reduces into 45 days the deadline for getting the construction permits and the "silence is consent" principle is attached to it. Thus, if such a thing has consequences, then the one who failed to express himself should face them", said the PM.

PM Berisha: Building of the southern road axis, a major project of the coming four years



During today's meeting, the Council of Territory Adjustment of the Republic of Albania approved the Draft of the feasibility study and implementation plan of Lushnje-Berat road.

Prime Minister Sali Berisha took the opportunity to reiterate the importance of building the southern road axis. I have assigned the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications the task to immediately launch the southern road axis project along Elbasan-Berat segment. Thus, if we can, we shall begin within the current year the building of the southern road axis, said PM Berisha.

Further on, the PM emphasized that, The southern road axis would be the main project of the four coming years, if the Albanian citizens vote for the current ruling majority, but, I believe that every other governing majority would consider worthy the building of this road.

The PM appreciated that the southern road axis completes the country developing roads. Berati and Tirana would be connected via a new road the building of which will begin within the current year. The building of the roads that shorten distances is a national policy, said the PM.

Speaking about Lushnje-Berat draft, PM Berisha drew the attention against wasting the farmland. While sticking to short distance roads, wherever it is possible we should spare the agriculture land, said the PM adding that in under construction do not waste any large area of agriculture land.

Deputy PM Asselborn expressed full support of Luxemburg for visa liberalization regime between Albania and EU



PM Berisha received today the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn. Welcoming him, PM Berisha

expressed his pleasure over the second visit of Asselborn to Albania, which testifies his friendship and interest for Albania.

The PM considered the political relations between two countries as excellent, whereas expressed deep gratitude for the help given by Luxemburg to two projects of the century for the Albanians: NATO and EU integration.

The PM put an emphasis on the great potentials that Albania offers for investments in energy, tourism and mines.

Further on, the PM said that from the political point of view, year 2008 was the year of great reforms.

Putting an emphasis on the importance of increase of Luxemburg investments in Albania, PM Berisha informed Asselborn of the reforms of Albanian government for improvement of business climate and reduction of fiscal burden.

PM Berisha said that reforms have given their results. "We have a system with the lowest fiscal burden in Europe, we have increased the incomes by 22 % and have sent a second budget to parliament every year. We have eliminated bureaucratic obstacles for business. Last year Albania ranked second for economic reforms", said PM Berisha.

PM Berisha guaranteed the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg for determination of Albanian government in realization of free and fair elections.

On his part, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg said that since his first visit in 2006 is noted a great change due to successful implementation of reforms. "Europe congratulates you on your achievements", said Asselborn, praising the economic reforms, commitment of government in fight against corruption, organized crime and informality.

Asselborn expressed full support of Luxemburg for visa liberalization between Albania and European Union, whereas stressed that his country will ratify Albania's Accession Protocol into NATO before April.

PM Berisha thanked the guest for the assessments and said that continuation of reforms is the only route toward European integration.

PM Berisha: We shall set up libraries in every school and town



Prime Minister Sali Berisha said today at the meeting of the Cabinet that he will raise funds on books and will start up a chain of libraries in every school and town.

Speaking at the routine meeting of the Council of Ministers, PM Berisha said that, Over the recent two years, the Ministry of Education has managed a fund for buying of the books. Naturally, this is indispensable. We are setting up informatics labs in all the schools; up to March we shall provide Internet connection to all the schools and this costs a considerable amount of money. But, it is inexcusable that our schools have no modern libraries. We shall raise further funds for the book and we shall set up modern library media centers in every school.

PM Berisha said that the government will pursue a consolidated policy towards the book and considered an important aspect the selection process of the best book titles of the Albanian and world literature.

Another important issue, - said the PM- is even selection of the books as they are bought with taxpayers money. Naturally, it is indispensable that the best sellers of the Albanian and world literature are found in the school libraries. The schools should be at the forefront of our efforts toward the book and the young people will have a growing passion for the book.

Hence, the PM unveiled that the Ministry of Education will set up an ad hoc Task Force to monitor following of the guidelines for selection of the best books.

We shall set up a Task Force. I have been informed that they do not buy the best books and books of interest for the pupils. The Task Force will check how the guidelines are followed. There is great interest in our schools. If we chose the best books then we can help them more to broaden their horizons and their love for the book will be growing more and more. I have seen interesting and not interesting books in the school libraries that I have visited. I would compare this with the construction sector where there are villas, but even kiosks.

The PM highlighted that starting up of libraries all over the country is a priority and further we shall continue with setting of libraries in every town.

The Minister of Culture will talk with the mayors to set up the school library media center in the towns where there are not. We shall start up a chain of libraries all over the country. This should develop quickly and we shall finance building of libraries where there are not.

