



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG-ENLARGEMENT

Conference on donor coordination in the Western Balkans and Turkey

**Tirana 2-3 April 2009
Objectives and Method**

Background

At the donor coordination conference held in Brussels in October 2008, the participants have agreed to speed up efforts to enhance donor coordination with the ultimate goal of better aid effectiveness. The conference reaffirmed that there should be a common strategic goal for assistance in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The ultimate aim of these countries is integration into the EU, and donor assistance should focus on this aim or be complementary to it. It was also agreed that the spirit and the relevant principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness - ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability - should guide donor coordination in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The participants concurred to meet in Tirana after 6 months to review progress.

This conference in Tirana has been jointly organised by the Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination of the Government of Albania and the Directorate General for Enlargement of the European Commission.

The conference gathers about 200 representatives of the countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey, of Aid agencies and financial institutions. It will be co-chaired by Timo Summa, Director, DG Enlargement, European Commission, and Albana Vokshi, Director, Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination, Government of Albania.

The conference will be introduced by the Prime Minister of the Government of Albania, H.E. Mr. Sali Berisha, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Albania, H.E. Mrs. Marketa Fialkova, on behalf of the EU Presidency, and the Director-General for Enlargement, Mr. Michael Leigh, for the European Commission.

Objective and expected results of the meeting

Against the background of a financial and economic crisis making a sustained and effective effort of aid delivery more necessary than ever, the meeting aims to:

- a) Review strengths and weaknesses of existing coordination mechanisms at national and regional level and make recommendations for next steps;
- b) Discuss possibilities of enhancing strategic programming and aid harmonisation alongside the National Development and EU integration Plans adopted by the countries and the Multiannual Indicative Planning Documents (MIPD) of the European Commission;
- c) Review and inform on forms of financial cooperation between donors to draw full benefit from a better division of labour;

d) Discuss and make recommendations for three sectors which are key for socio-economic development and for European and regional integration in the Western Balkans and Turkey: education, environment and transport.

Organisation of the meeting

The meeting takes place on 2nd and 3rd April 2009. It is divided into three half-day sessions.

The first session will mainly focus on recent progress made in enhancing coordination mechanisms at country level and on identifying remaining shortcomings. The discussion will be introduced by short reports by the beneficiary countries as well as by an evaluation report undertaken by the consultant MWH on behalf of the European Commission (DG Enlargement). It should pave the way for concrete recommendations to be followed up by the national authorities and the donor community in the beneficiary countries.

The second session will be mainly devoted to two topics: (i) how to improve programming and aligning aid objectives and strategies on national and regional socio-economic needs and EU integration objectives, and (ii) how to improve aid effectiveness through better division of labour between donors and pooling of resources. Each of the discussions will be introduced by presentations made by representatives of the Government of Albania and of the European Commission, and will be enriched by case studies.

During the third session, three Working Groups will meet to discuss aid effectiveness and coordination issues in the sectors of education, environment and transport. The challenge is to ensure that the objectives of adopting appropriate regulations, in line with EU standards whenever relevant, building up strong administrative capacities and developing infrastructure are pursued according to a coherent national programme, supported by the donor community. While these three sectors have in common to be key for the socio-economic development of the countries and EU and regional integration, there are substantial differences in the degree to which their regulation is driven by EU norms or standards (from low in education to high in environment), in the importance of planning at regional level, and in the difficulties of implementing reforms to ensure a better policy outcome. The discussion will in particular focus on how to involve all stakeholders (aid agencies and financial institutions) under the leadership of the authorities of the countries and on the steps necessary to come to a consensus on sector strategies and benchmarks. The conclusions of these Working Groups will be reported to the plenary meeting.

The co-chairs will draw provisional conclusions from the meeting. These conclusions will be circulated in written form to the participants at the end of the meeting.

The documentation of the conference will be made available after the conference on the Web page of DG Enlargement: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm