

HEAD OF PRESENCE'S REMARKS TO THE MEDIA

19 January 2012

Q: Today the parliamentary law committee was to discuss a law that requires 84 votes. It was neither discussed, nor voted. Do you think that the consensus that the political parties reached in November last year is at risk or at least frozen?

Ambassador Wollfarth: The consensus and the announcement to proceed at the end of last year towards preparing the future on the consensus should continue. It is needed to prepare the further way forward of the Republic of Albania to become a candidate for European Union on its way to further integration into European structures. The Constitution is very wise. It says, in general terms, that consensus is needed for fundamental decisions. Fundamentally speaking, Albania through, its public officials, always made clear that it wants to be part of the democratic and western world. And, on this issue, it is very important to have a large consensus starting in the population, in the people, but have that reflected also at the highest political level. So, in that respect, it is very important that fundamental steps, fundamental decisions, and key laws are adopted with the support of the Ruling majority and opposition. So, in that respect, I would like to renew the invitation to the political leaders in doing their utmost in finding that consensus. It is necessary. Your country needs you. Albania needs you. Your people need you. And the decisions have to be taken as early as possible after - and this is an important element - sound discussion.

Q: Mr. Ambassador, what is your opinion regarding the dismissal of Mr. Spahiu, which is demanded by the majority? Do you think that the law is being violated, considering that Mr. Spahiu is approved by the President, and not by the majority?

Ambassador Wollfarth: From a public official, no matter in which office, I would expect that his or her time is dedicated for whatever the appointment has been made. It is not only legitimate, it is also important that relevant questions are being asked and necessarily also answered in the proper way in the parliament. Parliament is the right place for these questions. And a public office, an office paid with taxpayers' money, must be respected and the conduct must be appropriate. When there are questions regarding such conduct, especially when it relates to a high level official, a very good place, the best place, and probably even the only place, is in the parliament. The most important institution a country has is its democratically elected parliament and it should be respected.

Q: Don't you think this is an institutional clash, considering that the case might even go to the Constitutional Court? How do you see the stand of the opposition?

Ambassador Wollfarth: I am sure that the opposition sticks to democratic rules. I have no indication that the opposition is any different from the Ruling majority on this point. Democratic respect for democratic institutions is a key thing in democracy. I do not see any problem. And since you asked me for the opposition, I have never ever seen anybody in the Socialist Party not being in line with the Constitution.

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