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- AIIS brings new contributions to the process of EU integration “A new chapter for Albania’s Integration in a changing EU: Challenges after the candidate status and enlargement policy under the Italian presidency.” Read more in “In Highlight”, pg 1-3.
- Two new researchers join our team! Read more about them in “Welcome on Board!”, pg 2.

- AIIS hosted a book signing with well-known historian and author Bernd J. Fischer. Read more in “Our events”, pg 3.
- “Challenges and potential of the economic relations between Albania and Kosova” are discussed in a roundtable with a multitude of stakeholders”, Read about it at “Our events”, pg 3.
- Keep up to date with our global-trotting staff and their papers and presentations in “Other activities and contributions”, pg 4.

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# AIIS Newsletter

1 / October 2014

The Albanian Institute for International Studies  
organized on September 30, 2014 the international conference:

## “A new chapter for Albania’s Integration in a changing EU: Challenges after the candidate status and enlargement policy under the Italian presidency.”

The conference gathered decision makers, experts, civil society activists and media, all on the topic of European integration. The added value of this event was to bring the best perspectives from the region countries on how to a. quicken the pace of reforms necessary for integration and b. how to secure comprehensive process and inclusiveness of civil society in every step of it.



## Panel 1 – Next Steps of Albanian EU-Integration, experiences and challenges from the region:

The first panel of the meeting was opened by **Mr. Fatmir Besimi**, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia, Minister for European Integration, Macedonia. Mr. Besimi made a brief presentation on Macedonia’s steps

towards EU integration. He stated that EU integration positively affects social-economic developments in the whole region. Further he added that, EU integration

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## Panel 1 – Next Steps of Albanian EU-Integration, experiences and challenges from the region:

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should be a credible process in order to achieve as much consent as possible from the local population.

**Snežana Radović**, General Director for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EU Integration, Montenegro, discussed about Montenegro's progress towards EU accession. She mentioned the chapters of EU *acquis communautaire*, which were being negotiated with EU representatives. Ms. Radović further stated that transparency of integration process and the inclusion of Civil Society's Partners were crucial factors for successful negotiations.

**Gëzim Kasapolli**, Acting Minister of European Integration, Kosovo, highlighted the most important challenges of the Republic of Kosovo is facing towards EU integration and the country's major accomplishments since the declaration of independence in 2008. He expressed his opinion that EU doesn't have a clear vision on Kosovo's future EU integration process. Mr. Kasapolli stated that the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU and the finalization of the Visa Liberalization process are two important steps that will be taken in the near future.

**Tonino Picula**, Member of European Parliament, former Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Croatia, discussed the basic facts on Croatia's EU journey. He underlined that one of the most important contributors to the Croatian EU success story was the establishment

of a political alliance for the EU integration, including all political parties of the country. Further he mentioned that Croatian public reception on EU has changed, undergoing three phases: 1. Europhoria, 2. Euro-skepticism and 3. Euro-Realism. Mr Picula further added that EU should be open to further accessions and that Albania has already accomplished huge steps forward with respect to EU integration.

**Gentian Elezi**, Deputy-Minister of European Integration, Albania, emphasized that granting of Candidate Status for Albania was the most important step in the EU integration process. He stated that the most important challenges ahead are related to the rise of professionalism of the Public Administration, improvement of Legal Framework and Approximation of Albanian legislation with the EU's *Acquis*. According to Mr. Elezi, EU integration process should be more inclusive, also involving actors from civil society, since EU accession is too important to remain just in the hands of Politicians. Further he added that cooperation with regional partners such as Croatia and Kosovo is instrumental for the advancement of the process.

The chair of the Panel, Mr. Frank Hantke, stressed that integration process of Balkan countries, would gain more speed if Balkan countries would collaborate more with each other. Mr. Hantke stated that EU integration is currently more difficult than ever, but a single regional voice in this context would be of immense value.

## WELCOME ON BOARD

AIIS welcomes on board:



**SASHENKA LLESHAJ**,  
*Researcher*. After the successful completion of her Research Fellowship at the Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) following the award of Think Tank Young Professional Development Program for MA and PhD

Graduates 2013-2014, Sashenka Lleshaj joined the team of AIIS full time researchers in July of 2014. She is also engaged as a Research Assistant at the Albanian Centre for Competitiveness and International Trade (ACIT) working on the project "Analyzing political and economical costs and benefits of Albania's EU integration process". Sashenka holds an MSc in Russian and East European Studies from the University of Oxford where she was awarded the 2012-2013 Open Society Foundation Oxford

Scholarship. She holds a BA in Political Sciences for the University of Tirana and a BA in International Relations from the European University of Tirana.



