



D-AL_PV (2022)1114_01

MINUTES

of the preparatory Meeting of the EP Delegation to the EU-Albania SAPC

Monday 14 November 2022, 14.00 -15.30

Brussels

Room SPINELLI 3G2

The meeting opened at 14:00 on Monday, 14 November 2022, with Manolis KEFALOGIANNIS as Chair (EPP, GR).

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda of the meeting adopted without changes.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the Delegation meeting of 7 February 2022

The minutes were adopted without comments.

3. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed the following speakers:

- **H.E. Ambassador Ms Suela JANINA**, Mission of the Republic of Albania to the EU;
- **Ms Michela MATUELLA**, Acting Director for Western Balkans in DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission;
- **Ms Elsa FENET**, Head of Division 'South East Europe & Western Balkans' in the European External Action Service.

In his opening remarks, the Chair announced that the preparations for the upcoming EU-AL SAPC meeting were well underway, reaffirming his commitment to informing Members on any necessary updates in the future. In addition, Mr KEFALOGIANNIS invited Members to table their amendments by 21 November, and emphasised that a number of significant events had occurred since the last meeting.

4. Election of the new D-AL Vice-Chair

Mr KEFALOGIANNIS reminded the participants that the former Vice-Chair had recently retired from the EP, and that the Delegation Secretariat had received a nomination for the replacement, Ms Theresa BIELOWSKI (S&D, AT). The candidate was elected by acclamation, and subsequently welcomed to join the podium for the duration of the meeting.

5. Exchange of views on the political, economic and pandemic situation in the Republic of Albania, and its relations with the European Union

H.E. Ambassador Ms Suela JANINA thanked the Chair and the Delegation Members ahead of the 15th Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee meeting in Brussels, underlining that there had been important developments recently. She first noted Albania's starting of the accession talks with the EU, which represents a symbolic achievement for the region. The beginning of the accession talks placed significant energy and progress towards Albania's full EU membership, she said.

The Ambassador hoped for the negotiations to be a transformative process and bring European standards to Albanian citizens. She noted that Albania had an ambitious agenda ahead, including the process of screening. Based on its previous record of accomplishments, she stated that the country had fulfilled all conditions needed for succeeding on the accession process. Ms JANINA then added that Albania was focused on EU-related reforms, despite all the drawbacks, e.g. the earthquake in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. She underlined that the country was satisfied with the Commission report's assessment, namely that Albania was ready to start negotiations.

When referring to reforms, the Ambassador emphasised that one of the most important fields remained justice; the justice reform was demonstrating good results thus far. She stated that Albania has continued to put effort on raising the record of accomplishments, particularly on the fight against corruption, with the country having delivered positive results in this field as well. More specifically, she noted several criminal proceedings that have started against a former minister, a Member of Parliament, several (former) Mayors and other elected officials. These procedures, in essence, underline the country's political will towards the fight against corruption, she claimed.

The Ambassador highlighted that in terms of Albania's economic programme, the Commission report demonstrated the country's commitment to reforms. As Albania is facing many challenges, she noted, it remains important to thank the EU for its support. Moreover, Ms JANINA said that EU's energy support package would help the country overcome challenges deriving from the energy crisis and inflation. She stressed that Albania would like to explore

alternative energy sources, and that it was a privilege to have solar energy within the country. Ultimately, she said, Albania aimed to be energy-independent by 2025.

In regard to foreign and security policy, the Ambassador noted that Albania continued to have 100% policy alignment with the EU. She stated that this alignment sends a strong message in respect to the country's commitment to its European path. Albania is striving to be as active as possible and be a strong European voice, while also contributing to regional cooperation, she affirmed.

Concluding, Ms JANINA referred to Albania hosting the EU-AL summit on 6 December, underlining that the summit made for a big achievement and further acknowledged the strength of the relationship between Albania and the EU.

