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*WORKING GROUP TO EU-ALBANIA STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE*

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MINUTES
of the 4th meeting of
EU-ALBANIA STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE
Tirana, 09.13-12.40

The meeting opened at 09.13 on 9 December 2011 with Mr. Fatos BEJA, Co-chairman of the European Union - Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee (EU-Albania SAPC) in the chair.

Chairman BEJA welcomed members of both delegations and two distinguished guests: Mrs. Majlinda BREGU, Minister for European Integration, (representative of the Albanian Government) and Mr. Ettore SEQUI, Head of EU Delegation in Albania and all the participants of the meeting.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes, as in the draft document.

2. Approval of the draft minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes of the 3rd meeting of the EU-Albania SAPC, which was held in Brussels on 14-15 June 2011, were adopted without changes, as in the draft document.

3. State of play of EU Albania relations; exchange of views with representatives of the Albanian Government and of High Representative for FASP/ the European Commission.

The first to address this point of the agenda on behalf of the Albanian Government was the Minister of European Integration, Mrs. Majlinda BREGU. She mainly focused on the progress made by Albania in the implementation of the 12 key priorities identified in the European Commission's Opinion on Albania's application for membership of the European Union, in the framework of the existing *Action Plan*, aiming at the fulfilment of the most important objectives.

Following, the EU Ambassador to Tirana, Mr. Ettore SEQUI stressed the need for the extension of the constructive political discussion to this forum with the EP. He also summarised on the outlook of the country's present situation and challenges, such as: political situation, reform of electoral code, reform of parliamentary rules of procedure, improvement of the functioning of the rule of law in Albania, protection of human rights, economic criteria, SAA implementation, and so on.

Afterwards, Chairman Fatos BEJA gave the floor to Mr. Eduard KUKAN, Chairman of the European Parliament's delegation, who appealed for the necessity of the continuation of the actual steps, which would help Albania on its EU path reassuring at the same time an assistance of the EP.

Chairman BEJA also presented the state of play of EU-Albania relations, focusing on the new political climate in the Parliament, including the establishment of the ad-hoc committee on the electoral reform and the working group for the review of the Rules of Procedure. He also devoted his speech to the economic situation in Albania and the free movement of the Albanian citizens among other topics.

Mr. BEJA 's address was followed by the address of Mrs. Valentina LESKAJ (Albanian vice-chair). She stressed the commitment of the Socialist Party towards the EU integration of the country. She commented on several points, such as ongoing work in the Parliament or election of the Ombudsman. She concluded by raising the concern about the time factor, stressing that all the steps needed to be made on time.

The other parliamentarians to discuss at this point were: Mr. Viktor BOSTINARU (EP vice-chair), Mr. Jemin GJANA (Albanian MP), Mr. Antonio CANCIAN (MEP), Mr. Ditmir BUSHATI (Albanian MP), Mr. Michail TREMOPOULOS (EMP), Mr. Florian MIMA (Albanian MP), Ms. Tanja FAJON (EMP), Mr. Arben MALAJ (Albanian MP), Mr. Stanimir ILCHEV (EMP), Mr. Sajmir TAHIRI (Albanian MP).

The Albanian parliamentarians together with the MEPs raised and discussed several issues regarding the visa free regime, the economy, improvement of the political climate in Albania, the necessity for the improvement of the electoral system, the strengthening of the fight against corruption, reforms in the judiciary, freedom of media and others.

4. Reforms and developments in the Parliament of Albania

Mr. Viktor GUMI (Albanian MP) briefed on the latest reforms and developments in the Parliament. Mr. GUMI also touched the topic of the judiciary and the latest developments in this respect. All present parliamentarians took part in discussing this point of the agenda.

5- Adoption of the recommendations

The recommendations were unanimously adopted.

6. *Any other business*

Mr. Taulant BALLA (Albanian MP) asked the EU colleagues that in an upcoming meeting of EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs could support a statement for the visa liberalization process for Kosovo.

7. *Date and place of the next SAPC meeting.*

Chairman Fatos BEJA announced that the next meeting was to be held after six months.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 on 9 December 2011.