



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY

The Acting Deputy Director-General

Brussels, **15 JUL. 2009**
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Mr Ferit Hoxha
Secretary General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic
of Albania

By email: albanian.ec1@skynet.be

Dear Mr Hoxha,

Further to my meeting with you on 11 June 2009, I am pleased to outline in the present letter the next steps in the dialogue on visa liberalisation between the EU and Albania.

As noted in the updated assessment of 8 June 2009 on the implementation by Albania of the roadmap for visa liberalisation, your country has made substantial progress in this regard, though further efforts are still needed to meet the outstanding benchmarks of the roadmap. In order to assess the ongoing efforts and progress made by Albania, I would like to reiterate my invitation to your authorities to submit a second readiness report by 1 October 2009, reporting on developments and progress made in meeting the outstanding benchmarks of the roadmap since April 2009. To help your authorities and services in the preparation of this report, please find in annex a list of the specific areas in which Albania is asked to make further progress, and report on, in view of the fulfilment of the outstanding benchmarks.

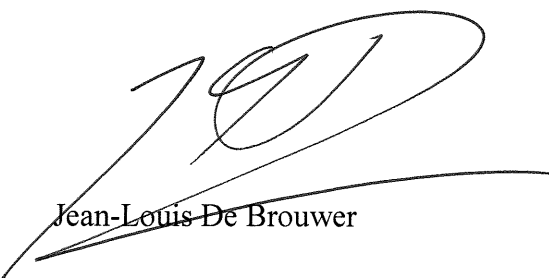
After a review by the Commission services of the second readiness report, I would like to invite you to a further Senior Officials' meeting in Brussels in order to take stock of the progress made by Albania and to discuss the next steps, such as the organisation of further field missions and expert meetings where appropriate.

As you are aware, on 15 July 2009, the European Commission adopted a proposal for modifying Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 to exempt the citizens of three countries of the Western Balkan region from the short-stay visa requirement. This confirms the long-standing commitment of the European Commission to granting visa free travel for the people of the Western Balkan countries.

Bearing in mind the substantial progress made so far by Albania, I am confident that Albania will too be able to meet the outstanding benchmarks in the near future. To this respect, I also want to confirm to you that the assessment of the progress made by the countries involved in the continuation of the visa dialogue will be made based on their own merit. The Commission

services will continue to support your efforts to achieve this important result for the citizens of Albania.

Yours sincerely,



Jean-Louis De Brouwer

Annex

ANNEX

On 8 June 2009, the European Commission presented Albania with an updated assessment of the implementation by Albania of the roadmap for visa liberalisation. As outlined in the assessment, Albania has made substantial progress but has yet to meet a series of the benchmarks specified in the roadmap. Albania is therefore invited to submit by 1 October 2009 a new readiness report covering developments and progress made in meeting the outstanding benchmarks of the roadmap since April 2009. The **purpose of this annex** is therefore to outline the specific areas in which Albania is asked to make further progress, and report on, in view of the fulfilment of the outstanding benchmarks.

Block 1	Illegal migration, including readmission
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Passports/travel documents, ID cards and breeder documents (benchmarks 1-5)

- Continued issuance of biometric passports (please specify the number of biometric passports issued)
- measures taken to ensure the security of the passport personalisation centre
- measures to ensure systematic verification of applicants' biometric features upon distribution of ID cards/passports
- measures to ensure systematic training and general anti-corruption programmes targeting public officials dealing with issuance of breeder documents, ID cards and passports
- measures taken to ensure direct access of Albanian police stations and border crossing points to the Interpol database on lost and stolen passports
- measures to ensure that the use of handwritten certificates is abandoned and that data from sources other than the NCR is no longer used

Block 2	Illegal migration, including readmission
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Border management (benchmarks 6-9)

- implementation of the Law on state border control and surveillance
- adoption of a revised Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy and development of an Action Plan for its effective implementation measures taken to better define the territorial responsibilities between BM Directorates and BM Stations, the division of competences in the management of the blue borders
- measures taken to strengthen inter-agency cooperation between authorities working at the border including information exchange
- establishment of the Inter-Institutional Maritime Operational Centre (IMOC) with a demonstrated level of resources (please specify its organisational structure and functioning)
- modernisation of infrastructure at BCPs, equipment and IT technology
- measures taken to strengthen human resources and training
- implementation of the BMP's anti-corruption programme