**EMA BUTKA** *Research Assistant*- Ema Butka holds a Bachelors degree in Translation and Interpretation of German Language from University of Tirana, and is currently studying in Business Administration in the same University. She has worked

as German teacher for the past 3 years in various language schools as well in the private High school "Faik Konica" based in Tirana. In the past, Ema has also been involved with AIIS in several quantitative research projects such as the national poll 'European Perspective of Albania'.

## Panel 2 – EU Integration perspectives from the region

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Panel 2 was chaired by **Ms. Alba Cela** – Deputy Director, Albanian Institute for International Studies. Kristian Turkalj, Former Assistant Minister of Justice, Croatia, stressed that negotiation for EU accession involves many actors, whereas independent state institutions and justice authorities, such as Prosecutor Office, are involved. According to Mr. Turkalj, comprehensive reforms and communication with EU stakeholders are very important to the process.

**Miodrag Radović**, Secretary of the Negotiating Group (EU negotiations), Montenegro, underlined the crucial role of the Montenegrin Ministry of foreign Affairs during the ongoing negotiations with the EU. *“Montenegro reports to EU through different actors, who report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which on the other hand elaborates the information and deliver to further to EU authorities in Brussels.”* Mr Radovic, discussed briefly the negotiating structure of Montenegro, which is composed of a Negotiating College, negotiating group and respective secretariat of negotiation groups.

**Jelena Ribac**, Project and Network Coordinator, European Movement Serbia, made a brief presentation on the accession negotiations of Serbia and the relevant involvement of Civil Society Organizations in this process. Ms. Ribac mentioned



the most important Serbian state actors involved in the process, such as: Mechanism for coordination, State EU delegation, Serbian government and the National Assembly. She further highlighted the importance of the National Convention on the European Union in Serbia, a mechanism focused on the institutional debates related to Serbia's EU perspective, involving different actors of Serbian society such as: CSOs, government institutions and broader public.

**Živana Mejač**, Former head of department for EU negotiations and director for EU coordination, Slovenia, mentioned the key milestones of the EU accession process of Slovenia. She stressed the importance of public support in the accession process, the efficient organization of state institutions during the negotiations and the legal harmonization process.

**Altin Fuga**, Directorate of Policies, Ministry of European Integration, Albania, noted that so far the adoption of EU legislation was a smooth process without causing any political debates. Further he discussed the EU priorities on Albania, which should be considered as important benchmarks for the whole process. Mr. Fuga, made a brief presentation of all state structures involved in the integration process such as: The EU integration directories of all Line Ministries, The Inter-ministerial and Coordination Committee of Integration. He further mentioned the future plans related to the appointment of a Chief Negotiator of the Negotiating team during the negotiations process and the appointment of the recently established National Council of European Integration.

*For more information on this event please contact Researcher **Dritan Sulcebe**, [dsulcebe@aiis-albania.org](mailto:dsulcebe@aiis-albania.org).*



From 7-9 October 2014, AIIS Executive Director of AIIS, Dr. Albert Rakipi attended and spoke at the conference **“Western Balkans - The futures of integration”**, organized by the NATO Defense College Foundation in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Balkan Trust for Democracy in Rome.

## OUR EVENTS:



- On 18 September 2014, AIIS together with the US Embassy in Tirana broadcasted live the public speech held by **American Ambassador to NATO, Mr. Douglas E. Lute: “Building a stronger future for NATO: The voice of next generation leaders.”**
- On 29 October 2014 AIIS organized the roundtable **“Challenges and potential of the economic relations between Albania and Kosovo”,** in the framework of the project **“Albania and Kosovo, in quest of a common future”** supported by Friedrich Ebert in Albania and Kosovo. The conference was addressed by Charge D’affaires of Kosovo to Albania Mr. Ramiz Lladrovci as well as the Director of the Regional Directorate in the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bashkim Rama. The vibrant discussion that followed was due to the presence of many other economy experts such as Selami Xhepa, Arben Malaj, Gjergji Erebara, Ilir Zhilla, Gjergji Buxhuku, Ilir Ciko, etc.



