

donordialogue

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Photo: Deputy Prime Minister Gazmend Oketa, chair of the Parliamentary Committee for European Integration, Ilir Meta, Ambassador Sweder van Voorst tot Voorst of the Netherlands and Dan Redford, Political Officer of the OSCE Presence in Albania at a regional forum on issues of European Integration in Durres. (photo: OSCE / Fabiola Haxhillari)

Parliamentarians and Durres community discuss challenges of European integration in an OSCE Presence-organized forum

Social and economic developments that are expected to affect the Durres region in the process of European integration were discussed on 20 February 2008 in Durres, at a policy forum that brought together Members of Parliament, local leaders, business and civil society groups. The event was organized by the OSCE Presence in Albania, the Albanian Assembly and the European Movement Albania.

Discussions focused on problems of the region, development policies, local industries and free movement of citizens. Participants

included Deputy Prime Minister Gazmend Oketa, chair of the Parliamentary Committee for European Integration, Ilir Meta, Ambassador Sweder van Voorst tot Voorst of the Netherlands, deputy chair and Democratic Party Member of Parliament Genc Juka, Socialist Member of Parliament Taulant Balla, as well as other Members of Parliament and local authorities.

Similar forums will be organized in several regions of the country during the year. They are part of the Presence's activities in the framework of its Parliamentary Support Project.

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The European Commission and the Council of Europe support the School of Magistrates

On 8 February 2008, the European Commission and the Council of Europe launched a jointly funded project to support the School of Magistrates.

The project Support to the Sustainability of the School of Magistrates of Albania is funded to the value of 400,000 Euros and will be implemented by the Council of Europe. It aims at enhancing the management and operational capacity of the School of Magistrates.

For the next 18 months, the Council of Europe will work with the School, focusing on the training of 360 magistrates, 60 teachers and 20 students. The opening event was hosted by Ambassador Helmuth Lohan, the Director of the School of Magistrates, Arjana Fullani and Margaret Killerby, Director a.i. of Cooperation in Human Rights and Legal Affairs at the Council of Europe.

Sector Related Activities



Photo: Minister of Justice and Head of European Commission Delegation inaugurate new Pre-Trial Detention Centre in Vlorë
(Photo: Delegation of European Commission in Albania)

Minister of Justice and Head of European Commission Delegation inaugurate new Pre-Trial Detention Centre in Vlorë

On 21 February 2008, the Minister of Justice, Enkelejd Alibeaj, and the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Albania, Ambassador Helmuth Lohan inaugurated the new Pre-Trial Detention Centre in Vlorë. The design, construction and furnishing of the Vlorë Pre-detention centre are funded under the EU CARDS Programme to the value of 3.7 million Euros. The works began in August

2006 and lasted for some 14 months. The construction and furnishing of the Centre is an important step in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Albanian pre trial detention system. The Master plan provides an overview of the pre trial detention and makes recommendations for investments in the sector. The design of six additional Pre-Trial Detention Centres in Fier, Elbasan, Berat, Gjirokastra, Kukes and Shkodra are identified in the Master plan and will be funded from EU assistance programmes starting in May 2008. This will be followed by the construction of the Pre-Trial Detention Centres in Fier and Elbasan.



Photo: Inauguration of Pre-Trial Detention Centre in Vlorë
(Photo: Delegation of European Commission in Albania)

National meeting on “Migration: New scenario for developing cooperation between Italy and Albania”

On 29 January 2008, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Italian Development Cooperation and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), organized a national meeting in Tirana on Migration: new scenario for developing cooperation between Italy and Albania. The event was prepared in co-operation with Italian agencies operating in the area of migration such as Caritas Italiana, Patronato ACLI-IPSA and Regione Emilia Romagna. The event was introduced by Minister, Koço Barka and the Ambassador of Italy in Albania, Saba d'Elia. The meeting was attended by some 100 representatives from Albanian institutions, foreign embassies, international and non governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society. The information and statistics provided concerning migration to Italy (381, 000 regular migrants, 77.900 students enrolled in the Italian school system, more than 15, 300 businesses run by Albanians) highlight the importance and potentialities of migration for Albania's future development. The event focused on the challenges to manage migration related flows in order to ensure an effective and concrete valorisation of migration resources, experiences and know-how. Thus, continuous cooperation among all entities involved was highlighted and the Italian Development Cooperation confirmed its commitment to begin new initiatives in this sector.



Photo: the National Meeting 'Migration: new scenario for developing cooperation between Italy and Albania', jointly organized by the MOLSAEO, IOM and the Italian Development Cooperation (Photo: Office of the Italian Development Cooperation).



Photo: USAID Mission Director, Edward T. Landau and the Minister of Health, Nard Ndoka signed a three year, \$5.5 million project, ProShëndetit is providing assistance to improve primary health care services at health centres in Albania. (Photo: USAID Albania).

Health

USAID and Ministry of Health Sign Agreement on Primary Health Care Reforms

On 22 February 2008, USAID and the Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding to improve primary health care services. USAID's three year, 5.5 million USD project, ProShëndetit is providing assistance to: improve primary health care services at health centres, upgrade the skills of doctors and nurses, develop a national electronic health information system, and strengthen the insurance and financial management of health facilities.

