



WEEKLY NEWS

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Package of Albania NATO adherence approved

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Minister Bakoyannis praises great progress of reforms in Albania



PM Berisha received today the Foreign Minister of Greece, Dora Bakoyannis, in the capacity of Chairwoman of OSCE Rotating Presidency.

Cordially welcoming her, Premier Berisha said that OSCE Greek Presidency has the full support of Albania in its mission.

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President Mesić expresses support to Premier Berisha for lifting visa regime between two countries by end of current year

In the course of his visit to Zagreb, Prime Minister Sali Berisha met today with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

While appreciating the very good bilateral relations, President Mesić and Premier Berisha said that both sides are willing to cooperate closely in political, economic and other fields.

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Premier Berisha: Trans Adriatic Pipeline project of great strategic, political and economic importance

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received yesterday evening the Leading Board of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) composed by Robert Klein, TAP Project Director and the representatives of the StatoilHydro: Jan Mikal Heiberg, Irene Rummelhoff and of the Swiss EGL: Markus Brokhof and Hans Schulz.

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Press Statement of Spokeswoman of Prime Minister, Juela Meçani

Premier Berisha strongly condemns the ugly criminal act of murder attempt against member of High Court, Prof. Dr. Ardian Nuni, considering it a criminal act against justice.

Premier Berisha urged the respective authorities to take all the measures to bring to justice the author of this extremely criminal act.

Last night, Premier Berisha visited the wounded, treated at Military Hospital. During the visit, Premier Berisha, accompanied also by minister of Health, Anila Godo, wished Judge Ardian Nuni a quick recovery. Likewise, Premier Berisha discussed with the medical staff and got acquainted with the health condition of judge Ardian Nuni. The staff assured the Premier that Nuni is not in critical conditions and he is receiving all the necessary assistance.

Minister Bakoyannis praises great progress of reforms in Albania



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Rotating Presidency

Cordially welcoming her, Premier Berisha said that OSCE Greek Presidency has the full support of Albania in its mission. Minister Bakoyannis heartily thanked Premier Berisha for the cordial reception and stressed that European Union countries maximally praise the so far work of Albanian government in reformation of Albania and quick NATO and EU integration.

Premier Berisha guaranteed Bakoyannis for full commitment of Albanian government in holding free and fair elections and asked her to influence in bringing as many observers as possible in Albania. Bakoyannis expressed her assurances that Albanian government will hold free and fair elections.

The meeting focused also on lustration law. Premier Berisha guaranteed Minister Bakoyannis that lustration law will be implemented in full compliance with rule of law principles and Strasbourg standards, and Albanian government would be really grateful if Czech experts

of lustration law could come in Albania to help implementation of this law. Minister Bakoyannis stressed that lustration, as an important issue related to moral of the society, finds the understanding of everyone and agreed to ask for the help of a group of experts.

Further on, both interlocutors considered the relations between Albania and Greece as excellent. Minister Bakoyannis guaranteed PM Berisha that Greece will ratify the protocol of Albania's Accession in NATO next week.

Premier Berisha guaranteed Bakoyannis that Greek investments have the full support of Albanian government. On her part, Bakoyannis informed the Premier that Greek government is very interested to boost Greek investments in Albania, and in this context, she said that the Greek economic aid program will finance, through a grant, all the rural roads connecting Konispol – Saranda road with the surrounding communes.

Before the meeting with Greek minister, Premier Berisha held a meeting with the EU Troika, headed by Ambassador of Czech Republic to Albania, which focused on lustration law. In the meeting, the parts agreed that Czech experts, who have an important experience with this law, would come to help the Albanian government in implementation of this law.

Premier Berisha and Premier Sanader: Let us lobby for Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline project



Prime Minister Sali Berisha –on an official visit to Croatia- was granted a special audience today by the Prime Minister of Croatia Ivo Sanader.

Following their meeting both prime ministers gave a joint news conference to say the two countries have friendly relations in all the fields.

Both dignitaries appreciated the mutual projects of Albania and Croatia to become NATO members and highlighted that full NATO integration is not just a dream, but it is becoming a reality.

Premier Berisha said that the two countries are following a common route toward implementation of this major project of historic importance. Premier Berisha highlighted the U.S. great support to the process, but also the close cooperation between the

two nations and governments. The premier pointed to cooperation in the framework of the Adriatic Charter A3 as an important mechanism that inspired the two countries to undertake the necessary sweeping reforms so that to attain the standards.

