



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 7, 2017

Case No. F-2017-09463

Segments: IPS-0001 & Tirana-0001

Mr. William F. Marshall  
425 Third St., SW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Mr. Marshall:

In response to your request dated March 31, 2017, under the Freedom of Information Act (the "FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Review of documents potentially responsive to your request remains ongoing. We have located 11 documents responsive to your request. After reviewing these documents, we have determined that 9 may be released in full and 2 may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each document. All released material is enclosed.

If you have any questions, you may contact Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Schaefer, at (202) 252-2531 or [Daniel.Schaefer@usdoj.gov](mailto:Daniel.Schaefer@usdoj.gov). Please be sure to refer to the case number, F-2017-09463, and the civil action number, 17-cv-01012, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric F. Stein for".

Eric F. Stein, Director  
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

(b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:

- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
- 1.4(b) Foreign government information
- 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
- 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US; including confidential sources
- 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
- 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction

(b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency

(b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:

ARMSEXP	Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c)
CIA PERS/ORG	Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
EXPORT CONTROL	Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c)
FS.ACT	Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f)
IRAN	Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505

(b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information

(b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product

(b)(6) Personal privacy information

(b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:

- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
- (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
- (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (D) disclose confidential sources
- (E) disclose investigation techniques
- (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual

(b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions

(b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

**Other Grounds for Withholding**

NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

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From: SMART Archive  
Sent: 3/16/2017 7:53:49 AM  
To: SMART Core  
Subject: Tirana Highlights for March 16, 2017

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MRN: 17 MDA 5276  
Date/DTG: Mar 16, 2017 / 161153Z MAR 17  
From: Koski, Paola  
Action: Koski, Paola ROUTINE  
E.O.: 13526  
TAGS: PGOV, SOCI, PHUM, AL  
Captions: SENSITIVE  
Subject: Tirana Highlights for March 16, 2017

**(SBU) Coverage of Senators' Letter to S:** Media published yesterday a letter from Senator Mike Lee and five other Senators to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson expressing concern over the role of U.S. embassies in Macedonia and Albania and the Open Society Foundations (Soros Foundation). The letter states that "Foundation Open Society – Albania (FOSA) and its experts, with funding from USAID, have created the controversial Strategy Document for Albanian Judicial Reform. Some leaders believe that these 'reforms' are ultimately aimed to give the Prime Minister and the left-of-center government full control over judiciary power." Media reported that DP Chair Lulzim Basha read the letter in the opposition tent in the boulevard yesterday to illustrate international support for the opposition's protest and demands. (Comment: Post has consistently and actively supported efforts to defend against political parties on either side from manipulating judicial reform to exert control over the judiciary.)

**(SBU) Justice Reform Update: Vetting Delay:** Media reported that since the parliament's decision to reopen applications and accept supporting documents for the vetting bodies ten days ago, justice reform has been delayed. Media reported that on Monday the Ombudsman was expected to reopen the call for existing candidates to provide supporting documents, as well as the call for new applications for the vetting bodies. (Comment: The parliament's decision to return the process to the Ombudsman and the lengthy time of transfer of documents will delay the start of the vetting process.)

**(SBU) Ambassador Comments on Proposed Interior Minister:** Media widely published the Ambassador's statement for Voice of America in which he stated that "for the fight against organized crime and illegal narcotics in Albania to succeed, there is need for new energy. If Mr. Xhafaj aggressively works against narcotics and organized crime, he will have our full support. We have worked closely with Mr. Xhafaj as head of the parliament's legal committee and on the judicial reform. We look to him to actively combat crime in Albania and act in an impartial manner as the country prepares for elections." Separately, media reported a letter from formerly-politically persecuted citizens to President Bujar Nishani, asking him not to decree Xhafaj as Interior Minister. (Comment: Some media read the Ambassador's statement as criticism of former Interior Minister Salmir Tahiri. Xhafaj faces criticism for his communist past, when he served in the judiciary.)

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Drafted By: TIRANA:Koski, Paola  
Released By: TIRANA:Koski, Paola

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From: SMART Archive  
Sent: 6/5/2015 4:48:08 AM  
To: SMART Core  
Subject: Albania Hosts Balkans Regional Summit on CVE, May 19-21, 2015

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MRN: 15 TIRANA 364  
Date/DTG: Jun 05, 2015 / 050843Z JUN 15  
From: AMEMBASSY TIRANA  
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE  
E.O.: 13526  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PTER, PHUM, SOCI, KHLS, KIRF, KSUM, KWMN, KYOU, KPAO, AL, ZL  
Captions: SENSITIVE  
Pass Line: DEPT FOR J/CELL (LONNI REASOR)  
Subject: Albania Hosts Balkans Regional Summit on CVE, May 19-21, 2015

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On May 19-21, the government of Albania hosted the first of the regional Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) summits building on the February White House CVE Summit in Washington, DC. It was the first REGIONAL CVE conference in the Balkans that prominently featured civil society speakers. The conference's primary focus was on the violent extremism linked to the flow of FTFs from Iraq and Syria. The event included some 130 participants – Ministers of Interior and other government officials, civil society, municipal governments, and the private sector from the Balkans region, as well as the representatives from the United States, Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Turkey, and the UK, as well as multilateral bodies, including the European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe (CoE), United Nations (UN), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Hedayah, and Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). On May 19, the first of two civil society-focused days, participants explored the potential drivers of violent extremism in the region, discussed the role of civil society in implementing CVE programs, and considered how local governments can work to address this complicated issue. The May 20 "government" day focused on the importance of developing inclusive national CVE strategies, strengthening the relationship between law enforcement and communities, and addressing social, political, and economic grievances to build stronger communities. On the final day on May 21, a smaller group continued in a technology workshop that examined the role that technology can play in promoting and confronting violent extremism, followed by discussion to develop project proposals focusing on intervention, education, and content. Under Secretary of State (U/S) for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall led the inter-agency U.S. delegation. In addition to extensive Embassy representation at the event, including Ambassador Donald Lu, officials from the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security, and USAID also participated. The Conference highlighted a lack of trust between some of the countries, which presents a challenge to desperately needed regional cooperation. It also stressed that successful CVE efforts require close cooperation between central government, local government, civil society, and religious communities. The Conference highlighted the growing number of CVE activities and potential funding for

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additional activities from the international community in the Balkans. As we continue to push for implementation of the White House CVE Summit follow-on action agenda, our Embassies will need to ensure any new programs do not overlap with other CVE projects. END SUMMARY.

**Day One – May 19:**

2. (U) **Opening Remarks:** The Summit opened with remarks from Saimir Tahiri, Albania's Minister of the Interior, who acknowledged the challenge of CVE and spoke to some of the root causes. He also emphasized the importance of cooperation and national action plans. Under Secretary (U/S) for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, Sarah Sewall, urged attendees to create a Western Balkans Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), draft comprehensive national CVE strategies, and train front-line officials and civil society on identifying possible violent extremists.