Referring to the Municipal Council failing to vote Tirana municipal budget, PM Berisha said: I would have resigned if my budget was outvoted. I know only one person holding no responsibility after his budget is outvoted. But, I would have resigned if on the same footing.

PM Berisha receives new Ambassador of Japan, Hiroyasu Ando



PM Berisha received today the new ambassador of Japan to Albania, Hiroyasu Ando. Congratulating Ambassador Ando on his new duty, PM Berisha expressed his

pleasure over the level of the relations between two countries. The PM stressed that Japan has been one of the most important donors in development of Albania in different fields. During the meeting, the PM asked the Japanese ambassador to boost interest of Japanese companies' for investments in Albania.

Ambassador Ando thanked the PM for the support shown by Albanian government to further development of relations and exchanges between our two countries, stressing that the last year visit of the Albanian PM to Japan opened a new chapter of relations between our countries. Ambassador Ando thanked the Albanian government for the support for Japanese candidature in international organisms.

U.S. President, George W. Bush wishes Premier Berisha on Holiday Seasons

Premier Berisha and his spouse Liri Berisha have received a greeting card from President of the United States of America, George W. Bush and First Lady, Laura Bush.

Through this card, U.S. President and his spouse wish Premier Berisha and his spouse on Holiday season.

“Dear Sali and Liri,

“May your hearts and home be filled with joys of Holiday Season”

George W. Bush Laura Bush

PM Berisha meets Elbasani students: A second mandate for youth



PM Berisha held a meeting with students and lecturers of the “Aleksandër Xhuvani” University in Elbasan in the framework of several meetings arranged with the university students of Albania.

PM Berisha had a warm conversation with the students and the academic staff and answered to their questions about different topics. He thanked for the hospitality and assured them that the government considers a priority the education and employment of Albanian youth. The PM described the universities as the laboratories of the future of the nation. “I have won every uphill battle together with you and thanks to you. In 2005, I was confident of winning the vote because I saw it through your eyes and based it on your support”, said the PM.

The students thanked the PM for the strong support he has given to education system and especially to the “Aleksandër Xhuvani” University as confirmed even by his numerous visits.

PM Berisha meets with DUI chairman, Ali Ahmeti



DUI head emphasized that construction of Arber road, in Macedonian territory, will start in spring, and the tender for

construction of railway connecting the Albanian border with Skopje has opened

PM Berisha received today the Chairman of Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) of Macedonia, Ali Ahmeti. During the meeting they discussed the developments in Albania and Macedonia, as well as further strengthening of cooperation between two countries.

Welcoming the guest and expressing his pleasure over the meeting, PM Berisha hailed the contribution of Ahmeti and DUI in governance of Macedonia.

Ahmeti informed PM Berisha of several important investments in infrastructure field in Macedonia, which will affect the facilitation and improvement of movement in the region.

DUI chairman said that construction of Arber road, in Macedonian territory, will start in spring, and the tender for construction of railway connecting the Albanian border with Skopje has opened.

PM Berisha expressed his pleasure on this news and stressed that construction of these connecting networks are the priority of Albanian government.

Likewise, PM Berisha thanked Ahmeti for excellent organization of 100th anniversary of Congress of Manastir, which marks one of the brightest days for Albanians and national history. On his part, Ahmeti thanked PM Berisha for his help and commitment of Albanian government in development of this activity.

Focusing on the next parliamentary elections in Albania and local and presidential elections in Macedonia, PM Berisha and Ahmeti voiced their commitment in realization of a free and fair electoral process.

PM Berisha: Ratification of SAA by 27 EU member countries, evidence of GoA successful reforms



Today by noon, Prime Minister Sali Berisha gave a news conference to hail the completion of the ratification process of the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) by 27 EU member countries.

I am in front of you today to hail the completion of the ratification process of the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) by 27 EU member countries.

This historic step is evidence of the notable success of the reforms that GoA has implemented. In June 2008, the EU Ljubljana meeting considered inspiring the reforms the government of Albania (GoA) implemented.

The signature on the first historic contract of Albania with Europe carries positive evaluation for the country, its efforts and reforms.

If the pre-accession process and the negotiations on signing of the Agreement continued from 1999 up to 2005-2006, thus being marked as the longest process in the EU history, the signing and ratification process by the 27 member countries of the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement was realized within a period of time three times shorter.

Following NATO membership invitation and the EU-Albania SAA signing in June 2006, the SAA ratification by the 27 member countries is the third major success of Albania and the Albanians in their European and Euro-Atlantic integration path.

The ratification of the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement by the parliaments of the 27 EU member countries was first of all thanks to improvement of the freedom and human rights, free speech, minority rights and crystal clear positive changes in the sentence suffering institutions.

Also it was thanks to fight with zero tolerance against organized crime and transformation of Albania into one of the safest countries in the region. The present-day Albania has crime indicators under the EU countries average.