On his part, Premier Sanader expressed his hope that NATO Accession protocols will be fully ratified and the two countries will go to the coming NATO summit as full members. Mr. Sanader appreciated NATO membership of extreme importance not just from the military viewpoint, but even politically as EU integration process is moving ahead.

Speaking about EU integration process, Premier Berisha said that Croatia is in the threshold of the EU Membership Agreement as it has met in time all the required standards. And he considered Croatia membership a major event not just for Croatia, but even for Albania and all the regional countries aspiring to join the EU.

Albania, emphasized Premier Berisha, is making major strides to fulfill the required standards and the government of Albania will forward the request for getting the candidate status within the EU Czech Presidency.

Both dignitaries said they had discussed in the spirit of understanding the complete liberalization of the visa regime between the two countries within 2009 and had expressed the full commitment to reach an agreement about lifting the visa regime between Albania and Croatia.

During the meeting were discussed other topics of economic cooperation and it was agreed the two countries will cooperate for extending the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline throughout the region, via Montenegro up to Croatia.

“Today, we signed very important agreements, but the negotiations were fruitful for deepening the economic cooperation, too. We defined new directions of cooperation in the field of education, free movement and tourism. But, I would like to highlight the discussion on energy issue. I informed Premier Sanader about my efforts for the TAP gas pipeline and the crystal clear results. During my U.S. visit, I also demanded the backing of Secretary Hillary Clinton as she took an interest on the process. Together with Premier Sanader we decided to lobby for this major project,” said Premier Berisha during the news conference. In this context, Premier Berisha announced that TAP Consortium Board is scheduled to hold a meeting in Tirana tomorrow and the premier will inform it about Premier Sanader willing to cooperate in this direction. The project is the most efficient from the economic viewpoint and the shortest

among the gas pipeline projects from the Caspian to the West.

Likewise, Premier Berisha and Premier Sanader said they had discussed on finding the ways of cooperation about nuclear energy project.

Premier Berisha said that together with Premier Sanader decided to work even with other countries of the region like Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia to build a joint venture nuclear plant. Croatia, said Premier Berisha, has set a very good model, that of Krsko nuclear power plant, a joint venture with Slovenia. Hence, I am more optimistic than ever from today negotiations about the future of this project.”

Likewise, during the news conference Premier Berisha thanked Croatia nation and government for the support they have given to the aspirations of the Albanians of Kosova for freedom and dignity.

Following the meeting between the two prime ministers, 4 bilateral agreements were signed;

1 - Albania Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy Genc Ruli and Mr. Damir Polancec, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship of Croatia signed the supplementary protocol on amendment to the agreement about stimulation of mutual protection of the investments.

2 – Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy Genc Ruli and Mr. Damir Polancec, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship of Croatia signed the agreement between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Croatia on amendment of the agreement about bilateral economic relations.

3 – Mr. Ferit Hoxha Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Secretary for Political Affairs at the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Bianca Matković signed the agreement about employment of the family members of the Diplomatic Corps and consular offices.

4 – State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Croatia Ivica Buconjic and Albania ambassador to Croatia H.E. Pëllumb Qazimi signed the Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania about repatriation of the illegal emigrants.

Speaker Bebić impressed by Albania reforms and progress



During his official visit to Croatia, Prime Minister Sali Berisha met with the Speaker of the Parliament of Croatia Luka Bebić.

Welcoming Premier Berisha to the Croatian Parliament, Speaker Bebić expressed his pleasure that Croatia Parliament, the oldest in the region, receives today the prime minister of a country that keeps an old friendship. This friendship, said further Premier Berisha, is displayed even in the very good bilateral relations.

Speaker Bebić said he was impressed by Albania reforms and progress during the recent four years as he had seen it during his recent visit to Tirana.

Mr. Bebić expressed his satisfaction that the joint project of Croatia and Albania NATO integration is being successfully completed. Likewise, the talks focused on the joint projects in different fields and Mr. Bebić appreciated highly sharing of the ideas on the nuclear energy project and the Trans-Adriatic highway.

Speaker Bebić also pointed to the Adriatic Sea that connects both countries as a great natural resource that should be protected.

Speaker Bebić emphasized that Croatia has made steps forward with the project of Trans-Adriatic highway.

The Speaker of Croatia Parliament also expressed his willingness to share with Albania the experience of application for the status of the EU candidate country in the governmental and Parliamentary level.

On his part, Premier Berisha thanked Mr. Bebić for the hospitality and said he was honored of being invited to the Parliament of Croatia, a traditional friendly country that has made an outstanding contribution to the projects of freedom and dignity of the Albanians.