3. (SBU) Ministers generally stressed the importance of cooperation, but Montenegro and Croatia provided particularly illustrative interventions. Croatian Minister of Interior Ranko Ostojic encouraged attendees to do their homework so that they can fulfil EU standards, since that is "the best thing they can do to prevent radicalization." Montenegrin Deputy Minister of Interior Ivan Ivanisevic presented Montenegro's four-point focus for CVE: new strategy to combat terrorism, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2178; legislative reforms to criminalize actions of persons who recruit, finance, lead, or organize armed groups; operational cooperation with INTERPOL and regional organizations; and regional cooperation. Serbian Minister of the Interior Nebojsa Stefanovic discussed the financing of terror organizations and then used the Kumanovo incident, and recent events in Bosnia, as examples that "terror is more and more present." (Note: On April 27, a recently radicalized gunman attacked a police station in Zvornik, Bosnia and Herzegovina, killing one police officer and wounding two more before being shot by police. On May 9, a clash occurred in Kumanovo, Macedonia, between police forces and an armed group of Albanians identifying themselves as the "National Liberation Army," resulting in casualties on both sides. End Note.) He added that we "cannot allow organizations to call themselves liberation movements," and Serbia's goal is to prosecute those that propagate radical ideology. Stefanovic spoke about Serbia's legislation and legal actions to prosecute and limit the activity of extremists.

4. (SBU) **Session 1** focused on local research, and speakers presented results of completed and ongoing research into the demographics and drivers of violent extremism. The focus of this session was ethnic Albanians in the Balkans – researchers agreed that the radicalization among Albanians started from Macedonia, then Kosovo, reaching Albania at the end. Gjergji Vurmo from the Albania Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) presented information on the Project "Preventing Religious Radicalization" in which he analyzed potential drivers of violent extremism in Albania and Albanian perceptions about faith and radicalism in their communities. Florian Qehaja, Head of the Kosovo Center for Security Studies (KCSS), spoke about his Center's recently-launched project interviewing returnees from Syria and their families. Qehaja contrasted violent extremism with conservatism, noting that conservatives are not necessarily violent. When discussing reasons for the high radicalization rate in Kosovo, Qehaja opined that Kosovo's international isolation, coupled with poverty and lack of government's contact with endangered communities, contributed to the phenomenon. He also spoke to the potential benefits of engaging certain returnees, many of whom are regretful, for counter-messaging campaigns. Independent researcher Adrian Shtuni explored the role of social media, emphasizing that it is as much a weapon of jihad as a gun or a bomb, and many families are ill-equipped to fight its influence. Shtuni also presented research revealing that the average age of foreign fighters from Albania was nearly a decade older than that in Kosovo and Macedonia, highlighting the importance of tailoring social media campaigns in light of such information. In addition, research found that the most radicalized communities in Kosovo coincided with the location of foreign-funded charities that were shut down in 2014 by Kosovo police for suspected terrorist financing activities.

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5. (SBU) Session 2 discussed innovative civil society programs. Reis Sulejman Rexhepi, Head of Macedonia's Islamic Community, emphasized the role of the many associations within the Muslim community in reaching vulnerable youth. Emir Kovacevic from the Bosnia Inter-religious Council presented his organization's coordination of joint condemnations of extremism attacks and engaging in public forums exploring faith and forgiveness. Speakers in this session addressed the contributing role of recent Balkan conflicts, adding that securing justice, finishing reconciliation, and prosecuting war crimes deter violent extremism. At the end of the session (unscheduled), the Bulgarian Ambassador to Albania delivered a message from the Deputy Minister of the Interior in which he noted the importance of border security and the efficient exchange of information. He also noted a rise in conversions into Islam among the Roma community.

6. (SBU) Session 3 addressed the role of new and existing civil society initiatives that counter violent extremism. Izabela Kistic from the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia spoke about the Helsinki Committee's outreach to Sandzak, where 50% of the population is under age 20 and 80% are unemployed. The outreach project connected police and youth, enabling both to overcome their misconceptions and prejudice. As a result, several outreach participants have formed NGOs, and 70% report that they changed their opinions after participating in the Committee's workshop. Ms. Kistic also called for a roster of CT/CVE experts to be made available to NGOs in the region, explaining that it is often difficult for the NGOs to secure expert speakers at their events. Fabian Zhilla from the Open Society Foundation for Albania explored the similarity between violent extremism and organized crime, arguing that organized crime is a type of violent extremism. Gianluca Rocco, Regional Director of the International Office of Migration (IOM), spoke about building women's associations in communities, noting that the credibility problem can only be solved by working closely and transparently with the community, especially with local and religious leaders. Kristina Voko, a journalist from the Balkans Investigative Reporting Network, noted the role of the media, especially local media, as a driver of violent extremism, adding that the media must be careful about how they deliver stories on violent extremism. Most speakers agreed that the role of (conservative) imams in preventing or countering radicalization to violence was crucial, especially in rural areas where local government is barely present.

7. (SBU) Session 4 addressed the role of municipal governments in countering violent extremism. (Note: This was the most difficult session to organize because few municipalities in the Balkans acknowledge a role or responsibility in addressing violent extremism. End Note.) Moderator Timothy Curry from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security discussed the need to develop strategies that are tailored and adaptable, offering examples from the UK, The Netherlands, and the United States. Investigations Officer Jouke Osinga from the Public Prosecution Office in The Netherlands spoke about initiatives in Arnhem, Netherlands, using a customized approach to reach each radicalized individual and obtaining useful information, even if that information is not intended, or used for prosecution. The difference between de-radicalization and disengagement was also discussed. Since not every person with radical views represents a security threat, we should attempt to have them disengage from violent actions, even if we do not succeed in de-radicalizing them.

**Day Two – May 20:**

8. (U) **Opening Remarks:** Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama used the opening remarks, which were widely covered by the press, to put forth Albania's perspective on key issues with the EU, NATO, and other Balkan countries. Rama remarked that the current peace is an opportunity for the Balkans to liberate itself "from the dictatorship of the ghosts of the past," adding that it is "time to stop looking back – we need to look ahead." Rama said that Albania needs the support of the EU as its partner and "Balkan countries are closer to the EU than they are to each other, and that is their common problem." Rama said he hoped that the Summit will confirm the willingness of participants to "fight terrorism not just face to face, but with ideology, mechanisms, and spirit."

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9. (U) Rama then offered targeted thoughts on regional issues: Albania strongly supports the need to include in NATO all countries of the Balkans, and especially Montenegro. Albania supports Kosovo in becoming closer to NATO and appealed to the EU for visa liberalization so that Kosovo would not "feel as if they are locked in absurdly." Rama exhorted Macedonia to respect both the letter and the spirit of the Ohrid agreement, admonishing them for using the words "Albanian" and "terrorist" together when the Kumanovo incident was about addressing issues about democracy. Rama encouraged Macedonia to provide a "liveable and sustainable" Macedonia for all, adding that human rights and fundamental freedoms must coincide with aspirations to be part of NATO. Addressing Serbia, Rama said that Albanians and Serbs should come together to do for the Balkans what France and Germany did for the EU, and in so doing, will create a road of no return toward the EU. Rama closed with a reminder of the legend of the construction of Rozafa castle, in which the construction done during the day was undone every night, and encouraged attendees to not undo the progress that is being made.

