



## **ALBANIA'S IMPACT IN THE REGION IN THE ALBANIAN-SPEAKING AREAS**

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**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT   
STIFTUNG**

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Published by: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Office Tirana

Rr. Abdi Toptani

Torre Drin, Kati i 3-të

Kutia Postare 1418

Tirane, ALBANIA

Responsible: Mariola Qesaraku

Editor: Dorian Jano

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# INTRODUCTION

**Dorian JANO**

*...what you all saw today is actually the crowning of a lengthy preparatory work, not just to agree on the agreement text but to advance a strategic integration plan of our common space, of economic and cultural interaction, because the political aspect is an interaction that has not been absent since the very beginning. The today's meeting consolidate with no turn back, a process where the path towards national unity, seen as the integration among us, in the view of the modernization of our states and their full integration into the European Union, has a very concrete and daily dimension of common ideas, projects, instruments and energies that are being implemented on a daily basis, a joint national effort, the creation of a unified space and a model of cooperation between us and the wider region. Prime Minister Edi Rama's statement at the press conference with Kosovo Prime Minister after the joint meeting of the two governments*

The role of Albania in the region has often been considered as neutral and far from its national interests. Only recently, there has a more focused and articulated approach to the national-wide spaces. In the analysis of different scholars, the regional foreign policy of 1992 to 2013 is seen to have successfully resisted the pressures to intervene in the domestic affairs of the neighbouring countries where its compatriots live.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, renowned Albanian diplomats see the official Tirana so much pleased and even obsessed with its constructive, moderating and generating role of peace and stability in the region, as it has overlooked in some cases its national interests.<sup>2</sup> Whereas after 2014, the Albanian government is taking some concrete measures to increase its impact on the Albanian speaking region by institutionalizing co-operation and relations with neighbouring countries at the level of a strategic partnership. This new spirit is reflected not only in the priorities and strategic documents of the government, but also in the political and intellectual circles. Protecting national interests and strengthening the role and the impact of Albanian foreign policy in the region is articulated as an important axis that describes vertically all the other axes of the Albanian foreign policy; it is one of the main priorities and it is combining the national

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the Albanian regional foreign policy of non-intervention from 1992 to 2013 see: Gjevori, Elvin (2018) "Kin state non-interventionism: Albania and regional stability in the Western Balkans", *Nations and Nationalism* 24 (1): 171–193.

<sup>2</sup> Quote of the renowned diplomat Shaban Murati from his book "Hije në diplomacinë shqiptare" (2012: 247). Reference: Beshku, Klodiana (2016) "Perceptime të Intelektualëve mbi Performancën e Politikës së Jashtme Shqiptare (2013-2015)", Centre of Excellence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May, Tirana, pg.20.

objectives and priorities of our engagement in NATO and EU membership.<sup>3</sup> In line with the post-2014 Albanian foreign policy, the perception of intellectuals and foreign policy experts towards bilateral relations with neighbouring states has increased also considerably, thus conditioning regional cooperation with protection of national interest.<sup>4</sup> According to the study of Centre of Excellence of the Foreign Ministry, which analyses the perceptions of foreign policy professionals, the 'protection of national interest' is an element often mentioned spontaneously by respondents, even when they were not specifically asked by the question.<sup>5</sup>

What is the dynamics of cooperation between Albania and other Albanian-speaking states from the region and what impact it has had today? This is the main research question that will be addressed by the essays of this publication. The aim of this study is to better understand the latest developments in the bilateral relations between Albania and the countries of the region and the impact on the Albanian-speaking area. In this collection of essays, we analyse the current dynamics of interaction between Albania and the neighbouring countries with an Albanian-speaking population, considering not only the institutional dimension and the inter-state relations, but also analysing the community perspective and public perception. In order to bring a more comprehensive understanding and a multidimensional analysis of the recent developments we have consulted not only primary sources (mainly official documents, statistical data, public announcements of senior executives, as well as interviews with experts and personalities in the field) but also secondary resources (studies and reports, media articles and opinions). In this collection of essays, we will address in particular the initiatives of deep cooperation in the political, economic and cultural aspect of the Albania's bilateral relations with the countries of the region where there is an Albanian-speaking population, placing the focus not only on political discourse and the popularity of the issue, but also on the institutional strengthening of specific relations between states as well as the current impact of Albania in the Albanian-speaking area.

Albania's foreign policy today has shifted from a 'passive' role in the region, excessively neutral, towards a more pro-active policy in regional co-operation, and recently a more bilateral approach, especially with the states where Albanians live, but all these initiatives are considered under the framework of European integration and the principle of good neighbourhood. In our opinion, the Albania's foreign policy can and should play an important role not only in promoting and protecting national interests, identity and culture (the primary role in Real Politics) but also in promoting a common political goal and aim of good neighbourhood and integration of the region into the European family. Any initiative

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<sup>3</sup> See: "Priorities" of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Albania <http://www.punetegashtme.gov.al/al/misioni/prioritetet>, accessed on 23 January 2018; and also Bushati, Ditmir (2015) "A ka Shqipëria një politikë të jashtme?", Minister Bushati speech at the Faculty of Social Science, 28 October, <http://www.punetegashtme.gov.al/al/zyra-e-shtypit/fjalime/fjala-e-ministrit-bushati-mbajtur-ne-fakultetin-e-shkencave-sociale-me-teme-a-ka-shqipëria-nje-politike-te-jashtme>, accessed on 23 January 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Beshku, Klodiana (2016) "Perceptime të Intelektualëve mbi Performancën e Politikës së Jashtme Shqiptare (2013-2015)", Centre of Excellence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May, Tirana, pg. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pg.23.

undertaken at bilateral or regional level should have as its ultimate goal the improvement of the citizens lives of the two (all) countries, the progress of regional development and the acceleration of EU integration. What we noticed is that, despite the numerous strategies and initiatives, most of the commitments undertaken remain on paper or without continuity. If in the institutional aspect there is an increase in the exchange courtesy visits and departmental co-operation, it seems that at the community level and especially between different interest groups and private or local entities there is regression. Moreover, the impact of this process is very scarce among the public, and the differences in the various civic perceptions is mainly related to the quality of the relationships and the creation of 'peripheries' in almost all areas of cooperation (social, political, economic and cultural peripheries). There is a risk that all these bilateral cooperation initiatives in the Albanian-speaking space will lose credibility as long as they remain at the central and rhetorical level, with no concrete long-term results for the population in general and with a limited prospect of a larger project of integration in the European area as soon as possible. The time has come for the institutions to establish the appropriate instruments for monitoring the agreements and initiatives undertaken, the appropriate additional mechanisms for strengthening co-operation at the local level and of the private actors in order to give meaning to a real and long-term cooperation in the regional Albanian-speaking area.

This collection of essays is a critical analysis of the discourse, policies and institutions related to the role of Albania in the Albanian-speaking area, aiming not only to understand and analyse the current situation but also to suggest concrete recommendations about the future Albania's foreign policy in the region. In order to further promote and strengthen a more efficient and realistic bilateral cooperation, in addition to the initiatives taken so far, we think that three should be the main objectives:

- The underlining of mutual advantages in all areas: The Albanian government and its diplomatic missions and the other societal actors in the region will need not only to cooperate but also to assist in building sustainable bilateral relations with the countries of the region in many areas of common interest thus promoting and protecting not only the interests of the country as a classic role of diplomacy but also creating reciprocal bridges for the common interests of the countries of the region, such as the fight against organized crime and terrorism, the economic development, the consolidation of democracy and the respect for minorities.
- The all-inclusive and equitable engagement with all the countries with Albanian-speaking populations: In order to avoid the differentiation between the countries and the creation of the peripheries of the periphery, it is needed to put in place instruments and initiatives that create space for the entire Albanian-speaking community, regardless of the state of origin. The common space needs to be unified and balanced in order to create opportunities for the entire Albanian-speaking population.
- The establishment of mechanisms of a decentralized bilateral cooperation: The improvement of bilateral relations, in addition to the meetings and the exchange of

high level official visits, should be developed at the level of expertise or at local level since this type of cooperation should be the ultimate objective with a direct impact for the community and citizens. Also, there should be created all the bureaucratic facilities and concrete incentives that will encourage also bilateral relations among the private institutions and interest groups such as universities, institutes, trade unions, media, professional and non-profit organizations, chambers of commerce etc., since they are a substantial and long-term impact factor.

# ALBANIA'S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

**Enri HIDE**

In international politics often there has been a distinction between great powers, states that are rule-makers in the international arena, and small powers, states that often do not have enough leverage to change or make the rules. The implication of such a configuration is that they follow different strategies to further national interests, and approach foreign policy and alliances in distinct ways. Rothstein (1966) first described a small power as “a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so”.<sup>6</sup>

With a population of a little less than 3 million and 0.06% of US's GDP, Albania undoubtedly ranks among the small powers in international politics. Its behaviour as such is evident since the end of the Second World War, when the country aligned with greater communist powers in instituting communism inside and resisting Western powers on the outside. These alliances included first the Soviet Union and later on China. Only for a short period of time before communism fell, the country was isolated and supposedly relying on its own capabilities, a time known for many economic and social hardships. Albania's foreign policy in the aftermath of the fall of communism has largely followed similar patterns, whereby the European Union and NATO have served as supporters to Albania's capabilities to obtain security and become an important actor in the region. Furthermore, Rothstein identifies three unique aspects of the small power's situation. Firstly, outside help is required. Albania has largely relied on the help and alliances with the US, European Union countries, and especially NATO to alter from a security consumer to a security provider in the region. Subsequently, it has used this logic to further its national interests, and protect the interests of Albanians scattered in different countries of the region. Secondly, the state has a narrow margin of safety with little time for correcting mistakes. This is true for Albania's precarious position in the region and its often-fragile relationship with other countries, especially Serbia, who has often acted as an antagonist to the Albanian factor in the Western Balkans. Lastly, the state's leaders see its weakness as essentially unalterable. Albanian leaders time and again

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<sup>6</sup> Rothstein, R. L. (1966) “Alignment, Nonalignment, and Small Powers: 1945-1965”, *International Organization*, 20(3), pp. 397-418.

have emphasized the importance of EU and NATO integration in all their statements, foreign policy strategies, and public discourse. Even when there has been rumours in the region about Albanian ethno-nationalism or the idea of “Greater Albania” has gained public attention, the Albanian leaders not only have been eager to reject this rhetoric, but instead they have been insisting upon the importance of peace and stability in the region. Such rhetoric can be attributed to what Rothstein considers the unalterable weakness of a small state.

Studies of small states in today’s Europe focuses on answering two questions: The first one concern the security policy of small states and the second one regard the implications from the European integration, both highly appropriate to Albania’s current foreign policy in the region. Classical analysis of the distinction between small and large states focuses on power, understood in a positive sense as the ability of states to impact and change the behaviour of others, or influence; and in a negative sense the ability of states to not yield to another state’s pressure, or autonomy. It is this binary understanding of power that helps classify states into powerful and powerless. According to Goetschel “small states have relatively little influence on their international environment, and their autonomy in respect to this environment is relatively small”.<sup>7</sup> Quantitative measures define the lack of autonomy or influence, for instance what kind of international presence a state has (number of embassies), GDP, population, country size etc. Other authors have added psychological perceptions of state leaders as a function of understanding the smallness of a state. It is arguably the case for Albania, that its foreign policy has been marked by quantitative measures of smallness and weakness, as well as leaders’ perception that the country’s influence in the international sphere is insignificant and consequently also small in the Western Balkan region. As a result, the foreign and security policy chosen by a small state tends to minimize and compensate for the power deficit they encounter. Albania rely on NATO to promote its security policy in the region, and become a stabilizer to counter nationalistic tensions, reflects its power deficit vis-à-vis other states.

Based on the framework provided by Rothstein and the discussions on the role of European integration and small states’ foreign policy this paper analyses Albania’s foreign and security policy in the region in the recent decades, its role as a stabilizer as well as the latest development of bilateral relations with specific countries, namely Kosovo, Serbia, FYROM, and Montenegro. The aim is to map Albania’s regional security policy and its interaction with other states, to better understand the country’s position and strategies employed to achieve national interests abroad, and what gaps exist in this approach. The study takes into consideration main historical events that have shaped Albania’s foreign policy in recent years. We consult primary and secondary sources to provide the descriptive analysis. Through the primary sources, mostly government documents that outline different bilateral, regional and coordination agreements between Albania and the countries of the region we try to understand the country’s primary areas of interest in the region and specifically for each country. Secondary sources, such as academic studies, expert analysis, and other commentary were used as supporting arguments to the primary sources. In order to

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<sup>7</sup> Goetschel, Laurent (1998) “The foreign and security policy interests of small states in today’s Europe”, in *Small States inside and outside the European Union* L. Goetschel (ed.), Springer US, p.20.

better understand recent developments and the influence of the country in the region, we rely also on interviews with relevant experts and stakeholders. We consider also media articles in the neighbouring states and see what issues they cover and how they are articulated.

### *Albania's Foreign and Security Policy towards the Region*

The Western Balkan region has been a pivotal area for Albanian foreign policy and security strategy, because of geopolitical determinism and of the historical process that produced it. Albania has been an active actor in most of the events of the region, aiming to switch from a security consumer to a security provider. For several years Albania has been considered a stability factor in the region. After the collapse of the communist regime, the country's focus shifted towards Euro-Atlantic integration. The importance of Albania's influence is enhanced by the geopolitical importance of the Albanian factor in the Balkans. Due to the large number of Albanian inhabitants in the region, the official foreign policy of Tirana is perceived as a crucial component for the overall stability of the Western Balkans.

The integration of Albania in the EU and NATO was the main foreign policy orientation of all Albanian Governments. The government headed by Ilir Meta in the period 1999-2001 *the coalition at the time called "Alliance for the State" had to face the Kosovo crisis and support NATO's interference in Kosovo.*<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, after the wars in former Yugoslavia, the foreign policy and leadership discourse in Tirana was oriented towards the "unification of Albanians within Europe", by thus not promoting the idea of Greater Albania, which would stimulate crisis in other states of the region, such as FYROM in 2001. Consecutive governments, both right and left wings, showed the will to align with EU and US policy in the region and further engagement on peace and security in the Balkans was of high priority and extraordinary importance;<sup>9</sup> whereas the integration in the European Union and NATO, remained 'the priority of all priorities'<sup>10</sup>. After becoming a NATO member state (2009), Albanian government committed to continue its foreign policy of peace and to further strengthen its already consolidated role as an important contributor to peace and stability in the region and beyond. NATO integration showed a clear sign of the role of Albania in promoting NATO in the region. It is noted that the consecutive Rama government (2013-2017) focused on the challenges of Albania to gain candidate status, clearly highlighting in the government programme that "*Albania is European, within the region but also globally*".<sup>11</sup> The emphasis of Rama's first mandate was on "*correcting the errors of the past and increasing the credibility of Euro-Atlantic structures in the region*"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Government Program, Ilir Meta (28 October 1999 – 6 September 2001)

<http://shtetiweb.org/2015/09/14/programi-qeverise-ilir-meta-28-tetor-1999-6-shtator-2001/> (9/11/2017).

<sup>9</sup> Government Program, Fatos Nano 4 (2002 – 2005) <http://shtetiweb.org/2015/09/13/programi-qeverise-fatos-nano-4-2002-2005/>.

<sup>10</sup> Government Program, Sali Berisha (2005 – 2009) <http://shtetiweb.org/2015/09/13/programi-qeverise-sali-berisha-2005-2009/>.

<sup>11</sup> Government Program, Rama (2013 – 2017) <http://shtetiweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Programi-i-Qeverise.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* pg.10-12.

Regional cooperation is of essential importance in the current programme of the Albanian government. Of course, the influence of the Berlin Process is also visible. Since the start of the process, the Western Balkans have seen an increase of regional cooperation initiatives on several levels, mainly using the concept of “spill over effect”, which consists of sectorial integration through tailored summits on specific topics. As stated in the official programme of the current government, Albania’s: *“foreign policy intends not only to rectify past errors that have seriously endangered Albania’s Euro-Atlantic future, but also to enhance the quality and speed of the integration process into the European Union, as well as to boost credibility in the region and the Euro-Atlantic structures.”*<sup>13</sup> It is noted that several governments after the Kosovo War, have been focusing on promoting stability in the region, though nationalism remains one of the most prominent challenges. The Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs openly states that the role of Albania as a candidate country to EU and a NATO member state is vital for regional development. *“Albania is a strategic country for the security, peace and prosperity of the Balkans, the Mediterranean and Europe. Our foreign policy is determined to increase its role and contribution, as a factor with regional impact for increasing security and guaranteeing political stability and regional economic growth.”*<sup>14</sup>

Albania must serve as a model for the region, according to the government programme in two main directions; firstly, the promotion of NATO in neighbouring countries and secondly, increasing economic cooperation with Western Balkans states. Throughout its mandate, the focus was put on *diplomacy in service of economic development*. One of the main indicators that show cooperation between Albania and the Western Balkan states are also summits held within the Berlin Process. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Ditmir Bushati in an interview for Deutsche Welle points out that *economic diplomacy has been the leitmotiv of recent events. In this light, the visit of Prime Minister Rama in Serbia is within the Berlin Process. This process is clearly redefining and restructuring the regional orientation through clear instruments.*<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, regarding NATO and Albania’s influence in the region as a member state of the alliance, it is important to emphasize that Albania is supporting an “open door policy” that the organization itself is pursuing. In this light, the integration of Montenegro is observed as a crucial event in the region. General Peter Pavel has been present in the joint conference held in Tirana. During his stay *he praised Albania’s role in promoting cooperation and stability in the Western Balkans, as well as in the fight against the co-called Islamic State “by contributing equipment to the global coalition against ISIL and the special forces trainers in Iraq.”* One important element to add is that *Albania has offered to host a NATO centre of excellence to study the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters.*<sup>16</sup> However, it is still questionable whether Albania is using all its potential to influence the region. Recent

<sup>13</sup> Government Programme on Foreign Policy, <https://kryeministria.al/en/program/european-albania-in-the-region-and-worldwide/foreign-policy> (accessed on 8/11/2017).

<sup>14</sup> Albania in the Region Programme by the MEFA, <http://www.punetejashtme.gov.al/en/mission/albania-in-the-region> (accessed on 7/11/2017).

<sup>15</sup> Interview of Mr. Ditmir Bushati for Deutsche Welle 2014 <http://www.dw.com/sq/bushati-procesi-i-berlinit-po-strukturohet-p%C3%ABrmes-instrumenteve-konkrete/a-18040654> (Accessed 5/11/2017).

<sup>16</sup> General Pavel: NATO to pursue open-door policy” *European Western Balkans* 17.09.2017, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/09/17/general-pavel-nato-pursue-open-door-policy/>.

visits by the Albanian authorities to Serbia and Macedonia show an increased attention of Albania to the regional issues.

### *Albania's Contribution in the Region*

Since the fall of communism, subsequent governments in Albania have relied heavily on the country's role as a strategic point of security, peace and prosperity in the Balkans.<sup>17</sup> Its foreign policy has reiterated in the last two decades its aim to increase the country's role and contribution, as a factor with regional impact for increasing security and guaranteeing political stability as well as regional economic growth.<sup>18</sup> Several avenues were used to reach these stated foreign policy goals, ranging from bilateral agreements with other countries in the region to participation and pushing for regional cooperation, often under the umbrella of the European Union.

One of the major challenges facing Albania in the region is the situation of ethnic Albanians in different states of former Yugoslavia from Serbia to Montenegro and Macedonia.<sup>19</sup> Despite the country's weak capacities in the aftermath of communism, experts believe it has been largely successful in thwarting attempts to destabilize the region from a security standpoint. It has done so by offering alternative perspectives to keeping peace and security in the region, especially through its NATO integration and substantial cooperation with international organizations dedicated to security and cooperation. Albania's NATO integration is considered the biggest achievement in establishing it as a leader in the region and an important factor in securing peace in the region. However, internal political crisis and stagnation have hampered its European integration efforts and could be considered failure on the side of the Albanian government to reach its full potential.<sup>20</sup>

The current Albanian government emphasizes three foreign policy orientations and goals for Albania in the region and further beyond. Primarily at the centre of its mission is to protect national interests, prevent conflict and contribute to the democratic stability in the region.<sup>21</sup> While European integration and cooperation with United States seem to take primacy in the axes of Albania's current foreign policy, it also focuses on the country's aim to become a model of inspiration in the region as well as attempts to improve and deepen economic cooperation with countries in the region. As a NATO member the Albanian government considers itself an actor that pushes for other countries' integration process and a guarantee for keeping and consolidating peace and stability in the region.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The role of Albania as provider of security in the region is confirmed by different experts from the region.

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Albania in the region. <http://www.punetejashtme.gov.al/en/mission/albania-in-the-region> (18/11/2017).

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Baki Rexhepi, journalist, Kosovo.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Kosovar Experts Ragmi Mustafa and Shaip Kamberi.

<sup>21</sup> Prime Minister's Office. 2017. Foreign Policy. <https://kryeministria.al/al/programi/shqiperia-evropiane-ne-rajon-dhe-ne-bote/politikate-jashtme>.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Violent extremism is one of the many common challenges facing countries in the Western Balkans. Home-grown extremist groups in the region are well connected with each other.<sup>23</sup> Despite this, little concrete efforts are made at the regional level to coordinate approaches to the fight against violent extremism. Some regional partnerships exist, although most not initiated from the countries in the region. These include the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, Central European Initiative, South-East European Cooperation Process and the Regional Cooperation Council.<sup>24</sup> One of the most important initiatives that directly relates to CVE is the Declaration on Police Cooperation Initiative, which aims to fight against terrorism, and was signed by Albania together with Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>25</sup> Albania has individually signed a number of agreements with specific countries from the region, such as the agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina signed in 2010, the agreement with FYROM signed in 2005 and the agreement with Serbia signed in 2010.