The bilateral relations are very good and they are reaching a culminating point with the NATO integration, said the premier. He added that this would add to the safe future of our countries in freedom.

Premier Berisha said he is following with interest EU Croatia integration which is worthy of the entire region. Croatia, said the premier, meets the conditions of being an EU member and I am aware of the sacrifices

that your nation has made for freedom and development.

The premier added that EU membership project is important for the entire region that is trying to be part of the European family.

The premier thanked the Speaker of Croatia Parliament for the willingness to help with the application of Albania for EU candidate status. He also said that Albania welcomes the Adriatic Sea protection project which is a common natural wealth of both countries.

At the end of the meeting, Premier Berisha said that his Croatia visit was successful because during which was discussed at length the lifting of the visa regime, the joint projects on energy; there were signed several important agreements that bring the relations between the two countries into a higher level. The premier said that Albania welcomes Croatia companies to come and invest in Albania.

President Mesić expresses support to Premier Berisha for lifting visa regime between two countries by end of current year



In the course of his visit to Zagreb, Prime Minister Sali Berisha met today with the President of the Republic of Croatia Stjepan Mesić.

While appreciating the very good bilateral relations, President Mesić and Premier Berisha said that both sides are willing to cooperate closely in political, economic and other fields.

On his part, Premier Berisha said he took great pleasure in meeting with President Mesić and called him a dear friend of Albania and the Albanians. "All the Albanians are grateful to you for the support you have given to their aspirations for freedom and dignity throughout your career in politics. There is a traditional friendship between our two peoples and together they are experiencing the greatest event of their history: NATO membership, the result of a fruitful cooperation between our nations and governments", said Premier Berisha.

Premier Berisha said that Albania is following with great interest Croatia EU membership and that Croatia deserves it because it has fulfilled all the conditions

and criteria. “Croatia membership is indispensable to the further integration of all the regional countries. Croatia integration is very important and the government of Croatia has testified it is willing to do its best for the facilitation of the EU integration process”, said Premier Berisha.

Croatia President Stjepan Mesić said to Premier Berisha he was in favor of lifting the visa regime between the two countries up to the end of the current year.

Speaking about the cooperation in the economic field, the Croatian president said that work is underway for the betterment of the bilateral relations. President Mesić informed Premier Berisha that Croatia is working for completion of the Trans-Adriatic Highway project that will serve like a bridge connecting Europe with the Western Balkans.

Premier Berisha said that cooperation in tourism and economic field will develop further. Albania has created very favorable conditions for Croatia entrepreneurs, said further the premier, while highlighting the tax cuts and creation of a very favorable climate for the business.

Premier Berisha and President Mesić also discussed cooperation for nuclear energy. President Mesić expressed his satisfaction at the cooperation in the framework of the nuclear energy, the cleanest source of energy and rather indispensable to meet the needs of the region for energy, but even to become independent from the energy viewpoint. President Mesić said that the more the number of countries joining the project the more the opportunities of its successful implementation.

Premier Berisha acquainted President Mesić also with the discussion he held with Premier Sanader about Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline project. “We agreed with Premier Sanader about very important economic issues like the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline project and the project on nuclear energy about which Croatia has an experience with Krsko nuclear power plant, a joint venture with Slovenia,” said Premier Berisha.

Premier Berisha invites Croatia businesses to invest in Albania



Prime Minister Sali Berisha held a meeting with Mr. Nadan Vidosevic, President of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce and other

representatives of the Croatian business. Attending the meeting was also Mr. Damir Polančec, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy.

Premier Berisha made a presentation of the reforms implemented in Albania and the measures taken to prevent contagion effects of the financial crisis in Albania while highlighting that this crisis found Albania the country with low taxes. My government, said Premier Berisha, has instituted the flat tax of 10%; it reduced to 15% the social insurance contribution and has reduced many tariffs to Euro 1. Our goal and achievement has been Albania of a high economic growth so that to make up for the lost time.

Premier Berisha also emphasized that the government has invested heavily in infrastructure because we inherited a Third World infrastructure, therefore 10% of the GDP is invested in infrastructure. Thanks to these measures, said the premier, the global crisis effects in Albania have not been significant and the banks have good liquidity.

While inviting Croatia business to come and invest in Albania, Premier Berisha said that Albania is of interest to Croatia business especially in tourism, energy and infrastructure fields. Albania coastline of 400 km is still not developed and offers great potentials.

