

# CCIFA Weekly News

No.27 25-29 September 2017

**Revue de presse hebdomadaire/Përmbledhja javore e shtypit /Weekly press review  
Activité hebdomadaire de la CCIFA /Aktiviteti javor i CCIFA /CCIFA Weekly activity**



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**With the participation of their excellencies Ambassador Christina Vasak  
and Ambassador Susanne Schütz**

At this multicultural event **eleven** bilateral Chambers / Associations will participate together with the private sector.

Please click [here](#) to reserve your tickets. Thereafter the tickets have to be paid and picked up until 10.10.2017 either at the DIHA or CCIFA.

Entry fee: 10 Euro + VAT per person for all members of the participating Chambers / Associations or otherwise 15 Euro + VAT (incl. Wine degustation & Finger food)



Last Friday, during Co.Morning Coffee Event organized by Tirana Business Park, #Epitech Balkans presented its role in society, in meeting the requirements of various companies and most importantly in building a solid professional background for our students. We had a positive feedback, so the distributed information by our network will certainly lead to a fruitful year.





## RELAXING IN LUXURY AT THE SHERATON TIRANA HOTEL

Albania is making inroads into becoming the Balkan Peninsula's next big tourist destination. A country which was isolated from the rest of the world by its brutal dictator, is now modernising and accepting foreign investment to improve its attractiveness as a tourist destination. Our first stop in this developing country is where most travellers will start their journey in Albania. The thriving capital city of Tirana. Whilst here for five relaxing days, we stayed at the luxurious Sheraton Tirana Hotel.

To be honest with you when we initially talked about Tirana, we had no idea about the history or culture of Albania. Of course, we knew it was in Europe. Somewhere! But pictured a more rural and rustic type of lifestyle. You know, horse and carts, with farmers and their families working the land and living in little mud-brick cottages. What we didn't expect was for the city to be a modern metropolis, with many other new buildings under construction. I know that sounds a little sheltered, but we didn't know that much about Albania.

Read full article:

<http://ourworldinreview.com/relaxing-luxury-sheraton-tirana-hotel/>



# InnerEye

InnerEye is a new pioneering solution developed by ICTS Europe that combines human visual perception, innovative classification of brainwaves and computer vision algorithms.

InnerEye is a revolutionary interface that allows screening staff to analyse up to 20 times more X-ray images per hour, while maintaining high detection levels and low false alarm rates.

## LINKS:

[InnerEye Clip](#)

[Presentation of InnerEye at the ICAO AVSEC Security Annual Meeting](#)

<http://www.ictseurope.com/media/news-pr/icao-avsec-security-annual-meeting-2017-12-14-september-2017-in-montreal-canada>



ICTS Europe's President, Mr. Oren Sapir, presented InnerEye, on 14 September 2017 during the ICAO AVSEC Security Annual Meeting in Montreal,

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) organized its inaugural Global Aviation Security Symposium (AVSEC2017) in collaboration with Airports Council International (ACI) from 12 – 14 September, 2017 at ICAO Headquarters in Montréal, Canada. The three-day Symposium served as a platform to promote the work of ICAO, its Member States and stakeholders in the area of aviation security. AVSEC2017 brought together AVSEC professionals from around the globe to advance the cultivation of a new mind-set towards aviation security,

that embraces AVSEC as a culture beyond a set of standards.

The Symposium, participants had the opportunity to experience an interactive exhibition showcasing the latest State and industry AVSEC technology and process innovations, along with dynamic learning workshops.

ICTS Europe presented **InnerEye** as a new solution for the Aviation Industry and Airports to increase efficiency at the checkpoints without compromising security.

**InnerEye** is a new interface between the screener and the monitor that revolutionizes the screening process enabling a faster and more efficient process.

**InnerEye** is an inline solution which does not require any changes in the airport infrastructure using standard X-Ray equipment.



## Initiative pour l'Europe - Discours d'Emmanuel Macron pour une Europe souveraine, unie, démocratique.

Presidenti Francez Emmanuel Macron prezantoi një projekt ambicioz me propozime konkrete në funksion të rigjallërimit të projektit European, të zgjeruar edhe në Ballkan.