### ***Bilateral Relations and Security Cooperation***

**Albania and Macedonia:** With a fourth of the population of ethnic Albanian origin in Macedonia, the influence from Albania amid growing political crisis and ethnic tensions has crucial implications for Macedonia's internal developments and its foreign policy. In 2017 there were accusations on the side of Albania for involvement in internal affairs of Macedonia. In March of the same year, Macedonian officials claimed that Albania was trying to further its foreign policy agenda by pushing for constitutional changes in the country, which would recognize Albanian as the second official language in the country. Media at the time reported that backed by Tirana, Albanian political parties in Macedonia put forward conditions prior to joining any governing coalition. Another actor involved at the time, Russia warned Tirana for pushing to introduce Albanian as a second language in Macedonia amounting to foreign interference and contrary to the Macedonian constitution, whereas it sees EU playing a detrimental role by supporting the "Albanian platform".<sup>26</sup> According to Albania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a key preoccupation is the state of human rights of Albanians living in Macedonia. The official position is that despite reaching the Ohrid Agreement there is slacking in terms of ensuring equal rights between Albanians and Macedonians. Major concern is the slow progress in ensuring respect for the official use of

<sup>23</sup> Hide, Enri (2017). *Emerging Security Issues: Countering Violent Extremism*. Centre of Excellence. Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tirana, Albania.

<sup>24</sup> CODEXTER (2014, November). *Profiles of Counter-Terrorist Capacity: Albania*. Council of Europe, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations Vienna (2014, May 22).

*Note Verbale*. No. prot. 304. <http://www.osce.org/fsc/119814?download=true> (12/07/2016).

<sup>26</sup> Voice of America (March 2017). Presidenti i Maqedonisë paralajmëron për kërcënimin e sovranitetit të vendit nga Shqipëria. <https://www.voanews.com/a/macedonian-president-warns-of-albanian-threat-to-sovereignty/3754238.html> (accessed on 10/11/2017); Euractiv. (Mars 2017). Shqipëria paralajmëron Maqedoninë të mos i japë krizës ngjyrim etnik.

<http://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/albania-warns-macedonia-not-to-bring-ethnic-twist-to-crisis/> (accessed on 10/11/2017).

Albanian language, the Albanian national flag, employment and social services.<sup>27</sup> Media coverage of Albania in Macedonia is peculiar. The situation with Macedonia is very special due to the fact that most of the media coverage regarding Albanians is related to local elections of the country. The role of Political Parties in post-election coalitions is very important. Also, most of the coverage of Albania *per se*, as a country, is in cases when there are important news in Albania, such as political crisis and boycott.

Despite recent developments, Albania and FYROM have established significant cooperation routes in the area of security. Since 2000 at least seven agreements were signed between the two countries in this area. In 2000, a protocol to stop illegal migration was signed between the ministries of interior of both countries, which assisted them in improving policies of migration and tackling illegal migration on both sides. Following the 2001 crisis in Macedonia, where the National Liberation Army clashed with the Macedonian Security Forces, the Albanian government and the Macedonian government reached a memorandum of understanding to advance cooperation and contact between ministries of defences on both sides. The first attempts to jointly tackle terrorism and organized crime came in 2004, when both governments signed a cooperation agreement. The purpose of the agreement was to intensify cooperation in the war against terrorism, organized crime, illegal traffic of narcotic drugs, psychotropic and precursor substances, illegal migration and other illegal activities. In order to intensify the efforts to curb human trafficking, along the border of the two countries, an additional Protocol to the 2004 agreement was signed in 2006. The specific aim of the protocol was to intensify cooperation in the war against human trafficking along the border. This intensification of institutional relations at bilateral foreign policy level implies that cooperation between the two countries has given birth to an important level of interdependency. This interdependency, combined with other elements, such as Albania's integration in NATO, has the potential to produce long-term cooperation inertia between these two countries of the Western Balkans. The next year, two other agreements were signed involving Albania, Macedonia and other NATO countries to conduct joint military exercises and cooperate in military preparation, technique and science. These agreements aimed at helping Albania and Macedonia in achieving NATO standards for future membership in the organization. A second memorandum of understanding in the same area was signed between the ministries of defence in both countries. The aim of this memorandum was to increase cooperation and the will of both countries to reach peace and prosperity in the region, through exchange of experts in both countries.

**Albania and Kosovo:** Albania has by far the most cooperation agreements with Kosovo. As a matter of fact, both countries have signed nine cooperation agreements in the framework of strengthening security, defence, foreign policy, cross-border defence, the fight against trafficking, terrorism etc. All public institutions working in the area of security and foreign policy have signed substantial agreements since Kosovo's independence with the aim to better coordinate between the two countries, and address common security challenges. These

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<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Relations with countries from the region. Online: <http://www.punetegashtme.gov.al/al/misioni/shqiperia-ne-rajon/marredheniet-me-vendet-e-rajonit>.

include cooperation agreements and joint operations between ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of defence and ministries of interior affairs. In 2009 the government of Albania and the Government of Kosovo signed a cross border police cooperation agreement, which aimed to facilitate more effective border controls to curb illegal trafficking. This agreement was preceded by a cooperation protocol, which paved the way between the two countries to coordinate and cooperate in the field of foreign policy. Cross-border cooperation between the two countries has been a major focus point, as witnessed by a number of agreements signed between the ministries of interior. In 2012, joint patrols along the borders between the two republics paved the way for more effective control of the border and providing enhanced safety in that area. Military cooperation was furthered from the agreement between the Albanian Armed Forces and Kosovo's Security, which regulated the procedures of entry, exit and temporary residence in the territory of each respective state.

Cooperation and coordination between the two countries has intensified in recent years and continues to provide an example of Albania's influence outside its borders. In 2014, the Ministry of Defence of Albania and the Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force signed a protocol on cooperation in the field of military education and training. It provided a myriad of tactics and coordination areas such as: assistance and expertise in the legal field, necessary for NATO membership and regional initiatives as well as joint assessments on the regional security environment and beyond. At the same time the two countries intensified cooperation in the security field by extending it to military education and training, establishing the same education and training structures as well as joint schools. Responding more actively to threats to public safety the two countries signed in 2015 an Agreement in the field of security, which aimed to further improve the level of cooperation in the field of security, cooperation in the area of prevention of public order and public security threats and providing mutual assistance in the prevention and detection of criminal offences and joint searches for persons who are perpetrators of these offences. A final field of cooperation and coordination includes cyber security. In 2016, Albania and Kosovo signed a Cooperation Agreement which aims at cooperation in the field of cyber security and prevention of possible attacks. Primarily, the agreement allows computer security agencies and units in both countries to block information systems to increase the level of protection from cyber-attacks, which are becoming one of the most prominent forms of attacks for nation-states in the contemporary world, and a favourite instrument of some international actors, such as Russia.

In regard to Albania's coverage in Kosovar media, the situation is different compared to other countries and this might be an outcome of several reasons, such as cultural and language proximity. But also due to the local public interest in everyday issues in Albania, since the other states' media covers Albania or Albanians only when it is related to their interests be it ethnic, or economic. The articles of Kosovar media are mainly neutral with focus on mainly reporting and analysing everyday events. The countries are supportive to each other's integration processes and Albania is seen as the main partner of Kosovo in the region.

Through these processes of intensive institutional and political cooperation in the sectors of foreign and security policy, Albania and Kosovo are gradually forming a solid strategic

partnership. This partnership is slowly but firmly developing into a fundamental geopolitical pivot in the Western Balkans, despite the many challenges of cooperation in their foreign policy that sometimes come for domestic political interests.

**Albania and Montenegro:** The Albanian government in the last two years has made significant efforts to increase its role and influence among ethnic Albanians in Montenegro. In 2016, just prior to the general elections in Montenegro, the three-main ethnic Albanian parties in the country agreed to form a coalition to gain more seats and thus boosting the fight for extended national rights for the Albanian minority. The Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs officially brought this issue into the attention of his Montenegrin counter-part, a point which was further reiterated during a high-level meeting between Albania's PM with his Montenegrin homologue. Aiming to gain control of the city, the four Albanian parties pledged to work together and signed an agreement on November 26, 2016. Later in 2017 the government broke a deal between the four Albanian parties in an Albanian dominated town, which is currently an administrative part of the capital.<sup>28</sup>

From a geopolitical standpoint, Montenegro is actually the newest NATO member, though its path to membership encountered significant barriers, from a part of political parties and Russia's interventions in the process, with its failed efforts of *coup d'état*. On the other hand, the Montenegrin integration process towards the European Union is an added value to the geostrategic landscape of Western Balkans. Due to its geopolitical peculiarity, the strategic importance of Montenegro has increased during the last decade, along with Albanian interest to develop more fields of cooperation with this country on bilateral level.

From a geopolitical determinism perspective, sharing a border with Montenegro makes cooperation between Albania and Montenegro multifaceted. In the area of cross-border cooperation the ministries of internal affairs in both countries signed a joint patrolling agreement in 2008, to stop and avoid human trafficking, drug smuggling, illegal migration and other illegal activities in both states. A year later a similar protocol was signed between the Council of Ministers of Albania and the Government of Albania in order to take actions together on the border at Muriqan-Sukobin. The protocol was mostly targeting narcotic and trafficking of human beings and materialized through joint checkpoints in the border.

In the area of data protection, both countries signed a Declaration of cooperation between the Personal Data Protection Commissioner of the Republic of Albania and the Agency for Personal Data Protection in Montenegro. The declaration signed in 2011, aimed to create common structures for sharing information related to national security as well as keeping them secret. This agreement created opportunities for both countries to take their cooperation at another level, due to sharing sensitive data on each side. Furthermore, in the framework of NATO both ministries of defence signed a technical agreement to establish cooperation between the two countries in disarming unused ammunitions.

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<sup>28</sup> Mejdini, Fatjona. 2017. Tirana brokers deal uniting Montenegro's Albanian parties. Balkan Insight. Online: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/ethnic-albanians-in-montenegro-together-to-win-tuzi-10-31-2017>.

Montenegrin newspapers mainly focus on relations with Kosovo. The articles are mostly reportages on recent developments and statement declarations. The country's media also covers issues on EU Integration of the countries. Few articles also focus in problems such as mafia and state capture. Generally, articles cover cross border issues related to Shkodra. Albanians constitute approximately 5% of Montenegro's population, but have often been critically important in crucial political developments, especially during the independence referendum from Serbia as well as recently supporting a coalition to join NATO and the European Union, which according to Albania's Prime Minister signified that Albanians saved Montenegro at least twice in its recent history.<sup>29</sup>

**Albania and Serbia:** Albania and Serbia are undoubtedly protagonists in Balkan regional politics and have often been antagonistic in the following decades after the fall of communism. The two countries have recently made more efforts to overcome the past and improve relations on various fronts. Such attempts were fuelled even further by the Berlin Process, which recognizes that normalization of relations between Albania and Serbia are key for maintaining stability in the region. Most notably, both countries have understood the limitations of nationalized policies and Albania undertook steps beyond the usual good neighbourly relations in the region, while Albania has undertaken some steps towards building good neighbourhood relations in the region.<sup>30</sup> But this doesn't mean that their geopolitical interests coincide. The two countries have different views on the issues of Kosovo, on the role of Albania and Albanians in the region, on the importance of NATO and on its geostrategic interests in the region.

Despite increasing attempts to bolster relations between the two countries, the attention has been heavily focused on less sensitive areas compared to regional security threats. In its foreign policy towards Serbia, Albania has applied a "confidence building measures" approach, focused on the identification of common interests first in the so-called "low politics" (which might serve to build trust among foreign policy actors that look at each-other antagonistically), before proceeding to issues of "high politics", that encounter the most fierce opposition on both sides. However, in 2010 the two countries embarked in two bilateral agreements in the field of security. In March 2010 a cooperation agreement was signed in the area of organized crime, illicit international drug trafficking and international terrorism between both executives. The agreement focuses on closer cooperation and coordination to fight organized crime, trafficking and terrorism, as a way to further develop the contribution of the two countries in the fight against international terrorism, and to enhance attempts to secure peace in the region. At the same time, another protocol on cooperation between the ministries of foreign affairs of the two countries, aimed at achieving more effective institutional communication to pave the way for other cooperation opportunities. These steps, while insufficient, marked a clear departure from politics of the past. Understandably the

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<sup>29</sup> Tanjug. 2017. Albanian PM explains how Albanians "saved Montenegro twice". Online: [https://www.b92.net/eng/news/region.php?yyyy=2017&mm=04&dd=12&nav\\_id=101007](https://www.b92.net/eng/news/region.php?yyyy=2017&mm=04&dd=12&nav_id=101007).

<sup>30</sup> Sokol Lleshi. 2015. Regional Cooperation. Albanian Institute for International Studies. <http://www.aiis-albania.org/sites/default/files/Regional%20Cooperation.pdf>.

1990's were plagued from the war in Kosovo and the mutual animosity between Albania and Serbia. It wasn't until 2004 that Vuk Drašković, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the former State Union of Serbia and Montenegro paid the first official visit in Albania since 1948, which was returned in 2005 by the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time.<sup>31</sup> While political exchanges halted again after Kosovo's declaration of independence, attempts to go beyond history and assert a leading role for the two countries have taken primacy in recent years.

Media coverage of Albania in Serbia swings towards negative or neutral connotation. Understandably, the majority of coverage revolves around Kosovo and Albania's role in the region as a supporter and promoter of Kosovo's independence. Serbian media treats Albania mostly as an intermediary for the Kosovo coverage, which was most prominent in the early days of Kosovo's independence. Articles specifically dedicated to Albania were connected to bilateral visits of the countries' prime ministers as well as the recent football match that gained international coverage. The trend is that in most recent years, Albania is becoming more visible and the issue of Kosovo more neutral, as the country is oriented towards negotiation talks with Prishtina.

### ***The Way Forward to Becoming a 'Regional Leader'***

In the decades since the fall of communism Albania has made considerable progress in being recognized as an important player in regional politics. NATO membership since 2009 has certainly aided this process and the country's ambitions to maintain stability and provide security in the region. Greater engagement through regional initiatives and increased cooperation and coordination with other countries in the region has provided increased incentives to seek a greater role for Albania in the Western Balkans.

The country is in a unique position to claim this role and use available foreign policy tools to achieve its intended goals. As it is visible from different governmental program across many years and strategies laid out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the major avenues for the country's foreign policy include the ambition of becoming a leader in the region to not only protect its national interests and the rights of Albanians scattered in neighbouring countries, but also to become a factor of peace and stability in a region with a troubled history. However, Albania has not lived up to its potential to become a crucial actor and mediator. Its influence in the region as a whole and in specific countries is still limited. Many opportunities were missed in the last decades, but most importantly internal political instability and deadlocks have prevented the country from achieving its ambitions in the outside arena. Furthermore, a less than desirable economic performance prior and after the global financial crisis, has hindered the country substantially from using economic diplomacy in gaining prominence and leverage with other countries in the region.

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<sup>31</sup> International Security and Affairs Centre. 2011. Serbia and Albania: Preparing for a new start. Policy Paper. <https://www.isac-fund.org/download/sr-al-ENG.pdf>.

The presence of ethnic Albanians in the majority of the countries of the Western Balkans, should have served as a strong foreign policy tool. Instead for many years Albanians in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia were neglected. Only in recent years have foreign policy officials articulated a policy to protect the rights of Albanians across the region. While a balance must be struck between serving as a source of stability and protecting the interests of ethnic Albanians across the region, more needs to be done to strengthen the country's position in the region.

As media coverage in different neighbouring countries shows, Albania is moderately present in the public discourse of these countries. Furthermore, while more attempts were made in recent years to increase the level of bilateral cooperation in the area of security, existing structures are not significant to account for Albania as a key provider of security in the region. More economic diplomacy, combined with greater leverage of NATO membership should be used to improve the country's standing in the region and better articulating its interests.

An important consideration in Balkans politics is the dichotomy between Albanians and Serbs. The history of antagonism and animosity between the two countries and governments has made them the key actors in maintaining peace and stability in the region. Recognizing this, both countries have intensified high level cooperation and decidedly taken leadership for developments in the Western Balkans. Though the country has accumulated a number of missed opportunities in its post-communist transition, the momentum created by its NATO membership, the Berlin process and relationship with Serbia, provides an excellent chance for the Albanian government to materialize its stated ambitions in the region.

# ALBANIA'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ON ALBANIANS ACROSS THE WESTERN BALKANS

**Klodjan RAMA**

The economic situation in the Western Balkan countries has continuously improved over the years. According to a recent World Bank report, economies in the Western Balkans have continued to expand by an estimated value of 2.6 percent in 2017, while growth prospects look similarly promising, especially for Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro thanks to large projects financed by foreign direct investment (FDI) and a recovery in private consumption, as well as higher exports in the case of Kosovo.<sup>32</sup>

European integration processes have played a crucial role in providing positive incentives and levelling the playing field by creating a working institutional framework. All economies of the region operate now under free market conditions with reduced trade restrictions and barriers. Trade relations are governed in the frame of the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement<sup>33</sup> and by different multilateral and bilateral agreements among the countries. Although economic exchanges have generally intensified, yet in terms of volumes much needs to be done. For most of the Western Balkan countries, the main economic and trade partners are outside the region, despite the fact that many of the countries have close cultural and social ties to each other, directly or through minorities living in respective countries.

This is the case also for Albania. Albania's kinstate obligations towards all Albanians are sanctioned in the preamble of the Albanian constitution. All governments across the political spectrum have continuously pledged support in all domains of life, including the economic aspects. How far this support has gone and whether Albanians living in the neighbouring countries have actually benefited, it is however not easy to say with certainty. Apart from Kosovo where the Albanians constitute the majority of the population, analysing the impact

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<sup>32</sup> World Bank (2017). Job Creation Picks Up. Western Balkans Regular Economic Report. No.12. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/477511510774559876/pdf/121417-WP-PUBLIC.pdf>. accessed on December 2017.

<sup>33</sup> CEFTA is a trade agreement signed in 2006 between Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Serbia. Bulgaria, Romania and later Croatia have withdrawn from the agreement following their accession into EU in 2007 and 2013, respectively.

of Albania's economic policies on Albanians living in the neighbouring countries is very challenging and difficult due to small size of the communities and their economic integration into the respective countries' economies. Thus, it can be useful to look at the trade relations between the countries as a whole and highlight those aspects that are relevant for the economic analysis. The focus will be put on key macroeconomic indicators such as exports, imports, trade volumes and trade balance, trade by groups of commodities, as well as direct investments, number of businesses and number of visitors entering Albania. These indicators will help analyse the dynamic trends of economic exchanges over the years and discern as much as possible the beneficiaries of the exchanges. By focusing on trade volumes by groups of commodities and analysing the economic activities in the areas dominated by Albanian communities, it may be possible to imply potential impacts on their livelihoods. Foreign direct investments in respective countries are also an important indicator showing at least the interest of Albania to invest in countries where Albanians live. Another aspect to be considered is the number of businesses originating from respective countries. It has to be pointed out that most of the data on businesses are for foreign businesses operating in Albania, since the availability of data on Albanian businesses in other countries was limited. Nevertheless, although these macroeconomic indicators provide a useful view on the trade relations between the countries and an indirect impact on economic policies on Albanian communities, it is necessary to first give an overview of the institutional and legislative framework that govern the economic relations. In this way, we will be able to understand whether and how the economic policies are specifically tailored for Albanian communities outside the national border of Albania.

The institutional framework and economic agreements between Albania and other neighbouring countries where Albanian communities reside will be discussed in the next section. In the subsequent section, an analysis of trade relations between Albania and Kosovo will be provided. Other sections will give an overview of trade relations of Albania with Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, respectively. Finally, the paper will be wrapped up with some concluding remarks.

### ***The Institutional Framework and Economic Agreements***

Economic relations, but not only, between the countries are governed by sets of institutions and rules at multiple levels of decision making, from WTO regulations to national or even local level. Additionally, the processes of European integration have added further complexity to the understanding of the impact of the institutional framework in governing economic relations. Many economic agreements are in place as a result of the *Acquis* requirements which have and are to be adopted by the countries aspiring to join EU. Consequently, it becomes more difficult to distinguish the policies and legislation that address or are targeted to Albanian communities.

As mentioned earlier, Albania's economic and trade relations with the Western Balkan countries are regulated by the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) signed in 2006, as well as by bilateral agreements with individual countries. Especially with Kosovo,

there are several agreements and a diverse institutional framework. The main economic agreement between Albania and Kosovo is the framework agreement “On promotion and facilitation of trade” signed on 11.01.2014 which entered into force in March 2015. This agreement addresses some of the debated issues related to the trade of agricultural commodities and food safety that have been at the centre of a trade dispute between Kosovo and Albania. The governments of both countries keep pledging to increase the economic activities across the border. In May 2016, the governments of Kosovo and Albania signed an agreement to reciprocally protect and promote investments.<sup>34</sup> Several other agreements on sectoral issues have also been previously signed ranging from reciprocal cooperation in areas of industry, trade and standardisation signed in 2010,<sup>35</sup> to more technical agreements such as the agreement on avoidance of double taxation of income and capital taxes and the prevention of fiscal evasion, which entered into force in March 2015,<sup>36</sup> or the cooperation agreement on customary issues of 2009.<sup>37</sup> Other agreements have been signed in the areas of tourism,<sup>38</sup> infrastructure,<sup>39</sup> intelligence,<sup>40</sup> as well as veterinary<sup>41</sup> and standards<sup>42</sup>.