This was even thanks to efforts to eradicate corruption. TI Corruption Perceptions Index 2008 recognizes GoA as champion of fight against corruption.

The government of Albania succeeded to bring Albania out of the group of 24 most corrupted countries of the world into a position with 95 countries behind. The Albanian judiciary managed to bring to justice tens of officials.

SAA ratification was also thanks to last year Albania being listed among the 10 most successful countries of the world for fight against corruption.

The ratification of the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement was even because of the deep economic and fiscal reforms that transformed Albania into the runner-up in the world, according to the WB Doing Business; the reforms turned Albania into the country of the most rapid economic growth in the region and perhaps in the continent and one of the most attractive countries for the FDI.

The ratification by 27 EU countries of our contract with the European Union was thanks to the major constitutional and legal reforms of the institutions of the country, the Parliament, the Presidency, the Council of Ministers, the electoral system, the justice system and the other institutions.

We also stuck by the motto we announced when we came in power that the reforms would be the alpha and omega of our program.

The ratification of the EU-Albania Stabilization and Association Agreement by the 27 EU member countries and the European Commission 2008 Report consist the legal, moral and all-round basis for Albania to deserve the EU candidate member status.

These facts add to its maturity in its way to gain the status of the EU candidate member.

Thus, Albania is changing!

The second issue I am also here today in front of you is to talk about the elections. June 28 is the Election Day.

Firstly, I would like to say that I commit myself to a free and fair electoral process. The government will do its best for a worthy electoral process and the citizens vote like European citizens.

The government has made unprecedented efforts for among the most modern election infrastructure.

The government also calls on all the citizens, the public and private institutions to make their contribution for a free and fair electoral process. It is vital for the law, the moral, and the image of this country to display all our devotion to free and fair elections.

There are no losers in this process, quite the contrary. Naturally, one party will win, while the other will be in opposition, but, at long last every Albanian citizen will be the winner of this process.

PM Berisha receives the Arch Orchestra "Young Virtuosos of Tirana "



Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today the string orchestra The young virtuosos of Tirana, with conductor Zhani Ciko and who also

perform with other orchestras in prestigious international stages.

Attending the meeting were Klajd Sahati the concertmaster of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy, Gert Kumi a soloist, Artist in Residence and Professor of Violin at Grace College in Winona Lake, Indiana, Suela Mullaj- European Union Chamber Orchestra, Arben Sknderi Soloist and member of The Gaudi quartet, Paris, Fatlinda Thai concertmaster of the Orchestra da Camera dei Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, Suela Piciri -concertmaster of the Opera and Ballet House and other Albanian instrumentalists who perform with distinguished orchestras of Europe.

Welcoming the artists, PM Berisha expressed his satisfaction that a group of Albanian instrumentalist virtuosi have succeeded to outshine in the world orchestras and stages. The PM said that these artists are Albania best integration ambassadors and the country is proud of them. No other better representative than you, emphasized the PM, can present and improve Albania image to the world through the best cultural values of the country.

The PM expressed the government of Albania support for all these great Albanian artists who outshine in the world stages and make a worthy representation of the country.

The instrumentalists of the string orchestra The young virtuosos of Tirana thanked PM Berisha for the reception and attention paid to them and emphasized they will continue to make a contribution through their art for Albania development and its rapid integration.

The young virtuosos of Tirana instrumentalists will perform tomorrow, January 20, 2009 at a concert in the Opera and Ballet House.

The string orchestra of Tirana was created about 20 years ago; it was composed by 12-16 year old pupils of Tirana High school of music and became known for its successful tours in many countries of the world and for the positive assessments of their professionalism and distinguished musicality. This orchestra has also won awards in Albania and many world countries like in Belgium, France, Hungary, Greece, and Austria etc. In 1995, while on a tour in France, they were named as The young virtuosos of Tirana.

PM Berisha receives a letter from Indian PM, Manmohan Singh

Through this letter, Indian PM, Manmohan Singh expresses his pleasure over the excellent level of the relations between India and Albania, as well as the deepening of these relations after the opening of Albanian Diplomatic Mission in New Delhi.

Likewise, in the letter, Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh expresses his highest estimations for the figure of Mother Theresa, who "continues to be a powerful symbol between two countries".

Following is the letter of Indian PM addressed to PM Berisha:

Excellency,

We are happy that the relations between India and Albania are deepening. The opening of Albanian Diplomatic Mission in New Delhi and the visit of your Foreign Minister will further boost our bilateral relations.

Mother Theresa, Albanian descent and Indian citizen, reflected glory through her devoted work. She continues to be a strong symbol of our two countries.

I also avail myself of the occasion to thank you for the cordial invitation to visit Albania. I consider it a great honor for India.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration and best New Year wishes.

Manmohan Singh