



**SÜDOSTEUROPA-
GESELLSCHAFT**

in cooperation with

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Tirana

Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (gtz), Tirana



Stabilitätspakt für Südosteuropa
Gefördert durch Deutschland
Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
Sponsored by Germany

Invitation / Preliminary Programme

Decentralization and Local Self-Government in Albania. Problems, Prospects and Strategies in the Light of Albania's EU Integration Process

International Expert Conference

3/ 4 February, 2006

- Conference Venue:** Hotel Sheraton Tirana, Tirana
- Conference Languages:** English and Albanian (Simultaneous Translation)
- Conference Co-ordination:** **Uta Zapf**, Member of the German Bundestag , Vice-President, Southeast Europe Association
Dr. Hansjoerg Brey, Director, Southeast Europe Association
Ismail Beka, Program Manager, gtz, Tirana
Thomas Wenk, Deutsche Botschaft Tirana

Decentralization and the establishment of functioning local self-government are among Albania's key steps towards a fully democratic system and full implementation of the rule of law. From a highly centralized government, Albania has already taken important steps in the right direction – for example – by anchoring the principles of local self-government into the new Constitution, by passing the corresponding legislation and by implementing specific policies towards decentralization.

A recent study of the World Bank defined the critical challenges Albania faces on its way to implementing a sustainable decentralization strategy, as follows:

- enhancing implementation capacity and weak institutions
- reducing the fragmentation of local government units and the re-defining the role of the regions
- designing a clear definition of specific responsibilities of levels of government
- improving the local revenue autonomy
- improving the efficiency of the transfer/grant system.

The International Conference of the German **Southeast Europe Association**, organised in co-operation with the **Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit** in Tirana and **the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany** in Tirana has the objective to evaluate the process of decentralization and the establishment of a functioning self-government so far – in the light of the country's efforts to integration into the European Union. Key elements of a functioning local self-government will be discussed and projects presented that enhance good governance and institutional development on the regional and local levels in Albania. Representatives of local and regional administrative units, policy makers, planners, and project coordinators, representatives of academia, the business community and the media have been invited to participate in an open discussion.

Preliminary Programme

FRIDAY, 3 FEBRUARY, 2006

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| 09:30 hrs | Opening and Welcome |
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Uta Zapf, Member of the Deutsche Bundestag,
Vice-President, Southeast Europe Association, Berlin

Hans-Peter Annen, Ambassador,
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Tirana

Ismail Beka, Program Manager, Gesellschaft für Technische
Zusammenarbeit, Tirana

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| 10:00 hrs | Panel I: Decentralization and Local Self-Government in Albania - State of Play |
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Chair: Uta Zapf, MP, Vice-President Southeast Europe Association

*Decentralization and Local Self-Government within the National Strategy for
Socio-Economic Development*

Sokol Olldashi, Minister of the Interior

Local Self-Government and Cooperation of Communities in Albania
Edi Rama, Mayor of Tirana, President, Association of Albanian
Municipalities

Albania: Decentralization in Transition

Nadir Mohamed, Country Manager, World Bank Office, Tirana

11:30 hrs Coffee Break

12:00 hrs **Chair: Petra Bläss**, Former Vice President of German Parliament; Senior
Consultant to the Stability Pact on Parliamentary Cooperation

*Decentralization as an Element of European Integration – Albania and the
Stabilization and Association Process*

Lutz Saltzmann, Ambassador, Delegation of European Commission in
Albania, Tirana

Decentralization and the Need for a Territorial Reform in Albania

Delphine Freymann, Special Adviser of the Council of Europe to Albania

*“Local Democracy and Cross Border Cooperation in Albania: Enhancing the
Regional Perspective”*

Srdjan Cvijic, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Working Table I

13:00 hrs Lunch

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| 14:00 hrs | Panel II: Instruments and Strategies for an Effective Decentralization Policy in Albania |
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Chair: Franz Kaps, World Bank Special Representative for Southeast Europe, Brussels

The Role of Education in Regional Development and Decentralization
Genç Pollo, Minister of Education, Tirana

Financing, Transfers, Revenues and Accountability

- **Ardian Turku, Mayor of Elbasan**
- **Sherefedin Shehu, Vice Minister, Ministry of Finance, (formerly adviser to USAID-Project Urban Institute)**
- **Artan Hoxha, Director, Institute of Contemporary Studies; Adviser to National Committee on Decentralisation (NCD)**

15:30 hrs Discussion

16:00 hrs Coffee Break

16:30 hrs **Chair: Dr. Heinz Schrumpf, gtz**

Implementation Capacity and Institutions

- **Ilmi Gjeci, Mayor of Mamias; President of Association of Communes**
- **Fatlum Nurja, Development Policy Center** (co- lecturer)

Urbanisation and Legalisation of Immovable Property, Important Factor for Regional Planning and the Development of Communities/Municipalities
Besnik Alia, adviser to the Prime Minister (former Executive Director, Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, Tirana)

17:30 hrs Discussion

18:30 hrs Reception

SATURDAY, 4 FEBRUARY, 2006

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| 09:00 hrs | Panel III: Supporting Decentralization and Local Governance in Albania Project Reports |
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Decentralisation in Albania: Experiences and Challenges from the Perspective of Donor Co-ordination

Robert Hall, Delegation of the EU-Commission, responsible for Donor Co-ordination

T.B.A., UNDP (co-lecture)

09:30 hrs Short Presentations of Projects (max. 15 min.)

(Projects can be presented by one or several representatives of the respective organisations; parallel exhibition of project outlines in Hotel Sheraton International)

Chair: Robert Hall, Delegation of the EU-Commission, responsible for Donor Co-ordination

Water Supply and Sewage as Communal Obligation in Albania; Experiences and Best Practices

T.B.A. (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, KfW, may be plus communal water supply enterprise representative)

Millenium Development Goals Strategy and Implementation in Kukes Region;
T.B.A., UNDP (plus local Project Coordinator in Kukes)

Future EU Requirements in the Field of Regional Development in Albania: the Example of Northern Albania

Dr. Heinz Schrumpf, Project Adviser , Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ); / Lorenc Luka, Chairman of Qarku Shkodra

T.B.A , World Bank

(Note: donor representatives of relevant projects will be asked to participate in the discussion and to present project outlines in the exhibition)

Discussion

10:45 hrs Coffee Break and visiting the exhibition of relevant project outlines**11:30 hrs Closing Panel: Supporting Decentralization and Local Governance in Albania: The Road Ahead**

Chair: Dr. Hansjörg Brey, Director, Southeast Europe Association

- **Ferdinand Pone, Vice Minister, Ministry of the Interior, responsible for Decentralisation and in charge of the National Committee on Decentralization, NCD, Tirana**
- **Ilmi Gjeci, Mayor of Mamias; President of Association of Communes**
- **Fatos Hodaj, Executive Director, Association of Albanian Municipalities**
- **Artan Hoxha, Director, Institute of Contemporary Studies; Adviser to NCD**
- **Robert Hall, Delegation of the EU-Commission, Tirana**
- **T.B.A.; Program Manager, UNDP Project Kukes**

13:00 hrs End of the conference

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