This entire legislative framework has provided grounds for regulating most of the trade and other sectoral agreements, but the implementation in practice has often faced difficulties.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, there is no legislation in place which provides Kosovo a privileged status in trade relations with Albania in the framework of a closer economic cooperation.<sup>44</sup> One of the few legislations that directly target Kosovo Albanians and Albanians living in Serbia in the sense of recognizing a privileged status as compared to other foreign citizens is the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 2655, of 2014 “On Excluding Citizens of the Republic of Kosovo and of the Albanian Citizens of the Republic of Serbia from the Obligation to Obtain Work Permits and Certificates of Employment Registration”. Other direct involvements of the Albanian government have been more in the form of aid (although very minimal) such is the case of donating 50,000 Euros for improving health services in Albanian communities in Serbia or 150,000 Euros for flood relief in Macedonia.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment, signed on May 3, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> “Inter-ministerial agreement on cooperation in sectors of Industry, Trade and Standards”, signed on 30.09.2010.

<sup>36</sup> Agreement “avoidance of double taxation of income and capital taxes and the prevention of fiscal evasion” signed on 28.3.2014 and entered into force in 11.3 2015

<sup>37</sup> Agreement “On cooperation on customs matters” of 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Agreement “On cooperation in tourism sector” between respective ministries signed on 09.05.2006.

<sup>39</sup> Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in quality infrastructure signed between respective Ministries of Trade on 06.02.2007

<sup>40</sup> Agreement “On exchange and protection of classified information”, signed on 07.11.2012 and ratified with Law No. 5/2013, dated 25.02.2013

<sup>41</sup> Agreement “On cooperation in the area of veterinary services” signed on 16.11.2012 and approved in principle by DCM No. 947, dated 26.12.2012

<sup>42</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Metrology Department of Kosovo and General Directorate of Metrology of Albania, signed on 26.11.2012

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence, Z.R., Frasheri, E., and Qazi, M. (2014). Integration in the Balkans: Albania and Kosovo. Report in the frame of the Economic Growth in Albania Project at the Centre for International Development at Harvard University. Cambridge M.A. USA.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> See: Jano, D. (2017). Albanian International Development Policy and CSO Role in the EU Accession Perspectives. Policy paper, part of the project “Western Balkan CSOs for Global Development” financed by program of Official Development Aid of Slovakia, SlovakAid.

With respect to Macedonia, the reviewed institutional framework reveals an established but general cooperation. Similar to Kosovo, the governments of both countries commit to promote and protect respective investments<sup>46</sup> based on reciprocal economic cooperation<sup>47</sup>. In terms of specific and sectoral legislation, it ranges from technological, technical and scientific cooperation<sup>48</sup>, to avoidance of double taxation on incomes and capital<sup>49</sup> as well as cooperation in the tourism sector<sup>50</sup>. Apart from the cooperation in the tourism sector which could have a more direct impact on some Albanian communities in Macedonia such as Ohrid or Struga, the other legislation is of a more generic nature with no specific tailoring to Albanian communities. As it will be shown in the subsequent sections, Albanians in Macedonia are focused primarily on agriculture and retail activities. As such, one would only speculate on a possible trickle-down effect on these communities derived from the overall trade transactions. A similar picture is noticed in the case of Montenegro, in which some of the key agreements and legislation signed by the governments of both countries are focused on the inter-institutional cooperation on standards, accreditation and metrology<sup>51</sup>, cooperation in the tourism sector, as well as on more specific issues such as the cooperation on banking, environment and energy<sup>52</sup>.

Nevertheless, the institutional set up and the agreements signed by respective governments provide only a prospect of potential policy impacts. Analysing practical economic relations in terms of trade exchanges will allow us to have a better understanding over the policies in place.

### *Economic Cooperation*

**Albania and Kosovo:** The governments of Albania and Kosovo have continuously committed themselves to strengthen and intensify the economic cooperation between the two countries. A series of agreements with economic cooperation in focus have already been signed, ranging from technical matters such as mutual assistance in customs matters to a more strategic partnership<sup>53</sup>. In terms of trade relation, Albania and Kosovo do not have a specific free trade agreement between each other, although advances have been made in this regard through signing an implementation protocol “For the Implementation of the

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<sup>46</sup> Agreement on promotion and protection of investments between Albania and FYR of Macedonia, signed on 04.12.1997, and entered into force on 3.4.1998

<sup>47</sup> Protocol of economic cooperation between the Government of Albania and Government of Macedonia, signed on 15.01.1998.

<sup>48</sup> Agreement on scientific, technical and technological cooperation between the Governments of Albania and Macedonia”, signed on 01.06.1994

<sup>49</sup> Agreement between the Governments of Albania and Macedonia “On avoidance of double taxation of income and capital taxes and the prevention of fiscal”, signed on 02.11.1998

<sup>50</sup> Cooperation Agreement on tourism sector between the Government of Albania and Government of Macedonia, signed on 16.11.2005, approved with DCM No. 31, dated 18.1.2006, and entered into force on 10.05.2006.

<sup>51</sup> Interinstitutional cooperation in the area of standards, accreditation and metrology, signed in 2009.

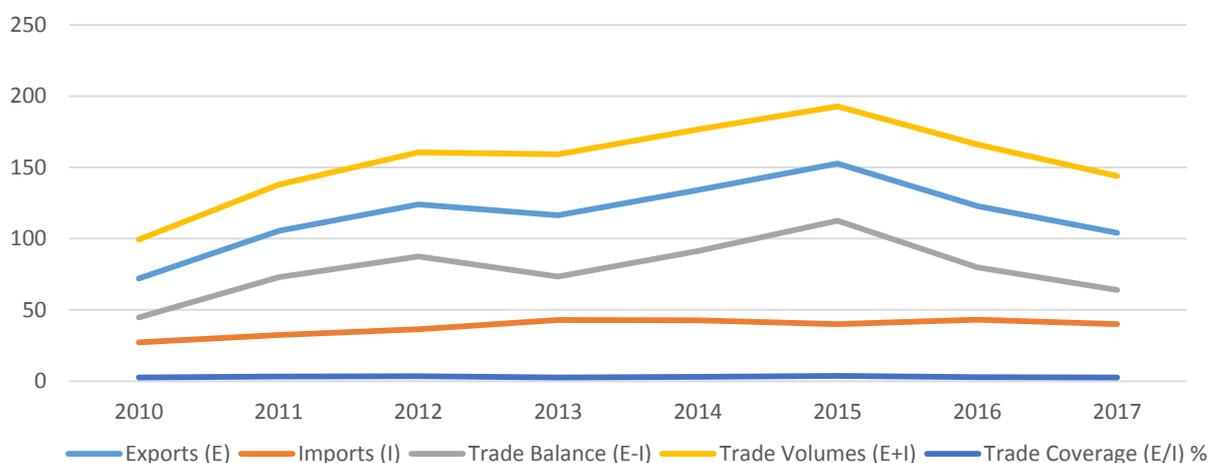
<sup>52</sup> The cooperation on energy relates to the construction of the 400kv transmission line Tirana-Podgorica financed by KfW, with a value of 43million Euros.

<sup>53</sup> See: Sulçebe (2015) for a more detailed list of economic agreements between Albania and Kosovo.

Framework Agreement reached Between the Republic of Albania Council of Ministers and the Kosovo's government for Cooperation in Boosting and Easing Trade" in March 2015. Trade relations between the two countries are mainly governed by the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) in which Albania and Kosovo are members. In 2016, according to officials from the Ministry of Finance of Albania, another agreement has been signed aiming at reciprocal protection of investments, although this agreement is yet to enter into force.

However, despite the multiple paperwork signed by both governments, data suggest that volumes and values of these economic exchanges between the two countries are still rather low and exhibit fluctuations over the years. As shown in Figure 1, there has been an increase in trade volumes from 2010-2015 with a slight fluctuation in 2013, to take a downward trend after 2015.

**Figure 1** Trade relations between Albania and Kosovo (2010-August 2017)



Source: INSTAT (2017); Note: The values are in million Euros

This trend can be attributed to fluctuations in Albania's exports to Kosovo, since Kosovo's imports show a steady trend over the years. The values of main trade indicators are more specifically presented in Table 1. As shown, the highest value of trade volumes is 192.7 million Euros recorded in 2015. Trade volume in 2016 is 166 million Euros, with a decrease of about 14% as compared to 2015, due to an increase in Kosovo's exports with 19% and a decrease in imports by 8%.

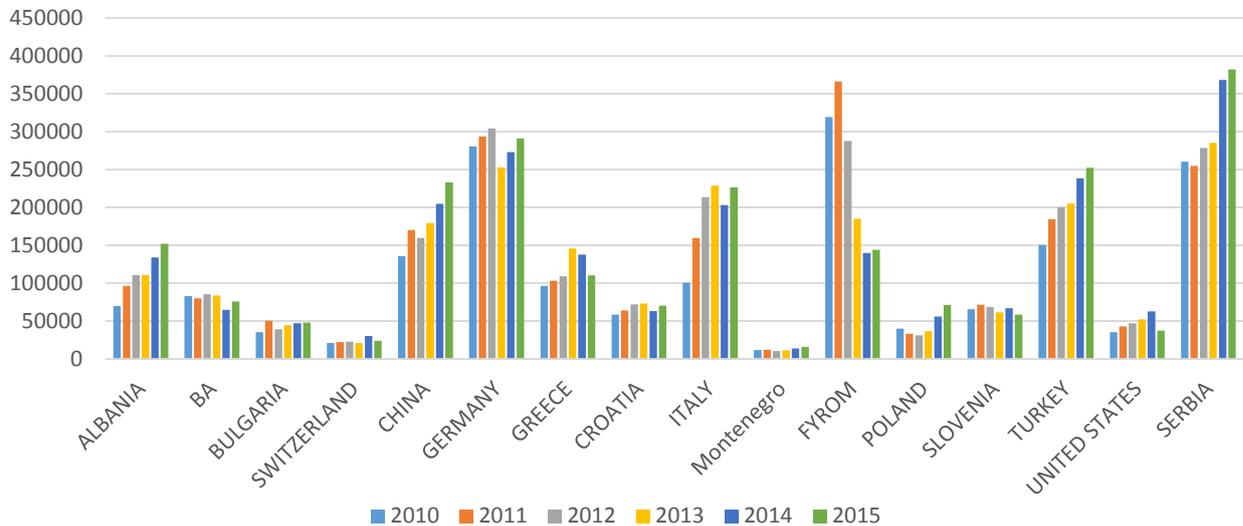
**Table 1** Albania's trade exchange with Kosovo 2010- 2016 (Mln Euro)

Kosovo	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Exports (E)	72.00	105.45	124.07	116.37	134.10	152.71	123.00
Imports (I)	27.34	32.45	36.47	42.95	42.68	40.02	43.10
Trade Balance (E-I)	44.66	73.00	87.60	73.42	91.42	112.69	79.90
Trade Volumes (E+I)	99.34	137.90	160.54	159.32	176.78	192.73	166.10
Trade Coverage (E/I) %	263%	325%	340%	271%	314%	382%	285%

Source: INSTAT

The overall figures, nevertheless, show that Albania is the main beneficiary from trade relations with a positive trade balance over the years. Yet, when considering Kosovo's overall exports, data show (Figure 2) that Albania is not its main trading partner.

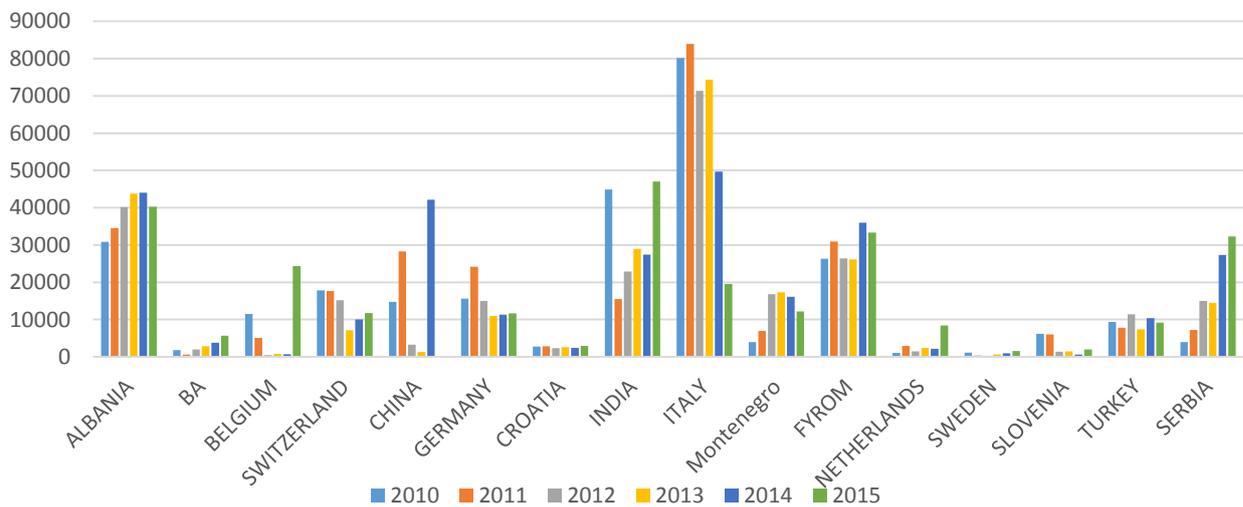
**Figure 2** Kosovo imports by country of origin (2010-2015)



Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency

Serbia remains the main supplier of goods for Kosovo, followed by Germany, China, Macedonia, and Albania is only at the fifth place (Figure 3).

**Figure 3** Kosovo exports by country of origin (2010-2015)



Source: Kosovo Statistics Agency

However, in terms of exports, Albania is one of the main destination country for Kosovo's goods. The largest weight is occupied by group commodity "leather and leather manufactures" with an increase of 643%, followed by "wood manufactures and articles of paper", with an increase of 130% and "machinery, equipment and spare parts" which have increased by 64%. Other commodities show slight variations from 2015 to 2016 (Table 2 and Table 3).

**Table 2** Exports of Kosovo to Albania by group of commodities (in Euros)

	2015	2016	2015 vs 2016 change in %
Food, beverages, tobacco	15,009,108	18,167,478	+21%
Minerals, fuels, electricity	810,117	1,098,206	+36%
Chemical and plastic products	3,550,695	4,365,088	+23%
Leather and leather manufactures	5,967	44,312	+643%
Wood manufactures and articles of paper	439,848	1,011,144	+130%
Textile and footwear	241,641	198,690	-18%
Construction materials and metals	19,135,293	17,096,656	-11%
Machineries, equipment and spare parts	408,328	670,250	+64%
Others	419,688	450,732	+7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40,020,685</b>	<b>43,102,555</b>	<b>+8%</b>

Source: INSTAT

**Table 3** Imports of Kosovo from Albania by group of commodities (in Euros)

	2015	2016	2015 vs 2016 change in %
Food, beverages, tobacco	16,794,456	19,028,160	+13%
Minerals, fuels, electricity	62,467,083	26,379,362	-58%
Chemical and plastic products	8,251,534	9,436,382	+14%
Leather and leather manufactures	12,082	479	-96%
Wood manufactures and articles of paper	2,315,147	2,422,528	+5%
Textile and footwear	592,245	703,284	+19%
Construction materials and metals	49,883,251	50,578,231	+1%
Machineries, equipment and spare parts	4,124,027	5,253,069	+27%
Others	8,266,877	9,195,629	+11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152,706,703</b>	<b>122,997,123</b>	<b>-19%</b>

Source: INSTAT

The increase in trade volumes between the two countries from 2010 and on, may be especially attributed to Albania's improvements in road infrastructure, particularly to the construction of the highway Tirana-Prishtina, known as "Road of Nation", for which the Albanian government invested heavily, financially and politically. This major investment has yielded positive economic impacts by significantly reducing transportation costs and increasing the movement of goods and people across the border. The percentage change in Albania's exports from 2010 to 2016 is positive with about 71%, whereas the percentage change in imports from Kosovo for the same period is also positive, with about +58%. In fact, other less visible measures of a more technical nature have also been put in place with the aim to ease the flows of goods. For instance, customs arrangements to create a one-check system where trucks and vehicles are checked only in one border point. Also, the procedures for transit of goods destined for Kosovo market are carried out in Durrës with no further need to be re-checked at the Albania-Kosovo border.<sup>54</sup> Also, the movement of people especially from Kosovo to Albania has increased over the years. As shown in Table 4, the number of

<sup>54</sup> See also Lawrence et al. (2014). Integration in the Balkans. Albanian and Kosovo. Report prepared by the Centre for International Development in the frame of Economic Growth in Albania Project.

Kosovo visitors to Albania was over 2 million in 2016. It has to be noted that visitors from Kosovo constitute about 40% of the tourism market in Albania.

**Table 4** Number of visitors travelling to Albania

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Visitors from Kosova	1,179,300	1,439,700	1,708,700	1,378,100	1,379,200	1,682,000	2,157,000

Source: Albanian Directorate General of Tourism

Nevertheless, despite overall improvements in trade volumes and technical procedures, important challenges and barriers still persist, particularly related to agricultural products. One of the barriers that became an issue of public debate across the two sides of the border concerns the wheat flour coming from Kosovo. The Albanian Ministry of Agriculture issued a ministerial order<sup>55</sup> in 2015 for determining the quality and safety standards of wheat flour, in which it was required that the protein levels of wheat flour shall be 12.5%. This regulation was harshly contested by Kosovar government and also by Kosovo's wheat flour producers. The Kosovo side view this as a trade barrier arguing that many EU countries have a lower standard in protein levels while some other countries do not have determined levels at all. Despite the contestation from Kosovo government, this regulation is still in force. The tense trade relations especially related to agricultural products is reflected in both sides since Kosovo authorities also blocked the import of eggs of an Albanian producer with anti-dumping arguments. Another element that is viewed as having a negative impact on trade and economic relations with Kosovo concerns the use of reference prices, a practice which is against the rules of GTAA/WTO. In the context of agricultural products, potatoes exports from Kosovo are for instance subject of increasing reference prices.

Another aspect to be considered when analysing the impacts of economic policies of Albania is the volumes of foreign direct investments (FDIs) that have been exchanged between the two countries, as well as the number of businesses. Albania appears as one of the main investors in Kosovo with FDIs constituting around 13% of the total FDIs for 2016<sup>56</sup> reaching the highest value in 2015 with 40.1 million Euros (Table 5). The figures suggest an overall increase in FDIs from 2007 to 2016, with an exception of year 2012. It is difficult, however, to disentangle the sectoral destination of the FDIs by country of origin since it was difficult to obtain data on the number and activity of Albanian businesses in Kosovo. According to data from Central Bank of Kosovo on FDIs by sector, the largest share of inflows for 2016 are invested in "real estate, rental and business activities" with a value of 167 million Euros, followed by "construction" with 29.2 million Euros and "financial services" with 19 million Euros.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Directive Nr. 207, date 31.3.2015 "për përcaktimin e treguesve të sigurisë dhe të cilësisë së miellit të grurit të parapakëtuar, për t'u shitur tek konsumatori i fundit ose për prodhimin e produkteve të tjera ushqimore" <http://80.78.70.231/pls/kuv/f?p=201:Udh%EBzim:207:31.03.2015>.

<sup>56</sup> Central Bank of Kosovo <http://www.bqk-kos.org/?id=55>.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

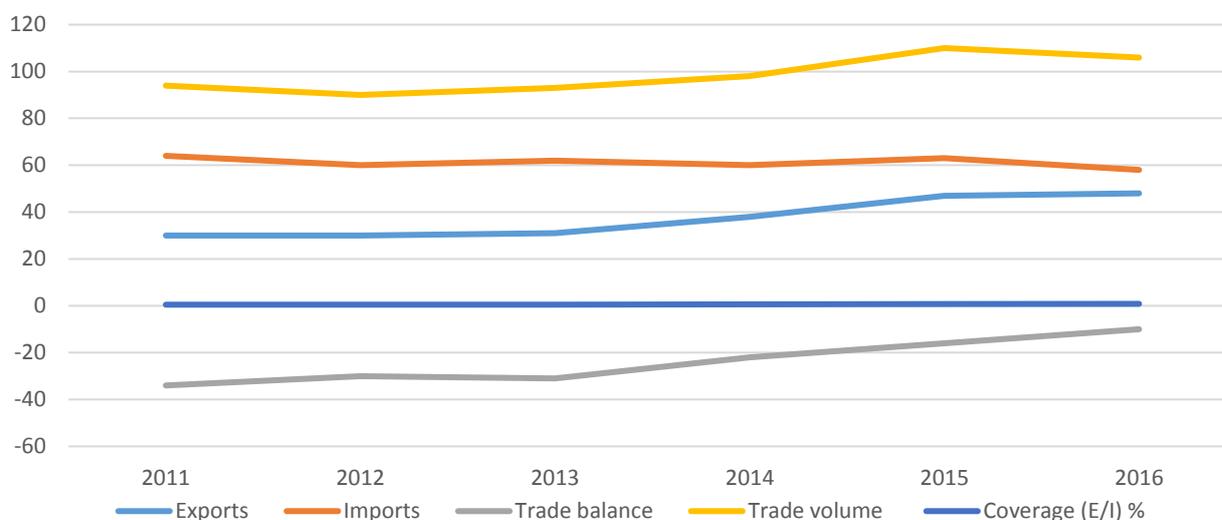
**Table 5** Stock of foreign direct investments

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Albania</b>	3.4	21.9	23.3	20.3	11.2	4.7	19.3	20.4	40.1	28.6
<b>Kosovo</b>	5	14	9	10	5	13	13	26	29	29

Source: Central Bank of Kosovo and Bank of Albania

On the other hand, Kosovo FDIs in Albania appear to be slightly higher for 2016, although the weight of Kosovo's investments in Albanian economy is much lower. In spite of that, the presence of Kosovo businesses in Albania is considerable. According to data from Albania's National Business Centre (QKR), about 817 businesses from Kosovo are registered until September 2017, operating in processing industries, merchandise, car repairs household appliances, hotels and restaurants, transport and telecommunication, construction etc.

