

**From:** BAŃKA Tomasz Stanisław  
**Sent:** 18 November 2011 12:03  
**Subject:** Albania: details of this week political developments

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Dear Members,  
please find below a detail description of the political developments in Tirana. The description is provided by the European Commission.

**Monday 14 November:**

On 14 November, the Conference of Chairs of the parliamentary groups agreed by consensus on the following:

1) to establish an ad-hoc parliamentary committee on electoral reform, to be formally approved by the plenary session on Thursday 17 November;

2) to establish a working group on improving the Parliament's rules of procedure with representatives of majority and opposition. The working group was formally approved by the Conference today and is due to start work once the parties have appointed their representatives.

3) a three-week calendar for Parliament which includes the committee discussion and vote on adoption of a number of laws that require a 3/5 majority vote. The calendar was approved today by the Conference and includes the voting on adoption of the following draft laws:

- on 17 November: Amendments to the Railway Code and Amendments to the Aviation Code;
- on 24 November: Amendments to the Maritime Code;
- on 1 December: Amendments to the Road Code.

The agreement also provides that other laws requiring a 3/5 majority vote will be reviewed and approved by March 2012, according to an agenda to be agreed jointly in the coming weeks.

The draft decision on the ad-hoc electoral reform committee, and the requests on which the decisions on the Parliament's working group on rules of procedure and on the three-week calendar were based, are attached.

Speaker Topalli called a press conference and stated the following: “Today I want to forget about the debates of the past two years and commend the political parties on these decisions. Today all the parties have taken up their responsibilities. I hope that the laws requiring a qualified majority will be approved according to the calendar adopted by the Conference. I also hope that the understanding reached today on the establishment of the electoral reform committee will define the work of this committee. Today’s decisions are a very strong signal welcomed by the international community, who have always encouraged and supported the process. I am very happy for this compromise”.

### **Thursday 17 November:**

On 17 November, the Albanian parliament adopted a decision establishing an ad-hoc parliamentary committee on electoral reform and adopted two laws requiring a 3/5 majority vote, concerning amendments to the **railway code and the maritime code** respectively.

The decision on the ad-hoc parliamentary committee on electoral reform defines its membership as including all parliamentary parties, with co-chairs from DP and SP. It provides that for issues where the parties do not reach a consensus, "the consensus will be requested with the assistance of the OSCE/ODIHR expertise and the Venice Commission" (see attached translation of the decision).

Some SP hard-liners (such as Fatmir Xhafaj) did not attend the session.

Between the votes on the two 3/5 majority laws and the vote on setting up the electoral reform committee, SP parliamentary group leader Gramoz Ruci spoke in strong terms of "votes stolen in the elections," "an SP MP killed", "four SP protesters killed," and the DP "breaching the constitution" and "disrespecting court decisions" in Fier (this issue, which involves regional council mandates, was subsequently resolved by another court decision today). Ruci nonetheless underlined that the SP "puts the future of the country first."

PM Berisha, although present at the votes, did not respond to Ruci's remarks.

In a bilateral meeting with the HoD following the parliamentary session, Speaker Topalli hoped that this demonstration of Albania's engagement in view of the country's EU path would impact positively on the December Council conclusions. She felt that this would be "an encouragement to consolidate the process."

OSCE presence head Eugen Wollfarth immediately welcomed the votes. US Ambassador Alexander Arvizu is expected to make a statement welcoming the developments.

Votes on further laws requiring a 3/5 majority are currently planned as follows:

- 24 November: amendments to the Aviation Code (initially intended for today – swapped with Rail Code amendments at SP request);
- 1 December: amendments to the Road Code.

According to the 14/11/11 agreement, other laws requiring a 3/5 majority vote are to be reviewed and approved by March 2012, according to an agenda to be agreed jointly in the coming weeks.