Ms Michela MATUELLA thanked the Chair and the Members for attending the meeting, which is taking place in the wake of significant positive events for Albania. Ms MATUELLA noted that since the last meeting in February, the opening of accession talks has been the most significant development. She also underlined the significance of the EC President, Ursula VON DER LEYEN, visiting Albania. Additionally, Ms MATUELLA referred to Albania taking an active role in joining the Western Balkan leaders' summit in Berlin.

The opening of accession negotiations sends another strong message in regard to the importance of security in the region, Ms MATUELLA expressed. She underlined that the EC is supporting Albania on its preparations for EU membership, starting (intensively) with the screening process. The first step on the accession process is the assessment of how the Copenhagen Criteria applies to Albania, she said. Subsequently, the EC will comprehensively review all the legislative standards. Ms MATUELLA also stressed how technical of a process the accession is, while also emphasising that the accession negotiations present a great opportunity for understanding what it means to be a Member State of the EU. The enlargement package remains the guiding framework for the respective priorities ahead, with funding being very important in helping the country address the crisis, Ms MATUELLA concluded.

Ms Elsa FENET echoed on the beginning of a new phase - that of the screening process, and reaffirmed the importance of standing by the European values, and by those of the international order. Ms FENET emphasised that this process is particularly relevant to the aspirations of the Albanian people as they prepare for the following meeting in December. She further added that the EU reform agenda is an extensive and an all-country effort, detrimental for progressing. Ms FENET highlighted that Albania has played a rather special role on the UN Security Council, acknowledging that this would come at a cost, and certain countries would be tested by external factors. To illustrate, she referred to the cyberattacks on Albania, for which the EU expressed solidarity and cooperated in support of the country, highlighting that the EU's support is concrete and not solely words. Ultimately, progress for Albania is progress for the entire region, she concluded.

Ms Suela JANINA said that Albania has addressed the vetting process and yielded tangible results from it. There has been an impact in respect to the constitutional court - with the court considering approximately 54 new applications on decisions that have been final or in the process of assessment from judges, aiming to reduce the backlog over the years, she specified.

The Ambassador emphasised that the fight against organised crime remains one of the highest priorities for Albania. She informed that the vacancy of the special prosecutor has been filled already; with more vacancies being filled under way, assets being seized (consisting of ALL 30 million) and significant efforts against money laundering being made (77 cases of money laundering being investigated).

The Ambassador said that the government acknowledges that there has been some criticism concerning freedom of expression. Measures are being taken to mitigate the inaccurate perceptions that little progress has been made. In addition, she acknowledged there have been recent concerns related to migration and asylum seekers, particularly in respects to fostering control at the border. On this topic, Ms JANINA stated that Albania fully cooperates with all international partners, emphasising that cooperation is key and that the country remains eager to cooperate with all its partners. Concluding, Ambassador JANINA underlined that Albania is the first country in the region to sign an agreement with Frontex.

Ms Michela MATUELLA's message was that freedom of expression is an area in which the country falls short. Consequently, she noted that the EC would focus their efforts into Albania progressing in this area.

Ms Elsa FENET expressed that the EEAS would like to deepen cooperation with Albania. She added that the EEAS has their military advisor accredited to Albania, and that she looks forward to continue cooperating in the future.

6. Consideration of the draft Agenda of the 15th EU-Albania SAPC meeting to be held on 1 and 2 December in Brussels

The draft Agenda of the 15th EU-Albania SAPC meeting was distributed to the Members.

7. Any other business

No issues were raised.

8. Date and place of the next meeting

The upcoming EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee meeting is scheduled to take place in Brussels on 1 and 2 December 2022.

The meeting closed at 14.54.