10. (SBU) Session 5 focused on the development of comprehensive national CVE action plans. Moderator Thomas Wuchte, Head of the Action against Terrorism Unit (OSCE), briefed attendees on OSCE's guidebook on community policing and emphasized the importance of community policing in CVE. Allison Peters from the Institute for Inclusive Security discussed the inclusion of women and women's issues in the drafting of national CVE action plans. Peters stressed that women play a key role in preventing and moderating violent extremism and the innovative approaches women's NGOs bring in tackling these problems. Peters also emphasized the importance of ensuring that civil society understands the roles of the other actors and has an adequate funding stream, and encouraged countries that draft national CVE action plans to allocate funds to operationalize their plans. Edon Myftari, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Kosovo, spoke about Kosovo's new provisions on foreign fighters and the establishment of a working group to develop a national five-year CVE strategy. Peter Gridling, Head of the Federal Agency for State Protection and Counter Terrorism in Austria, offered a broader view of violent extremism and national strategy, providing examples of Austria's response to nationalist and anti-G7 violent extremists as well as religious extremism. Gridling was one of very few speakers who discussed the important role that teachers play in spotting the first signs of radicalism and offered attendees Austria's example of placing their "Information Center on Extremism" in the Ministry of Family Affairs, thus giving it accessibility and an outreach rather than a security focus. Jay Singh, Director of the Democracy Office in the U.S. Agency for International Development, offered a broader view of violent extremism, telling attendees that "CVE is about governance, not government," and increasing law enforcement in a corrupt system only serves to increase the exclusivity of the corrupt elite, which further marginalizes citizens leading to extremism. Singh encouraged attendees to look broadly at governance that improves inclusion, including issues such as equitable access to justice and health care, improving mobility, promoting tourism, and expanding social services.

11. (SBU) Session 6 focused on strengthening community law enforcement relations to counter violent extremism. Agron Sojati, Head of the Counter-Terrorism Unit in the State Police of Albania, listed recent examples of violent extremism and arrests made by Albania and discussed interventions through border police and EUROPOL. Martin Cunningham, Acting Head of the Strengthening Division EULEX Office in Kosovo, spoke broadly about the role of community-oriented policing in fighting violent extremism, emphasizing the importance of establishing strong ties, accessibility, and trust in communities. Amar Shakoor, Former Chair and Founder of the Scottish Police Muslim Association (SPMA), provided several re-creatable examples for attendees of effective community engagement by the police among the Somali Muslim population in Scotland. Dr. Necati Anaz, Senior Researcher at the Turkish International Centre for Terrorism and Transnational Crime (UTSAM), presented his research into violent extremism in Turkey, which has more than 14,000 suspected ISIS sympathizers and more than 1,200 fighters which have joined ISIS, despite religious freedom and pro-Islamic government. He noted that 81.9% of Turks feel free to practice their religion and

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Muslims are very integrated, yet specialist bookstores, tea houses, and industrial zones are hotbeds of recruitment. Motivations in Turkey for violent extremism may be a perceived need to atone for past sins, a search for a perfect place and Islamic state, and a lack of comprehensive knowledge of Islam and its traditions.

12. (SBU) Session 7 focused on building secure and resilient communities by addressing social, political, and economic grievances. Ivo Veenkamp from Hedayah moderated the session and provided a brief overview of Hedayah's three foci: dialogue, research and analysis, and practical training on CVE for governments and civil society. Bujar Luma, Director of the NGO Loja in Macedonia, spoke about using art and the theater to address issues which may lead to extremism. Artan Shkempi, former Mayor of Pogradec, Albania, used his twelve years of experience as a mayor to provide attendees with a sharp vision of the role of a municipality in reaching those vulnerable to extremism and ensuring that they have an open door for concerns and know that someone cares about them.

#### Concluding Session

13. (SBU) U.S. Ambassador to Albania Donald Lu told attendees that when we discuss the causes of violent extremism, we need to look first within ourselves and our societies – how have we failed to capture the imagination of youth; how have we allowed our prisons to become training centers? Ambassador Lu said that he hoped this Summit would be an end to talking and a beginning of action, and toward that end, provided the following U.S. suggestions for concrete follow up:

- Points of contact for each country so that countries can continue the dialogue
- Support and encouragement as countries work on their strategies
- Funding on special projects related to CVE
- Support in the development of a regional radicalization awareness network
- Support in the development of a youth network
- Support for efforts to work in prisons
- Work with civil society to increase the capability to use technology

14. (SBU) Minister of Interior Tahliri told attendees that we must "kill bureaucracy before we can win over terrorism." He continued that this means dealing with the justice system, employment policies, and giving people a chance to believe in the good things that we can do together. He thanked the United States for its help with the summit and facing this issue in the region, and added that he hoped that the follow-up by attendees would be common steps and action plans.

#### Tech Workshop – May 21:

15. (SBU) The Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) conducted a day-long hands-on highly interactive CVE Tech Workshop for civil society and government representatives. It allowed participants to identify key challenges in the CVE space that could be addressed using low-cost easy-to-implement technological tools/concepts. The participants worked closely with technology experts on topics including social media, online-to-offline engagement, mobiles, crowdsourcing, and data-mapping, and co-created strategies for high-impact solutions to address some of the key challenges identified during the first two days of the CVE Summit. Adrian Shtuni spoke more extensively about the role of social media in recruitment for violent extremism. There were presentations by local social media and electronic content experts, who provided statistics about the breadth of social media use, discussed the possible use of mobile applications, and emphasized that we must counter extremist social media penetration with anti-extremist content and a positive narrative.

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16. (SBU) After a working lunch, the tech workshop participants broke into three small groups to develop project proposals focusing on intervention, education, and content. Projects that were proposed include: a portal which would provide a clearinghouse for CVE, an education plan involving training in person and online and video conferencing between students and educators to provide needed skills to counter violent extremism among students, and a competition by university students to design an advertising campaign and a brand that would serve as an umbrella under which anti-violent extremism efforts such as education and content could be launched.

**Comment and Next Steps:**

17. (U) The Tirana Summit highlighted the need for coordinated follow up on CVE efforts in the Balkans region. Participants recognized the sensitive issue of violent extremism in the region and agreed to support CVE efforts, including those involving civil society, to address the growing trend going forward. Participants also agreed to support and encourage countries as they develop comprehensive CVE action plans in the lead-up to the CVE leaders' summit planned for the margins of the UN General Assembly in September.

