Albania and the EU

Albania is a candidate country for EU membership. It is working closely with the EU to complete reforms that will strengthen its political and economic ties with the EU.

Political relations

Albania is a candidate country following the Brussels European Council of June 2014.

The granting of candidate status was the result of Albania's reform efforts in recent years and acknowledgement of the EU for the efforts made and the progress achieved on Albania's accession road. The decision also provides encouragement to continue with existing reforms and embark on new reforms necessary to prepare Albania for the start of the accession negotiations later on.

A constructive and sustainable political dialogue will remain essential to consolidate and continue reforms. Candidate status does not mean that the EU will automatically start accession negotiations with Albania, which is a subsequent, separate step in the EU integration process, for which additional progress, in five key priorities, is required.

The candidate status nevertheless raises the relationship between Albania and the EU to a higher level: Albania will now receive invitations to Council meetings open to candidate countries. Its access to and cooperation with EU agencies will be easier — for example its participation in the Fundamental Rights Agency as an observer. Joint Committees between Albania and the Committee of the Regions as well as the Economic and Social Committee might also be set up.

The way forward

The European Commission will continue to work closely together with Albania to support its reforms and prepare it for the next step in the integration process, namely the opening of accession negotiations. The opening of negotiations depends on further concrete and sustainable reforms in Albania; agreement from all EU countries is also required.

Economic Relations

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement was signed with Albania in June 2006 and entered into force in April 2009. It supersedes the Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related aspects, which
entered into force in December 2006. From an economic perspective, Albania’s EU candidate status (2014) encourages foreign investments and, as a result, leads to job creation.

As a candidate country, Albania continues to profit from EU funds under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in order to carry out comprehensive reforms and strategic investments, and benefits from the participation in EU programmes.

**Human rights**

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are core values of the European Union. In view of the country’s European perspective, human rights and the protection of minorities play a central role in EU-Albania relations. The role of EU Delegation to Albania is to continue promoting fundamental rights and supporting their advocates. In this regard, the EU Delegation has three main missions:

**Monitor the human rights situation**
The EU Delegation collects, verifies and shares information to identify human rights violations, in cooperation with civil society organisations dealing with human rights. It maintains an active dialogue with the Albanian authorities on human rights protection and cooperates with other relevant international organisations, in particular UN, OSCE, and the Council of Europe, in promoting international norms and standards.

**Maintain a permanent dialogue with human rights defenders**
The EU Delegation consults and involves human rights defenders in issues related to human rights. It informs and assists them on the financial resources available and the means of applying for them. The EU Delegation is focused in understanding their needs to help shape EU financial assistance, and stresses the need for further cooperation among human rights defenders. The EU Delegation provides its political support to relevant activities and initiatives organized by the human rights defenders. In addition, the EU Delegation supports the work of national bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Delegation encourages the Albanian authorities to guarantee a favourable environment for human rights defenders and to further involve civil society organisations in the policy-making process.

**Provide support to civil society organisations**
The EU Delegation provides recognition and support to civil society actors actively working for the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Albania, including funding opportunities and public awareness activities. In this regard, the EU Delegation provides financial support to civil society organisations under a number of instruments. Information on funding opportunities in the field of human rights and strengthening of civil society is regularly published on the website of the EU Delegation.

**Human rights focal point/ EU liaison officer on human rights defenders:**
delegation-albania@eeas.europa.eu

**International Monitoring Operation**

**General Documents**

- [Most frequently asked questions on the International Monitoring Operation](#)
Op-Ed


24.05.2019 - *Justice reform and vetting: for the citizens, with the citizens* - by Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director for the Western Balkans at the European Commission and Chair of the International Monitoring Operation (IMO).

Interviews

09.08.2019 - *Voice of America* - Interview to Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director for the Western Balkans at the European Commission and Chair of the International Monitoring Operation (IMO)

Dissenting Opinions

Among other functions within the vetting process, the IOs have the right to file dissenting opinions regarding decisions of the IQC and of the Appeal Chamber, pursuant to article 55 VL and F Constitution Annex. Below you find the IMO dissenting opinions filed so far.

Dissenting opinion in the case of Adnand Kososva regarding Independent Qualification Commission's Decision n. 90 on 20.12.2018

*Here to link both the Word doc of IMO Dissenting Opinion:*

[en-20190128final-dissenting_opinion_a-kosova.docx](#)

*and the IQC decision:*

[vendim-adnan-kosova.pdf](#)

Dissenting opinion in the case of Antoneta Sevdari regarding the Appeal Chamber's Decision n. 6 on 28.2.2019

*Here to link both the Word doc of IMO Dissenting Opinion:*

[dissenting_opinion_antoneta_sevdari_final-2.docx](#)

*and the IQC decision:*

[vendimi-a.-sevdari-i-anonimizuar-per-publikim.pdf](#)

Press Statements

20.09.2017 - *Deployment in Tirana of IMO long term experts*

08.02.2017 - *Chair's press points following the constitutive meeting of the IMO Management Board*

08.02.2017 - *Joint press release announcing the constitution of the IMO Management Board*

06.02.2017 - *Call for applications to serve on the Vetting Commissions*
03.03.2017 - [Press statement by the Chair of the IMO as Link]

27.03.2017 - Re-deployment of IMO international observers to Albania

31.03.2017 - Completion of activities by the assessment committee at the Ombudsperson Office

07.04.2017 - The list of potential candidates for the vetting institutions now for consideration by the Assembly of Albania. Review completed by the IMO

02.06.2017 - Handover of recommendation on candidates to lay members of the High Judicial Council, to be appointed amongst ranks of the advocacy

General official IMO correspondence

26.01.2017 - Letter from Director General Christian Danielsson

26.01.2017 - Administrative arrangement - Annex

07.02.2017 - Letter from Director Genoveva Ruiz Calavera

17.02.2017 - Letter by Commissioner Hahn to PM Rama, in reply to the letters from Ministers Gjosha and Vasili regarding the International Monitoring Operation (IMO)

24.02.2017 - Letter from Director Genoveva Ruiz Calavera

01.03.2017 - Explanatory note on the IMO Albania

03.03.2017 - Letter from Director Genoveva Ruiz Calavera to Ombudsman Igli Totozani

07.03.2017 - Letter from Director Calavera to Minister Vasili

07.03.2017 - Explanatory Note

22.03.2017 - Letter from Director Calavera on IMO re-deployement

06.04.2017 - IMO transmission letter to Ombudsman

29.05.2017 - Letter from IMO Chair to Secretary General Shtylla

Reports

Documents

Stabilisation and Association Agreement 2009
Albania 2016 Report
Albania 2018 Report

See also

Strategy for the Western Balkans
Albania factograph
Eurostat infographic
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
Overview of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
People's Advocate (Ombudsman)
Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
Office of the Commissioner for Data Protection
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Presence in Albania

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