USAID Programme to Expand Method Choices in Family Planning

On 14 February 2008, USAID sponsored a two-day consensus building stakeholders' meeting Building Consensus for Action: Meeting the Family Planning Needs of Albanian Women that marked the start a new project ACCESS-FP, a USAID supported global programme lead by JHPIEGO, an international health affiliate of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA. ACCESS-FP will support the Ministry of Health's efforts to improve

National Conference on the Role of Local Government in the Fight against Corruption

On 1 February 2008, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister organised a National Conference on the Role of Local Government in the Fight against Corruption. The event was funded by the OSCE Presence in Albania. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Head of the OSCE Presence, Ambassador Robert Bosch, Deputy Prime Minister Gazmend Oketa, Deputy Interior Minister Ferdinand Poni and the President of the Albanian Association of Municipalities, Refik Rugjija. Representatives of central and local government as well as of the Inspectorate for the Disclosure and Verification of Assets delivered keynote speeches. The main aim of the conference was to introduce the principles of the Government Anti-Corruption Strategy in the context of local government and decentralisation reform, as well as to address the role and measures that both the local and central government should undertake to make possible its implementation in practice.



Albanian civil society organizations promote increased participation of women in elections

In a forum, organized in Tirana on 9 February 2008 by Elections to Conduct Agency (ECA) and supported by the OSCE Presence in Albania, the Council of Europe and UNIFEM, civil society experts prepared a set of recommendations aiming to increase women's role in politics as candidates, leaders and voters.

The recommendations are to be presented to the President, political parties, institutions and the Assembly Speaker, with the goal of putting these recommendations on the working table of the Ad Hoc Committee on Electoral Reform. Participants at the forum debated root causes of the low level of women's participation in the Albanian election process and identified potential solutions. The event was part of a series of forums aimed at fostering dialogue between civil society and the Assembly on the ongoing Electoral Code reform process.

The results of a nation-wide sample survey on the public's perceptions about women's political participation as voters and as candidates for elected offices in Albania were presented during the forum.

According to the UNIFEM Country Programme Manager, Christine Arab, the sample survey revealed the number of contradictions in people's perceptions about women's role in elections, and also the gradual changes in these perceptions.



maternal and reproductive health as well as increase knowledge, access and use of modern methods of contraception. In the next 18 months, the project will work in Tirana, Shkodra, and Korça to address family planning and reproductive health needs of women in the extended postpartum (after-birth) and post-abortion periods. Another aim will be to expand woman's contraceptive choices to include an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD) to provide a long-term, reliable and safe family planning method for women in Albania.

Agriculture

USAID Supports Agribusiness Owners Visit to German Trade Fair

With the support of USAID, four Albanian agribusiness companies participated in the annual Fruit Logistica trade fair in Berlin from 5 to 10 February 2008, the largest international trade fair for fresh the fresh fruit and vegetable industry attended by thousands of business representatives from over 120 countries. Following the fair, three international buyers now plan to visit Albania in late April to continue export discussions with the companies. Through these fairs, USAID helps companies acquire real world experience to improve their efficiency, competitiveness, and marketing capacity.



Photo: Ready to do business, Albanian businessmen pose at the entrance of the Fruit Logistica Trade Fair in Berlin (Photo: USAID Albania).

Civil Registration

OSCE Presence fosters consultation process on modernizing Albania's civil registration system

Modernizing the Albanian civil registration system, including the civil status services, the printing of certificates, and creating voter lists, and the needs of future users of the civil registry were discussed at a workshop in Tirana on 19 February 2008.



Photo: Head of the OSCE Presence, Ambassador Robert Bosch, Minister of Interior, Bujar Nishani, and the Head of the European Commission Delegation in Albania, Ambassador Helmuth Lohan at the seminar on modernizing the civil registration system in Tirana, 19 February 2008. (OSCE/Fabiola Haxhillari)

The event was organized by Albanian Ministry of Interior and the OSCE Presence. The workshop provided participants with a better insight on how the civil registration system will look in the future, including up-coming provisions of a computer-based system. It also gave the Interior Ministry a better understanding of the needs of potential users and the necessary system requirements. Both elements are key in the process of creating a proper civil registration system.

“The modernization of the civil registration system is a complex task. In order to ensure that all aspects are taken into account, it is important that there is a sufficient consultation with the future users of the system. Information-sharing is the key to guarantee the best outcome of this process,” said Ambassador Robert Bosch, the Head of the OSCE Presence.

Albanian Interior Minister, Bujar Nishani, and the Head of the European Commission Delegation in Albania, Helmuth Lohan, spoke at the event. The OSCE Presence is helping to modernize the civil registration systems under an EC-funded project.

Transport

On 15 February 2008, in the premises of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication, a ceremony was held in order to present the final design of the road Shkoder – Hani Hotit, connecting Albania and Montenegro. This initiative took place in the framework of an Italy-funded programme to the value of 21.85 million Euros that also includes the works direction and road construction. The event was attended by Minister Sokol Olldashi, the Italian Deputy Ambassador, Francesco De Luigi, the Mayor of Shkoder, Lorenc Luka, and other representatives of the Albanian public administration. ■

Photo: Presentation of the final design of the Road Shkoder - Hani Hotit, held in the presence of the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication, Sokol Olldashi, and Italian Deputy Ambassador, Francesco De Luigi (Photo: Office of the Italian Development Cooperation).