<b>Signature:</b>	Lu
<b>Drafted By:</b>	TIRANA: Makely, Emily
<b>Cleared By:</b>	POL: Lynagh, Stephen E J: Rosand, Eric A J: Reasor, Lonni H (J) EUR/SCE: Lamie, Jameson F EUR/PGI: Olson, Maria dG POL: Carnie, Amy (Athens) DRL/IRF: Padgett, Douglas M AmEmbassy Sarajevo: Singh, Jaidev ME/TS: Katz, Dara (ME/TS) DIR: Hope, James R/PPR: Hamilton, Stevie B INL/EA: Simic, Andrea V AmEmbassy Sarajevo: Vaccaro, Michael U.S. Department of Homeland Security: Curry, Timothy
<b>Approved By:</b>	Exec: Lu, Donald
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<b>Info:</b>	EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ROUTINE

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From: SMART Archive  
Sent: 4/28/2016 10:00:45 AM  
To: SMART Core  
Subject: Tirana Highlights for April 12, 2016

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MRN: 16 MDA 8366  
Date/DTG: Apr 28, 2016 / 281400Z APR 16  
From: Hernandez, Allegra E  
Action: Hernandez, Allegra E ROUTINE  
E.O.: 13526  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, AL, KCOR  
Captions: SENSITIVE  
Subject: Tirana Highlights for April 12, 2016

Tirana Highlights  
April 12, 2016

(SBU) PM Rama in USA:

The local media is covering closely Prime Minister Edi Rama's visit to the U.S. with an emphasis on the meeting at the White House on April 14. The press noted that Rama's social media postings about the meetings with New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio as well as with the Albanian Diaspora in New York City. The media reported on the PM announcing a global Albanian diaspora conference in Albania in November 2016.

(SBU) National Poll On Justice Reform:

The Institute for Development and Research Alternatives (IDRA) published a public survey on citizens' knowledge, support, and expectations on justice reform. According to the survey, that the Embassy sponsored along with the Open Society Foundation for Albania, 91% of respondents either "fully support" or "somewhat support" the need for a judicial reform. 90% of respondents believe that the EU and the United States Embassy fully support the reform, followed by the Venice Commission (77%). The respondents reported that judges and prosecutors are less interested in reform. 65% of Albanian citizens are optimistic about the chances of judicial reform being approved in parliament within 2016. However, 66% also think that there will be groups/organizations/individuals who will try to prevent approval of the reform. (Comment: The findings of the survey track with the displays of strong support among the general public for the reform.)

(SBU) Opposition: Free And Fair Elections Albania's Key Priority: Democratic Party Chairman Lulzim Basha met on April 11 with leaders of the opposition coalition parties to discuss electoral reform as well as the platform for the planned 2017 general elections. Basha stated that free and fair elections were the most important priority for Albania. Some of the proposals included possible changes to the electoral system including the possibility of creating a bicameral parliamentary system, the introduction of electronic voting and counting, limiting private donations to political parties, implementing the decriminalization law, and guaranteeing media freedom. The DP invited the Justice, Integration and Unity Party of the Cham community and the New Democratic Spirit of former President Bamir Topi (which gathered around the ruling majority in 2015) to join the opposition coalition. (Comment: The opposition proposals broaden the scope of electoral reform by going beyond making changes to address ODIHR recommendations from 2013 and 2015 elections. Some of the changes in the electoral system raised would require constitutional amendments. Some of the proposals such as electronic voting also appear overly ambitious or have the possibility to create complication down the line, given that previous similar test cases for such a system in Albania were not successful.)

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From: SMART Archive  
Sent: 3/26/2015 9:35:54 AM  
To: SMART Core  
Subject: Demarche Request: Supporting the European Roma Institute

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MRN: 15 STATE 32540  
Date/DTG: Mar 26, 2015 / 261334Z MAR 15  
From: SECSTATE WASHDC  
Action: BERLIN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; PARIS, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; ROME, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; STOCKHOLM, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SOFIA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BUCHAREST, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; MADRID, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; THE HAGUE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; TIRANA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE  
E.O.: 13526  
TAGS: PHUM, PREL, COE, XG  
Reference: A) 14 STATE 31770  
B) 15 STATE 16520  
Subject: Demarche Request: Supporting the European Roma Institute

1. This is an action request, please see para 6.
2. Background: The European Roma Institute is a proposed independent institution the Open Society Foundations (OSF) would like to establish in partnership with the Council of Europe (COE). Its goals are to promote Romani culture and education, foster dialogue between Roma and non-Roma populations, and provide Roma policy advice to European governments (see attached information sheet). As an observer to the COE and a supporter of Roma inclusion across the continent, the United States supports the creation of the Institute as an important component of efforts to combat anti-Roma discrimination and promote positive inclusion policies. The goal of this demarche is to bring awareness to European capitals about the initiative and the process in the COE, and to encourage European partners' support for the Institute in an upcoming debate at the COE.
3. On March 31, in Strasbourg, the COE Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC) will discuss establishment of a European Roma Institute (ERI). GR-SOC members will hear from Zelkjo Jovanovic, Director of OSF's Roma Initiatives Office, and receive a report from Ulrich Bunjes, the COE's Special Representative on Roma Issues. GR-SOC will then hold a debate on the establishment of the ERI on the basis of a draft decision (attached).
4. Following the debate, GR-SOC may decide to forward the draft decision to the COE

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Committee of Ministers for adoption without further debate at its April 15 meeting. Such a move would constitute the first step in establishment of the ERI, after which the COE Secretariat would conduct preparatory work for the ERI and follow-up work would be assigned to GR-SOC. Alternatively, in the absence of consensus, GR-SOC may schedule another discussion on establishment of the ERI, or determine to indefinitely shelve it. COE contacts currently indicate that the outcome of the GR-SOC debate is unpredictable. At this stage, political commitment to support the Institute entails no funding obligations by member states.

5. On March 11, EUR DAS Hoyt Yee gave remarks at an OSF-sponsored dinner in support of the ERI. He highlighted the U.S. government's efforts to combat discrimination and intolerance directed against the Romani minority. DAS Yee called on our European partners to support the establishment of the ERI. In May 2014, U.S. acting representative to the Council of Europe Evan Reade made a public statement in the COE's Committee of Ministers on U.S. support for the Institute (Ref A). For additional information on the U.S. government's Roma policy, see Ref B.

#### Action Request

6. Posts are requested to deliver the below talking points to the appropriate contact responsible for Council of Europe issues to convey U.S. political support for the establishment of the European Roma Institute (ERI) and request their support at the March 31 GR-SOC debate. Posts are requested to report substantive responses to David Meyer, [meyerdk@state.gov](mailto:meyerdk@state.gov), and Michelle Bloom, [EUR-PGI-DemocracyandHR-DL@state.gov](mailto:EUR-PGI-DemocracyandHR-DL@state.gov), by close of business March 30. Post may leave the points and attached background sheet as a non-paper.

#### 7. Begin Talking Points:

- As an observer to the Council of Europe, the United States values the Council's role in defending human rights across Europe, including the rights of Romani individuals, which is a priority for the United States in Europe.
- On March 31, the Council of Europe's (COE) Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC) will debate a decision to establish the European Roma Institute and determine whether the decision should be transmitted to the COE Committee of Ministers for adoption without further debate at its April 15 meeting.
- We encourage your government to strongly support establishment of the institute when it is considered initially at the March 31 GR-SOC meeting and possibly later at the April 15 Committee of Ministers meeting.
- At this stage, there is no financial obligation on the part of your government. All that is required is your political support.
- [If pressed] Council of Europe Secretariat co-funding will be necessary during the initial phase at a proposed €200K per year. The Open Society Foundations and ERI fundraising

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efforts will provide the remaining funding necessary for operations, which the COE Secretariat estimates to be €600K per year total.