Asylum (benchmarks 11, 12)

- preparation and adoption of bylaws ensuring the effective access of asylum seekers to the rights foreseen by the Law on Asylum as amended in January 2009

- clarification of the procedure for appeals against decisions of the Department for Citizenship and Refugees
- training and assistance to staff working in the asylum system

Migration Management (benchmarks 10, 13-17)

- adoption of an Action Plan for the effective implementation of the Law on Foreigners of December 2008 and its bylaws.
- measures taken to further develop use of the TIMS (Total Information Management System) for migration data, in particular to ensure that all relevant ministries have access to the system
- measures to strengthen the integration of returnees
- measures taken to develop a specific methodology and rules on inland detection of illegal immigrants
- progress of construction of a detention centre for illegal immigrants

Block 3 Public order and security

General/Overall policy on preventing and fighting organised crime and terrorism (benchmarks 18, 23)

- implementation of the inter-sector strategy against organised crime, trafficking and terrorism (resources committed and training provided to the authorities responsible for implementation) including adoption of an action plan for fighting organized crime
- implementation of the UN Convention on transnational organised crime and its protocols via national law
- measures to strengthen the capacity to investigate and prosecute criminals in the crime areas covered

Policy on preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings (benchmarks 19, 23)

- implementation of the existing strategies in the area of preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings (resources committed and training provided)
- information on the coordination mechanism between the central and regional police units engaged in preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings (tasks and responsibilities)
- measures to improve the protection and reintegration of victims of trafficking

Policy on preventing and fighting financial crimes (money-laundering, terrorist financing, confiscation of assets) (benchmarks 20, 23)

- adoption of a national strategy and action plan on the prevention of money-laundering, including details on the timeframe
- adoption of further implementing legislation to the Law on the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism
- implementation of FATF recommendations and Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism

- measures taken to raise the awareness of the reporting entities of their obligations (including training)
- implementation of legislation on confiscation of assets of criminals (including application of the 2004 law enabling seizure and confiscation)
- reinforcement of the capacity of the Agency for the Administration of Sequestered and Confiscated Assets and of the General Directorate for the Prevention of money laundering (FIU)

Anti-drug policy (benchmark 21)

- implementation of the strategy and action plan against drug trafficking (resources allocated and training provided)
- measures to improve the access to information on drug seizures and persons involved at BCPs
- enhancing international cooperation (including results achieved)
- measures to align with EMCDDA information collection standards

Policy on prevention and fighting corruption (benchmarks 22, 23)

- Implementation of the inter-sector strategy as well as the anti-corruption action plan (resources committed and training provided)
- strengthening of inter-agency cooperation, including administrative capacity and resources allocated to the existing Joint Investigative Unit (JIU) and to the 6 new JIUs being established on the regional level
- strengthening of internal control systems and anti-corruption activities in the public administration and law enforcement bodies
- implementation of the outstanding GRECO recommendations and Council of Europe and UN Conventions

Judicial co-operation in criminal matters (benchmarks 24 - 26)

- adoption of the law on international mutual legal assistance
- training provided to staff dealing with requests for mutual legal assistance
- progress on finalising extradition agreements with third countries
- progress in cooperation with Eurojust (including contact point in the prosecution)

Law enforcement co-operation and operational capacity of law enforcement services (benchmarks 27-31)

- strengthening of operational cooperation between the law enforcement agencies and with the judiciary, in all the crime areas covered by the roadmap
- strengthening of international cooperation, including cooperation with Europol
- use of special investigative techniques and training for their use.
- improved information exchange and in particular extension of direct access to the MEMEX information system to the relevant bodies

Protection of personal data (benchmarks 32, 33)

→ Progress in the implementation of the Personal Data Protection law, strengthening of the administrative capacity of the Commissioner including allocated resources

Citizens' rights including protection of minorities

→ the adoption of the Anti-discrimination law

→ the adoption and measures taken to implement the National Strategy for improving Roma Living Standards and the Roma National Action Plan as part of the Roma Decade