**Albania and Macedonia:** Macedonia is another country where a large number of Albanians reside. That makes it also an important regional economic and political partner for Albania. Differently to the case of trade and economic relations with Kosovo, in which the impact of economic policies enforced by the governments of Albania can be more distinguishable, in the case of Macedonia, these impacts are more difficult to discern. Nevertheless, improvement or deterioration of trade and economic relations between the two countries would certainly have an impact also on Albanians of Macedonia. Both countries share a joint aspiration of becoming EU members, which necessitates the need to strengthen their economic cooperation. In this respect, Albania and Macedonia have signed several economic agreements, while their trade relations are governed in the frame of CEFTA. Trade exchanges between the two countries show an overall increasing trend although Albania has a negative trade balance. The volumes of trade for year 2016 have been 106 million Euros, marking a slight decrease of 3.6% from year 2015 (Table 6 and Figure 4). Trade balance on the other hand is negative across the years, although the gap is reducing.

**Figure 4** Trends of trade exchange Albania-Macedonia (in mill. Euros)

Source: INSTAT

**Table 6** Trade exchange between Albania and Macedonia (in million Euros)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Exports	30	30	31	38	47	48
Imports	64	60	62	60	63	58
Trade balance	-34	-30	-31	-22	-16	-10
Trade volume	94	90	93	98	110	106
Coverage (E/I) %	47%	50%	50%	63%	75%	83%

Source: INSTAT

In terms of commodities, the main group of commodities that Albania exports to Macedonia are “minerals, fuels and electricity”, and “construction materials and metals”, in values about 15 million Euros and 17 million Euros, respectively (Table 7).

**Table 7** Albania's exports to Macedonia during 2011-2016 (in Euros)

Articles	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Food, beverages, tobacco	2.986.893	3.420.063	4.445.318	5.046.091	5.667.946	6.079.133
Minerals, fuels, electricity	11.576.999	9.524.018	11.018.829	15.174.840	14.701.762	14.641.326
Chemical and plastic products	214.379	352.852	1.009.621	1.052.252	1.165.691	1.739.514
Leather and leather manufactures	290.281	230.568	78.820	26.294	29.171	5.526
Wood manufactures and articles of paper	540.440	1.500.166	1.802.284	1.404.484	1.345.914	1.603.960
Textile and footwear	975.913	97.648	972.223	618.248	750.418	568.357
Construction materials and metals	9.639.224	12.325.779	9.995.646	11.321.661	14.045.133	17.166.135
Machineries, equipment and spare parts	3.094.429	1.733.929	1.839.646	2.415.141	6.958.408	3.803.228
Others	527.932	469.481	248.141	802.244	2.151.879	1.955.301

Source: INSTAT

Meanwhile, in terms of imports, the main group of commodities are “food, beverages and tobacco”, “construction materials and metals”, and “chemical and plastic products”, with values about 20 million Euros, 14 million Euros and 12 million Euros, respectively (Table 8).

**Table 8** Albanian imports from Macedonia during 2011-2016 (in Euros)

Articles	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Food, beverages, tobacco	22.413.338	20.455.562	17.606.702	18.740.089	23.243.847	20.487.104
Minerals, fuels, electricity	1.982.397	1.144.718	3.106.780	4.341.615	2.242.040	1.611.890
Chemical and plastic products	13.544.349	13.172.870	11.818.544	11.714.001	10.897.755	12.585.580
Leather and leather manufactures	99.361	35.335	307.110	3.528	130.340	5.066
Wood manufactures and articles of paper	2.043.838	2.163.109	2.182.112	2.472.987	2.344.891	3.045.915
Textile and footwear	295.874	234.518	653.121	417.351	357.351	392.796
Construction materials and metals	19.467.275	19.156.251	21.960.304	18.280.516	19.194.223	14.161.047
Machineries, equipment and spare parts	3.507.857	2.722.263	3.404.556	3.223.177	3.640.975	4.521.914
Others	547.038	664.780	431.589	446.403	557.970	705.661
<b>Total</b>	<b>63.901.326</b>	<b>59.749.407</b>	<b>61.470.818</b>	<b>59.639.667</b>	<b>62.609.393</b>	<b>57.516.971</b>

Source: INSTAT

These figures do not show explicitly, what is the economic impact of these trade volumes on Albanians. However, when looking at business structure in the Albanian regions in Macedonia, such as Ohrid, Struga, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kumanovo and Diber, the main economic activities in this areas are retail activities and accommodation and hotel services.<sup>58</sup> From that, we can assume that the impact of the trade exchanges between the countries may have only a modest impact on Albanians in Macedonia. Since the magnitude of the economic impacts cannot be measured with certainty, these figures suggest that Albania's economic policies are however not tailored to the economic activities of Albanians from Macedonia.

Meanwhile, investments in both countries in the form of FDI's are quite low, despite an increase over the years. As shown in Table 9, the stock of Macedonian FDI's has increased from 20 million Euros in 2013 to 42 million Euros in 2016. Also, the stock of Albania's FDI's has increased over the years with a slight decrease in 2015, amounting to 39.6 million Euros in 2016.

**Table 9** Stock of FDI's (in million Euros)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Macedonia	20	22	36	42
Albania	30.5	35.3	32.6	39.6

Source: Bank of Albania and National Bank of Macedonia

In terms of number of Macedonian businesses in Albania, the data from the National Business Centre (QKB) show that there are about 351 businesses with both sole and joint capital, operating in almost all sectors of the economy. Another sector of economy that has witnessed an increase over the years is tourism. As shown in Table 10, the number of Macedonian visitors has increased from about 430 thousand to 515 thousand in 2015, making it the third largest group of visitors by country. According to officials from tourism directorate, a major share of this number consists of Macedon-Albanians.

**Table 10** Number of tourists entering Albania 2013-2015

Year	2013	2014	2015
Visitors	432.646	514.459	515.130

Source: Albanian General Directorate of Tourism

Economic activities between the two countries are expected to increase also in the future upon the completion of the new road project announced by the Albanian government which will connect Tirana with Diber region. From this project the main beneficiaries as far as the Macedon-Albanians are concerned will be the region of Greater Dibra. However, no proper economic analysis of this project is publicly available, so far.

**Albania and Montenegro:** Montenegro is the smallest country in the Western Balkans with a population of a little bit over half a million inhabitants, where ethnic Albanians constitute

<sup>58</sup> Active business entities by sectors of activity according to NKD Rev.2, by municipalities, by years, situation as at 31 December

[http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/en/MakStat/MakStat\\_\\_DelovniSubj\\_\\_AktDelovniSubjekti/275\\_DelSub\\_Op\\_02AcDSbD\\_ang.px/?rxid=355a8e23-5795-43b1-a451-076dd5f31994](http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/en/MakStat/MakStat__DelovniSubj__AktDelovniSubjekti/275_DelSub_Op_02AcDSbD_ang.px/?rxid=355a8e23-5795-43b1-a451-076dd5f31994).

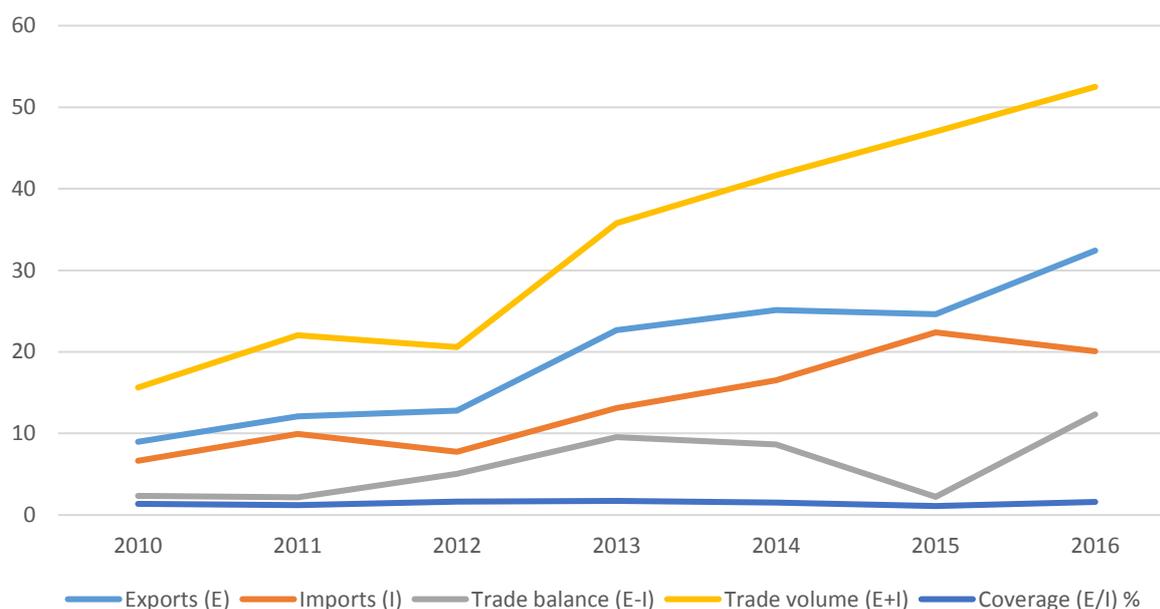
about 5% of the population or about 30 thousand inhabitants. Trade relations between Albania and Montenegro are also governed in the frame of CEFTA. Despite a slight decrease in 2012, trade volumes between the two countries have witnessed an increasing trend over the years, amounting to 52 million Euros in the year 2016. Expressed in percentage, the trade volume in 2016 increased by 10% compared to 2015, with exports increased by 29%, while imports fell by 11.6% (Table 11 and Figure 5). With Exception to the year 2015, Albanian exports have continuously increased. Also the balance of trade has inclined more in Albania's favour, despite a reduction during the years 2013-2015. The highest value of exports was recorded in the year 2016 with about 32 million Euros, whereas highest imports value was recorded in 2015.

**Table 11** Trade relations between Albania and Montenegro 2010 – 2016 (in million Euro)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Exports (E)</b>	8.98	12.11	12.81	22.66	25.14	24.63	32.42
<b>Imports (I)</b>	6.65	9.94	7.76	13.12	16.50	22.39	20.08
<b>Trade balance (E-I)</b>	2.33	2.17	5.05	9.54	8.64	2.24	12.34
<b>Trade volume (E+I)</b>	15.63	22.05	20.57	35.78	41.64	47.02	52.50
<b>Coverage (E/I) %</b>	135%	122%	165%	173%	152%	110%	161%

Source: INSTAT

**Figure 5** Trade relations between Albania and Montenegro (in million Euros)



Source: INSTAT

In 2016, exports increased by 32%, in which the largest weight was occupied by the group of commodities “Textiles and footwear” with 47%, “food, beverage and tobacco” and “construction materials and metals” with 41%, and “minerals, fuels, electricity” with 33% (Table 12).

**Table 12** Exports of Albania to Montenegro by commodity

	2015	2016	% change
Food, beverages, tobacco	4,138,518	5,825,005	+41%
Minerals, fuels, electricity	10,560,994	14,000,427	+33%
Chemical and plastic products	1,496,048	1,142,181	-24%
Leather and leather manufactures	-	-	0%
Wood manufactures and articles of paper	358,136	332,047	-7%
Textile and footwear	112,638	165,635	+47%
Construction materials and metals	6,916,687	9,753,808	+41%
Machineries, equipment and spare parts	456,473	489,858	+7%
Others	595,162	714,078	+20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,634,655</b>	<b>32,423,040</b>	<b>+32%</b>

Source: INSTAT

Meanwhile during the year 2016, imports to Albania have decreased by 10%, in which the largest share was occupied by groups of commodities “machinery, equipment and spare parts” with 157%, “woods and paper articles” with 84%, and “chemicals and plastic products” with 67% (Table 13).

**Table 13** Imports of Albania from Montenegro by commodity

	2015	2016	% change
Food, beverages, tobacco	3,767,052	3,531,366	-6%
Minerals, fuels, electricity	7,989,091	6,116,882	-23%
Chemical and plastic products	352,882	590,328	+67%
Leather and leather manufactures	14,910	4,744	-68%
Wood manufactures and articles of paper	3,994,833	7,359,956	+84%
Textile and footwear	94,322	15,568	-83%
Construction materials and metals	5,976,227	2,000,038	-67%
Machineries, equipment and spare parts	149,805	385,234	+157%
Others	49,040	77,551	+58%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,388,161</b>	<b>20,081,667</b>	<b>-10%</b>

Source: INSTAT 2017

Also in the case of Montenegro, it is difficult to specify the impact of these trade relations on ethnic Albanians. Direct investments in respective countries are very low with Montenegrin investments about 0.9 million Euros (Bank of Albania), whereas Albania’s direct investments in Montenegro during recent years are not nominally reflected suggesting a very low value (Central Bank of Montenegro). However, several business activities with Montenegrin capital operate in Albania. According to data from the National Business Centre (QKR), about 46 businesses with Montenegrin and joint capital are registered in Albania operating mainly in processing industry, hotel and restaurants, merchandise, transport and telecommunication and real estate. Their geographical dispersion is concentrated in Tirana with about 50%, in Shkodra with about 40% and the remaining 10% in Fier, Durrës and Berat. On the other hand, data on businesses with Albanian or joint capital were not available.

As far as the tourism sector is concerned, the number of Montenegrin tourists reflects an increasing trend. As shown in Table 14, the number of visitors in 2016 is about 325 thousand

visitors. During 2013-2014, the number of visitors increased by 37%, from 2014-2015, it increased only slightly with 1%, whereas from 2015-2016, the number of visitors increased by 35%. In terms of the total share of tourists visiting Albania, Montenegrin visitors are the fifth largest group with ethnic Albanians constituting the largest share.

**Table 14** Number of visitors from Montenegro during 2013-2016

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Visitors	174,500	238,500	240,781	324,968

Source: Albanian General Directorate of Tourism Development

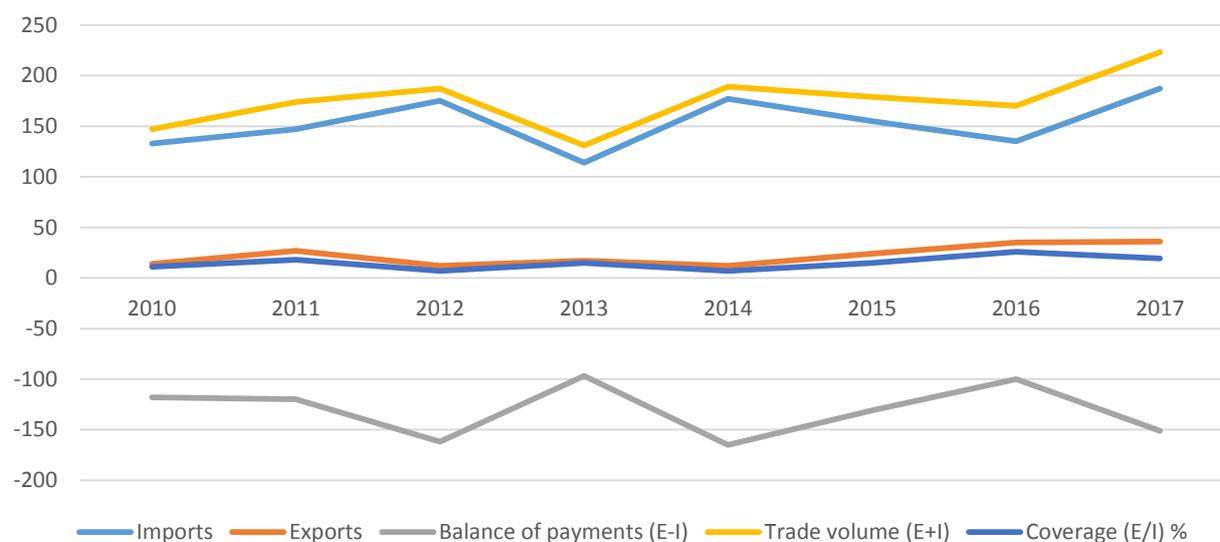
Also with respect to Albanians visiting Montenegro, data were not available. Thus, it is difficult to conclude on the impact of Albania's economic policies on ethnic Albanians living in the neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, what can be argue with certainty is that Albanians in both countries have large potentials for economic development especially in the tourism sector. Most of the Albanians in Montenegro live across the border by Buna/Bojana River delta, Adriatic Sea in Ulcinj, Shkodra Lake and mountainous areas, all of which have considerable potentials for tourism development.

**Albania and Serbia:** Serbia is another important country where ethnic Albanians live. Serbia has a population of 7,058,322 inhabitants of which, however, only about 0.82% (around 70,000) are of Albanian ethnicity. Economic relations between Albania and Serbia have improved as compared to late 1990s and early 2000s. The main reasons for these improvements can be largely attributed to the process of EU integration. Both countries aspire to join the EU and have made significant progress in many domains, especially in the frame of economic cooperation. Free movement of goods and capital is one of the core principles of EU existence as stipulated in EU treaties.

As mentioned earlier, Serbia is also part of the CEFTA agreement, which means that most of the economic relations are governed within CEFTA's principles and requirements. Also bilateral relations have considerably improved, with leaders of both countries calling on the respective business communities to invest in the respective countries. Although Albania and Serbia have no direct borders, the volume of trade between the two countries is significant. For instance, as shown in

Table 15 and Figure 6, the volume of trade for the year 2017 has been about 223 million Euros, which in absolute terms is higher than the volume of trade with other neighbouring countries considered in this paper. These figures have considerably increased over the years when compared to early 2000.<sup>59</sup> The main gainer from the existing trade relations is obviously Serbia with a trade surplus of 151 million Euros in 2017. The imports of Albania from Serbia during 2017 amounted to 187 million Euros, while exports were 36 million Euros. Albania's balance of trade with Serbia has been negative over the years.

<sup>59</sup> Data from INSTAT show that imports and exports between Albania and Serbia up to 2006 were zero. (www.instat.gov.al).

**Figure 6** Trade relations between Albania and Serbia (in million Euros)

Source: INSTAT

**Table 15** Trade relations between Albania and Serbia 2010 – 2017 (in million Euro)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Imports</b>	133	147	175	114	177	155	135	187
<b>Exports</b>	14	27	12	17	12	24	35	36
<b>Balance of payments (E-I)</b>	-118	-120	-162	-97	-165	-131	-100	-151
<b>Trade volume (E+I)</b>	147	174	187	131	189	179	170	223
<b>Coverage (E/I) %</b>	11	18	7	15	7	15	26	19

Source: INSTAT

Looking at specific commodities, we notice an increasing trend over the years for most of the commodity groups (Table 16). The change in total imports by commodity groups from 2010 to 2017 is 41%. The commodity groups making the biggest bulk of Albania's imports from Serbia are "minerals, fuels and electricity" and "food, tobacco and beverages". The dominant commodity in the commodity group "food, tobacco and beverages" is grains (wheat and maize)<sup>60</sup>. Serbia is one of the important actors in the grain market in Europe<sup>61</sup>, including the Western Balkan region. The wheat especially goes for the Albanian bakery industry. In terms of the commodity group "minerals, fuels and electricity", electricity is the main commodity imported by Albania. Albania is a net importer of electricity, especially during summer, and for that it relies on Serbia's infrastructure.

<sup>60</sup> Statistics Office of Republic of Serbia ([www.stat.gov.rs](http://www.stat.gov.rs)).

<sup>61</sup> See: Djuric, Ivan (2014) Impact of policy measures on wheat-to-bread supply chain during the global commodity price peaks: the case of Serbia. Studies on the Agricultural and Food Sector in Transition Economies, Vol. 76, Halle (Saale): IAMO.

**Table 16** Imports of Albania from Serbia by groups of commodities (in 000 Euros)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Food, beverages, tobacco</b>	26,21	20,93	21,73	35,71	46,93	50,48	56,96	50,89
<b>Minerals, fuels, electricity</b>	34,01	49,10	106,34	31,99	73,16	56,96	38,82	69,61
<b>Chemical and plastic products</b>	9,767	11,22	10,39	14,51	14,91	15,14	14,77	17,25
<b>Leather and leather manufactures</b>	2	5	0.749	3	0.121	98	212	170
<b>Wood manufactures and articles of paper</b>	2,422	2,730	4,370	4,286	4,075	5,280	4,750	5,031
<b>Textile and footwear</b>	188	193	227	645	972	1,381	2,162	3,122
<b>Construction materials and metals</b>	55,696	58,678	28,752	22,030	32,698	20,269	11,593	34,487
<b>Machineries, equipment and spare parts</b>	3,572	3,492	2,339	3,768	3,929	5,414	5,610	6,076
<b>Others</b>	936	697	765	1,059	812	603	637	849
<b>Total</b>	<b>132,8</b>	<b>147,1</b>	<b>174,9</b>	<b>114,0</b>	<b>177,5</b>	<b>155,7</b>	<b>135,5</b>	<b>187,5</b>

Source: INSTAT

As far as Albania's exports to Serbia are concerned, Table 17 shows an important increase in total exports over the years. When calculating the percentage change of exports of 2010 with 2017, we notice an increase of 147%. The largest increase has been marked by commodity groups "food, beverages, tobacco", "wood manufactures and articles of paper" and "textile and footwear".