- Last year on April 8, International Roma Day, Secretary Kerry asserted that the United States is committed to removing the obstacles that keep millions of Roma on the margins of society and prevent them from reaching their full potential.
- We believe that securing the equal participation of Roma in political, social, and economic life will strengthen democracies, invigorate economies, and lead to further stability across the continent.
- This is why the United States supports the creation of the European Roma Institute at the Council of Europe and believes that it will provide a much needed focal point for Roma initiatives across the Council's member states.
- The Institute will help combat prejudice, promote diversity, and educate about Romani culture and history to promote the inclusion of Roma in all walks of life.
- By serving as a resource center for policy makers and government officials, the Institute can provide a forum for the diverse perspectives of Romani leaders, activists, and citizens from across the continent.
- We value our cooperation on this critical issue and thank you for your support.

Signature:	Kerry
<hr/>	
Drafted By:	DRL_EUR:Meyer, David K
Cleared By:	J:Hogrefe, Hans-Joachim EUR:Yee, Hoyt B Strasbourg:Westling, Amy P EUR/PGI:Bloom, Michelle DRL/EUR:Anders, Jaroslav Z D-MR:Donnelly, Jacob E P:Wang, Joe S/P:Baer, Lauren E D:Sheils, Siobhan M - info by request
Approved By:	DRL/EUR:Kaplan, Philip W - Acting DAS
Released By:	DRL_EUR:Meyer, David K
Info:	EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE ROUTINE
Attachments:	ERI Draft Decision for 3-31.docx
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**Ministers' Deputies / Rapporteur Groups**  
**GR-SOC**  
**Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions**  
**GR-SOC(2015)10 12 March 2015<sup>1</sup>**

**Creation of a "European Roma Institute"**  
Information document prepared by the Secretariat  
**For consideration by the GR-SOC at its meeting on 31 March 2015**

**Executive summary**

The "European Roma Institute" (ERI) [*working title*] is proposed as an independent organisation with the mission of increasing the self-esteem of Roma<sup>2</sup> and decreasing negative prejudice of the majority towards the Roma by means of arts, culture, history, and media.

The idea of a European Roma Institute originates from discussions by Romani intellectuals over the past four decades. Prestigious Romani arts and culture organisations in Europe, prominent artists, cultural producers and intellectuals are convinced of the value of this initiative, backed by the Open Society Foundations which formally approached the Council of Europe with the proposal of a partnership establishing ERI.

The proposed Institute is in line with the fundamental values and principles laid down in the "Strasbourg Declaration".<sup>3</sup> It aims at strengthening the recognition and respect for Romani cultures, overcoming discriminatory attitudes and promoting co-operation between Romani and non-Romani communities throughout Europe. Building on the Council of Europe's previous efforts in the field of advancing knowledge of Romani history and culture, ERI would support the Roma-related policy agenda and activities of the Council of Europe and its member States.

This paper elaborates the principles underpinning the ERI project, the Institute's goals, functions, budget and governance structure. It is proposed that the Council of Europe co-funds the project in its five-year start-up phase with a contribution of €200 000 per year.

**European context**

The widespread social, cultural and economic marginalisation of Romani communities in Europe persists, although some progress has been made in recent years. Sectoral policy achievements have however been insufficient to produce a major and deep change, not least because they address primarily socio-economic challenges without tackling the root causes that stand in the way of meaningful progress: ignorance, hatred and mistrust. Socio-economic strategies will have a limited impact as long as widely held stereotypes about Romani people are not addressed more assertively. Romani people do not possess an

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international institutional framework for preserving and developing a positive self-image that can be set against negative stereotyping and prejudice. Drawing on the power of culture and the rich history of Romani contributions to European culture, ERI would fill this gap.

As the "Strasbourg Declaration" explicitly states, effective human rights protection "must be embraced and supported by society as a whole", and genuine participation of Europeans of Romani origin "is a precondition for success". The Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Secretary General and other bodies of the Council of Europe have repeatedly emphasised this aspect.<sup>4</sup> Many Romani leaders and representatives have also long emphasised this correlation.

#### **Principles underpinning the ERI concept**

The proposal and vision to establish ERI is grounded in six founding principles, which will define the Institute's establishment, core functions, governance, structure and membership:

- respect of the dignity of Romani people and Romani identity;
- diversity and plurality of Romani identities and cultures;
- Romani leadership with the support and co-operation of non-Roma, key to breaking the stereotypes by representing talent capability, confidence in taking responsibility, co-operation and inclusiveness;
- engagement and contribution of Romani organisations and individuals in the establishment and ongoing activities of the Institute;
- political autonomy and non-partisanship, openness for collaboration with public authorities and political institutions as partners;
- highest quality standards in the domains of arts and culture, as well in as its own operational performance.

#### **The unique role of ERI**

Many projects tackling anti-Roma prejudice have been implemented for decades. However, Romani people face challenges that go beyond the local scale or short-term projects. Changing negative prejudice will take a long time, it is therefore necessary to establish a viable institution which can achieve a critical impact, building upon – and scaling up – existing initiatives in order to give them long-term sustainability. No other international institution has ever systematically documented and promoted Romani arts, culture, history, talent and their cultural and intellectual contributions to society. No other organisation at European level has ever supported the collection, exchange and showcasing of the rich cultural production of prominent individuals and organisations of Romani background. ERI aims to work on the root causes of growing anti-Roma sentiment in majority populations, and to boost the self-esteem of Romani people.

#### **Three core functions**

As a *creative hub*, ERI will support the exchange of existing and creative new ideas and materials across cultural borders, cultural domains and Romani identities, in order to

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document the historical experience of Romani people in Europe. ERI will be the promoter of Romani contributions to European culture and talent, success and achievement.

As a *communicator* and *public educator*, ERI will disseminate a positive image and knowledge about Romani people and will use public spaces for dialogue, such as schools, mainstream cultural institutions and media.

As a *policy advisor*, ERI will provide expert advice in its areas of competence when required by the Council of Europe, its member States and other partners.

#### **Main working tools**

ERI is expected to use *inter alia* the following tools, in order to achieve its mission and goals:

- public events, exhibitions and performance of arts and other culture products, to develop public dialogue and awareness of Romani culture;
- online technology for the collection and dissemination of image and knowledge, to make Romani history, language and other Romani contributions accessible;
- extensive use of media (including social media, photography and film) to engage with wide audiences and to spread a positive image;
- expert networking, exchange and co-production among artists, cultural producers, archives, linguists and historians, to share and develop knowledge and materials;
- fellowships for outstandingly talented young Romani people, offering a professional placement experience, to boost the capacities of a new generation of cultural leadership;
- connecting with mainstream arts and culture networks to establish partnerships and networks of supporters;
- awards recognising extraordinary talents and achievements, named after important Romani figures (e.g. Nicolae Gheorghe, Papusza, Django Reinhardt);
- work on innovative European initiatives like the "Route of Roma Culture and Heritage";
- interaction with stakeholders from other policy areas related to Roma, and with pan-European initiatives addressing the situation of Romani people;
- studies and reports in its field of competence, including exploration of conceptual, methodological and policy issues for the Council of Europe and its member States.

