

Albania Update

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I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding Albania.

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- **Albania Prepares to Increase Troops in Afghanistan**
-Albania is willing to send more troops to Afghanistan, in response to President Trump's new strategy in Afghanistan.
-Albania is showing its continued support of US military operations in the area.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-09/16/c_136614828.htm
- **€800,000,000 Worth of Investments in Albania in 2017-2018**
- €800,000,000 in Albania over the next year to build the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline.

- The pipeline is part of the Southern Gas Corridor which will carry gas from Azerbaijan, through Greece and Albania, and then to Italy.
- €1,500,000,000 is expected to be invested in Albania throughout the project.
<https://sofiaglobe.com/2017/10/03/tap-800-million-euro-worth-of-investments-in-albania-in-2017-2018/>
- **Visegrad Group Supports the EU Membership Bid of Western Balkans**
 - Visegrad countries met with Western Balkans countries to discuss accelerating EU enlargement processes to meet security challenges in Europe.
 - Visegrad countries urge to set a target date for Albanian accession talks, and praise Albania's progress, especially on justice reform.
<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/10/11/visegrad-group-supports-eu-membership-bid-western-balkans/>
- **Albania & Luxembourg Enhance Cooperation**
 - Albanian Minister for European and Foreign Affairs Bushati met with Luxembourg Minister Asselborn to strengthen and intensify cooperation between the two countries.
 - Luxembourg fully supports Albanian integration into the EU, which may occur in 2018.
<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/10/03/bushati-asselborn-albania-open-negotiations-2018/>
- **Hungary Urges EU to Start Accession Talks with Albania & Macedonia**
 - Hungary urges a start date to be designated for accession talks with Albania and Macedonia, and for the talks to begin no later than the first quarter of 2018.
<https://seenews.com/news/hungary-urges-eu-to-start-accession-talks-with-albania-macedonia-586856>
- **European Commission Praises Albania as Good Neighbor**
 - European Commission praised Albania's efforts for cooperation regionally.
<https://www.eureporter.co/world/2017/10/11/commission-praises-albania-as-good-neighbour/>
- **Kosovo and Albania – Cooperation in the Field of Defense**
 - Cooperation between the Ministry for Kosovo Security Forces and Albania's Ministry of Defense will increase in the fields of education, training, and joint exercises between their militaries.
<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/10/05/kosovo-albania-cooperation-field-defence/#>
- **Albania's GDP Expands More than 4% in Q2**
 - Mining, tourism, construction, energy, water, and trade helped the Albanian economy grow for the second consecutive quarter.
 - GDP grew 4.06% in the second quarter.
 - Prime Minister Rama hopes to achieve annual growth of over 5% during his four-year term.
<http://www.nasdaq.com/article/albanias-gdp-expands-more-than-4-percent-in-q2-20170929-00621>
<https://seenews.com/news/albanias-gdp-to-grow-by-39-in-2017-imf-585642>
- **The Capital of Albania Has Transformed into a Lively, Affordable Destination**
 - Tourism is beginning to soar in the Balkan countries, with Tirana, Albania being recognized as a lively affordable destination for travel.
<https://www.vogue.com/article/where-to-go-in-tirana-albania>

- **Albania: Staff Concluding Statement on the 2017 Article IV Mission**

- IMF says that Albania's economy is strengthening as result of tourism, energy-related FDI, EU trading partners, and domestic demand.

- GDP growth projected to increase 3.9%.

- <http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/10/02/ms100217-albania-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2017-article-iv-mission>

All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler