

Donor - Government Round Table (4th June, 2010)

Last Monday, 31st May 2010, the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Fast Track Initiative in Albania" has been signed by the Government of Albania and the European donors currently participating in the initiative, namely: Italy, the EU Delegation, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland.

The Memorandum concludes one year of joint work carried out by DSDC and some of the European donors present in Albania, with the aim of fostering the implementation of the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and the Division of Labour. Italy has had the honour of serving as facilitating donor in this process, which has been based at all stages on close exchange and cooperation.

The aim of the Fast Tracking Initiative is to support Albania in the process of implementing in-country division of labour, which is crucial to increasing aid effectiveness. All donors are committed to the international agenda on aid effectiveness, and - indeed - much has already been accomplished in terms of information sharing and donor coordination. But in Albania - considering the EU pre-accession process - we believe it is especially important for European donors to develop closer and more operational coordination. This means working together towards increased complementarity between the EU financial support to Albania's enlargement and bilateral aid.

We hope that other European - or non European - donors will join us in the next future and support our commitment.

The Line Ministries will have the opportunity to work in close cooperation with European Lead Donors defined by the Division of Labour arrangements. The Lead European Donors, in close consultation with the Active Donors, are ready to support the programming and monitoring capacities with regard to sector strategies of the Line Ministries. This support is also meant to facilitate broader sector policy dialogue and as European Lead Donors will have the opportunity to contribute better to the work undertaken within the Sector Working Groups. Again, we have a special focus on European coordination, but the process is open to anyone interested.

The initial phase has implied a great amount of analytical work and negotiations on roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. I would like to thank here the Government of Albania for providing - through the exceptional leadership of the Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination - a definitely enabling environment. The Government's firm commitment to aid effectiveness has ensured that the process of Fast Tracking Division of Labour among European donors is thoroughly in line with the Albanian Harmonization Action Plan. And I would also take the chance to extend my thanks to all the participating donors, which have fully contributed with their time, resources and ideas, to what is - in fact - a pilot exercise at European level.

The facilitating phase, as I said, is concluded. It is now time to start implementing our Division of Labour arrangements and follow up to our commitments as European Lead Donors. Hence, I wish to all of you - to all of us - good work.