#### **Establishing ERI**

ERI will be established as an independent institution (e.g. a foundation) under national law.

The founders of ERI will include the Council of Europe, the Open Society Foundations and the "Alliance for the European Roma Institute" ("the Alliance").<sup>5</sup>

As one of the founders, the Council of Europe will be linked to ERI mainly in four ways:<sup>6</sup>

- the Council of Europe (as well as representatives of other founders and possibly major funders) will be represented on the governance structure of ERI;
- the Council of Europe (Committee of Ministers and/or CAHROM, SRSG for Roma Issues) will receive information on the Institute's work, e.g. through regular reporting, and will benefit from policy advice provided by ERI on all relevant aspects of Roma inclusion policies;
- the Council of Europe will provide at least in the five-year start-up phase a regular financial contribution towards ERI's core operational costs and will upon request assist ERI in its fundraising efforts;

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- the Council of Europe will provide ERI with information and expertise, and can use ERI's expertise in the context of its own programme of activities.

The exact modalities of the bilateral co-operation will be laid down in a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Alliance, currently in its formation phase, is made up of Romani organisations and individuals who have publicly demonstrated their commitment towards the Initiative of a European Roma Institute. The Alliance engages with other organisations, individuals, governments and other stakeholders actively supporting this initiative. Moreover, the Alliance is ready to contribute financial, material, intellectual, creative and reputational assets to ERI. Three renowned organisations are at the core of the Alliance:

- The *European Roma Cultural Foundation (ERCF)*,<sup>7</sup> an independent organisation that aims to educate and inform the non-Roma population about Romani arts and culture and to help creating understanding, tolerance and mutual respect between Romani and non-Romani communities, raise awareness among European institutions, policy-makers and stakeholders about the role of Romani arts and culture and to build up a broad partnership across Europe (and beyond) for support of Romani arts and culture. ERCF opened a prominent gallery space in Budapest ("Gallery8"), which built a comprehensive collection of European Roma art and conducts an extensive and intercultural exhibition and education programme. ERCF's recent international achievements include the *Archive and Academic Conference on Roma Hip-hop* (2010), the establishment of the diplomatic body *The Romani Elders* and their *Public Intervention for the Unfinished Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered Under the National Socialist Regime* in the frame of the 7<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale (2012), and the *Inside Outsiders Program* series in co-operation with *Moderna Museet*, Malmö (2014). ERCF is a consulting partner for several European Biennales, Art Museums and Cultural Institutions, including the German Federal Cultural Foundation in building a digital archive of knowledge, culture and art by and about Roma in Europe. ERCF received the Igor Zabel Award for Art History and Art Criticism (second place, 2012), the Katalizator Contemporary Art Award (2013) and the Otto Pankok Award (2014). ERCF has a data-base of more than 600 organisations and initiatives working in the domains of ERI, which is a significant resource that can be used for including many of them in ERI and reinforcing their work to date.

- The *Romedia Foundation*<sup>8</sup> founded in 1992, which has since made use of television broadcasting, publishing and the opportunities offered by multimedia digital technology to provide an insider's viewpoint on Roma issues. The foundation works towards contributing to a positive perception of Romani ethnic identity, combating anti-Roma prejudice, and providing alternative information to policy makers. Romedia is a partner of HBO television channel. Its "Mundi Romani" documentary series was broadcast on Hungarian TV network "Duna" and in 2008 the series received a nomination for Best News Documentary at the Monte Carlo Festival for "Trapped: the Forgotten Story of the Mitrovica Roma"; a year later the same film was shortlisted for the FIPA award for Best Reportage and Current Affairs. The following year, UNESCO formally honoured the series with its Prize for the Rapprochement of Cultures. "Mundi Romani" has also won two First Prizes at the "My Native Land International Television Awards" (2008 and 2009) in Ukraine. The Romedia Foundation's latest documentary film, "Uprooted - Children's Perspectives on Europe's Repatriation Policies", entered the top three in the Child and Family Awards category at the 8th Al-Jazeera International Documentary Film Festival (Doha, Qatar, 2012).

- *Romano ButiQ*,<sup>9</sup> established in April 2011, is the founder of the Museum of Romani Culture and a Documentation Centre on Roma in Bucharest, spaces dedicated to the promotion of the art and personalities and a better and direct knowledge about Roma. Romano ButiQ

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promotes non-discrimination through the development of cultural and educational activities. It works to present realistic views of the Romani community and to create spaces for people to discover and experience the value that members of this community bring to society, beyond the paradigm of negative stereotypes or victims. Romano ButiQ promotes the study, cultivation, development and promotion of the cultural and artistic heritage of multicultural communities, especially Romani communities, in Romania and abroad.

The Alliance commenced the consultation for ERI in October 2014 and is currently under legal formation in order to work with the Open Society Foundations and the Council of Europe on the founding of ERI; once ERI is established, the Alliance will act as a facilitator to support openness and inclusion of other organisations and individuals in ERI, as collaborators or members.

#### **Membership, governance and management**

ERI will be open to all formal or informal groups, organisations and individuals who support ERI's mission and founding principles and are ready to contribute to change. Interaction with ERI is regulated through membership; members will have key roles in building the resources of ERI, engaging in creative exchange and co-production, taking ownership of ERI's initiatives and engaging in its decision-making. Members will have full access to ERI's information and knowledge resources, collections, archives and database.

ERI membership will be based on contribution in terms of financial, intellectual, material and creative resources, in order to strengthen ERI's impact. ERI will organise its membership through particular thematic sections (arts, culture, media, and knowledge), to which members should commit. Membership will be open to organisations and individuals. Precise standards for membership will be developed by the founders once ERI is established.

The governance structure of the ERI will be composed of two layers, the 'Barvalipe' Academy<sup>10</sup> and the Board ('Pakiv').<sup>11</sup>

- the "Barvalipe" Academy is the agenda-setting and strategic body of the Institute, composed of up to 30 highly regarded, publicly acknowledged people in the areas covered by ERI activities. They are mandated for a maximum period of three years, serving on a voluntary basis. At the start of ERI, the Board ("Pakiv") will nominate the initial ten members of the "Barvalipe" Academy who, in turn, will invite another ten prominent personalities from ERI's field of competence. Ten delegates representing the ERI members will complete the composition of the Academy once the sections are set up and an election policy is in place. Two thirds of the Academy members will have to openly declare their Romani ethnicity, respecting the diversity among the Romani communities. Gender balance must be ensured;

- the Board ("Pakiv"<sup>12</sup>) is ERI's statutory and founding body. It will supervise the adherence of operational work to the statutory norms. The Board "Pakiv" will be made up of 7 to 9 members and include representatives nominated by the founders, who will be joined by "Barvalipe" Academy delegates once it is established.<sup>13</sup> The majority of the Board "Pakiv" will have to be made up of members who openly declare belonging to Romani origin.