<http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique/>



# A LA UNE CETTE SEMAINE/HIGHLIGHTS

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## **Albania has the lowest subsidies for agriculture in the region, European Commission says**

Albania seems to be the country where the sector of agriculture benefits fewer subsidies than in any other country of the Balkans. Such fact was unveiled by the latest report of the European Commission, according to which, Albanian agriculture receives the least support from the state budget compared to all other Balkan countries, although agriculture in the country contributes for 20% of GDP and employs 44% of people. So, based on these figures, in Albania, direct subsidies per producer are less than 3 euros per hectare, while in FYROM this figure is 145 euros. In Kosovo, subsidies per producer amount to 45 euros, in Bosnia and Herzegovina they amount to 31 euros and in Montenegro they amount to 25 euros. Such situation is not at all favorable for Albania, at a time when it is aiming to enter a joint Balkan market.

## **Government in Albania launches a new operation against informality**

Starting from 1 October, the government of Albania will launch another operation against informality in the economy. This was declared by the new minister of Finance and Economy, Arben Ahmetaj, according to whom, the battle against informality will be accompanied by another important reform, which has to do with offering easier services to individuals and businesses, but at the same time, regulate the market, aiming to reduce bureaucracy, time and costs for the public. "The Prime Minister has considered the second term of the government in office as the term of anti-informality. Each day that goes by, we will see zero tolerance against evasion", the minister said. As far as the focus of this operation is concerned, Ahmetaj explained that it will mainly include big companies, but also small businesses

## **Investors Discuss Tourism Development**

World Bank representatives along with experts of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy as well as of the Albanian Development Fund held a meeting in the coastal city of Vlore, Albania on Thursday, in the frame of the project "To an integrated Urban and Tourist development" The Regional Agency for Protected Areas presented the group of experts to the natural and cultural preserved areas with a development potential in sustainable tourism in Vlore country. Few days ago, the EU Information Centre in Vlora hosted the first Technical meeting of Stakeholders Working Group organized by the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and for Sustainable Democracy CFFE in the framework of the project "Tourism In Synergy With Energy Efficiency: Creating Eco-Sustainable Tourism Destination" which aims at supporting the development of a competitive and responsible tourism industry through the improvement of industry sustainability. The aim of this activity is to provide information about ETIS and destination benefits from the implementation of this system and share opinions and experiences according to localities.

## **KESH's financial situation, 2.4 billion lek in revenues**

The lack of rainfall has deteriorated the financial situation of KESH. The company has witnessed a decline in revenues by 2.4 billion lek than the original forecast. KESH's expenses increased by 5.1 billion Lek as a result of liabilities to OSHEE due to the draught and lack of electricity production. During September, OSHEE managed to get 94 percent of the required electricity while the remaining 6 percent was received from KESH. Furthermore, KESH has spent 2.9 billion lek for energy imports which was financed by World Bank in the framework of the power recovery loan. Meanwhile, KESH posted losses from January-June by 325.5 million lek. Meanwhile, electricity production is down by 26 percent. The energy crisis is a result of the draught and forced the government to amend the budget and approve an additional 3 billion lek.

## **Energy situation improves after rains and lower consumption**

The increased domestic production and lower consumption has improved the financial situation of Albania's energy companies. The Energy Distribution Operator (OSHEE) declared that they will import only 225.000 MW for the next month, two times less than the average quantity bought in the three consequent months. As result, the cost of imports for October will drop at 12 million EUR. For July Albania spent 30 million EUR of imported energy, and more than 80 million EUR for July and September. Most of the payment was covered by the OSHEE, but the Energy Corporate (KESH) also paid 7 million EUR with a loan from the World Bank. Last month the government made urgent state budget amends, adding 3 billion ALL for the energy sector. The money was used to pay the loans taken from KESH and OSHEE, who could not cover it on their own.

## **Government to reduce foreign debt**

At the end of June 2017, Albania's gross foreign debt was 7,851 million euros, according to Central Bank. Data shows that during the second quarter, the stock of gross foreign debt dropped by 129 million euros and expanded by 23 million euros in annual terms. About 77 percent of the foreign debt has been borrowed by the central government, whereas the short term debt has been borrowed from banks. The stock of foreign debt borrowed from Central Bank dropped to 19 percent. The banking sector's debt stock stands at 1,356 million euros or 59 million euros more than one year ago.