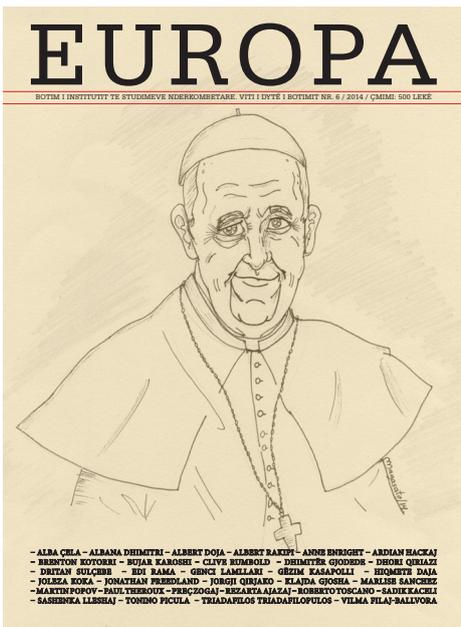
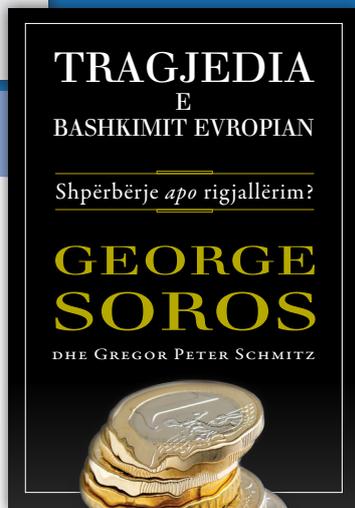
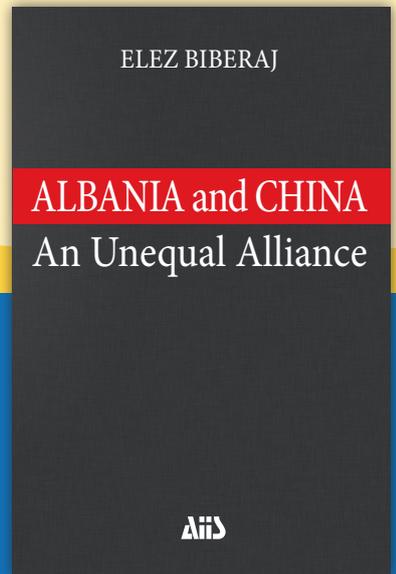
- On October 25, 2014 AIIS hosted a **book signing for historian and author Bernd J. Fischer** since throughout the years our Institute has brought his main titles for the Albanian audience. Fischer has been the Director of the History Department at the Indiana University, Fort Wayne. He is the author of many books that have been translated into Albanian such as **“King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania”** (1984), **“Albania at War, 1939-1945”** (1999), **“Albanian Identities, History and Myth”** (2002), **“Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeastern Europe”** (2007), and **“Albania 1943-1945: A View Through Western Documents”** (2012).

## Other activities and contributions:

- From 18 to 26 of September of this year, AIIS Deputy Director Alba Cela participated in the **Workshop on China Issues for Scholars from Central and Eastern European Countries,** organized by the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing China. Alba in the course of this activity participated in high profile networking meetings at the 16+1 Initiative Secretariat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China as well as at the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.
- From 25 to 27 September 2014 Sashenka Lleshaj participated at the regional workshop **“Bosnia-Herzegovina and Beyond: The Role of Civil Society in Supporting Democratization and Euro-Atlantic Integration in South East Europe”** in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. This event was organized jointly by the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes, the Austrian National Defence Academy, the Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sports and the Centre for Security Studies. At this workshop Sashenka presented the paper **“The role of CSOs in Albania’s EU integration: From marginal actors to governmental partners”,** which will be published next year.



# AIIS New Publications



Our magazine *Europa* latest issue:

*'Europa' magazine is an novel and pioneering publication targeting Albanian readers with the aim of encouraging a new, involving and critical approach to European integration, providing more space to promotion of European values including arts and culture as well as featuring thoughtful analysis on current developments within the EU. The magazine promotes critical thinking, open debate and provides the reader with a fresh perspective on both current events and more general trends. For subscriptions, inquiries and advertising please contact [aiis@aiis-albania.org](mailto:aiis@aiis-albania.org)*

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