ERI will be managed by a Secretariat.<sup>14</sup> The administrative office will implement projects and organise communication among ERI members. According to the programmatic needs and the financial capacity of the Institute, permanent and temporary staff members will be recruited through open competitions. Staff shall be recruited from diverse cultural backgrounds in line with ERI principles.

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The Secretariat of the Institute shall be headed by an Executive Director appointed by the Board following an open competition for a determined period of four years.

#### **Key activities after establishment**

The programmatic scope will have to be developed in detail by the ERI governance structures according to available budgets. However, three initial steps seem important.

The first step will be building membership based on existing initiatives and organisations working in the domains of ERI's mission. That way ERI will act as a hub for connecting, exchanging and developing knowledge and work of outstanding Romani and non-Roma thinkers, creators and activists. The key task for this step will be to map ideas and materials of valuable existing small-scale and isolated initiatives, organisations and individuals working in the interest of the affirmation of Romani cultures and identity. Organising them in four main sections (arts, culture, media and knowledge) will increase the efficiency and impact of the Institute's work.

The next step will be building partnerships with mainstream arts and culture organisations, networks and institutions (museums, libraries, theatres, universities, festivals) and online social media. Open Society Foundations will help ERI to build partnerships with organisations such as the Sundance Institute.<sup>15</sup> The Alliance and individuals and organisations members of ERI will provide connections with professional contacts, both thematically and at national level. ERI's intellectual and creative potential will lie in innovative communication methods, targeting existing cultural platforms so that Romani presence and contribution is appreciated by the general public and used for societal change.

As a third step, ERI will develop new narratives and encourage media producers, curators, and professionals, at the same time supporting and providing institutional backing for already existing remarkable initiatives. This includes forging and supporting agreements with mainstream and Romani media. Using the potential and the professional knowledge to change already existing portrayals of Roma in the media through direct self-representation in film, journalism and traditional and new media, ERI will challenge the status quo through narratives come from Romani history, culture and experience.

#### **Location**

The question of the seat remains open for the time being. The Secretariat will mainly host the administrative functions, while ERI activities are organised throughout Europe; ERI will function as a creative hub, its activity must therefore be present in as many countries and locations as possible. The Secretariat location is therefore not a priority issue.

The Secretariat could be located in Brussels for strategic purposes of its European profile. Equally valid alternatives could be:

- premises offered free of charge by a Council of Europe member State (in European art and cultural centres, such as Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Milan or Madrid, or those with a significant Romani population such as Bucharest, Sofia, Budapest, Skopje, Venice, Seville or Istanbul);
- or premises using the infrastructure of the Alliance or other members joining ERI after its establishment.

#### **Budget**

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The initial budget during the five-year start-up phase is projected at around € 600 000 per year, covering operational and staff costs as well as a minimum level of activities.<sup>16</sup> It will be necessary to bring together several funding sources, including the Council of Europe and the Open Society Foundations. The alliance of ERI supporters will contribute financially and in-kind. After being established, ERI will immediately engage in fund-raising activities. The founders will commit to an initial five-year period, subject to a satisfactory performance review after two years.

Informal consultations during 2014 have shown that a multi-stakeholder start-up funding scenario could be achievable, involving the Council of Europe, one or several member States, the Open Society Foundations and other funders contributing towards the initial budget (a realistic contribution of the Council of Europe would amount to one third of the budget, i.e. €200 000 per year in 2016 and 2017, with a *pro rata* contribution in 2015).

<sup>1</sup> This document has been classified restricted until examination by the Committee of Ministers.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Roma" used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

<sup>3</sup> CM(2010)133 final.

<sup>4</sup> CM Declaration on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe (February 2012): "*The effectiveness of strategies, programmes or action plans ... can be significantly reinforced by resolute action to combat anti-Gypsyism and action to improve the trust between Roma and the wider community...*". Also CM/Rec(2008)5 on policies for Roma and/or Travellers in Europe; Recommendation Rec(2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe. SG Report 2014 "on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Europe", pp.46-47. PACE Resolution 1927 (2013) "Ending discrimination against Roma children", § 4. Congress Resolution 366 (2014) "Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels". ECRI General Policy Recommendation

<sup>5</sup> Currently in the registration process

<sup>6</sup> The proposal follows the logic chosen in the case of the "European Wergeland Centre", which is attached to the Council of Europe through a decision by the Committee of Ministers, a co-operation agreement and the membership of Council of Europe representatives on the EWC Board. See documents CM(2007)178 rev (*concept note*), CM(2008)104 add (*Statutes*), CM(2008)104 (*Co-operation Agreement between Norway and the Council of Europe*), CM/Del/Dec(2008)1032/7.1 (*CM decision*), DD(2011)96 (*CM exchange of views with the EWC Executive Director*). [www.theewc.org/](http://www.theewc.org/)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.romacult.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.romediafoundation.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://romanoqbutiq.ro/>

<sup>10</sup> "Pride", "richness" or "greatness" in Romanian language

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<sup>11</sup> "Trust", "respect" in Romani language

<sup>12</sup> Not to be confounded with the "Pakiv European Roma Fund" (Budapest)

<sup>13</sup> It will be up to the Council of Europe and Open Society Foundations to decide if they want to have a representative in the Board 'Pakiv' and the period of their engagement.

<sup>14</sup> Apart from activity costs, an annual start-up budget of € 600K is expected to cover operational and staff costs, based on a calculation for three to six persons depending on the qualification structure and local salary scale (subject to revision).

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sundance.org>

<sup>16</sup> Based on the budget estimate provided in May 2014 (subject to revision).

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MRN: 17 MDA 2774  
Date/DTG: Feb 14, 2017 / 141207Z FEB 17  
From: Koski, Paola  
Action: Koski, Paola ROUTINE  
E.O.: 13526  
TAGS: PGOV, SOCI, PHUM, AL  
Captions: SENSITIVE  
Subject: Tirana Highlights for February 14, 2017

**[SBU] Opposition Protest:** The opposition Democratic Party continued preparations for its February 18 protest. DP Chair Lulzim Basha, who recently visited several cities calling for broad participation, held a meeting yesterday with supporters in Kavaja. Basha denounced Kavaja Mayor Elvis Rroshi's ties to Prime Minister Edi Rama, and said the upcoming protest would be the biggest in 27 years. (Note: Rroshi is currently appealing the decision to remove his mandate under the decriminalization law. End Note.) Media reported on a physical confrontation between two citizens at a meeting, one of whom had spoken up to praise Rroshi's work in Kavaja. (Comment: The DP protest is expected to take place at noon local time on February 18. The DP has given private assurances that the protest will be peaceful.)