(Sot,10)

## **World Bank refutes Rama's pledge for lowered public debt and economic growth**

World Bank has said that Albania's public debt will not be lower than 60 percent of the GDP before 2021, hence refuting claims of the government. Albania's public debt has rapidly increased during 2013-2015 reaching to over 73.7 percent of the GDP. In its official document released on development policy loans, World Bank says that the lowering of the public debt has been postponed by several years. "At the end of 2013, Albania's public debt reached to 71.7 percent and then it was expected to go down. Instead, the debt jumped to 73.7 percent in 2015 and is not expected to go lower than 70% before the end of 2017," the document read. According to World Bank, the government's failure to reduce the debt is related to the devaluation of domestic currency, lower economic growth and weak performance of revenues and taxes. The opposition and experts have accused the government of borrowing money to finance programs that are not convenient from an economic viewpoint. These projects have led to the misuse of millions of euros when investments on education and health sector are lacking.

(Gazeta 55,)

## **World Bank: Albania and Switzerland have the highest level of rainfall in Europe**

Albania and Switzerland have the highest rainfall annual levels according to World Bank calculations. The global rainfall map published by the bank, highlighted Albania as a country with a high intensity of rainfall per year at 1.485 mm/annum. Switzerland ranks in the first spot with 1,537 mm/annum. World Bank urges from countries affected by rainfall to invest more in the technology of weather forecast, which can minimize economic losses. Albania is a typical case when the lack of this forecast technology and institutional collaboration has had high costs. In 2010-2011 the country faced dangerous floods with a high economic cost. World Bank says that the hydrological and meteorological risks are responsible for 90 percent of total losses from natural hazards. The World Bank's survey shows that countries can save up to 13 billion USD each year by investing in these technologies.

(Rilindja Demokratike,8)

## **TAP launches 131 extra projects with a value of 23 million euros**

Another 131 extra projects with a total value of 23 million euros have been scheduled for the months to come by the consortium building the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). This was announced by TAP's managing director, Luca Schieppati, while adding that adding the benefits that this pipeline will bring to our country, Greece and Italy, will be many. "The project will have a direct impact on the GDP of the three countries through taxes. Also, TAP will promote the development of the economy and the creation of jobs during the construction and operation phase", he said. Schieppati also says that many local businesses have been involved in the project and many people will be employed in the construction phase. He also said that TAP's construction is contributing in the improvement of local infrastructure through the rehabilitation of entry roads and bridges in Albania. "In total, we will invest over 55 million euros in the communities along the way", managing director Schieppati said

## **IMF experts in Tirane, the budget based on new ministries will be reviewed**

Even though Albania has concluded the conditional agreement with the International Monetary Fund, a group of experts from the IMF have arrived in Tirana. According to sources, it is learned that the IMF experts will discuss the required changes to the budget resulting from the restructuring of ministries, as a revision to the allocation of funds is needed. The draft of the new budget is expected to be released within a few weeks to the Assembly. The agreement with this important financial institution will be discussed in upcoming meetings. At the end of the conditional agreement, which lasted for three years and saw Albania receive a fund of 370 million euro, the Minister of Finance left the possibility open for the renewal of the agreement. Now, a political decision is expected to be made whether the collaboration with the International Monetary Fund will be on an advisory or conditional level. The collection of tax on apartments will also be part of the discussions with the International Monetary Fund. This is a good opportunity to increase the budget. The possibility to include tax on water bills is also being considered. The experts of the International Monetary Fund are expected to hold meetings with senior executives of Albanian Financial Institutions, such as the Minister of Finance and Economy and the Governor of the Bank of Albania.

# A LA UNE CETTE SEMAINE/HIGHLIGHTS

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## **AIDA Willing to Assist Slovenian Investors**

On Tuesday, Executive Director of AIDA, Brisida Shehaj, met with ambassador of Slovenia in Tirana, Lea Stancic. Interlocutors talked about ways to deepen cooperation in promotion of opportunities for investments in Albania, creation of a favorable climate for partnership between Albanian and Slovenian businesses as well as establishment of direct contacts with business organizations. "AIDA in pursuit of its mission confirmed once again the assistance for Slovenian enterprises as well as for all those eyeing the Albanian market to invest in strategic fields such as tourism, energy and agriculture," a press release by AIDA read. According to the press release say interlocutors asserted the willingness to host promotion activities focused on strategic sectors with view to increasing the presence of Slovenian investments in Albania.

