



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

Brussels, 12 November 2013

EU-Albania: Joint Conclusions of the High Level Dialogue on the Key Priorities

Prime Minister Rama and Commissioner Füle chaired the first High Level Dialogue (HLD) on the Key Priorities between Albania and the European Commission on 12 November 2013. The plenary session included the participation of Government Ministers, as well as of the chair of the parliamentary committee for European integration, Majlinda Bregu, representing the opposition.

The objective of the HLD is to provide support to the EU integration process of the country by focusing on the five key priorities needed for the opening of accession negotiations, as defined in the last enlargement strategy (make further determined efforts in the fight against corruption and organised crime, take further action regarding public administration and judiciary reform and take effective measures to reinforce the protection of human rights, including of Roma, and anti-discrimination policies, as well as implement property rights). It is to structure EU-Albania co-operation and to help Albania maintain focus and consensus on EU integration – enhancing its chances for success. Inclusiveness is essential in the process; both government and opposition are key necessary partners.

The launching of the HLD takes place less than four weeks after the publication of the Commission progress report, and the recommendation to Member States to grant Albania candidate status.

The meeting reviewed the new government's reform efforts to date, in particular in the area of the rule of law, focusing on the fight against corruption and organised crime, and its plans for the short- and medium-term future. The Commission's recommendations regarding the key priorities essential for the opening of accession negotiations served as a basis for the discussion.

Commissioner Füle welcomed Albania's progress in EU-related reforms during the last 12 months, and praised the new government's commitment to further strengthen these efforts; in this context he welcomed a number of concrete measures, such as the recent conference on the trafficking of human beings, the organisation of a high level anti-corruption conference, the government's request for the Venice Commission to provide advice on judiciary reform, the signing of a memorandum of understanding between relevant law enforcement bodies to enhance the efficiency of fight against corruption and organised crime, the planned signature of the operational agreement with Europol, and recent actions taken by law enforcement agencies in the framework of the government's plan of action on the fight against corruption and organised crime.

Commissioner Füle reiterated the need for an inclusive and transparent approach in taking forward all reforms, including the systematic consultation and involvement of the Parliament, as well as other stakeholders.

Commissioner Füle underlined that the Commission stands ready to support Albania – with expertise and financial support.

Prime Minister Rama confirmed his government's commitment to fully engage in the HLD, and in this context, to develop a roadmap for the implementation of the five key priorities.

The Albanian Government expressed its commitment to a constructive and sustainable political dialogue with the opposition, which is vital for the sustainability of the reform process. In this context, the Albanian Government views the HLD as a useful instrument that will help consolidating political inclusiveness, which will in turn support the integration process.

Furthermore, the government intends to put in place a mechanism for involving civil society in the reform process, following consultations with stakeholders, which would contribute to consolidate the nationwide consensus on EU integration, and would provide a framework to channel existing expertise and energy within the Albanian society into the policy making and implementation.

To prepare for the next meeting of the HLD foreseen for early 2014, it was agreed for contacts on working level to intensify and reports on the implementation of the roadmap to be provided by the Albanian side on a regular basis.