Secondly, in the energy sector, Albania has reached 3.5 billion Euro contracts on exploitation of water resources only in December 2008. The premier acquainted the participants with the very fruitful discussions with Premier Sanader on the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline. The premier said that he would inform the Leading Board due to summon in Tirana about Croatia lobby for implementation of this project as well as about the fruitful negotiations in Davos and Washington on the same issue. Premier Berisha considered fruitful even the negotiations on cooperation in the framework of nuclear energy as the cleanest and most indispensable energy to meet the needs of the region for energy.

Thirdly, Croatia entrepreneurs will have the opportunity for success stories if they invest in road infrastructure. “Another project which will become a reality is the Ionian-Adriatic highway; Shkodra-Vlora road will soon

be of four lanes; while works on Shkodër-Hani i Hotit and Vlorë-Sarandë two lane road are due to kick off,” said the premier.

Also Premier Berisha said that Albania and Croatia will work together to lift the visa regime within the current year.

The participants, among which were even businessmen of Albanian descent, received with enthusiasm Premier Berisha speech.

Premier Berisha meets Albanian community living in Croatia



During his visit to Croatia, Prime Minister Sali Berisha had a cordial meeting with the representatives of the

Albanian community living in Croatia. Premier Berisha expressed his positive estimation of the rather important contribution that this community has made for the relations between our two countries, but even its influence to the positive attitude that Croatia adopted toward Kosova. The premier said that the Albanian community in Croatia enjoys the respect of Croatia people and government.

Mr. Berisha acquainted the representatives of the Albanian community with the sweeping reforms the government of Albania has implemented and the results of these reforms in the context of the fight against corruption, informality, the creation of a favorable environment for the foreign direct investments, the increase of investments in the country infrastructure etc.

Mr. Ton Marku, the head of the Union of Albanian Communities thanked Premier Berisha for the great contribution that he has made for Albania NATO membership, the approach of the country to the European Union and Kosova Independence.

A warm and friendly atmosphere dominated the meeting.

Package of Albania NATO adherence approved

The government of Albania approved during its meeting today the package of decisions for adherence of the Republic of Albania to the North Atlantic Alliance.



The premier said that the package of decisions provides the legal and sub-legal basis for making Albania a suitable country, a NATO member.

While making evident the ratification process of Albania Accession Protocol by the NATO member countries, Premier Berisha expressed gratitude for these countries and hope that the ratification process will be finalized in the near future.

“The ratification process of the Protocol is progressing rapidly and I would like to express deep gratitude to all the member countries for making a priority the ratification of the protocol in record time. The ratification process of the Protocol will be completed at the optimum deadline to define Albania NATO membership,” said the premier.

The bulk of the NATO member countries have already ratified Albania Accession Protocol in the North Atlantic Alliance.

Council of Ministers approves privatization package of government stake in Albletcom



The Council of Ministers approved today the privatization package of the government stake in Albletcom.

Premier Berisha said that following ARMO and Albanian Distribution Operator OSSH privatization, the process will continue with sale of government shares in all the enterprises where the government is shareholder.

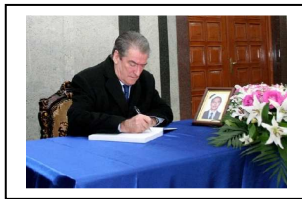
“The government being a shareholder is an outdated practice. Hence, following a successful process of AMC, we shall target another successful process of government stake sale in Albletcom. The privatization has been a promise the government has delivered.

There are successfully privatized ARMO and Albanian Distribution Operator OSSH; it is being negotiated INSIG contract, government shares in AMC were sold and there are on sale the government shares in the Albtelecom,” said the premier.

Premier Berisha said that 10% of the privatization money will be used for compensation of owners and the former political persecuted.

“The shares will be sold in all the enterprises where the government is shareholder- said the premier. And as the law stipulates, 10% of the privatization money will be used for compensation of owners and the former political persecuted. Thus, the compensation fund will be increased progressively in addition to other sources. The privatization funds will be added to the relevant compensation fund.”

Premier Berisha attends commemorative conference on the late Ljublin Dilja, a former senior diplomat



Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended today the commemorative conference in respect of Albania former ambassador to the USA, Ljublin Dilja, who passed

away several days ago following a serious disease.

Premier Berisha expressed again his condolences to the Diljas family members and other relations and considered Lublin Dilja's death as a heavy loss for his friends and colleagues.

Dilja used to be a model citizen, appreciated the premier, who embodied in himself the most brilliant qualities of citizenship; he used to be a gifted lecturer, a great intellectual and well-educated.