## **Ahmetaj Calls on Business to Cooperate**

Minister of Finance and Economy Arben Ahmetaj sent Tuesday a letter to entrepreneurs in the framework of the third operation to be undertaken by government against informality. Minister Ahmetaj has requested entrepreneurship to cooperate with state structures for the third phase of "anti-informality." Ahmetaj stated that the business and the department he leads remain on the same side, calling for both parties to remain persistent in law enforcement. "In this battle, we and the entrepreneurship are on the same side. We will remain persistent in the implementation of the law," Ahmetaj said. A few days ago, the minister said that the third phase of anti-informality begins on October 1st and there will be coordination between the Taxation, Customs and Labor Inspectorate. Informality in the Albanian economy is estimated to be about 40 percent, which is why in the first mandate, Rama's government took several actions against the phenomenon. The first phase involved tax receipts while the second formalizing businesses. The third phase will start with the control of big businesses.

## **FAO: All cattle in Albania should be vaccinated against nodular dermatitis**

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has urged Albanian authorities to vaccinate cattle and prevent the occurrence of nodular dermatitis. Countries in Southeastern Europe and Balkans are already vaccinating their cattle in an attempt to keep the illness under control. FAO says that all countries which have not been affected by this illness so far, but, which are considered at risk, must vaccinate their cattle, because the illness in question will spread among them and will have destructive effects for farmers and their economies. Nodular dermatitis is a virus which is transmitted from insects. This illness does not affect humans, but it could prove fatal for cattle. "Although in Europe it was present in April, following massive vaccinations, we have seen that the illness has been emerging once again in the recent months in Albania, Greece and Macedonia. This is not only a warning sign that the illness has not been entirely put under control, but also that it may spread if we don't make efforts to contain it", declared Ren Vang, Assistant General Director of FAO, who also mentioned Albania.

# A LA UNE CETTE SEMAINE/HIGHLIGHTS

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## **“BMI Research: Albanian economy to grow by 3.6% in 2017**

BMI Research, part of the Fitch group, which is known as one of the three most important risk rating agencies in the world, has recently published a report over the risk that is associated with Albania. “The outlook for judicial reforms has improved following the victory of Prime Minister Edi Rama’s Socialist Party in the June 24 election. That said, there remain vested interests opposed to the reform process, which is a key requirement for EU accession, and we therefore remain skeptical that Albania will join the EU with the next decade”, the report starts. Meanwhile, the report also adds that “there are still personal interests hindering the reform, but this reform is a key requirement to become member of the EU and for this reason, we are skeptic on Albania’s accession in the EU within the next decade”. As far as the monetary policies of our countries are concerned, the report in question explains that “an ongoing contraction in the private sector credit and a benign inflation outlook mean that we see the Bank of Albania maintaining its very easy monetary policy stance over the next 19 months, even as headline economic growth accelerates”. Meanwhile, BMI Research projects Albanian economy to grow by 3.6% in 2017, while it expects it to slow down at 3.3% next year

## **Market competitiveness in Albania has improved according to Economic Forum**

According to the Economic Forum, Albania is listed as the 75th most competitive economy in the world for this year, leaving behind Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Greece. This is the third consequent year that Albania’s economy is evaluated positively, improving the listing with 22 spots. The report shows that Albania has improved with almost every column, but the most decisive influence came from the macro-economic environment, the lowered public debt and better listing from agencies that value public finances. The economic forum asks businesses about problematic factors that hamper their activity. This year, taxes are the highest factor. Corruption and financial approach are listed second and third for this year. The competitiveness index is considered as one of the most complete indicators for the evaluation of economies. According to the Economist, the most an economy improves its position in this index, the higher their revenue.

