
TIRANA CONFERENCE

“ALBANIA IN THE BERLIN PROCESS: FALL 2015 STOCKTAKING AND RECOMMENDATIONS”

an Initiative of ShtetiWeb
5 November 2015
Consortium Hall, Tirana International Hotel

In its strategy towards EU membership, Albania has been firmly engaged in the Berlin Process. This commitment has been translated in numerous political declarations, statements, memorandums of understanding, bilateral and multilateral agreements and different regional cooperation projects.

In the aftermath of the Western Balkans Summit held in Vienna in August 2015, the political commitments leave the place to the implementation phase. Beside the civil society which for the first time sit side by side with WB6 leaders in the Vienna talks, new actors enter the scene such as public administration in charge of preparing the connectivity projects; banks, international financial and donor institutions in charge of financing; business community, etc. Once the political importance and commitment has been stated, project preparation, financing, implementation and monitoring take the priority. This phase requires a more intense communication and explanation campaign, so that the interested actors, and over all, the citizens gain a comprehensive understanding and provide their support to the ongoing process.

In this framework of intense and multi-faceted regional cooperation, ShtetiWeb has launched in March 2015, the *Observatory of Regional Integration*. This structure offers a platform for the observation, collection of empirical data, analysis and promotion of regional integration, in the context of cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

The conference “*Albania in the Berlin Process: Fall 2015 Stocktaking and Recommendations*” is the next step in the strategy of ShtetiWeb designed to contribute to the EU integration of Albania. It aims to delve further in the policy-making arena by providing an independent assessment of one of the most important and challenging endeavours in which Albania is currently involved. Concretely the conference will present the context and rationale of the Berlin Process; its interaction with the EU accession strategy; the main position of the national actors; the implementation mechanisms (such as National Investment Council, Single Sector Working Groups, Single Project Pipeline, etc.), as well as provide a critical assessment of the achieved progress since Berlin Conference. Furthermore, the speakers will discuss on the goals set in the Vienna Summit and the ways in which the main stakeholders intend to achieve them for an efficient preparation for the Paris Summit in 2016.

The Tirana Conference will bring together policy-makers, business community, academia, think tanks, civil society, media, etc. from Albania as well as from the Western Balkans region. Each session of the conference will be followed by a question and answers space, where participants can discuss with the experts and politicians.

The proceedings of the Tirana Conference will be published in a Policy Paper, and shared among the interested stakeholders in Albania and in the Western Balkans region. This conference opens up the cycle of activities for civil society to contribute to evidence-based policy-making.

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08:30 *Registration of the Participants*

09:00 Welcome and Rationale of the Conference

Mr. Frank Hantke, Director of Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Office Tirana

Mr. Klaus Fiesinger, Director of Department for Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich

Mr. Thomas Schrapel, Director of Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Office for Albania

09:25 The Berlin Process: A New Momentum for Regional Cooperation

“From Berlin Conference to Berlin Process: A German perspective” – H.E. Mr. Hellmut Hoffmann, German Ambassador to Albania

“Complementarity or Diversion: How connectivity impacts the EU integration dynamics of WB6?” – H.E. Ms. Romana Vlahutin, Head of EU Delegation to Albania

“Paris Summit: The next milestones for regional cooperation” – H.E. Mr. Bernard Fitoussi, French Ambassador to Albania

10:00 Questions & Answers. Moderator: Mr. Aleksandar Simurdic, European Movement in Serbia, Novi Sad; Note taker: ShtetiWeb

10:15 Getting the Most from the Berlin Process

“Tangible benefits for the country/citizens: The Berlin connectivity projects” – Mr. Nand Shani, Programme Manager, Regional School of Public Administration

“Institutional context, financial instruments and mechanisms: Preconditions for an efficient national process” – Mr. Ardian Hackaj, Director of ShtetiWeb

10:55 Questions & Answers. Moderator: Mr. Brenton Kotorri, APPA; Note taker: ShtetiWeb

11:10 *Coffee Break*

11:40 Wrap up of main points from previous discussions

11:50 Albania’s Roadmap to Paris Summit

“The Government agenda” - Ms. Odeta Barbullushi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

“The Parliamentary contribution”

– Mr. Eduart Shalsi, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Productive Activity, Trade and Environment

– Mr. Genc Pollo, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Means of Public Information

12:50 Questions & Answers. Moderator: Mr. Ilir Ciko, CDI Board Member; Note taker: ShtetiWeb

13:10 Concluding Remarks

13:15 *Lunch*