

## ROUNDTABLE

### AFTER TRIESTE SUMMIT:

### ALBANIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES ON ITS ROAD TO EU

Xheko Imperial Hotel, White Camelia Room

Tuesday, 19 September, 0900hs to 1030hs

The WB6 Summit in Trieste in July 2017 confirmed the unequivocal support for the EU perspective of Albania, as one of the WB6 countries. The strengthening of the rule of law, fundamental rights, economic development; the appreciation of commitment to good neighborly relations; the support to engaged reforms were all good marks for Albania and its other WB and partner countries. Connectivity, regional economic integration, private sector development, youth, good governance / fight against corruption; prevention of migration and fight against extremism were all addressed in the Trieste Final declaration. All WB Summit partner countries fully subscribed to it. All the WB6 leaders came back home drumming their success in Trieste.

The informal WB6 Summit of Heads of Governments of 26 August 2017 held in Durres, reaffirmed the local ownership of the process and by further advancing towards a shared vision, joint objectives and establishing trust to face common challenges. The European Parliament in the exercise of its scrutiny role, reviewed the achievements of Trieste Summit in its AFET Committee meeting of 30 August 2017.

But what does Trieste Summit mean in practical terms for the WB6 countries-in our case Albania? How does Trieste agenda impact and boost the regional cooperation, core condition for SAA? How the Regional Economic Area will contribute to regional growth and in what terms? How country reforms governance, rule of law and anti-corruption will be interlinked with the regional agenda? Could we have done more in Trieste, and if yes, what? What are the stakes?

The above questions are strategic for all the partners of WB Summit Series. We estimate that they arrive at a crucial time for Albania, in particular. This is for four reasons: *first*, because Albania has been amongst the pioneers of the Berlin Process. The letter of the Foreign Minister Bushati sent to Chancellor Merkel in August 2014, contains the seeds of the further development of this process. *Second*, Albania and Serbia have been the countries that until now have used most visibly this process to enhance constructive bilateral and regional cooperation, on top of the connectivity agenda. *Third*, because Albania and Albanian NGO sector has ben the spearhead of the public discussion and

research on the Berlin Process. And *fourth* and the most important, because in the year 2017, the Western Balkans Summit constitutes an important milestone towards which Albania can show concrete results in its way towards the EU membership.

Immediately after Trieste, the discussions in Albania were focused on the financial benefits that the country perceived and the allusion of the creation of New Yugoslavia (as well as the sartorial presentation of the PM Rama). No in-depth debate took place about what Trieste Summit means for the opening of negotiations had (if any?); about how the Trieste engagements will push forward Albania's reform agenda; on how the regional fight against corruption is interlinked with the ongoing justice reform etc.?

Or, the Five Key Priorities that Albania has to fulfill before opening of negotiations as contained in the Conclusions of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU of 13 December 2016, and the Final Declaration of the Trieste Summit have many common points. So while the next (Progress) Country Report will come in 2018, any measurable advancement that the country has completed must become visible for our partners, and the Albanian citizen. This process also concerns the areas where the progress is not satisfactory.

To discuss about Trieste Summit milestones and how they contribute to the overall advancement towards EU integration, Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) is organizing a Thematic Roundtable. MEP and Rapporteur for Albania Mr. Knut Fleckenstein will be the Key Speaker. High level officials and experts from state institutions in charge of the different topics of intersection between the Five Conditions and the Trieste Summit components, as well as other relevant stakeholders will discuss the above.

The round table is organized by CDI in partnership with CIFE (Centre international de formation européenne).

## PROGRAM

0850hs - 0900hs:	Registration
0900hs - 0905hs:	Welcome
0905hs - 0920hs:	Keynote presentation: Knut Fleckenstein " <i>Albania's road to EU since December 2016: the view from European Parliament</i> "
0920hs - 1030hs:	Debate: " <i>The Berlin process and EU Accession of Albania</i> "
1030hs	Closure
1030hs - 1040hs	Press point