## **Farmers Interested in Tobacco Cultivation**

The farmers in the area of Dumre, Elbasan, have shown much interest in planting and cultivation of tobacco, which is seen as a key and profitable business for inhabitants of this area. The hilly terrain but also the quality of land is suitable for the cultivation of tobacco. During this year, roughly 300 hectares have been planted in this area, which is more than last year although this area has great potentials for larger production of this plant. Experts say that tobacco that Albania produces and trades in domestic market has increased. According to official statistics from the General Directorate of Customs, in the first 5 months of this year, 60 tons more than the corresponding period last year were marketed for consumption. Divided into cigarettes and tobacco, statistics for 2017 are as following: 1110 tons of cigarettes and 33 tons of tobacco, while in the same period 2016, respectively 1,500 tons of cigarettes and 24 tons of tobacco were consumed.

## **Toll fee for highway to be implemented in December**

The toll fee for the Durres Kukes highway will be enforced in December, local media reports. Although the highway is incomplete, the concessionaire awarded the road maintenance contract is setting up toll units. Residents of the northern city of Kukes and local power representatives fear that the toll fee will further isolate their town, which according to them is one of the poorest in the country. The highway construction started about a decade ago and its cost was about Euro 1 billion. It was open for commuters since 2009 even though it's still incomplete. BIRN said that all drivers will start to pay the toll while other Albanian citizens will pay the tax on the road no matter if they use it or not. Speed limits on the highway were halved due to the fact that there are incomplete four-lane segments and two lane bridges and unsafe exits. So far 30 people died in car accidents along this highway. A representative of the concessionary company said that there will be five lanes on both sides of the electronic toll units. Vehicles that will use the roads are going to pay about Euro 5, VAT included. Meanwhile, the consortium will receive Euro 5 million per year starting from the third year, until the 15th year, as a subsidy.

# A LA UNE CETTE SEMAINE/HIGHLIGHTS

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## **IMF observer mission meets business representatives**

The International Monetary Fund team held several meetings with the business community. Sources from the Tirana Chamber of Commerce told TV SCAN that the IMF mission headed by Anita Tuladhar held meetings with representatives of this Chamber to discuss problems and shortcomings. According to the sources, the topics discussed in this meeting focused mainly on the high informality in the economy, fiscal policies, labor force and necessary reforms in the inspection processes. The IMF mission has arrived in Tirana for a series of meetings until October 3. According to the agenda the IMF mission held meetings with Minister Arben Ahmetaj and Governor of the Bank of Albania, Gent Sejko, but many meetings have been scheduled with other finance ministry officials. After the end of its program, the IMF is now in Albania in the role of monitoring the implementation progress of its recommendations.

## **197 construction permits were issued in the second part of 2017**

The number of construction permits issued in Albania recorded another increase in the second quarter of this year. According to data from the Institute of Statistics, the total number of building permits approved across the country reached 197, out of 101 permits in the first quarter. Meanwhile, compared to the same quarter of the previous year, the number of permits has almost doubled. The districts with the highest number of new construction permits in the second quarter of this year was Tirana with 59 permits, followed by Fieri with 37 and Vlora and Elbasan with respectively 22. Based on the most detailed data from INSTAT, it is seen that there is a distribution flux of new permits, both for residential and commercial constructions. Out of 121 permits for residential buildings dominate buildings up to two floors, while permits for new buildings were only 29. Permits for non-residential buildings are mainly dominated by buildings for industrial and commercial activity. According to INSTAT data, construction has been one of the main contributors to the economic growth in recent years. For the first quarter of this year, the construction sector output increased by nearly 14% over the same period a year earlier. However, so far the main contribution within the sector belongs to engineering works, mainly those in the energy sector. However, the real estate market, despite improvements, is still facing a slow and volatile growth.

## **UNDP and SDS to Promote Youth Employment**

The Swiss Development Cooperation Office (SDC) is financially supporting the implementation of the 4-year "Developing Employment Skills" program by UNDP, which has a direct impact on youth self-employment. Nora Kushti, communications manager at the UNDP Office, explained that so far in the first two stages of the program, the interest of young people from different districts of the country to develop their business has been high. There are over 1,000 young people applying, 230 of whom have been trained and 36 of them have registered their new businesses. Under the condition, by the end of 2017, 100 new businesses are expected to be registered.

# Les sources de cette semaine/The Source

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CCIFA Weekly News est publié par la CCI France Albanie avec le soutien en particulier du Service Presse de l'Ambassade de France en Albanie.

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*CCIFA Weekly News is published by CCI France Albania with the support in particular of the Press Service of the French Embassy in Albania.*

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