**Table 17** Exports of Albania to Serbia by groups of commodities (in 000 Euros)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Food, beverages, tobacco</b>	602	1,137	2,172	2,803	4,056	8,960	11,803	14,927
<b>Minerals, fuels, electricity</b>	11,362	23,631	7,985	10,725	4,380	10,566	112	7,313
<b>Chemical and plastic products</b>	194	63	83	183	234	308	305	336
<b>Leather and leather manufactures</b>	214	433	169	173	154	0.996	50	211
<b>Wood manufactures and articles of paper</b>	5	11	186	415	343	541	598	692
<b>Textile and footwear</b>	413	579	476	607	885	1,715	6,054	11,415
<b>Construction materials and metals</b>	1,177	312	654	1,239	1,326	996	875	722
<b>Machineries, equipment and spare parts</b>	50	22	66	150	186	89	74	92
<b>Others</b>	613	788	561	555	494	857	537	543
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,633</b>	<b>26,981</b>	<b>12,355</b>	<b>16,854</b>	<b>12,062</b>	<b>24,036</b>	<b>35,256</b>	<b>36,255</b>

Source: INSTAT

Similar with other countries, the impact of these macroeconomic indicators on Albanians living in Serbia is however not straightforward. Although figures suggest that Serbia has clearly a more favourable position in terms of these trade relations, it is difficult to conclude that Albanian communities living in Serbia are directly benefiting from them.

### *Local and Sectorial Policies should Take Priority*

The economic relations of Albania with the neighbouring countries show an improvement over the years, with trade volumes increasing in value and quantity. Albania's balance of trade is positive with Kosovo and Montenegro but negative with Serbia and Macedonia. The

movement of people is also higher as compared to before thanks also to investments in key road infrastructure. Albania's Foreign Direct Investments occupy an important position and play a positive role for the economy of Kosovo. The institutional framework has become more cooperative due to EU integration processes and as result, several regional, multilateral and bilateral agreements have been signed covering a wide range of areas.

All these improvements are however very general and do not allow us to draw detailed conclusions on their impact on Albanian communities. The main sector in which Albanians inside and outside official borders are involved is agriculture. Thus, the expectation is to have a more elaborate policy targeting this sector. On the contrary, the reality is that several disputes have arisen specifically in this sector, such as is the case with Kosovo. Additionally, there is a tendency to direct and orient the support from the centre, often without understanding the needs of the local Albanian communities. Apart from Kosovo, other Albanian communities have a more localised cross-border interaction with local communities living within Albania. For this reason, it could be more effective to draw economic policies with a local context in mind. One important step would be to invest in improving the cross-border infrastructure by eliminating the institutional and physical obstacles that exist. That would allow for a more intensive economic and social interaction. With EU integration process in mind, cross-border cooperation and initiatives are very important for benefiting from EU support schemes and other regional opportunities.

# ALBANIA'S IMPACT IN THE REGION REGARDING CULTURE, EDUCATION, MEDIA AND SPORT

**Ben ANDONI**

Albania belongs to the smallest Balkan states, where cultural diplomacy and its accessories play an important role in increasing the country's influence and expanding its international status of representation. In the case of Albania, in the Balkan contexts, this concept shows exceptional importance, because of Albanian populations living in the surrounding countries. In the near past, just before the democratic transition, Tirana has been a virtual cultural centre with concrete attributes in terms of cultural, educational and sport cooperation, emanating from the official relationship that was formally established in the '70s with the former Yugoslav Federation. At that time, Tirana's impact was enormous in practical terms although less institutionally, given the fact that Albanians from the former Yugoslav Republics and the former Autonomous Province of Kosovo entirely referred to Tirana as far as it concerned their culture and the different aspects of life of their intellectuals' groups. Albania had this impact through direct media propaganda in the radio and television broadcasts as well as the indirect programs in the West, from where the Albanians of the former Yugoslavia living there brought it back to the cities and societies where Kosovars were living. Albania, through its propaganda conveyed not only its culture, but also the very agitation for Kosovo's independence. Many of the political actors of that time have confirmed this influence, which was made through a hidden cultural diplomacy<sup>62</sup>.

Tirana's cultural diplomacy has been emphasised very often in the recent years. From the concept and its derived meaning of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy has its own place, and we refer to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations in 1963 which clearly specifies diplomatic relations between states, the privileges and immunities of diplomats.<sup>63</sup> This convention is the cornerstone of diplomacy and international relations. Cultural Diplomacy is

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<sup>62</sup> Begolli, Abdullah (2015), Ex-student of that time "Vitet (70-81), Univerziteti i Prishtinës dhe lufta e drejtëpërdrejtë Shqipëri-Serbi për Kosovën", Albania Press, 25 April <http://www.albaniapress.com/lajme/21146/Vitet-70-81-Univerziteti-i-Prishtines-dhe-lufta-e-drejteperdrejte-Shqiperi-Serbi-per-Kosoven.html>.

<sup>63</sup> For a brief text on the development of diplomacy, see: Meçalla, Eraldo (2015) "Çfarë është diplomacia?", Bota Sot, 29 qershor, <http://www.botasot.info/opinione/422191/cfare-eshte-diplomacia/>.

one of the forms and types of diplomacy that has evolved with time, lately gaining special attention for Albania, if considering the enormous size of the documents which are actually signed by all neighbouring countries.<sup>64</sup> The proclamation of Kosovo's independence in 2008 changed the balance power in the Western Balkans region in terms of geopolitical developments. Since the early post-war years when Kosovo had the status of an international protectorate, the two countries expressed their willingness not only to cooperate but also to assist in stable bilateral relations in many common areas. Meanwhile, the influence of Tirana grew somewhat different in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after the Ohrid Agreement, and this was thanks to a resident office of an Albanian national television. Regarding Montenegro, the last independent Republic of the Balkans, the impact came through direct cooperation and some exchanges. The influence of Tirana was increased in Kosovo thanks to the institutionalization of relations and the signing of a series of ongoing documents and especially the joint meetings of both governments, with the last meeting of Korca being the fourth in a row. In practical terms, the impact of the official Tirana was enormous until recently, thanks to the full access of the Albanian private media. Unfortunately, this media effort wiped off during 2016, and today Kosovo and Macedonia, to a less extent Montenegro and more over the Presevo Valley, are no longer present to the Albanian public. Likewise in Albania, the news media about Kosovo are increasingly scarce, with the exception of news concerning political crises and extraordinary events. However, media has played a major role in presenting Albania in the region and vice-versa, but in the recent months, the losing interest is fading this important relationship.

It is very true that in the recent years there are many cooperation and various efforts, moreover the promotion of the national culture and the cultural support of Albanians abroad constitute a constitutional obligation, yet in the government programs we have so far no proper strategy or practical implementation of this obligation. The respective ministries engaged directly with culture and public diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, do not have a separate and specialized department for Cultural Diplomacy in their organogram.<sup>65</sup> It is quite difficult to find references to the specific budget of each of those ministries for the Cultural Diplomacy, respectively for diaspora education and cultural promotion abroad. Moreover, in Albania there is a lack of inter-institutional cooperation on Cultural Diplomacy and our Embassies do not have human and financial capacities in organizing cultural activities, and furthermore they are not present even when diaspora promotes cultural events. The Albanian state does not have statistics on the promotion of Albanian culture in the world, according to the countries and cultural genres.<sup>66</sup> Fortunately the artists themselves and especially the athletes have long passed this barrier. Kosovar football players, and those Albanians in Macedonia, Presevo, and less those in Montenegro, are on the spot and constantly have drawn the attention of the Albanian sport. Whereas, those from Albania are much less

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<sup>64</sup> On the official website of the Ministry of Culture (<http://www.kultura.gov.al/>) one could find information on cooperation agreements not only with state subjects but also non-state subjects.

<sup>65</sup> Zyka, Luan (2017) "Diaspora dhe Diplomacia Kulturore", Panorama, 24 November, <http://www.panorama.com.al/diaspora-dhe-diplomacia-kulturore/>.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

represented in the other Balkan states, this is also because of their significantly inferior quality.

### *Institutionalization of Inter-Cultural Relations*

Strategic Partnership Agreement between Albania and Kosovo, signed on 11.01.2014 is the basic document, where Albania's cooperation with Kosovo is based. The most important points of this document are:

- *Drafting of joint action plans and development strategies for pre-university education in Albania.*
- *Co-ordinating of common educational policies, in accordance with European standards.*
- *Developing a platform for the promotion of joint cooperation initiatives for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage.*
- *Coordination of policies in the field of sport, in accordance with European standards, including the joint organization of various sports activities.*
- *Strengthening cooperation between national libraries and archives of both countries.*<sup>67</sup>

During the last weeks of the year 2017, Albania prepared a draft agreement with Macedonia including also the cultural aspect, which was presented and finalized in the meeting between the two governments on December 2017. This was the first meeting of the two governments and an effort to start a new history between both countries, following the election of Zaev as the premier of the Macedonian Executive.<sup>68</sup>

Institutionally, the efforts are very well organized. The two respective ministries of Culture organized in Tirana on 13 February 2014 the meeting "Culture - our common space" under the chairmanship of the Albanian Minister Kumbaro and the Kosovar Minister Memli Krasniqi. The meeting held at the National Gallery of Arts was attended by all the leaders of the artistic and cultural institutions of both countries. At the end of the meeting, the protocol of cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Kosovo was signed, whose purpose was the establishment of an annual common cultural calendar and the coordination of cultural activities between the two countries.<sup>69</sup> Both ministries proposed cultural activities (from the proposals coming by relevant institutions), pledged to co-ordinate and assume the financial obligations associated with the implementation of the activities. The protocol of cooperation covers a four-year period ending in 2018 with proposals of cultural activities at the beginning

<sup>67</sup> See the official website of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, section: "Relations with the countries of the region" <http://www.punetegashtme.gov.al/al/misioni/shqiperia-ne-rajon/marredheniet-me-vendet-e-rajonit>.

<sup>68</sup> Special quotation for the report by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania.

<sup>69</sup> No Author (2014) "Speech by Minister Kumbaro Furxhi at the meeting: Culture-Our Common Space", February 14th, <http://www.kultura.gov.al/al/newsroom/deklarata-per-shtyp/fjala-e-ministres-kumbaro-furxhi-ne-takimin-kultura-hapesira-jone-e-perbashket>.

of each year. As it was planned, the joint cultural calendar started immediately on February 14th in Pristina, with the photo exhibition "Movable object of an archive" of "Marubi" in cooperation with the Prishtina Art Gallery. The cultural activities calendar, referring to the Albanian Ministry of Culture had an institutional impact, yet no real impact can be seen in public. Actually, the absence of impact in public has been recognized also by the officials themselves. *"I would say that it has been a 'black hole' but with the first initiative of cooperation with Kosovo in a common cultural calendar which we are organizing for the fourth year, now we can say that things are changing. We have organized joint performances, with mutual mobility of creators and artists in the two countries",* said the Albanian Minister Kumbaro.<sup>70</sup>

This kind of encouraging environment followed the second meeting of Tirana, where Kosovo former Premier Isa Mustafa was received with all the protocol honours by his counterpart, Edi Rama, just before all the ministers gathered around a table dressed with the symbols of the European Union and in the centre a black eagle with red background, the Albanian national symbols. The meeting was extremely quick but the decisions taken at this meeting were significant: 5 agreements, 4 memorandums and two protocols of cooperation. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the desire to strengthen the relations between the two countries in order to convey common cultural and historic values. This memorandum was signed by the Ministers Mirela Kumbaro, Valon Murati and Kujtim Shala, expressing their common will to materialize cooperation in the establishment of Cultural Centres in Diaspora. The document aimed to foster the cooperation between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo in the programs "Days of Albanian Culture in Diaspora" and the joint establishment of "Cultural Centres in Diaspora". The Kosovo Diaspora Minister Valon Murati and the Albanian Minister of Culture Mirela Kumbaro, during the meeting for signing the new Kosovo-Albanian cultural calendar agreement on February 20, 2015 in Pristina, emphasised not only the objectives and duties deriving from the Law of the Diaspora, but also the common cultural activities for Diaspora. The Pristina Meeting preceded the memorandum of cooperation, which was signed in Tirana between the ministries of Diaspora and Culture in Kosovo and Albania, in order to make the best use of Albanian institutional capacities and to organize cultural activities in the diaspora.<sup>71</sup> A close cultural cooperation between Kosovo and Albania was promised since the beginning of the year. From the exchange of cultural activities to more important organizations were the promises that made the agenda of the "Common Cultural Calendar" between the two countries, as reported at that time the "Express" show in KTV. However, the result was the same even for 2015. There

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<sup>70</sup> Political Debate Club (2017) "Minister Kumbaro speaks exclusively for PDC: We have a program of cultural cooperation among Albanians wherever they are", October 12th, <https://kdpolitik.com/2017/10/ekskluzivisht-per-kdp-ne-flet-ministrja-kumbaro-kemi-program-per-bashkepunim-kulturor-mes-shqiptareve-kudo-qe-ndodhen/>.

<sup>71</sup> No Author (2015) Albania-Kosovo Memorandum of Understanding on "Days of Albanian Culture in Diaspora" and establishment of "Cultural Centres in Diaspora", March 23th, <http://www.kultura.gov.al/al/newsroom/lajme/shqiperi-kosove-memorandum-bashkepunimi-per-ditet-e-kultures-shqiptare-ne-diaspore-dhe-themelimi-e-qendrave-kulturore-ne-diaspore>.

were very few joint cultural activities that took place that year. What was foreseen to be accomplished within 2015, was only partially done. Except the exchanging of two theatrical performances, some exhibitions and concerts, the other activities would remain in shadow. KTV, a Kosovo Television, tried to contact the Ministry of Culture, but it was almost impossible to get a response on the progress of these activities.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, the Minister of Culture of Albania, Mirela Kumbaro, said to KTV that this year has been active in terms of cooperation, if compared with one year before. Kumbaro was very optimistic that in 2016 an even greater cooperation between the two countries could have been done, but for that, according to her, there were needed a greater mobilization of the creators, KTV quoted her.<sup>73</sup> The epilogue was the concert of the well-known Kosovo rock band "Gjurmët" that completed the activities of the common cultural calendar for that year. Whereas, the annual conferences once in Prishtina and one in Tirana on the material and non-material cultural heritage with specific topics, the joint training by UNESCO specialists and other organizations, the trainings of the specialists in Prishtina from the National Library staff in Tirana, the participation of representatives from Kosovo in the activities of the Agency of Archaeological Service, the conference on dramaturgy in Tirana were some of the events that were not carried out that year. We can add also the non-functioning of the joint albanological portal Kosovo-Albania.

### ***Challenges to Impact on Culture: From Agreements to Public Perception***

The meeting of the Government of Kosovo and that of Albania, which was scheduled to take place on 24 April 2017 in Vlora, was postponed without giving any date and motive. It would have been the fourth meeting that the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Albania organised since the declaration of Kosovo's independence. Without any rumours, they achieved to hold the meeting in Korca on 27 November of the same year. *"It is evident that these meetings were more a kind of patriotic spectacle and a tendency to present a beautiful red image than to have any concrete effect on improving the lives of citizens,"* said a few hours before the fourth meeting of the two governments, the Kosovo analyst Artan Muhaxhiri.<sup>74</sup> The postponement of the meeting has really shown in a way the level of Albania's relations with Kosovo, Macedonia and other states. Many strategies, documents, promises, activities and official meetings have been done, but they have very little impact and what's more a lot of tasks among institutions were left unfinished. Currently, this perception is widely spread in the Albanian territories of the region and it has been shown in all Vox Pops of the media, and also to the many statements of a number of public personalities of the countries where Albanians are living.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> No Author (2015) "How much cultural exchange has between Kosovo and Albania", Koha Net, December 24th, <http://archive.koha.net/?id=4&l=90701>.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> No author, (2017) "Meetings of the governments of Kosovo and Albania: folkloric spectacle without economic effect", Gazeta Express, November 27th, <http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/mbledhjet-e-qeverive-te-kosoves-dhe-te-shqiperise-spektakel-folklorik-pa-efekt-ekonomik-466860/>.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Kim Mehmeti, writer and publicist, dated 8 November 2017.

What makes the difference in the public perception in our day? *"The sense of not knowing each other. Still, for more than a quarter of a century since Albanian communism collapsed, Tirana-Pristina relations are loaded with stereotypes, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and opposing interests,"* said the Kosovar publicist Migjen Kelmendi.<sup>76</sup> The absence of concrete results was the reason of postponing the fourth governmental meeting in April 2017. Both sides agreed to postpone the meeting because the failure to implement several signed agreements since the first meeting in Prizren made it nonsense to meet again. Only by their fulfilment it was thought to proceed with the next meeting.<sup>77</sup>

Since the first joint meeting in Prizren, where the Albania-Kosovo strategic partnership has been signed, there have been other meetings in March 2015 in Tirana and in June 2016 in Pristina. In an overall evaluation, besides the strategies, calendars and activities, it should be underlined that Albania's impact in the region although it tends to be seen great, it is still far from reality. It seems that the biggest impact so far has been coming from the media. *"In this regard, especially after the two governments' joint meeting and the Strategic Partnership Statement, the two line ministries have already drafted a common cultural calendar and for four years the cultural institutions operating within the Ministries of Culture of the two countries, had extended their cultural activity in many directions, for example, there are common cultural and historical days and also there has been co-ordination of the cultural and artistic activities in the special national, cultural and historical days of Kosovo and Albania. So, there are a number of projects from both countries that are implemented based on a dynamic and agreed agenda with precise timing, costs, and activity implementers,"* said Mr. Syl Ukshini.<sup>78</sup>

Differently from the official views, in the public memory, it has remained only the protocols with their patriotic settings and slogans. Mostly, what have been appreciated were the symbols and the findings of the slogans. It began with the symbolic day of January 11th, "One Land, One Nation, One Dream", in the first meeting of 2014 in Prizren. The enthusiasm of the meeting was very high if considering that there were identified 15 priorities and the premiers Edi Rama and Hashim Thaci committed to fulfil them within 100 days. A year and some months later (in March 23, 2015), the second meeting took place in Tirana at the Palace of Congresses around a table with a double-headed eagle. It was a wonderful artistic element created by the organizers of Tirana, where emphasis was put on intensifying relations. The third meeting was held on July 7, 2016, with the same time span as the first. The fourth meeting was held only in 27 November 2017 in Korça. *"The meeting that we just concluded in Korca shows a significant achievement score based on what we have done so far. We have taken these commitments on the conviction that there is still much to be done and practically since the first meeting in Prizren in 2014 we have enriched this framework with some important elements while it remains to meet another requirement. I'm also glad that all the*

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Migjen Kelmendi, Publicist, dated 13 November 2017.

<sup>77</sup> No Author, (2017) " That is why the joint meeting between Kosovo and Albania was postponed ", Gazeta Mapo, April 20th, <http://www.mapo.al/2017/04/ja-pse-u-shty-mbledhja-e-perbashket-kosove-shqiperi/1>.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Syl Ukshini, Minister Counselor, Chargé d'Affaires, November 24th 2017.

*steps taken are well defined. The Albanian space is one and inseparable*", said enthusiastically the Prime Minister Rama after the agreements reached on 27 November.

There were few words about culture and what real impact they have brought. What is the real impact of the cooperation between the two governments? Has the cultural and educational cooperation been increased? Mostly of the opinion-makers on both sides of the border believe that this relationship has been dimmed. *"The initiatives of Tirana-Prishtina relations, not only in culture, have had just one direction for many years: from Tirana to Pristina. Nothing important goes in the opposite direction. Therefore, we cannot speak about diminishing of collaboration, perhaps one could talk for reduction of cultural products coming from Tirana"* quote of Migjen Kelmendi, publicist and owner of Cable Television "Rrokum".<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, individuals and the different private and state institutions in the Balkans have different perceptions and this is related to the real quality of these relations, which apparently are still far from the desired real impact of Tirana. The latter seems to have a kind of neglect for the Kosovar factor and the possibilities of cooperation. *"I would like to have at least a painting at the National Gallery Fund in Tirana*, said renowned Kosovo painter Rexhep Ferri,<sup>80</sup> one of the forerunners of modernity in figurative arts in the former Yugoslavia. *"They would have been part of the Albanian post-war modernity, a time when Albania was banned from modern art, but the Tirana Art Gallery officials did not even dare to keep any of the work after my exhibition opened there"*. There is some kind of scrupulousness regarding the quality of the works of Kosovar authors in Tirana. Some, who have made history, are not represented in Albanian anthologies and sources. The same as in the case of Ferri there is no room for poets and narrators such as Anton Pashku, Rrahman Dede, Farudin Gunga and others.