The premier highlighted that the late Dilja was appointed to the most important post of Albanian diplomacy, to represent the country in Washington, the capital of world diplomacy. “He began his diplomatic career without any experience, but thanks to his gift and devotion he accomplished the job with dignity”, emphasized the premier.

Attending the commemorative conference in respect of the senior diplomat Dilja were the Minister for Foreign Affairs Lulzim Basha, former ministers of foreign affairs, representatives of the diplomatic corps and relations of Mr. Dilja.

Premier Berisha receives co-rapporteurs of Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly



Prime Minister Sali Berisha held a meeting today with Mr. Jaakko Laakso and David Wilshire, co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary

Assembly of the Council of Europe Monitoring Committee for Albania, in the framework of their fact-finding visit to Albania.

The Lustration Law was one of the topics discussed in the meeting. Premier Berisha pointed to the broad consensus that exists in Albania about approval of such a law. The three different drafts as compiled by three different political forces confirm this consensus, said the premier.

During the meeting, the premier brought to the attention of the co-rapporteurs the crimes against humanity and genocide committed during the communist regime in Albania. Irrespective of that, the law does not target the penal punishment of the people who committed the crimes, but to purify the Public Administration from those people who because of their past have lost credibility to fulfill important official functions as they also can fall a prey to different blackmail. Further on, Premier Berisha informed the co-rapporteurs of Council of Europe that Albania approved such a law in 1995. That was a copy of the Czech Law and was considered constitutional by the Constitutional Court ruling of 1996.

While the new law, said Premier Berisha, is a mild version as compared to Law 1995 and targets temporary restriction to exercise public functions and it is fully in the spirit of all the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights regarding lustration issues.

Further on, Premier Berisha said that the law was approved now because for two consecutive years the issue was negotiated with the other political parties and in July 2008 when the ruling majority accepted the amendments that the opposition proposed, the opposition didn't agree to the final consensus because of reasons related to the opposition leader, not the government.

Answering to the questions of his interlocutors, Premier Berisha said that he observes the rule of law and the decisions of the state institutions, the Constitutional Court included. But, he highlighted the need of the integrity of the officials and the conflict of interest runs counter to the standards of ethics of the senior officials.

Further on, Premier Berisha said that he had sought the assistance of Czech experts for enforcement of this law, as the current law is based on the model of Czech Lustration Law. And he also expressed the willingness to cooperate with every international institution for enforcement of the Lustration Law, the Council of Europe and Venice Commission included.

Premier Berisha receives Mr. Norman Gershman renowned American photographer of Jewish descent



Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today afternoon Mr. Norman Gershman, the renowned photographer from the United States of America of Jewish descent.

Mr. Greshman has opened in Albania the exhibition entitled: "BESA: Albanians Who Saved Jews in World War II", held under the auspices of the U.S. embassy in Tirana and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Attending this meeting were also Mr. Flamur Gashi, Director of the National Institute of Diaspora in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Albania and the representatives of the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, Vatra ("The Hearth") Ms. Majlinda Myrto, Mr. Sejdi Hysenaj and Mr. Kastriot Gramshi.

The exhibition includes 60 pictures and the exhibit has traveled to the States and Israel, while in March of the current year it will be staged in Kosova and in the follow-up months even in some world capitals. This will be a cooperation of the National Institute of Diaspora in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Albania, the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, Vatra and Mr. Gershman.

Welcoming the famous photographer Gershman, Premier Berisha expressed gratitude to him for this initiative which he appreciated as a major project to improve Albania image in the world through casting a light on the historical truth of the Albanians who sheltered Jewish families fleeing the Holocaust. Along with Besa, i.e. the Code of Honor of the Albanians, the Albanian nation is distinguished by harmony between the different religions and ethnic belongings.

On his part, the renowned American photographer of Jewish descent Norman Gershman thanked Premier Berisha for the hospitality and expressed gratitude for the support of the government of Albania and Premier Berisha in person for holding the exhibition in Albania.

He said further that through this exhibit he tried to document many Albanian families who protected the Jews during the World War Two and said that through it he thanks all the Albanians for the valuable contribution.

Premier Berisha receives H.E. Anders Bjurner, ambassador of Sweden to Albania

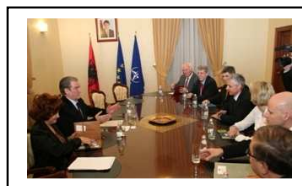
Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today the ambassador of Sweden to Albania H.E. Anders Bjurner on occasion of completion of his diplomatic mission in our country.

During the meeting, ambassador Bjurner pointed to the very high level of bilateral relations. In the course of my diplomatic mission, emphasized the ambassador, the cooperation has increased along with the number of delegations visiting the respective countries.

