

## ROUNDTABLE

### **“ALBANIA-CHINA COOPERATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF "BELT & ROAD" AND "16+1" INITIATIVES”**

31 October 2017

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is perceived as the major strategic initiative coming from China combining mercantile, economic, infrastructure and people-to-people components around major transport routes that connect China and Europe. At maturity, investment in the Belt and Road is expected to reach \$4 trillion. 16+1 Cooperation Initiative appears as an intensification of BRI focused in a delimited geographical space and possessing a more coherent governance architecture. Here the people-to-people component of the BRI becomes visible, through the attention that non-mercantile activities such as cooperation of local government units, health, research, art & culture are promoted.

OBOR and 16+1 CI have significantly contributed to the intensification of bilateral relations. In 2016 China comes third in the volume of exchanges with Albania (with 7.1% of the total after Italy & Germany), up from the fifth place in 2012. The weight of imports from China has continued to grow over the last five years, reaching 8.8% in 2016 from 6.4% of total imports in 2012.

By January 2017, 103 Chinese-owned companies were active in Albania, focused in Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan and Berat. The biggest Chinese investments however have been carried on through indirect acquisition of shares from non-Albanian owners: China Everbright Limited acquired 100% of the shares of the Tirana International Airport from a German owned company, and Geo Jade acquired management rights for the largest oil field in Albania from a Canadian company. Under the 16+1 initiative, the number of Albanian researchers, academicians and students visiting China is increased steadily. Albanian - Chinese cooperation is attracting more and more attention from stakeholders in both countries.

Based on its research on connectivity platforms and the Berlin Process, Cooperation & Development Institute is starting a cycle of events on Albania and Eastern Connectivity. The goal of the current roundtable is to contribute to an informed thematic discussion and to the enhancement of the cooperation dynamics between Albania and China. On the eve of the 16+1 Budapest Summit, this roundtable will increase the visibility of BRI and 16+1 Cooperation Initiative in Albania, enrich the discussion amongst Albanian and Chinese partners on projects of common interest, as well as bring on and discuss about challenges and eventual improvements of joint initiatives.

The participation of a mix of central and local government officials, government agencies, Chinese specialists, academicians, researchers and other think tanks, will create

a dynamic context propice to efficient communication and fruitful exchange. Professor Liu Zuokui, Director of the China – CEEC Think Tanks Exchange and Cooperation Network

Office, at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences will also address the event, and will present main findings of his last research on: *Europe and the "Belt and Road Initiative": Responses and Risks*.

The roundtable is organized by CDI in partnership with the Embassy of People's Republic of China to Albania, the China – CEEC Think Tanks Exchange and Cooperation Network Office, and with Albanian Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (*or National Coordinator of 16+1 Cooperation Initiative*).

## PROGRAM

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 | 09:00-11:00

Venue: White Camelia Room, Hotel Xheko Imperial

0845 – 0900 hs	Arrival and Registration
0900 - 0910 hs:	<b>Mr. ARDIAN HACKAJ</b> , CDI Head of Research <i>Welcoming of participants and Opening Address</i>
0910 - 0925 hs	<b>Mr. ETJEN XHAFAJ</b> , Albania National Coordinator of 16+1 Cooperation Initiative <i>"Albania in OBOR and in 16+1CI"</i>
0925 - 0940 hs	<b>HE JIANG YU</b> , Ambassador of People's Republic of China in Albania <i>"New impulses on the cooperation between China and Albania"</i>
0940 - 1000 hs	<b>Professor LIU ZUOKUI</b> , Director China – CEEC Think Tanks Exchange and Cooperation Network Office <i>"OBOR and 16+1 Cooperation Initiative: what's in there for Western Balkans"</i>
1000 - 1030 hs	Open discussion on: <i>"Current Achievements and Challenges of China - Albania Cooperation: intensifying the cooperation agenda"</i> , moderated by ARDIAN HACKAJ
1030 - 1040 hs	Wrap up of the Round Table
1040 - 1100 hs	Distribution and signature of the book of Prof. LIU ZUOKUI: <i>"Europe and the "Belt and Road Initiative": Responses and Risks"</i>
1100 hs -	Coffee, biscuits & refreshments