



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy, following his meeting with the
President of Albania Bujar Nishani**

It was my pleasure to meet today the President of Albania, Mr. Bujar Nishani. Let me congratulate him on his election and wish him every success in his demanding position.

Our discussion focused on Albania's European perspective. We took stock of progress related to important reforms. We also touched upon the continued contribution of Albania to the stability in the region. I reiterated my wish to see Albania making progress on its path towards the EU.

Albania can still make good progress towards this aim in 2012. The European Commission will assess the situation in October and the Council will discuss that assessment in December 2012.

It is now important that political reforms continue. I encourage the Government and the opposition to jointly exploit the momentum in order to achieve concrete results addressing the 12 key priorities outlined in the Commission Opinion. Respect for the rule of law, including fighting against corruption and organised crime, is crucial. I welcome President Nishani's strong commitment to the reform of the judiciary.

European integration needs to be a real national effort and an inclusive project. Continued commitment and a stable and constructive political dialogue are essential for Albania's success.

The high level of support by Albanian citizens to European integration is a significant pillar around which political leaders can build a common platform in the interest of the Republic of Albania. Government and opposition need to make joint efforts while listening to civil society, so that all parts of the society can feel ownership for achieving the joint ambition of EU integration.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

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The EU is committed to working together with Albania to moving ahead with the EU agenda and the President of the Republic can play an important role in all this. Concrete progress on the EU path depends entirely on Albania and its performance in delivering results in key reform areas. There is no doubt that Albania's future lies in the EU.

The Western Balkan countries have a European perspective. Progressing towards EU integration generates reforms in all sectors of the society, increases cooperation and stabilises the whole region.