The ambassador expressed thanks to the prime minister for the support that the government of Albania has provided his mission as ambassador of Sweden and expressed hope that this support will continue even for his successor to the post.

On his part, Premier Berisha expressed gratitude to ambassador Bjurner for the contribution he has made for the development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Premier Berisha: Trans Adriatic Pipeline project of great strategic, political and economic importance



Prime Minister Sali Berisha received yesterday evening the Leading Board of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) composed by Robert Klein, TAP Project Director and the representatives of the StatoilHydro: Jan Mikal Heiberg, Irene Rummelhoff and of the Swiss EGL: Markus Brokhof and Hans Schulz.

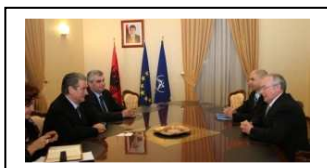
The TAP Leading Board summoned in Albania as a rather important location of the gas pipeline project. The goal of the meeting was the presentation of the achievements and the vision for the future. They said that the project implementation will begin soon and Albania role for its support and stimulation in the region is vital.

The representatives of the StatoilHydro Company said they joined this major project a year ago as they evaluated it economical and within reach. Albania economic performance was another good reason that encouraged this company to join the project.

Premier Berisha said that thanks to this project Albania is currently on the gas pipeline map and it is the second project following that of the Italian Falcone. The premier thanked the leading board of this major project for considering the country reliable for launching this major initiative and ensured the government of Albania further support. Projects like this, -said the premier, are of great strategic, political and economic importance.

Norway's StatoilHydro ASA and Swiss-based EGL Group are major oil and gas companies. The StatoilHydro ASA is the biggest offshore oil and Gas Company in the world and has recently chosen our region- Albania occupies a main place- to extend its activity.

Premier Berisha discusses with EUROCONTROL Director General improvement of air transport sector



Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today Mr. David McMillan, Director General of EUROCONTROL, the European Organization

for the Safety of Air Navigation.

Mr. McMillan presented to the premier the work done and the achievements. He said that the Civil Air Transport has successfully performed in the framework of the project backed by this organization. Albania is a member of this organism and has marked notable achievements regarding development of the systems and increase of the security. The achievements from the membership moment up to now, said Mr. McMillan, have turned Albania into a country in high demand by the air companies. Thanks to the reforms implemented, the increase of autonomy of this institution and the assistance the international organizations have provided, it is succeeded an increase of the air traffic while the revenues from the activity have been boosted. Mr. McMillan thanked the premier for the support and an atmosphere of cooperation the government of Albania has created.

Premier Berisha thanked Mr. McMillan for the assistance provided. They also discussed the economic situation in the framework of the global

economic crisis and the measures taken for the management the crisis. As the Civil Air Transport has been affected, during the meeting were discussed the measures of avert the crisis in the Albanian market. Although Albania market has not been affected by the current crisis yet, Premier Berisha said he would work for the stimulation of flights at low cost in Albania pointing to the low cost air lines that operate in Northern Europe.

Germany Dermapharm Ltd representative acquaints Premier Berisha with extension of business activity in Albania



Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today Mr. Wilhelm Beier, the representative of the German

Pharmaceutical Company Dermapharm Ltd. Attending the meeting was also the ambassador of Germany to Albania Bernd Borchardt.

Mr. Beier thanked the premier for the business climate created and government support for implementation of their substantial investment. Mr. Beier said that the recent three year developments convinced the executives of the company to qualify Albania as the location of their business activity and the site for building a factory of medicaments products.

The Profarma privatization by this company marked the beginning of its activity about a year ago in Albania. And this activity is expected to be crowned in a matter of few months with building of a new factory of production of medicaments in accordance with European standards. The list of products of this company is certified and accredited in Albania and Germany. The market of Albania factory products will be Albania, Kosova, Macedonia and Germany.

Premier Berisha thanked the company for its activity and ensured support for implementation of the project up to its inauguration. The premier also evaluated positively the job done by the human resources department and the company products in line with the European standards. The Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP model) of medicaments applied in Germany and all over Europe sets the best example to all the relevant actors in the field, the investors, employees, state and consumers.

Premier Berisha receives DPA leader Menduh Thaçi



Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today by noon the leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) in Macedonia Menduh Thaçi. Premier Berisha and Mr. Thaçi discussed

the recent developments, the coming elections and the integration process of both countries.

Following the meeting, Premier Berisha and Mr. Thaçi said to the media:

Premier Berisha: I had a very fruitful meeting with Mr. Thaçi.