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/ ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE
NIMEKIRI/ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/ LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZOČNIH/ELENCO DI
PRESENZA/ARMEKLĖJUMU REGISTRAS/DALYVIŲ SĄRAŠAS/ JELENLÉTI ÍV/REGISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA
OBECNOŚCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/ LISTĂ DE PREZENȚĂ/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM
NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/NÄRVAROLISTA**

Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Predsjedništvo/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/ Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/Birou/Predsedníctvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Manolis Kefalogiannis, Theresa Muigg
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Βουλευτές/Members/Députés/Zastupnici/Deputati/Depu tāti/ Nariai/Képviselők/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Ciarán Cuffe, Andrey Slabakov
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Zamjenici / Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/ Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Vlad Gheorghe, Ondřej Knotek

209 (7)
216 (3)
56 (8) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/ Päevakorra punkt/Σημείο της ημερήσιας διάταξης/Agenda item/Point OJ/Točka dnevnog reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkes punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)
<div>H.E. Ms Suela Janina, Ambassador of the Mission of the Republic of Albania to the EU; Michela Matuella, Head of Unit for Albania, North Macedonia, and acting Director for the Western Balkans (DG NEAR, EC); Elsa Fenet, Head of Division for the Western Balkans (EEAS).</div>
Item 5

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Promatrači/Osservatori/Novērotāji/Stebėtojai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Obserwatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/Na poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/Fuq stedina tač-'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/ Na pozwanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Vijeće/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)
Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)
Michela Matuella, Head of Unit for Albania, North Macedonia, and acting Director for the Western Balkans, DG NEAR
Европейска служба за външна дейност/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Evropská služba pro vnější činnost/EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa välisteenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European External Action service/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Europska služba za vanjsko djelovanje/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības dienests/Europolio išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew għall-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Europejska Służba Działalności Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Acção Externa/ Serviciul european pentru acțiune externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnosť/Europska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska avdelningen för yttre åtgärd (*)
Elsa Fenet, Head of Division for the Western Balkans
Други институции и органи/Otras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere Organe und Einrichtungen/Muud institutsioonid ja organid/Λοιπά θεσμικά όργανα και οργανισμοί/Other institutions and bodies/Autres institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Altre istituzioni e altri organi/Citas iestādes un struktūras/Kitos institucijos ir įstaigos/ Más intézmények és szervek/Istituzzionijiet u korpi oħra/Andere instellingen en organen/Inne instytucje i organy/Outras instituições e outros órgãos/Alte instituții și organe/Iné inštitúcie a orgány/Muut toimeelimet ja elimet/Andra institutioner och organ

<p>Други учасници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti oħra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Altji participantī/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare</p>

<p>Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Secretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Tajništva klubova zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/Képviselőcsoportok titkársága/Segretarjat gruppi politiċi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/De politiska gruppernas sekretariat</p>
<p>PPE S&D Renew Verts/ALE ID ECR The Left NI</p>

<p>Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantslei/Γραφείο του Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Ured predsednika/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli</p>
<p>Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο του Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du secrétaire général/Ured glavnog tajnika/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli</p>

Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/ Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/Ġenerāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/ Direttorat Ġenerali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG EPRS DG COMM DG PAPA DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG LINC DG FINS DG ITEC DG SAFE	
Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Õigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/ Service juridique/Pravna služba/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/ Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten	
Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariat výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschussesekretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία της επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Tajništvo odbora/Segreteria della commissione/ Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretariat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/ Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet	
Igor Miskulin	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Paligs/Padējējas/Assizstents/Asystent/Pomočník/ Avustaja/Assisterter	
Rosa-Maria Licop Cabo, Tanya Bolneva	

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chairman/Président/Predsjudnik/Priekšsēdētājs/ Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Preşedinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
- (VP) = Заместник-председател/Vicepresidente/Místopředseda/Næstformand/Stellvertretender Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Αντιπρόεδρος/ Vice-Chair/Potpredsjednik/Vice-Président/Potpredsjednik/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/ Viči 'Chairman'/Ondervoorzitter/Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-Presidente/Vicepreşedinte/Podpredseda/Podpredsednik/ Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
- (M) = Член/Miembro/Člen/Medlem/Mitglied/Parlamendiliige/Βουλευτής/Member/Membre/Član/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Képviselő/ Membru/Lid/Członek/Membro/Membru/Člen/Poslanec/Jäsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Dužnosnik/ Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficial/Ambtenaar/Urzędnik/Funcionário/Functionar/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies / Tjänsteman