*"I can say that a strange phenomenon is occurring in the last two years: as Albania does not show any interest to the Albanians in Macedonia thus they have started to feel self-sufficient. This at best is seen in the visibility of the Albanian TV that is falling and the weakening of the euphoria of the past times when Albanians of Macedonia almost did not watch any local TV. But as I said: Everything has an end - even the Albanian media have almost forgotten that there are Albanians in Macedonia, they mention them only when there is a scandal and not for any cultural event,*" said publicist Kim Mehmeti.<sup>81</sup> The alienation of the relations is somewhat linked to the globalization of information. Global information is much more important than the local one. Thus the biggest losers are the small communities and their products. This trend is happening also in the entire Balkans where the main news, apart from the political ones, goes with the international trend of covering news that are mostly 'clicked'. And for this reason it is happening as in the case of Montenegro, where the relationship is somewhat lagging behind only at courtesy levels of the Executive and the Presidency of the two countries since the relationship is built in such a way. Between the two countries there have been continuous exchanges of senior officials' visits, where the larger

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with Migjen Kelmendi, Publicist, dated 13 November 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Quotation of the author after his personal exhibition at the Tirana Art Gallery devoted to his 50 years of work. November 2013.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Kim Mehmeti, former director of TOPCh office in Macedonia, date 8 November 2017.

part of the discussions were spent on issues regarding the integration processes apart from bilateral relations. *"The institutions of Tirana have an indirect influence, I would say, in the culture of Albanians in Montenegro. There is neither institutional cooperation and communication nor any assistance from the official cultural institutions of the Republic of Albania. All cultural communication is carried out through private cultural subjects, associations or non-governmental organizations who are dealing with culture. It seems to me that this type of cultural communication takes place in just one direction! However, I regret to say that instead of enriching it, after the initial enthusiasm in the early 90's of the last century, it is observed a kind of decline in the level of cultural communication. It needs to be said also that Albanians in Montenegro are not involved at all in the common Albania – Kosovo cultural calendar,"* said Ismet Kallaba.<sup>82</sup>

It seems that rising culture at its highest level and approximation with international norms constitutes the real challenge of Albania. It is believed that the fulfilment of the European standards, related to the adoption of the philosophy of the fathers of the European Union, where Europe recognized as a cultural community is the finite way of cooperation. It seems that achieving integration in the European Family is the common denominator, and if the cultural and media elites of the Albanian-speaking space will contribute then we will together accomplish our goal. *"Therefore, we have come to Korca to be inspired. The reality, but also the economy, encourages us to cooperate in diplomacy, to have complementary and alternative diplomatic and consular offices and consulates. Being together, as part of the European Union a place where both countries aspire to integrate, will make us stronger. Being together they will respect us more",* wrote in an editorial the Foreign Minister of Kosovo Behgjet Pacolli.<sup>83</sup> Robert Schuman, the former French minister and one of the main architects of the European political community, in his book "On behalf of Europe", among many other arguments stated that *"Europe, before being a military alliance or an economic entity, must be a cultural community in the most elevated sense of this term"*. This argument is missing nowadays in Albania and the countries of the region with Albanian population. We are missing the efforts to achieve European standards and the time is lost with activities without substance or with very poor impact.

*"The dominant perception of a representative part of the cultural institutions of Kosovo is that Tirana is an Albanian Piedmont. Therefore, this perception is completely misguided in my opinion, as it is making Kosovo cultural institutions to be transformed into photocopying machines, which do nothing else but just importing laws, programs, manifestos, policies, ideas from Tirana to Prishtina, allowing itself the comfort of not thinking. In this chosen, rather inactive position, the official Prishtina cultural institutions have lost their credibility and rightly so they are seen and experienced from Tirana as extensions of the Kukes Culture*

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with Ismet Kallaba, President of the Association of Artists and Intellectuals "Art Club" Ulcinj, date 12 September 2017.

<sup>83</sup> Pacolli, Behgjet (2017), "Why Korça, as a new start for co-operation with Albania?", Panorama newspaper, November 27th, <http://www.panorama.com.al/pse-korca-si-start-i-ri-per-bashkepunimin-me-shqiperine/>.

*Department. So in this domain, the impact is enormous. Pristina has no cultural policy”,* said the publisher and publicist Migjen Kelmendi.<sup>84</sup>

In fact, the perception is that Tirana, although it tries to be more institutional, it has not proper capacities to advance the cooperation processes between the two countries. The fact is that between the cultural institutions of Albania and Kosovo everything concerning the documentation is going very well.

One of the brightest aspects of this cooperation is linked with the agreement for the first albanological portal between Albania and Kosovo. The portal, despite the efforts made by the national libraries of both countries, it is not yet functional even four years after signing the agreement. *“We have qualified staff but we do not have many opportunities and logistic capacities to maintain it at the levels that we aim for such a portal. And if we cannot do it, then for Kosovo is a bit more difficult,”* is quoted to say Persida Asllani the director of the National Library in Tirana.<sup>85</sup> Typing in the web site address does not provide access to the designed portal for bibliographic sources such as books, articles, maps, manuscripts or digital sources of the Albanian character. It is a bit disappointing when you think about the rumour and institutional promotion of the agreement about the Albanian portal. At that time, it was signed by Aurel Plasari, then director of the National Library of Albania, and Sali Bashota, also director of the National and University Library of Kosovo. The promotion of the Albanian Portal ([www.portialbanologjik.net](http://www.portialbanologjik.net)) was promoted in April of that year in the framework of the ninth edition of the "Library Week in Kosovo", but it remained at very early levels. Earlier, the representatives of the National Library of Albania stated that the responsibility for managing the portal belonged to the National Library of Kosovo "Pjetër Bogdani", and indeed the representatives of the Kosovo Library did know nothing that the Albanian portal had stopped functioning, when they were asked by media.<sup>86</sup> If the portal does not function, this does not mean that Albania does not have a very good institutional cooperation with Kosovo. This was confirmed by the recent activity dedicated to the Kosovar writer Anton Pashkut. We have commitments and everything fits well within this cooperation, which is created by the calendar, said the director of the National Library, Persida Asllani. *“While official Tirana is facing the transition from Communism to Cannabisme, the official Pristina is facing the challenges of statehood and uncertainty about how this process looks like. Kosovo's civic concept is far from being overwhelmed by the Kosovar leadership. Still, civic Kosovo is experienced as provisional, which means that the Union by Albania will be the final process. Unfortunately, this is also helped by the often resurgent of the leadership in Tirana, which is affecting and nurturing these politically unproductive expectations of Kosovo politics. Europeanization is the perspective of our approach”,* said Migjen Kelmendi.<sup>87</sup> If with Kosovo the Albania's relationship is warm

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Migjen Kelmendi, Publicist, dated 13 November 2017.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Persida Asllani, director of the National Library, dated 14 November 2017.

<sup>86</sup> No Author (2015) "The common albanological portal Kosovo - Albania, unfunctional", Dialog Plus, October 30th, <http://dialogplus.ch/portali-i-perbashket-albanologjik-kosove-shqiperi-jofunksional-77647>.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Migjen Kelmendi, Publicist, dated 13 November 2017.

because the two countries have many channels of cooperation, regardless of the voices in favour of or against the positive impact of Tirana, it cannot be said the same for other states with Albanian populations in the Balkan.

The perception is that Albania is the centre and it is believed that the other spaces are simply peripheries. This conclusion could be drawn through the continuous statements of the Albanian factor in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. *"I believe and continue to believe that cultural peripheries - as we the Albanians in Macedonia are - need to be maintained by the centre because the centre needs them. Said it otherwise, the power of a nation is shown on how much they care about their social and cultural peripheries. Albania has neither the will nor the interest to do so, that is why the Albanian culture is fragmented. My impression is that everyone has started to enjoy living in our own cultural principdom and it seems that we are not even interested in the integration of the Albanian culture within ourselves. In this way, the influence of Albania on their compatriots in Macedonia is noticed only in politics, even there it prevails the personal benefits of party elites"*, writes Kim Mehmeti.<sup>88</sup>

But more than the will, it is the fact that Albania does not generate funds for its Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Culture for 2018 has had a budget of 2 billion (ALL), with an increase of only 200 million ALL compare to the last year. According to the draft budget report, presented by Minister Mirela Kumbaro in the Parliamentary Media Commission, the increase is the result of investments. According to the ministry, the salary and social security fund in the Ministry of Culture makes up to 46.6% of the total budget, which means that almost half of its budget goes for the salaries.<sup>89</sup> Academy of Science in Kosovo and Albania are seriously confronting the lack of funds. In the past, both institutions, separately and taken together, have played a key role in various aspects, not just related to national culture and identity issues, but also in setting some high cultural and linguistic standards which continue to be important even today. The idea of joining the two academies has been always an option that would have improved and give a new impetus to education, science and culture in the Albanian-speaking areas. Unfortunately, nothing has been done so far. It is thought by various specialists that the setup of a unique academy of science can save the government's efforts in the process of standardizing textbooks for pre-university and higher education. However, considering the problems of today and the deep crisis that the Academy of Sciences of Albania is going through, it simply cannot play this role, the more so the Academy of Kosovo. Anyway, the two institutions have a rich calendar together, which they have filled in with many joint activities.

### **The role of the Media: Empowering Private Institutions**

For the sake of the argument, Albanian media like TopCh, Digitalb, Supersport, Klan have established their partnerships in Kosovo and Macedonia and this was the most direct impact that Albania was sending to the region and taking back home. Kosovo and Macedonia, thanks

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Kim Mehmeti, former chief of the TOPCh office in Macedonia, dated 8 November 2017.

<sup>89</sup> Nikolli, Fatmira (2017) "2018 budget, Culture confronts Finances", November 9, Gazeta Shqiptare, <http://www.gsh.al/2017/11/09/buxheti-2018-es-kultura-perplaset-financat/>.

to the establishment of the Albanian media, were much more present through the news coverage and the range of issues discussed.

How active is Albanian cultural diplomacy? Nowadays, it is weaker in the region because it is no longer directly attached to the practice. Moreover, since 2016, the TopCh centre in Kosovo and the office in Skopje were closed for financial reasons. The impact of cultural and cultural-education exchange, especially in Macedonia, has evidently fallen sharply. Nowadays, there is no attempt by Tirana to convey its opinion to the region through the media. Portals, which have flourished in both countries, simply translate news between countries, which often are unconfirmed. *"It has not happened that any cultural event from Macedonia to be transmitted by the Albanian media. This is especially notable after the closure of Top Chanel's editorial office in Skopje, which over the years of its activity has had a great influence in factorizing the Albanians of Macedonia within the Albanian territory. In short, Tirana was once seen as the Piedmont of all Albanians, while now the Albanians of Macedonia have almost begun to overwhelm the conviction that: It (Tirana) regards us as the useless part of the nation"*, says the former manager of the TOPCh office in Macedonia, Kim Mehmeti.<sup>90</sup> More than an underestimation, the loose of interest seems to be emerging because of the indifference that Albania and vice versa, the Albanian region, are showing to each other. It seems that in all Albanian space of Balkans there is an attempt to create mini-identities within the Albanian national identity. Each country intends more to create a place in the European family than to integrate with each other. Endless debates have been raised between one-another, but one of the best acquaintances of this phenomenon, Mehmet Kraja, would write in his book on Kosovo Identity that: *"Kosovar identity" is an invented political identity. And this identity does not exist beyond politics, because, Kosovo is us and we are nothing,*" he said in an interview.<sup>91</sup>

For the sake of the argument, Tirana has averted the debate and it has been trying to keep the impact on Kosovo at institutional level. Despite the successes and activities announced on both sides of the border, Albania's cooperation with Kosovo in the field of culture is still far from the pretending levels. The same could not be said for the private sector, where till the last months, the media sector proved that it stood far ahead of the state actors.

If there exist some development with Kosovo, it cannot be said the same for Macedonia and Montenegro. *"I think, as far as I know, Albania's cultural diplomacy in Montenegro has not worked so far. For the time being, I do not remember any cultural activity that is organized or sponsored by the Embassy of the Republic of Albania, generally the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this matters, the only exception are those projects in the field of culture implemented with the support of the European Union in the framework of the Albania-Montenegro cross-border cooperation program (IPA program),"* said Ismet Kallaba, the chair of the Association of Artists and Intellectuals "Art Club" from Ulcinj, and professor of

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Kim Mehmeti, former chief of the TOPCh office in Macedonia, dated 8 November 2017.

<sup>91</sup> Demolli, Donjeta (2013) "Nothingness is without identity", Gazeta Jeta, February 27th, <http://kallxo.com/gjnk/hici-nuk-ka-identitet/>.

literature.<sup>92</sup> It is quite true that Albanians almost never feel the influence of Tirana. It's not just the lack of direct cooperation, but also the very little institutionalization. An Albanian official of the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPS), a party led by Milo Djukanovic, an employee at the Ministry of Education in Podgorica, confirms this, though he do not admit it directly. *"We do not have the presence of Tirana, as we would like to and moreover we are divided with each other,"* he says. *"Most Albanian households have different satellite, digital platforms, and so on, apart from the Analog transmissions, to follow the main channels and shows of the Albanian televisions. I can say that this has had a positive impact, especially on children and young people, on the use of the Albanian literary language. It should also not be forgotten that a part of Albanian students from Montenegro are pursuing their studies at universities in Albania, which has had a positive impact in many aspects, including those linguistics, cultural, etc., especially in preserving the national identity of Albanians in Montenegro"*, said Ismet Kallaba, who is also the organizer of the "Kalipso "Festival in Ulcinj.<sup>93</sup> *"Albanians in Montenegro make up the voiceless group, distancing them from the public sphere. This "media silence" is part of Montenegrin media editorial policy towards Albanians. The few things about Albanians in Montenegro are mainly related to politics and black chronicle,"* while the Albanian culture is anathematized in the Montenegrin media because writing about the culture of another nation, in this case the Albanian culture, will meaning to write positively about it," it is reported in *"Albanian-language media in Montenegro and national culture"*.<sup>94</sup>

### **Sport: Collaboration in a Globalized Sector**

Thanks to the great attendance of sports, Kosovo and Albania have been exchanging time ago with each other. The fact is that a number of Kosovo players are members of the Albanian national team, while two well-known Albanian coaches Josa and Shkëmbi are currently heading two teams in Kosovo. Mirel Josa, the trainer of "Tirana" and "Skenderbeu" and one of the most successful in Albania is currently the coach of the famous "Pristina" team. A team with great history and coached by renowned international coaches. Whereas Bledi Shkëmbi, Skënderbeu's former head of the team, was appointed the trainer of "Liria". These recent exchanges have shown that Albania has begun to have some impact in Kosovo. In Macedonia the biggest influence has been from a few Albanian footballers playing there and fortunately approached by Albanian teams. The trainer Shpetim Duro has conveyed his Albanian experience to one of the best teams in the Macedonian championship, the Tetovo's "Shkëndija" team.

As far as Albania is concerned, this kind of cooperation and affinity with Kosovo has led to an overflow of players of all ages in Albania. Only the players of "Pristina" are almost a whole team. Thus, today in Albania the former players of Pristina who currently play in

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Ismet Kallaba, President of the Association of Artists and Intellectuals "Art Club" Ulcinj, dated September 12<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Kallaba, Ismet (2015) "Albanian-language media in Montenegro and national culture", Thesis, no.2, p. 110-111.

Albania are Astrit Fazliu, Labionot Ibrahim, Mentor Mazrekaj, Ilir Berisha, Enis Gavazaj, Silver Malaj, Veton Shabani and Liridon Latifi.<sup>95</sup>

The great influence of Tirana has also grown from the digital platform of Sport transmitting information and also exchanging the latest news among the countries, where part of this news regards also Macedonia, although it is understood that most of the news are about Kosovo's sportsmen.

### **The Potential of Education**

Albania's impact on education is mostly related to a kind of effort that has been made to standardize the textbooks and also the great effort to develop joint curricula. This effort took off especially after the signing of *the Cooperation Agreement for the unification of the curricula of the pre-university education system of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo on 03.06.2014*. Within this agreement, the parties have supported the process of co-ordination at a technical and professional level and have developed among them many activities. From this meeting it was achieved the *Unification of the Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education of Albania with the Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education in Kosovo*.<sup>96</sup>

These agreements seemed nice on paper, but in practice the situation was painful. In addition to the two sides' meetings, a case coming up in 2016 showed the gap that existed between the bureaucratic education agreements and the realities between our two countries. Thus, the diplomas of three thousand Kosovo students, who were attending private Albanian universities, were not recognized in Kosovo. From 2010, they had made constant requests to the ministries and all relevant institutions dealing with this issue. The answer as usual was, that it will be resolved soon, and at the meeting of the Minister of Education of Kosovo with the Minister of Education of Albania, on February 8, 2016, it was promised that within the week the process of unification of diplomas would have begun, but this did not happen!<sup>97</sup> The relationship between the Albanian education institutions is closer to Kosovo, then to Montenegro, Macedonia. It is obvious that institutionally there is a number of agreements and cooperation.<sup>98</sup> They date back to *the Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the fields of education and science, signed on 8 March 2010*. Under the agreement it has been implemented:

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<sup>95</sup> No Author (2017) "How many ex-players of Prishtina are playing in Albania, possible reserves for Europe", Gazeta Olle, June 2th, <http://gazetaolle.com/sa-shume-ish-lojtare-te-prishtines-luajne-ne-shqiperi-perforcime-te-mundshme-per-evrope-foto/>.

<sup>96</sup> This material is prepared of the Press Office of the Ministry of Education for the Report according Educational Arrangements of the Republic of Albania and the countries of the region, dated November 15th

<sup>97</sup> No Author (2016) "Kosovo/ 3000 students were not recognized their Albanian diplome", Gazeta Shqip, March 15th, <http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/2016/03/15/kosove-3000-studenteve-nuk-u-njihen-diplomat-shqiptare/>.

<sup>98</sup> No Author (2014) "Declaration of Cooperation and Strategic Partnership Albania-Kosovo", Shqiptarja.com, <http://shqiptarja.com/skedat/2724/deklarata-per-bashkepunim-dhe-partneritet-strategjik-shqiperi-kosove-195455.html>.

- *The mutual exchange of students for undergraduate and postgraduate studies.*
- *Realization of joint degrees in the master and doctoral degree with the logo of a university in Albania and another in Kosovo.*

In all the meetings, it has been concluded that education will remain an issue from where much could be done about the social and economic progress of the two countries in the future. In reality, the situation is very miserable. Albanian's school infrastructure is very weak and Albania in the unfavourable state of education, where every year it has problems with textbooks, corruption and lack of qualification of pedagogical staff; it cannot have any kind of impressive impact on Kosovo. The problems do not stop here, since the liberalization of private schooling has made the level of education to be so low that in some segments of education the situation remains critical. Good examples are very scarce in Albania and also in Kosovo, Macedonia and elsewhere, but often the models that can be transferred are still missing. In this context, the impact of Albania on the experiences of private schools has been very much unnoticed. The idea to create a platform for education is difficult because there is no will and because the preparation of new common policies aimed at creating a unified education system for Albania and Kosovo is also lacking.

There was an attempt in 2011 for the common ABC-book, another agreement on the joint organization of Albanian language and Albanian culture Diaspora and Diaspora education, signed in Tirana later, on the occasion of the two governments meeting on 23 March 2015. The latter conveyed another agreement related to the cooperation agreement in the field of higher education and research, where it was promised that the process of recognition of the diplomas of Kosovo students graduated in Albanian private higher education institutions would soon begin. Under the agreement, there has been intense cooperation between the recognition Diploma sectors (Enic/Naric) of both ministries, which according to the institutions would facilitate the process of recognition of the diplomas.<sup>99</sup>

Did Education in the region and in the Albanian-speaking area failed and what is the Albanian impact? To this question an Albanian minister answered with great difficulty: *"The decision is to accept the texts and the texts are accepted. So a text on how to educate a child in Albania or in Kosovo was recognized on both sides of the border. Now, this decision is taken. On the other hand, we cannot write about the reality of textbooks. In Albania, today, a school has the autonomy to select the texts with which it will educate the younger generation and this is not the same for every school. We are talking about texts that are known by the two governments"*, said Albanian Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati.<sup>100</sup>

Albania faces many challenges as far as Montenegro is concerned, and it is primarily concerned with tackling the impact of Albanian-run municipalities. The lack of Albanian

<sup>99</sup> No Author (2015) "Albania-Kosovo, three agreements on the education between two countries", March 23, <https://arsimi.gov.al/al/newsroom/lajme/shqiperi-kosove-tre-marreveshje-per-arsimin-e-dy-vendeve&page=16>.