We discussed at length elections in Macedonia and Albania and shared the same view that our political forces should make a contribution for free and fair elections which is to the great interest of our countries and societies.

Also we discussed other issues. Mr. Thaçi has adopted crystal clear pro NATO stands.

I informed him further with the developments in the country, the progress of the ratification process of the NATO Accession Protocol by the member countries; the completion of the ratification process of the EU Stabilization-Association Agreement; the government efforts to amortize the consequences of the global crisis in the Albanian economy and the perspective of our two countries.

It was a frank discussion. I reiterate that cooperation among the Albanian political forces in Macedonia on specific issues related to the Albanians of Macedonia is indispensable in the context of the historical Ohrid Agreement which is fundamental to peace, stability and prosperity of Macedonia.

Mr. Thaçi informed me that he is working in this direction and is determined to cooperate with the other political forces for a free and fair electoral process as well as for the further improvement of freedom and human rights of the Albanians in Macedonia.

Mr. Thaçi: It was a routine meeting and a special pleasure to see the Albanian prime minister and discuss with him on different topics. I informed him our party is willing to make the maximum contribution for the coming elections in Macedonia and this is a rather positive aspect. I voiced my concern for the freeze on Macedonia NATO and EU integration process and naturally the pleasure at the good news for Albania, its

full NATO membership in April. All the Albanians naturally welcome the good news for Albania irrespective of the place we are living.

Premier Berisha attends graduation ceremony of first students from “Zonja e Këshillit të Mirë” University



Premier Berisha attended today the graduation ceremony of the first students from the “Zonja e Këshillit të Mirë” University (Università Nostra Signora del Buon Consiglio), in Tirana.

In his greeting speech delivered on this occasion, Premier Berisha said that graduation of the first students with diplomas of European level marks a very important event in the history of the Albanian education. Appreciating this as a very positive and important development in the country, the premier considered it a meaningful day even because of the fact that this achievement was made possible by the private education sector. “Today, “Zonja e Këshillit të Mirë” University awards the first European diplomas to the young people for the successful accomplishment of the studies in this university. This marks one of the most important and positive developments for the Albanian education. Likewise, this is a meaningful day as the achievement belongs to the private education sector”, said the premier.

The premier also considered the event as inspiring for the higher education in Albania. “The Rector of this University Paolo Ruatti informed that 450 distinguished university teachers of the Italian universities have delivered lectures in the course of these years.

I believe that other university teachers from Italy, France, Germany, the USA and Great Britain would be willing to join the private and public universities of the country. I believe that this example would inspire the public and private universities of Albania to raise into a European level the diplomas of their students”, said the premier.

Premier Berisha highlighted the fact that the government of Albania has considered education a major priority. “Today, in Albania is in operation 10 public and 10 private universities. I would like to promise the private universities that their higher education coverage quota of about 12% would equal and even surpass the public university if the current majority would come out winner of the coming elections,” said the premier.

In his greeting speech, Premier Berisha congratulated the Rector of “Zonja e Këshillit të Mirë” University, local and foreign lectures, their students and family members for bringing this university into this level.

On his part, Mr. Tritan Shehu, the vice Chancellor of this university thanked Premier Berisha for the support, ideas and the major reforms he is implementing in Albania in the field of education, knowledge, science and which are the cornerstone of the further integration of the country.

On his part, the Rector of this University Paolo Ruatti expressed his satisfaction at this university being able of awarding to his students diplomas of the same level with those of the Italian students. He thanked the foreign lecturers for teaching in this university and this constitutes a novelty. Mr. Ruatti expressed his belief that capable specialists of the relevant fields are produced thanks to the university serious criteria applied.

Attending the ceremony were also Minister of Health Anila Godo, the Education Minister Fatos Beja, representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Tirana etc.

Press release of Mrs. Juela Meçani, spokeswoman of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania Sali Berisha has offered his condolences to the U.S. President Barack Obama for the 50 people killed in Thursday night's plane crash near Buffalo, New York. In his message of condolences, Premier Berisha writes among other things:

“Honored President Obama!

We got to know with deep regret the tragic accident of the Continental Airlines plane, flying from Newark, New Jersey, which went down in bad weather, crashing into a house near the city of Buffalo in New York State. Fifty citizens of your country lost their lives. Please, allow me that in this moment of great pain to share with you the sadness at the loss of lives and to send on behalf of the government of Albania and me in person the most sincere condolences and the human solidarity with this great loss for the families of the victims and for the government and your nation. At this difficult moment, all the Albanians share with you and the with the families who lost loved ones in the crash the pain in this heavy loss and pray for the souls of the victims to rest in peace. I take the opportunity to re-affirm, Honored Mr. President; you have come down in my estimation.

