

## Joint Conclusions of the third High Level Dialogue on the Key Priorities

4 June 2014

1) Prime Minister Edi Rama and Commissioner Štefan Füle chaired the third Meeting of the High Level Dialogue (HLD) on the Key Priorities between Albania and the European Commission on 4 June 2014. The plenary session included the participation of Government Ministers, as well as of an extended participation of the opposition through the chair of the parliamentary committee for European integration, and two additional Members of Parliament.

2) The focus of the meeting was on the findings of the Commission's "*Report on Albania's Progress in the Fight Against Corruption and Organised Crime and in the Judicial Reform.*" In line with the Council's request of December 2013 the report covers primarily the fight against corruption and organized crime and judicial reform and highlights some additional key developments in areas, which are important for Albania EU integration.

3) Commissioner Füle praised Albania's continued political will to act decisively in the prevention and fight against corruption and highlighted that structural reforms testify to an all-encompassing approach including a wide range of institutions. Important legislative reforms introduced in the fight against organised crime and investigations have yielded positive results in the fight against drug trafficking and other areas of serious and organised crime. Moreover, Commissioner Füle underlined Albania's commitment to judicial reform, notably by working with the Venice Commission to improve the independence, accountability and professionalism of the system. In this context, he welcomed the government's presentation of its vision for a comprehensive reform focusing on reforming the main judiciary institutions and the organisation and functioning of the judiciary through an inclusive process involving all the main stakeholders in the justice system, including Parliament and the civil society.

4) On the basis of the findings of this Report, the Commissioner confirmed the Commission's recommendation that the Council should grant Albania candidate status. Prime Minister Edi Rama welcomed this and confirmed his government's commitment to further strengthen the considerable progress achieved in EU-related reforms, in particular to continue the implementation of reforms in the area of the rule of law, including anti-corruption policy, judicial reform, and fight against organised crime. He referred to the adoption of the roadmap on the five Key Priorities, which need to be addressed for the Commission to recommend the opening of accession negotiations, and promised its solid and timely implementation.

5) In line with the Roadmap, the Albanian side also provided a brief update on its planned actions for further addressing the five Key Priorities. The Commissioner

underlined the importance of the Roadmap for outlining the next steps needed to bring Albania forward on its European integration path. To support this work, it was decided to strengthen the consultations between the government and the European Commission on the implementation of each key priority.

6) Commissioner Füle underlined that the Commission stands ready to support Albania's reform efforts with expertise and financial support.

7) The Albanian Government confirmed its commitment to a constructive and sustainable political dialogue with the opposition which is vital for the sustainability of the reform process. In this context, the Albanian Government briefly explained the modalities for establishing a National Council for European Integration. The Albanian Government confirmed that the first meeting of the National Council for European Integration will take place on 29 July 2014.

8) It was agreed that to prepare for the next meeting of the HLD foreseen for September 2014 regular contacts on working level will continue and that Albania will provide reports on a regular basis on the implementation of the roadmap, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 28 May. Commissioner Füle underlined the need for Albania to remain focused and continue delivering results as regards the five Key Priorities in view of the assessment of the Commission in its October Progress Report.