<sup>100</sup> No Author (2017) "Did the Albanian-Kosovo united government fail?", Aktiv Press, <http://aktivpress.com/a-deshtoi-bashkimi-qeveritar-shqiperi-kosove/>.

books, but also the various politics, has caused the Albanian-language to begin to lose from these countries. The consequences are referred often and now some evidences coming from school speak for difficult situations. In the official program we have a *Cooperation Agreement in the field of education between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro signed in Tirana on 11 March 2013 entered into force on 28 February 2014*. The signing of this agreement consists of:

- Active cooperation within regional, cross-border and international educational programs;
- Exchange of experience in education system reform in order to benefit from best practices;
- Realization of school-level projects, including twinning of schools, development of joint programs, exchange of groups and students, etc.
- Free movement of students in all levels of higher education; providing university, postgraduate and research scholarships on the principle of reciprocity.
- Exchange of professors based on agreements between institutions of higher education.<sup>101</sup>

Before this document, there was *The Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro on Scientific and Technological Cooperation*, signed in Podgorica on December 16, 2008, by the Ministers of Education and Science of both countries. This agreement provided among others:

- Realization of joint research, development and design projects;
- Exchange of scientists, researchers and technical experts;
- Exchange of information and scientific and technological documentation;
- Organization and participation in meetings, conferences, symposia, courses, seminars;
- Establishment of joint research centres and joint scientific and research groups. This agreement was valid for 5 years.<sup>102</sup>

Albania and Macedonia expect to soon concretise the conclusions that emerged from the meeting of the two governments held in Albania. Both countries are expected to have concrete proposals. *So far, all activity between the two countries is based on the Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Macedonian Government for Cooperation in the Field of Education and Science, signed in Skopje on 2 July 2015; the program of cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2015-2018, signed in Bitola on 22.11.2015.*<sup>103</sup> Under the agreement and this program, the parties have pledged to exchange reciprocal scholarships in state institutions of higher education for the teaching of Macedonian language and literature, also for the teaching of Albanian language and literature, scholarships for undergraduate / postgraduate study visits,

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<sup>101</sup> Source: Press Office of the Ministry of Education in Tirana for the report, dated 16 November 2017.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Source: Press Office of the Ministry of Education in Tirana for the report, dated 16 November 2017.

exchange of experts in the field of education, carrying out study and scientific visits as well as other forms of cooperation.<sup>104</sup> Unfortunately, the impact was small and almost negligible despite the big words. A great effort has been made with the idea of opening a second Albanian university, this time in Skopje, in one effort made in 2015. *"I wanted that this idea to had been carefully analysed in the planning stage in what directions it could have contributed to the needs of the Albanian population in Skopje. This should be done by meeting the high European standards so that you can have a quality university. Care needs to be made to the management staff, but also to the professors. I say this even taking into account the unpleasant experiences that happen to us with the opening of public universities in almost all major cities"*, said former Deputy Minister of Education, Hafizi.<sup>105</sup>

### **Periphery of Periphery: The Case of the Presevo Valley and Bujanovac**

The biggest problem that exists between the two countries is related to the textbooks used in the Presevo Valley. The textbooks used in schools are based on the agreement of the Serbian Ministry of Education and Albania. The used primer is already published in Albania and in small parts it is tailored to students from the Presevo valley.<sup>106</sup> *"There is an agreement in principle that all textbooks for primary and secondary schools for municipalities in southern Serbia could come from Albania, but in this regard no agreement has been reached between the ministries of two states due to the difference in the educational system"*, said Mr. Hasani the Albanian MP in the Serbian Parliament.<sup>107</sup>

In fact, the relationship between Albania and Serbia in education is very old. Albanian Language and Literature at the Albanian Language Department in Belgrade is backed with pedagogues thanks to the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia* on youth cooperation signed in Belgrade on November 10, 2014. Students graduate as specialist of the Albanian language and literature and they are entitled to attend their postgraduate studies in these fields. Each year, about 10-15 Serbian students are attending the summer course of Albanian language. In fact, the situation in this department is far from the expectations and only few of these students come up with good knowledge of Albanian. On the other hand, each academic year a significant number of Albanian students from Presheva Valley (Presevo, Medvedja, Bujanovac) are accepted to study in Albania's universities and higher education institutions. This group of students is accepted at the request and consent of the Albanian municipal authorities, but not in the framework of the official cooperation with Serbia. The agreement with Serbia, Article 1, paragraph 8, foresaw also that both sides would work together, and within 90 days should have approved a joint document for the mutual recognition of diplomas and university degrees. It has been forwarded to the Ministry of

<sup>104</sup> Source: Press Office of the Ministry of Education in Tirana for the report, dated 16 November 2017.

<sup>105</sup> No Author (2015) "Tirana supports Albanian University in Skopje", Gazeta Express, August 11th, <http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/tirana-perkrahe-universitetin-shqip-ne-shkup-121898?archive=1>.

<sup>106</sup> No Author (2017) "ABC-books and textbooks for the Valley of Preshevo come from Albania", Shenja, February 2th <http://shenja.tv/abetaret-dhe-tekstet-shkollore-per-luginen-arrije-nga-shqiperia/>.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

Foreign Affairs, expressing the will that representatives and experts of both sides should meet to specify the technical details of this agreement, but still today it has remained unfinished at technical level.<sup>108</sup> Since 2007, an agreement has been signed between the University of Tirana (UT) and that of Belgrade (UB), for the exchange of students and lecturers, as well as for the participation of students and lecturers of Albanian language of the University of Belgrade in the summer language courses organized by the Faculty of Philosophy and History of the University of Tirana.<sup>109</sup>

The biggest problem of the two countries is actually Presevo and the Bujanovac Valley. The concern about the textbooks for the Albanian municipalities continues to be very acute. The Albanian MP in the Serbian Parliament, Fatmir Hasani has stated that primary school pupils in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, who attend Albanian language classes, already use school texts and ABC-books published in Tirana, but texts for other subjects are missing.<sup>110</sup> *"To use these textbooks, the curriculum in these two countries must fit at least 70-80%, and this is not the case. At the Albanian Ministry of Education they told me that their proposal is to translate the textbooks used in Serbia into the Albanian language",* said Hasani. *The Albanian language textbooks for students of the Presevo valley until 1999 were provided by Pristina. For the past 18 years, students from the Valley are using textbooks, scripts, or handwritten notes of 20 years old.*<sup>111</sup>

### ***Toward Common Cultural Systems***

The Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two countries is the basic document that facilitates the strengthening of ties but also institutionalizes Kosovo-Albania relationship. The cooperation, in terms of Culture and Education, of Albania with countries in the region where Albanians reside, is still at the beginning despite the agreements reached so far. If this is the case for Kosovo, then one can figure it out the relations with other countries. Although, many agreements are often achieved they are still without any real impact.

At last, what worries most is how much this relation which is institutionalize will be actually put into practice. *"Regarding the challenges we face in this field, we must say that it needs more to be done in materializing major projects in the field of book publishing, joint film and sports projects. Of course, financial funds and administrative capacities have to be increased, and this is a process that cannot be completed with just a try, but rather year after year. It is essential that the issue remains a priority of both countries, governments and certain departments".*<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Report/ Dated 09.11.2016, Committee on Education and Means of Public Information, the Parliament of Albania, Tirana, <https://www.parlament.al/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Komisioni-i-Medies-dat---09.11.2016.pdf>.

<sup>109</sup> Partners, University of Tirana, <http://www.unitir.edu.al/index.php/studentet/trajnimet/36-universiteti-/artikuj-universiteti/63-pertneret>.

<sup>110</sup> No Author (2017) "ABC-books and textbooks for the Valley of Preshevo come from Albania", Shenja, February 2th <http://shenja.tv/abetaret-dhe-tekstet-shkollore-per-luginen-arrijne-nga-shqiperia/>.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Syl Ukshini, Minister Councilor, Chargé d'Affaires, November 24th 2017.

It is true that in recent years there has been cooperation and effort, and also the promotion of national culture and the cultural support of Albanians abroad are constitutional obligation, yet the government programs have no proper strategy or practical implementation of this obligation. In the line ministries, directly linked to culture and public diplomacy, there are still no particular and specialized structures for Cultural Diplomacy. It is time that the institutions do establish the right mechanisms and monitoring instruments for materializing the agreements. Unfortunately, there are no defined budgets for cooperation in culture, art, media and sports, thus it makes the agreements too bureaucratic. Meanwhile, figuring out concrete cooperation in culture and education is the first step towards smoothening out the Albanian problematic in the region and it would have a positive impact not only on the Albania-Kosovo relations, but also on the relation with Macedonia and Montenegro. On the other hand, the impact of Albania's cultural diplomacy is lacking also due to the narrow vision of getting proper elements that will boost it. Tirana, Prishtina and to a less extent the other Albanian-speaking centres should no longer look aside each other. The time has come for them to create common cultural systems. For example, Albania has had difficult times of communism and its isolation. The lack of access to modern culture at those times can be complemented through the Albanian authors outside its borders. In order to achieve this, Tirana should be more modest and shows respect for the Albanian authors who lived in the former Yugoslavia. It is time for the state to subsidize the Albanian media to be resident in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. It's the only way to convey the daily life, and also to monitor the status of the agreements and the bureaucratic tricks. On the other hand, education should work much more in terms of common textbooks and the sense for coordinating the many issues. Much more needs to be done regarding the project of Diaspora teachers and curricula adaptations.

It is given that borders cannot change, but the effort to strengthen Albania's impact should not be discontinued. The issue is whether these relations in culture and education will be within the economic space that is foreseen with the changes in the new customs realities. The efforts to EU membership will be of particular importance to Albanians and Albanian inhabited areas, because it will directly affect their well-being.

## Appendix: Bilateral Agreements

### *I. ALBANIA AND FYROM*

1. Protocol on Cooperation in the Field of Security between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia and the Ministry of Public Order of the Republic of Albania and the National Intelligence Service of Albania, signed on 5.6.1992.
2. Protocol for establishing cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Macedonia in the field of consular relations, signed on 29.7.1992.
3. Protocol between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia for the opening of new border crossing points, signed on 12.12.1992.
4. Agreement on scientific, technical and technological cooperation between the Albanian Government and the Government of Macedonia, signed on 1.6.1994.
5. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Government of Macedonia for Mutual Protection and Promotion of Investment with Macedonia, signed on 4.12.1997, entered into force on 3.4.1998.
6. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Macedonia for the reconstruction, repair and maintenance of the borderline and border signs at the Albanian-Macedonian state border, signed on 4.12.1997.
7. Agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the Albanian Government and the Macedonian Government, signed on 4.12.1997.
8. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Macedonian Government on measures for preventing and resolving incidents at the Albanian state border, signed on 4.12.1997.
9. Protocol on economic cooperation between the Albanian Government and the Government of Macedonia, signed on 15.1.1998.
10. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Government of Macedonia on cooperation in the field of plant protection, signed on 15.1.1998.
11. Agreement between the Albanian Government and the Government of Macedonia for the international transport of passengers and goods, signed on 15.1.1998.
12. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Government of Macedonia for the Mutual Execution of Judicial Decisions on Criminal Matters, signed on 15.1.1998.
13. Extradition Agreement between the Albanian Government and the Government of Macedonia, signed on 15.1.1998.
14. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Government of Macedonia on cooperation in the field of veterinary medicine, signed on 15.1.1998.
15. Agreement between the Albanian Government and the Government of Macedonia for Legal Aid in Civil and Criminal Matters, signed on 15.1.1998.
16. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Macedonia regarding mutual assistance and cooperation between their customs administrations, signed on 15.1.1998.
17. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Macedonian Government on Air Services between and beyond their respective territories, signed on 4.6.1998. entered into force on 1.1.2005.
18. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Government of Macedonia on the avoidance of double taxation in respect of taxes on income and capital and for the prevention of fiscal evasion, signed on 15.1.1998.
19. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for the establishment of the International Passenger Lake Pogradec-Ohrid line signed on 25.9.1999, entered into force on 20.7.2005.
20. Protocol between the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of Macedonia on co-operation in the field of employment, training and social security policies, signed on 22.1.1999.
21. Cooperation Protocol between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Macedonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed on 22.1.1999.
22. Agreement on cooperation in the field of agriculture between the Albanian Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of Macedonia, signed on 22.1.1999.
23. Protocol setting out the fields, ways and arrangements for preventing illegal migration between the Ministry of Public Order of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 16.7.2000.
24. Agreement between the Government of Albania and the Macedonian Government on cooperation in the field of health and medical sciences, signed on 23.2.2001, entered into force on 25.4.2003.

## ALBANIA'S IMPACT IN THE REGION IN THE ALBANIAN-SPEAKING AREAS

25. Free Trade Agreement between the Albanian Government and the Macedonian Government, signed on 29.3.2002, entered into force on 15.7.2002.
26. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia on advanced cooperation and contacts, signed on 5.2.2003.
27. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Defense of Macedonia for the training of "Neighboring Efforts", signed on 5.3.2003.
28. Memorandum of Cooperation in the European Integration Process, between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 17.6.2004.
29. Memorandum between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on the Protection and Sustainable Development of Lake Ohrid and its Watershed, signed in Skopje on 17.6.2004.
30. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on readmission of persons, as well as its protocol, signed on 17.6.2004, entered into force on 15.7.2005.
31. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on co-operation in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, illicit traffic of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances of precursors, illegal migration and other illegal activities, signed on 17.6.2004, entered into force on 20.5.2005.
32. Protocol on cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Macedonia, signed in Skopje on 15 April 2005.
33. Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia regarding the training "Adriatic Engagement 05", signed in Tirana on 28.6.2005 and in Skopje on 8.7.2005.
34. Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Culture between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 16.11.2005, entered into force on 5.1.2007
35. Agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 16.11.2005, entered into force on 10.5.2006.
36. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on the opening of the international border crossing point between the two countries "Xhepisht-Trebisht", signed on 16.11.2005.
37. Cooperation Agreement in the Field of Defense between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Defense of Macedonia and Bulgaria on cooperation in the field of military training, technique and science, signed on 17.5.2005.
38. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on Mutual Protection of Classified Information, signed in Tirana on 16.11.2005, entered into force on 4.4.2006.
39. The Protocol of Cooperation between the General Directorate of Patents and Trademarks of the Republic of Albania and the State Industrial Property Office of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 25.11.2005.
40. Protocol on cooperation in the field of energy sector, between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 19.5.2006.
41. The two-party protocol between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia and the AMBO Consortium "On the entry-exit point of the Trans Balkan Pipeline AMBO", signed on 30.10.2006.
42. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Office of the Public Prosecutor of Albania and the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on March 30, 2005.
43. "Tirana Declaration" document signed on 16.10.2007 on the coordination of social insurance in South East Europe.
44. "Montenegro Conclusions" document signed during the forums of the Third Ministerial Conference on Employment and Social Policies in Southeast Europe, signed in Budva on 26.10.2007.
45. Additional protocol for intensifying cooperation in the fight against trafficking in human beings through state borders and for the intensification of victims as well as of persons suspected of being victims of trafficking in human beings, in addition to the "Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and The Government of the Republic of Macedonia on cooperation in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, illicit traffic of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, illegal migration and other illegal activities ", signed on 14.9.2007.

46. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on the Mutual Movement of Citizens signed on 13.2.2008 and the Protocol of Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Macedonia on the Mutual Movement of Citizens during circulation in the border areas, signed on 19.2.2008, entered into force on 28.8.2008.
47. Agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of Macedonia for joint patrols along the state border, signed on 22.2.2008.
48. Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia on the organization and development of meetings between the heads of border police of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia at the national, regional and local level, signed on 22.2.2008 .
49. Cooperation Protocol between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 8.2.2010, entered into force on the same date.
50. Protocol of Cooperation between the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Directorate for Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 8.2.2010, entered into force on the same day.
51. Protocol on the electronic exchange of data between the Customs administrations of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia, signed on 31.5.2012, entered into force on 8.1.2013.
52. Cooperation Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in the framework of the European Union accession process, signed on 17.3.2011, entered into force on 30.1.2012.
53. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia amending the "Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for the Mutual Movement of Citizens signed on 19.2.2008", signed on 14.12.2011, entered into force on 6.4.2012.
54. Agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia on the Establishment and Functioning of a Joint Police Co-operation Center, signed on 15.3.2012, entered into force on 14.4.2012.
55. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on the settlement of the debt of the Republic of Albania vis-à-vis the Republic of Macedonia relating to the repayment of amounts in the exchange of goods between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, signed in Tirana on 18.6.2012 and in Skopje on 27.6.2012.
56. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for mutual recognition of driving licenses, signed in Tirana on 23.11.2012, entered into force on 14.3.2013.
57. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on the joint border crossing point Trebisht-Xhepsisht, signed in Tirana on 23.11.2012, entered into force on 5.3.2013.
58. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia on the strengthening of cooperation in the field of internal control signed on 17.5.2013 in Qafë Thanë, entered into force on 17.5.2013 .
59. Agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia on the establishment and operation of the Joint Information Exchange Center in Qafë Thanë, signed in Skopje on 15.3.2012.
60. Protocol to exchange diplomatic notes for the implementation of the "Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for the establishment of the OhridProduction of Lake Ohrid", which entered into force on 4 August 2014.
61. Cooperation Agreement between the Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration and the Ministry of Information Society and Administration of the Republic of Macedonia for cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), signed on 15.9.2014, entered into force on the date signing.
62. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia on the exchange of experts, signed in Skopje on 22.1.2015, entered into force the date of signing.
63. Program for Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2015-2020 ", signed in Tirana on 16.3.2015, entered into force the date of signature.

64. Agreement between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Macedonia for Social Protection signed on 17.3.2015, entered into force on 1.6.2016.
65. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia for cooperation during the tourist season, signed in Tirana on 5 September 2014, entered into force on the day of signing.
66. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on cooperation in the field of education and science, signed in Vlora on 2.7.2015, entered into force on 23.2.2016.
67. Program between the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia in the field of education and science for the period 2015-2018, signed in Bitola on 22.11.2015, entered into force the date of signing .
68. Cooperation Agreement between the General Directorate of Archives of Albania and the State Archives of Macedonia, signed in Skopje on 6.11.2015, entered into force on the date of signing.
69. Memorandum of Cooperation in the Energy Sector between the Ministry of Energy and Industry of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia, signed in Struga on 11.12.2015, entered into force the date of signature.
70. Program for cultural cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2015-2020, signed on 16.11.2015.
71. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia on Constant Cross Border Tracking, signed in Tirana on 19.7.2016, entered into force the date of signature.
72. Memorandum of Cooperation between the Veterinary Order of the Republic of Albania and the Veterinary Order of the Republic of Macedonia, signed in Tetovo on 2.12.2016.

## **II. ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO**

1. Agreement between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro over the permanent international circulation through the border control at Hani I Hotit – Bozhaj, signed on 24.1.2000.
2. Agreement for cultural cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Media of Montenegro, signed on 28.2.2001, entered in force on the same date.
3. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro over the water problems, the joint Status of the Intergovernmental Albanian Montenegrin Commission for the border waters, and the Protocol for the gathering of this Commission, signed on 21.10.2001, entered in force on 13.2.2003.
4. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Montenegro, for the cooperation in the area of the war against organized crime and the illegal traffic and other illegal criminal activities, signed on 31.10.2003
5. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, over the international road transport of the passengers and goods, signed on 2.7.2004, entered in force on 11.11.2004
6. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for the placement of the international lake line for the passengers, Shkoder – Virpazar, signed in Podgorica, on 2.7.2004.
7. Memorandum of understanding between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Montenegro for the exploitation of LTL 400 KV, signed on 2.7.2004
8. Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for cooperation in health and medical sciences, signed on 10.11.2004.
9. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Montenegro for reciprocal cooperation in the customs issues, signed on 23.12.2005, entered in force on 1.12.2007.
10. Memorandum of Understanding over the cooperation between the General Prosecutor Office of the Republic of Albania and the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of Montenegro, signed on 30.3.2005.
11. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for the organization of the railway traffic between two countries, signed on 16.5.2006.
12. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for the development of the Shkodra Lake Cross-border, signed on 26.5.2006
13. "Tirana Declaration", a document which was signed on 16.10.2007 for the coordination of Social Insurance in South-East Europe.

14. “Montenegro Conclusions”, a document which was signed during the Forums of the Third Ministerial Conference for the Employment and Social Policies on the South-East Europe, signed on 26.10.2007.
15. Cooperation Protocol between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, signed on 22.11.2007
16. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for the opening of the joint border cross point of Muriqan-Sukobine, signed on 17.1.2007, entered in force on 24.5.2007
17. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Defense of Montenegro, signed on 3.7.2008
18. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for the cooperation on science and technology, signed on 16.2.2008
19. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Montenegro, for the cross-border police cooperation, signed on 1.2.2008.
20. Protocol between Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic of Albania and Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic of Montenegro over the joint patrolling along the states border between Republic of Albania and Republic of Montenegro, signed on 22.2.2008.
21. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration of Montenegro for the organization and development of the meetings between the border police directors of the Republic of Albania and Montenegro in national, regional and local level, signed on 22.2.2008
22. Agreement between the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration of the the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Montenegro for the protection and sustainable development of the Lake of Shkodra, signed on 25.2.2008, entered in force in the same date.
23. Protocol between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for taking actions together on border control at Muriqan – Sukobin, signed on 18.6.2009, entered in force on 28.1.2010.
24. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for the reciprocal movement of the nationals, signed on 6.11.2009, entered in force on 15.2.2010.
25. Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the area of environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources between the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environmental of Montenegro, signed on 19.6.2010, entered in force on the same date.
26. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for readmission of unauthorized stay persons, signed on 6.11.2009, entered in force on 17.3.2001
27. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for readmission, reconstruction and maintenance of the pyramids and other signs on Albanian-Montenegro state cross-border, signed on 6.11.2009, entered in force on 8.9.2010.
28. Agreement for cultural cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Media on Montenegro, signed on 10.11.2009, entered in force on the same date.
29. Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Administration of Waters of Montenegro, signed on 14.12.2010, entered in force on the same date.
30. Declaration for the Cooperation of Personal Data Protection Commissioner of Republic of Albania and the Agency for the Personal Data Protection of Montenegro, signed on 19.5.2011, entered in force on the same date.
31. Changing of the Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for the reciprocal movement of the nationals, signed on 14.12.2011, entered in force on 21.3.2012.
32. Agreement for determination of the joint cross-border point Zatrijebacka Cijevna-Grabon for the international traffic of passengers and for the cross-border point Cerem-Vranica between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, signed on 25.1.2012, entered in force on 20.2.2013.
33. Protocol for the Electronic Exchange of data between the Customs Administration of the Republic of Albania and Montenegro, signed on 7.9.2012, entered in force on 10.2.2013.
34. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for conducting border railway transport between two countries, signed in Podgorica, on 2.8.2012, entered in force on 2.5.2013.

35. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for reciprocal protection of classified information, signed in Tirana, on 11.3.2013, entered in force on 17.6.2013
36. Agreement for cooperation on the area of education between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, signed in Tirana on 11.3.2013, entered in force on 28.2.2014
37. Agreement between the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro, over the cooperation in the field of tourism, signed in Tirana on 25.4.2014, entered in force in the same date.
38. Technical agreement between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Montenegro over the demilitarization of ammunition (pilot project of NSPA), signed in Budva, on 21.10.2014.
39. Second Additional Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro for “intensification of the cooperation in war against human beings traffic and improvement of identification, information, referral and assist on voluntary return of the possible victims of the traffic” signed in 8.12.2014, entered in force on 6.1.2015.
40. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for the reciprocal recognition of driving licenses, signed on 15.12.2014, entered in force on 7.4.2015.
41. Cooperation memorandum between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for the cooperation in the field of Information Technology and Communication, signed in 17.4.2015, entered in force in the same date.
42. Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for economical cooperation, signed in 23.2.2015, entered in force on 20.11.2015
43. Cooperation agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro in the context of the membership in European Union, signed in Tirana on 22.5.2015, entered in force on 16.12.2015.
44. Agreement between the Ministry of Urban Developing of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro for the cooperation in the field of Spatial planning, signed in 30.10.2015, entered in force in the same date.
45. Protocol between the General Directorate of Customs of the Republic of Albania and the Customs Administrate of Montenegro for implementation of “Agreement between the Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro, for conducting border railway transport between two countries, signed in Podgorica, on 3.8.2012” signed on 20.6.2016, entered in force on the same date.
46. Agreement between the railway operators of Montenegro and Albanian railway Durres HSH for the organization of railway transportation of goods and passengers in the border railway line and the joint border station in Tuz, signed in Podgorica on 21.6.2016
47. Protocol for the organization and regulation of railway transport in the area on the joint border station in Tuz and border station of Bajze between railway infrastructure of Montenegro sha Podgorica and Albanian railway HXH Management Unit of infrastructure, signed in Podgorica on 21.6.2016.
48. Cooperation protocol between Directorate of State Police, in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro for cooperation during the tourism season 2016, signed in Ulqin on 22.6.2016, entered in force in the same date.
49. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro, for implementation of “Agreement between Council of Ministries of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Montenegro for conducting border railway transport, signed on 3.7.2012”, signed on 1.7.2016
50. Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Health of Montenegro for cooperation in the field of health, signed in 3.4.2017
51. Protocol between the General Directorate of the State Police in the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the Republic of Albania and the General Directorate in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro for cooperation during the tourism season 2017, signed in Podgorica on 2.6.2017
52. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo for the establishment and functioning of the Joint Center for Police Cooperation, signed in Plava, on 30.5.2017

### ***III. ALBANIA AND KOSOVO***

1. Agreement of the Ministry of the Republic of Kosovo for information and Albanian Radio and Television, signed on 13.10.1992.

## ALBANIA'S IMPACT IN THE REGION IN THE ALBANIAN-SPEAKING AREAS

2. Protocol of Cooperation between the Customs Administration of the Republic of Albania and the Customs Administration of the Administration Mission United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), signed on 22.5.2001, entered into force on 22.5.2001.
3. Memorandum of Understanding on the opening of two border crossing points, border crossings in the south of Dragash, signed on 16.10.2002.
4. Agreement between the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports on behalf of The Government of the Republic of Albania and UNMIK acting on behalf of Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo for Cooperation in the fields of youth culture and sports, signed on 13.8.2002.
5. Memorandum of Understanding on Police Co-operation between the Government of The Republic of Albania and the Interim Administration Mission of United Nations in Kosovo (UNMIK), signed in Tirana, on 09/08/2002.
6. Memorandum of Understanding between the Albanian Investment and Investment Office United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), signed in Tirana on 9.9.2002.
7. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Albania UNMIK acting on behalf of the Provisional Institutions of Self – Government Kosovo for cooperation in the field of public veterinary service, signed on 21.11.2003, entered into force the date of signature.
8. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and UNMIK acting on behalf of the Provisional Institutions of Self – Government Kosovo for co-operation in the field of quarantine and plant protection, signed on 21.11.2003, entered into force the date of signature.
9. Free Trade Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Kosovo Albania and UNMIK acting on behalf of the Provisional Institutions of Self - Government of self-government of Kosovo, signed on 7.7.2003.
10. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Mission of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo promotion and mutual protection of investments, signed on 19.2.2004, entered into force on 7.2.2005.
11. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on behalf of Provisional Institutions of Self Government in Kosovo for Avoiding double taxation related to income tax prevention tax evasion, signed on 28.9.2004, entered into force on 31.3.2005 but with financial effect on 1.1.2006.
12. Protocol in implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation police between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, signed on 2.11.2005.
13. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on the transfer of convicted persons, signed on 2 November 2005, entered into force on 17.6.2006.
14. Protocol between the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of the Government of Kosovo, signed on 4.5.2006.
15. Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Albania and United Nations Mission in Kosovo, on behalf of Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (Ministry of Education and Science) Science and Technology), signed on 8.5.2006.
16. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and "Mali Gjakova" Company for the rescheduling of arrears ", signed on 31.8.2006.
17. Change of Free Trade Agreement between the Council of Ministers of The Republic of Albania and the Interim Administration Mission of United Nations in Kosovo (UNMIK), signed on 20.6.2007.
18. Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 19.6.2008.
19. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo signed on 25.6.2008.
20. Cooperation Agreement between Kosovo Water Regulatory Office and the Albanian Water Regulatory Entity, signed on 15.4.2009.
21. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and The Government of Kosovo for the Mutual Movement of Citizens and its Protocol, signed on 6.10.2009, entered into force on 15.4.2010.
22. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for readmission of persons, signed on 6.10.2009, entered into force on 12.3.2010.
23. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for Mutual Assistance in Issues Customs, signed on 6.10.2009, entered into force on 1.3.2010.

24. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for cross-border police cooperation, signed on 6.10.2009, entered into force on 20.3.2010.
25. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Local Government Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, in the area of local government and decentralization, signed on 06/10/2009.
26. Protocol on cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 25.11.2009.
27. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation in the field of education and Science, signed on 8.3.2010, entered into force on 1.12.2011.
28. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Criminal Matters between the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Albania and the Prosecutor of State of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 12.10.2010, entered into force on the date of signing.
29. Cooperation Agreement between the Albanian National Library (BKSH) and the National and University Library of Kosovo (BKUK) for the creation of Albanian-Kosovo Albanian Albanese portal, signed on 5.3.2011, entered into force at the date of signing.
30. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and The Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the conduct of joint procedures control of entry / exit between border crossing points Morinë (Kukës) - Vërmicë (Prizren) between the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Kosovo and Protocol for conducting joint activities in this BCP, signed on 30.4.2011, entered into force on 21.6.2011.
31. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and The Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the conduct of joint procedures control of entry / exit between Qafe Morine border crossing points (Tropojë) -Qafe Morine (Gjakove) between the Republic of Albania and the Republic Kosovo and the Protocol for the conduct of joint activities in this field PKK, signed on 30.4.2011, entered into force on 21.6.2011.
32. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and The Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the conduct of joint procedures control of entry / exit between Qafe Prush border crossing points (Has) -Qafe Prush (Gjakove) between the Republic of Albania and Republic of Kosovo and the Protocol for carrying out joint activities in this PKK, signed on 30.4.2011, entered into force on 21.6.2011.
33. Agreement on Mutual Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the Fields of common interest between the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Albania and the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 18.4.2011.
34. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and To the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on the International Road Transport of Travelers and Commodities, signed on 22.7.2011, entered into force on 21.11.2011.
35. Cooperation Protocol between the Customs Administration of the Republic of Albania and the Customs Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 18.6.2012.
36. Cooperation Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo in the field of representation Consular Office, signed on 13.1.2012, entered into force on 26.4.2012.
37. Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo on patrolling joint along the state border between the Republic of Albania as well the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 10.3.2012, entered into force on 10.4.2012.
38. Protocol between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo on the organization and the development of meetings between the leaders of the border police of the Republic Albania and the Republic of Kosovo at the national, regional and local levels, signed on 10.3.2012, entered into force 10.4.2012.
39. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo on mutual recognition of permits driving license / drivers, signed on 12.6.2012, has entered into force on 14.9.2012.
40. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, for the exchange and mutual protection of Classified information, signed in Pristina on 7.11.2012.
41. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for mutual legal assistance in matters criminal case, signed in Tirana on 6.11.2012, entered into force on 12.4.2013.
42. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo on Extradition, signed in Tirana, on 6.11.2012, entered into force on 12.4.2013.

43. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the transfer of convicted persons, signed in Tirana on 6.11.2012, entered into force on 6.11.2013.
44. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation in the field of veterinary, signed in Prishtina, on 16.11.2012.
45. Technical Agreement between the Electronic Communications Authority and Post offices of the Republic of Albania and Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications of the Republic of Kosovo for GSM 900 MHz bandwidth planning and coordination 1800 MHz in the border areas, signed in Tirana on 18.1.2013, entered into force at the date of signing.
46. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and To the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the opening of joint points Cross-border Crossing Borje-Glloboçicë, Orgjost (Kukës) - Orçush (Dragash) and Shishtavec (Kukës) - Khrushchev (Dragash) and the Protocols of Performing joint activities at these border crossing points, signed in Tirana, on April 16, 2013.
47. Cooperation Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for Cooperation in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), signed on 19.3.2013, entered into force on the date of signing.
48. Protocols of the First Session of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission for cooperation between Kosovo and Albania, signed in Tirana on March 15, 2013, entered in force the date of signing.
49. Agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo for the creation and the functioning of a joint police co-operation center, signed in Tirana on 16.4.2013, entered into force on 16.5.2013.
50. Framework Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for Cooperation in promotion and facilitation of trade, signed in Prizren on January 11, 2014, entered in force on 11.3.2015.
51. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Transport and Communications Infrastructure of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Kosovo, in the areas of transport and Infrastructure, signed in Prizren, on 11.1.2014, entered into force the date of signing.
52. Joint Statement on Cooperation and Strategic Partnership between The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic Kosovo, signed in Prizren on 11.1.2014.
53. Cooperation Agreement on Tourism between the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Kosovo, signed in Tirana, on February 6, 2014, entered in force the date of signing.
54. Protocol between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo in regarding the consular representation of the Republic of Albania in Republic of Kosovo in Milan, signed in Pristina, on March 14, 2014, entered into force the date of signature.
55. Agreement between the Republic of Albania and Republic of Kosovo regarding the Status of Members of the Armed Forces of the Republic Albania and the Security Force of the Republic of Kosovo during their stay their temporary residence in the territory of the respective states, signed in Prizren on 1.7.2013, entered into force on 25.3.2014.
56. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania Represented by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Albania) and Government of Republic of Kosovo (Represented by Ministry of Finance of Republic of Kosovo) for exemption from value added tax on import books, books related products, newspapers, magazines, periodicals as well as similar press materials published in the Republic of Albania or in the Republic of Kosovo, signed in Pristina, on 28.3.2014, entered into force on 20.6.2014.
57. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for avoiding double taxation related with taxes on income and on capital and for the prevention of evasion fiscal year, signed in Prishtina, on 28 March 2014, entered into force on 11.3.2015.
58. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Environment and Planning Spatial Planning of the Republic of Kosovo, for cooperation in the field of spatial planning, housing and construction, signed in Pristina, on 15.4.2014, entered into force signature date.
59. Protocol between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force on co-operation in the field of education and military training, signed in Tirana on 16.7.2014, entered in power the date of signing.
60. Protocol between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania and Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force on Co - operation and assistance in the field of Euro - Atlantic and regional integration, signed in Tirana, on 16.7.2014, entered into force the date of signing.
61. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of European Integration of The Republic of Albania and the Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Kosovo for the establishment of the Technical

Commission for Translation of Legislation EU in Albanian, as well as cooperation in the area of approximation legislation, signed on 26.3.2014 and entered into force the date of signing.

62. Cooperation Agreement between Albanian Post SH.A. and Posta's e Kosovo JSC, signed on 10.11.2014, entered into force the date of signing.

63. Cooperation Agreement between the General Directorate of Archives of The Republic of Albania and the State Archives of Kosovo Archives, signed on 3.12.2014.

64. Additional protocol for intensifying cooperation in the fight against trafficking human beings and to improve identification, notification, referral and voluntary return assistance to victims as well as potential victims trafficking, in particular of children in supplement to the agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Republic of Kosovo "On cross-border police cooperation", signed in Pristina on 12.6.2012, entered into force on 11.7.2012.

65. Cooperation Agreement between the Kosovo Academy for Public Safety and the Police Academy of Albania, signed on 26.11.2014, entered into force on the day of signing.

66. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation in the field of security, signed on 23.3.2015.

67. Protocol between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Kosovo "On the Implementation of the Framework Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Republic of Kosovo for co-operation in promoting and facilitating trade ", signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force on the same date.

68. Joint Declaration between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for Cooperation in Regional Development Area in Albania-Kosovo Cross-border Areas, signed on 23.3.2015.

69. Memorandum between the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation in the field of agriculture and rural development, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force signature date.

70. Memorandum of Understanding for Strengthening Cooperation between the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Finance of Republic of Kosovo, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force on signing.

71. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Sports the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo for the joint organization of teaching of Albanian language and culture Albanian Diaspora and Diaspora, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force the date of signing.

72. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Sports the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Republic of Kosovo for institutional co - ordination for progress and the professional development of teachers in pre-university education, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force the date of signing.

73. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Sports the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo in the field of higher education and scientific research, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force the date of signing.

74. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force signature date.

75. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo for Immediate Trans frontier Attendance, signed on 23.3.2015, entered power the date of signing.

76. Protocol between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo on joint use of border control equipment, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force on 22.4.2015.

77. Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of The Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic in Kosovo on Strengthening Co - operation in the Control Area internal, signed on 23.3.2015, entered into force on the same date.

78. Cooperation Agreement between the General Directorate of Standardization of the Republic of Albania and the Kosovo Agency of Standardization of the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 31.7.2015, entered into force on the date of signing.

79. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Social Welfare and Social Security Youth of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Youth Sports of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation in the field of youth, signed in Pristina on 14.7.2015, entered into force the date of signing.

80. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Albania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania Kosovo, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Tirana and Prishtina British Council in the framework of cooperation for the implementation of the project "Project for digital diplomacy - Albania and digital Kosovo ", signed on 14/12/2015.
81. Memorandum of Understanding between the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Diplomatic Academy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, signed in Tirana, on 6.1.2016.
82. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania, represented by the Ministry of Energy and Industry and Government Republic of Kosovo, represented by the Ministry of Economic Development, for exchange and / or allocation of regulatory reserve between the Operator Transmission System OST sh.a. and System Operator, to Transmission and Market - KOSTT JSC, signed in Tirana on March 30, 2013, entered into force the date of signature.
83. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and To the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the promotion and reciprocal protection of investment, signed on 3.5.2016.
84. Protocol of the meeting of the Joint Committee between the Republic of Albania and Republic of Kosovo on the international road transport of passengers and goods, signed in Tirana on 27.4.2016.
85. Joint Declaration between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania and Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, signed in Pristina on 3.6.2016.
86. Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo in the field of administrative, tax and customs investigations, signed in Pristina, on 06/03/2016.
87. Agreement between the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo for the establishment of the joint training, signed in Pristina, on 3.6.2016.
88. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Kosovo for cooperation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development, signed in Pristina, on 3.6.2016.
89. Cooperation Agreement between the Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry for Public Administration of the Republic of Kosovo for Capacity Building in realization of reforms in the field of good governance and public administration, signed in Pristina, on 3.6.2016.
90. Agreement between the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Trade and Industry Republic of Kosovo on Mutual Recognition of Certification test / calibration of tachograph of road vehicles, signed in Pristina, on 06/03/2016.
91. Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Energy and Industry of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Economic Development Republic of Kosovo, signed in Pristina, on 3.6.2016.
92. Partnership Agreement between the Ministry of European Integration of The Republic of Albania, acting as the leader and the Ministry of Administration Local Government that acts as a partner in the management of technical assistance in the IPA II Albania-Kosovo Cross-Border Program 2014-2020, signed in Pristina, on 3.6.2016.
93. Memorandum Cooperation for the organization of joint services of road policing of the Albanian State Police and the Kosovo Police, in the territory of the Republic of Albania, signed on 30.6.2016, entered into force the date of signing.
94. Procedure for the organization of border control services Albanian State Police and Kosovo Police at the Border Crossing Point (Morine - Vermica) in their respective territories, signed on 07.07.2016, entered into force the date of signing.
95. Memorandum of cooperation in the field of geology, between the Service Geological Survey of the Republic of Albania and the Geological Service of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 12.12.2016.
96. Cooperation Agreement between the National Security Agency computer software of the Republic of Albania and the National Security Unit cybernetics of the Republic of Kosovo, signed in Tirana on 24.11.2016.
97. 97.Memorandum Cooperation between the Directorate of State Police in The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Directorate General of Kosovo Police at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republic of Kosovo for cooperation during the tourist season 2016, signed on 27.7.2016 and the Annex of Article 2 of this Memorandum, signed on 10.8.2016.
98. Cooperation Agreement between the Ombudsman of the Republic of Kosovo and the Ombudsman of the Republic of Albania signed in Prishtina, on 7.3.2016.
99. Memorandum of Cooperation for the Organization of Joint Services of Road Policing, between the Kosovo Police and the Albanian State Police, in the territory of the Republic of Albania, signed on 30.6.2017, entered into force with signature.

100. Memorandum of Understanding between the Services of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania and the Assembly Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, signed on 26.5.2017.

101. Cooperation-twinning agreement between the National Historical Museum and the Kosovo Museum, signed on 9.10.2014, entered into force on signing.

#### **IV. ALBANIA AND SERBIA**

1. Agreement between the Government of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania and the Federal Executive Council of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic Yugoslav federation on scientific, educational and cultural cooperation, signed on 19.2.1988 and entered into force the date of signature.

2. Protocol of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Albania and the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, signed on 28 March 2002.

3. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for visa waiver holders of diplomatic passports and service, signed on 26.11.2002.

4. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the promotion and reciprocal protection of investment, signed on 26.11.2002, entered into force on 6.6.2004.

5. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for co-operation in the field medicine and medical sciences. Signed on 26.11.2002.

6. Free Trade Agreement between the Republic of Albania and Serbia and Montenegro, signed on 13.11.2003.

7. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro for cooperation in the field of tourism, signed on 22.12.2004, entered into force on 28.12.2005.

8. Convention between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro on avoiding double taxation income and capital account, signed on 22 December 2004, entered into force on 17 November 2005 and the financial effects related to the tax on it capital inflows start on 1.1.2006.

9. Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in the Field of Defense environment between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Serbia, signed on 20.5.2005.

10. Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation between the Prosecutor's Office Public Service of the Republic of Serbia and the Office of the Prosecutor General of Republic of Albania, signed on 30.3.2005.

11. Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Council of The Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro, signed on 23.5.2005, entered into force on 17.12.2005.

12. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Justice of the Republic Albania and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia, signed on 08/02/2006.

13. "Tirana Declaration" document signed on October 16, 2007 on Coordination Social Insurance in South East Europe.

14. "Montenegro Conclusions" document signed on 26.10.2007 during the forums of the Third Ministerial Conference on Employment and Social Policies in South East Europe.

15. Agreement on co-operation in the field of the fight against crime organized, illicit international drug trafficking and terrorism international, between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Serbia, signed on 11.3.2010, entered into force on 03/01/2012.

16. Protocol on cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, signed on March 11, 2010.

17. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the Readmission of Persons Resident of unauthorized and its implementation protocol, signed on 29.4.2011, entered into force on 12.10.2011.

18. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the Mutual Movement of Citizens, signed on 5.7.2011, entered into force on 22.12.2011.

19. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and To the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the repayment of the Republic's debt Albania to the Republic of Serbia, signed on 31.3.2011, entered into force on 4.10.2011.

20. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia for cooperation in the field of veterinary, signed in Belgrade, on 27.4.2012, entered into force on 29.11.2014.

## ALBANIA'S IMPACT IN THE REGION IN THE ALBANIAN-SPEAKING AREAS

21. Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Albania and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, the proposal of the Albanian part. The memorandum was signed between both parties in July 2010.
22. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and Government of the Republic of Serbia for mutual assistance for the prevention, investigation and punishment of customs violations, signed on 10.11.2014, entered effective on 1.6.2015.
23. Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, for youth cooperation, signed on 10.11.2014.
24. Agreement between the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the mutual recognition of driving licenses, signed in Belgrade on 17.12.2014, entered into force on 20.10.2015.
25. Protocols of the 1st Session of the Intergovernmental Joint Commission for Albanian-Serbian Economic and Trade Cooperation, signed in Tirana, on 16.4.2015.
26. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and other members of the SEE Educational Reform Initiative (ERI SEE), for the headquarters of ERI SEE Secretariat ", signed in Vlora on 2.7.2015.