Studies and Reports

Anti-Corruption Study by Sida

Sida has carried out an anti-corruption study and its report has now been released. The main aim of the study was to produce a corruption analysis of Albania that will serve as an input into the sector work of the new Sida strategy for Albania now being developed. The anti-corruption study should be seen as an input into overall dialogue with the Government on this key issue. The report gives an overview of the corruption situation in Albania and looks in detail on the corruption within the public administration, judicial and health sector. If you are interested in obtaining an electronic copy of the report, please contact the Embassy of Sweden, Rome, Section Office Tirana at this e-mail address: rezarta.katuci@sida.se

USAID, ADRF Report on Implementation of Disability Strategy

On 18 February 2008, the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF), a non-governmental organization established in 1996 with the support of USAID, held a conference to present the findings of the first monitoring report on the implementation of the National Disability Strategy. The monitoring report contains five assessments on the

accessibility, health care, social services, education, and employment and vocational training available in Tirana, Shkodra, Durres, Elbasan, Korça and Vlora. Winners of a USAID grant competition for NGOs working to implement or monitor the National Disability Strategy Action Plan were also announced at the conference. The monitoring report can be found on the USAID website at: <http://albania.usaid.gov>

Internal initiatives from the Italian Development Cooperation Office in Albania

In January, the Italian Development Cooperation Office in Albania drafted an internal report, assessing all the activities and status of Italy-funded programmes in Albania, in order to facilitate the work organization in 2008. In brief, this analysis pointed out that the Italian Development Cooperation financial commitment totalled 337,228,629.01 Euros, supporting 81 initiatives. During 2007: 9 tenders were launched, 13 contracts were signed for a total value of 16.805.304,00 Euros, 5 new initiatives were approved amounting to 3.627.090,40 Euros and 21 scholarships were awarded to Albanian students for post-degree courses in Italy. The main sectors of the Italian intervention are Energy, Transport, Water Supply, Health, Education, Agriculture, Government and Civil Society.



In-Country Missions

From **15 January to 15 February 2008**, an Italian expert from the General Directorate for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGCS) assisted the Project Implementation Unit established in the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication, General Road Directorate in order to supervise the implementation of Italy-funded programmes in the Transport sector.

From **4 February 2008**, a **mission of two Italian experts** from the General Directorate for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGCS) is in Albania to co-ordinate with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy to ensure the implementation of required activities, prior to the launch of an Italy-funded programme to the value of 25 million Euros, promoting and facilitating the creation of Small and Medium Enterprises.

On **12 February 2008**, a two-month mission has started, aimed to supervise the implementation of Italy-funded initiatives in the sector of Education. In particular, it is responsible for coordinating the envisaged activities in the framework of a 4 million Euros programme, contributing to the improvement of the Albanian University Electronic Network and resource management.

A high-level Swedish delegation will visit Tirana from 14 until 18 April 2008 to discuss a new development strategy with the Government with the aim to support development efforts and Albania's future EU accession. Currently, Sweden provides around 8 million Euros per year mainly for programmes on good governance, sustainable use of natural resources and the environment, social development and civil society. The new strategy is expected to begin in January 2009 and will recommend Swedish support in these or similar areas. The

Swedish government will underline the need for stronger sector focus, clear national ownership, anticorruption work and attention to gender issues.

A World Bank (WB) Notification Mission, Doing Business Reform Mission, visited country from 18 to 21 February 2008. The aim was to increase the understanding among the Doing Business team of key reforms underway in Albania, and for them to help outline key priorities for the business environment reforms in the specific Doing Business indicator areas going forward.

A WB Pre-Appraisal Mission for the Secondary and Local Roads Project took place from 28 January to 3 February 2008 in order: to confirm the prospective components, technical assistance and implementation

arrangements for the forthcoming project; to confirm the implementation arrangements and potential co-financing for the project; and to identify the next steps in preparation of the project for the appraisal stage.

A WB Mission for the Integrated Water and Ecosystems Management Project took place from 5 to 14 February 2008 in order to review social safeguard issues for the Project and to prepare for the upcoming Mid-Term Review scheduled for March 2008. The team conducted due diligence on social safeguard issues, in particular on illegal construction in the Kune Vaine Managed reserve; a land claim in the Lezhe Constructed treatment Wetland; and on potential fishing restrictions that might arise with the implementation of the Management Plan of the Kune Vaine Managed Reserve.

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As of 1 October 2007, the World Bank took over from the OSCE Presence as the Chair of the DTS Secretariat.

Any comments regarding Donor Dialogue (both positive and negative) are strongly encouraged – and we promise to print all such comments received!

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If you would like to contribute, send your text to the Donor Technical Secretariat (DTS) Office (nevila.como@aidharmonisation.org.al) by the 1st of every month. An ideal word count for submissions is around 100 words.

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