



Bruxelles
25/04/2019 - 11:17
Press releases

EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Agreement - 11th SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY - Brussels, 24 April 2019

The 11th Subcommittee meeting on Justice, Freedom and Security between the EU and Albania took place on 24 April in Brussels. Representatives from the European Commission and the Albanian authorities discussed the most recent developments in the area of rule of law and fundamental rights. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms Michela Matuella, Head of Unit for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission (Commission) and Mr. Sokol Dedja, Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

The meeting offered an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved by Albania in the past year, in particular with regard to the implementation of the justice reform, the fight against corruption, money laundering, organised crime, including drug trafficking, police cooperation, asylum and migration, border management and visa policy, counter-terrorism, and fundamental rights.

The Commission commended the Albanian authorities for their engagement and the steady progress achieved in the rule of law area, particularly in the area of justice reform and the vetting process, which has laid the foundations to consolidate a truly independent, impartial, professional and accountable judiciary. It stressed the importance of its further consolidation, underlying the need for continuous efforts in the fight against corruption at all levels and in the fight against organised crime. The Commission acknowledged the tangible results achieved on the cultivation and trafficking of cannabis and stressed the importance of finalising the establishment of the Specialised Prosecution Office against Corruption and Organised Crime (SPAK). Ensuring that recent successful police operations are duly followed up by investigations, indictments and final convictions is key. Fundamental rights require further efforts for effective implementation of the relevant legislation, including the adoption of the necessary secondary legislation, also in the area of protection of minorities. Particular emphasis was put on the need for a comprehensive property rights reform.

The Commission and Albania noted the decrease in asylum applications lodged by Albanian citizens to

EU Member States and Schengen-associated countries in 2018 compared to 2017, agreed on the importance to continue concrete efforts to address the phenomenon of unfounded asylum applications, and to swiftly address the recommendations of the Monyeval report on anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing.

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