Respectfully yours, Sali BERISHA.”

Premier Berisha visits “Besa” photography exhibit



Prime Minister Sali Berisha, accompanied by his spouse Mrs. Liri Berisha, visited today by noon the photography exhibit, “Besa: Albanians Who Saved Jews in WWII,” opened at the National Gallery of Art by American photographer of Jewish descent Norman Gershman.

Premier Berisha considered unique and heart-touching this exhibition and held in high esteem the Albanians and their families who rescued hundreds of Jews during the dark days of the Holocaust.

“This is a unique and heart-touching exhibit that one happens to see in a lifetime. This is thanks to photographer Norman Gershman and I would like to express deep gratitude. The exhibit displays photos of tens of Albanian families who by their virtue wrote one of the most brilliant pages in the history of our national moral. The author has entitled this exhibition as “Besa”, the Albanian Code of Honor which during the World War Two found its expression in sheltering the Jewish families fleeing the Holocaust,” said the premier.

Premier Berisha highlighted the fact that the Albanians didn't become part of the atrocity the Nazis committed during the Second World War as unfortunately the others did. Although the Albanians were under occupation, they didn't collaborate with the Nazis. Quite the contrary, they built a rich heritage for the nation and country with their stand toward the Jews. The exhibition reflects the real moral and values of the Albanians, said the premier.

Premier Berisha also thanked photographer Norman Gershman for realization with devotion of this exhibition. The premier said that, “This exhibition was opened in Jerusalem and it is currently traveling to other world capitals, hence, I thank him for the great service he is making to Albania and the Albanians.”

Further on, the premier reminded that the Holocaust was one of the most tragic moments in the history of mankind that happened no longer than 70 years ago. The Jewish nation became a symbol of unjust persecution, but it also makes great efforts to keep alive in the memory of mankind the barbarity it lived through, said the premier.

Premier Berisha voiced great estimation for the recognized Albanian families, but also the anonymous families and highlighted the fact that the by the end of the World War Two the number of Jews in Albania was greater than at the beginning of the war.”

The 70 photos displayed in this exhibition draw the attention to the fact that the Albanian families risked their own lives to save the lives of Jews.

Premier Berisha answers to media interest on Lustration Law



- Following his visit to “Besa” photography exhibit, Prime Minister Sali Berisha answered to the questions of journalists;

Question: Mr. Berisha, how do you explain the fact that an Institute of Memory and Conscience is not established yet in Albania?

Premier Berisha: The Institute of Memory and Conscience is being established; the law has been forward to the Parliament for further examination. We are late with this law, but in this country there still exists the mentality of protecting the crimes against humanity and the class struggle barbarous principles.

It will be an ultimate goal of this Institute the adoption of a new and just stand stemming from the international documents Albania has signed, such as the Geneva Convention on crimes against humanity; but it also stems from the determination of the Albanians to progress together in respect of one another, in harmony, tolerance, good understanding and social peace and this implies the condemnation of the heinous crimes against humanity as a sin equanon condition.

Question: Does this imply that the Institute will not share the same fate as the Lustration Law, which they say will not be enforced?

Premier Berisha: The separation of Albania from the crimes against humanity committed under the communist regime is unstoppable, irreversible and vital process which will be enforced in line with the rule of law. But, the process is un-stoppable.

The rule of law is a condition, but it is also vital the separation from that chapter the Albanians lived through the hardest times ever since the Inquisition until today.

Premier Berisha pays homage to the late Vladimir Prela, ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Macedonia



Prime Minister Sali Berisha paid homage today by noon at the venues of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the senior diplomat, the late Vladimir Prela, ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Skopje who passed away yesterday at the age of 59.

The premier offered his condolences to the Prelas family members, friends and other relations and held in high esteem the figure and contribution that Mr. Vladimir Prela made to the Albanian diplomacy and the intellectual world of the country.

“This is a real day of mourning for Albania diplomacy as Mr. Vladimir Prela used to be one of its most worthy representatives, an honest, devoted, wise official; a diplomat who made a special contribution to the country and the nation as a whole; he used to be a parent; he had a family life; he used to be a dear citizen and friend. While offering my most sincere condolences to the family, wife, children, all the Albanian diplomacy and his numerous friends who have fond memories of Vladimir Prela, I pray for him in finding the deserved peace.”