**[SBU] Justice Minister Vasili Questions IMO Management Board:** Justice Minister Petrit Vasili (LSI) said in an interview yesterday that the International Monitoring Operation (IMO) Management Board was an extra-constitutional body without clear competencies or duties. Vasili also said that he had learned about the Board through a recently leaked letter that listed EU Delegation and U.S. Embassy staff as members. He claimed that the Justice Ministry had been excluded from the Board's communications and said he had asked for clarification about the body. Vasili also said that visa revocations of judges and prosecutors would be considered negatively as part of vetting, but should not be. He also claimed that the Open Society Foundation's (Soros Foundation) role in justice reform was widely known. Regarding tensions with the SP, Vasili said the coalition was still functioning and expressed a lack of concern in the event that new political configurations rendered the LSI obsolete. Separately, SP MP and electoral reform ad hoc committee co-chair Taulant Balla said yesterday that his party would propose to exclude from running for office judges and prosecutors who had resigned before being vetted. (Comment: Tension remains high as the implementation of justice reform moves forward. The SP proposal to exclude unvetted judges and prosecutors from the election is not among the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations.)

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Drafted By: TIRANA:Koski, Paola  
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MRN: 15 MDA 6812  
Date/DTG: Mar 30, 2015 / 301105Z MAR 15  
From: Pittman, Patricia  
Action: Pittman, Patricia ROUTINE  
E.O.: 13526  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, KCOR, ECON, BE, EUN, AL  
Subject: (U) Tirana Highlights for Monday, March 30, 2015

**Tirana Highlights  
March 30, 2015**

**(U) House Arrest and Trial for MPs Doshi and Frroku; Belgians Now Want Frroku Arrested for Murder:** On March 28, the High Court issued the measure of house arrest for both majority MPs Tom Doshi and Mark Frroku. Prosecutors now have up to three months to investigate further, and the two MPs eventually will face trial before the High Court for giving false testimony to the PG and fabricating evidence. (The false testimony is alleged to have occurred during the PG's investigation of allegations by Doshi in early March that Parliament Speaker Ilir Meta paid an assassin to kill him and an MP from the opposition.) If found guilty, the two MPs face either fines or up to five years in prison. Meanwhile, on March 28 the PG asked Parliament for authorization to arrest MP Mark Frroku (again) on new charges following exchanges with Interpol Tirana on March 27 and the Ministry of Justice on March 28. According to the PG, Frroku (alias Besnik Morina) is wanted by a Belgian appellate court on "premeditated murder" charges, dating back to March 3, 1999 when Frroku is alleged to have killed, or been part of a group that killed an Albanian citizen in Brussels in a clash over prostitution circles. On January 15, 2010 the Belgian court convicted Frroku in absentia with a 10-year sentence. The decision was appealed, with the Belgian Court of Cassation sending the case back for retrial. The Parliamentary Council of Mandates and Immunity is scheduled to review the request for authorization to arrest Frroku on March 31 at noon. Should the Council recommend granting the request, it would go to the full Parliament for a vote.

**(U) Survey Confirms 91% Support for EU Membership:** A survey conducted by the Soros Open Society Foundation and supported with EU funding found that 91% of Albanians support EU membership. The somewhat dated survey, conducted in May-June 2014, revealed that to 72% of Albanians the EU means freedom to travel, study, and work anywhere in the EU; while to 60% it means democracy; to 60% it means economic prosperity; and to 59% it means peace. 96% of Albanians trust the EU, while 49% trust the Albanian government. In terms of progress with EU accession, 53% of Albanians think the country is ready to join the EU, 43% think it is not and 4% do not know. 69% of respondents said that the EU should accept the country as a member even if Albania is not ready yet. Looking at challenges to the country's EU accession, 87% of Albanians think that corruption in Albania is more widespread than in other European countries. 92% think corruption is a major problem in Albania, and 54% said they were personally affected by corruption in their daily life. 32% of respondents confirmed that in the last eight months (September 2013-May 2014) they had been asked or expected to pay a bribe in order to receive a public service. According to the survey, the main problems people face are a.) Unemployment (45%), b.) Crime (31%), and c.) the economic situation in the country (30%). However, at the time of the survey, 58% expected their life to be better in next 12 months, marking the highest figure in all of Europe, exceeding the citizens of Montenegro (47.2%), Iceland (43.2%), and Sweden (40.7%).

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Drafted By: TIRANA:Pittman, Patricia  
Released By: TIRANA:Pittman, Patricia

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**From:** Roberts, Ryan J  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2017 3:31 AM  
**To:** D'Amico, Peter N  
**Subject:** FW: OSF-Embassy Engagement.docx  
**Attachments:** OSF-Embassy Engagement.docx

**RELEASE IN FULL**

Here you go.

Was the S memo of last week on the high side?

Ryan

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**From:** Roberts, Ryan J  
**Sent:** Friday, February 10, 2017 4:22 PM  
**To:** Muniz, David  
**Subject:** OSF-Embassy Engagement.docx

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**Engagement with the Open Society Foundation for Albania**  
U.S. Embassy Tirana, Public Affairs Section  
February 10, 2017

The Public Affairs section provides support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on a wide range of U.S. Government priorities and coordinates closely with other assistance providers both inside and outside of the U.S. government.

**Funding Received from Open Society**

The Public Affairs section has not received any funds from the Open Society Foundation to support any projects or activities.

**Funding Support to Open Society**

The Public Affairs Section has not provided any funds to the Open Society Foundation to support their projects or activities.

**Donor Coordination**

As one of the major assistance providers in Albania, representatives from the Open Society Foundation are frequently asked to participate in technical reviews of application that we receive for funding. These Democracy Commission Donor Technical Review panels are designed to ensure that projects funded by the Embassy are feasible and to ensure there is no overlap with other donors. The World Bank, Dutch Embassy, Swedish Embassy, REC Albania, British Embassy, and others also frequently participate in these reviews.

**Cost-sharing**

In December 2015, the Public Affairs Section and the Open Society Foundation Survey each provided funding to a local organization to conduct a public opinion poll on attitudes towards the Judicial Reform effort.

**Cost-share for Democracy Commission Small Grants**

The Open Society Foundation has supported, with cost-share funding, local organizations receiving funds from the Democracy Commission Small Grants Projects. The following examples are from the past two years:

- Project: **"Building Capacity for Identification, Referral and Protection of Trafficking Victims"** - Vatra Psycho-social Center  
Funding: Democracy Commission, Open Society Foundation, Vlora Local Government
- Project: **"Za'Larte"** - Albanian Institute of Science  
Funding: U.S. Embassy, Open Society Foundation
- Project: **"UneMonitoroj"** (monitoring promises of mayoral candidates)  
Organization: Forum of Free Thought  
Funding: U.S. Embassy, Leviz Albania (consortium of three organizations including the Open Society Foundation)

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**From:** Pistoli, Angjelina  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2016 10:39 AM  
**To:** Douglas, Deanna K  
**Cc:** Roberts, Ryan J; Katundi, Katina; Cuko, Ilva  
**Subject:** Tirana IVLP slate for FY 17  
**Attachments:** Mission IVLP FY 17 Proposal - submission.docx  
**Importance:** High

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Shume e dashur Deanna,

After the solicitation process, the IVLP Mission Selection Committee came up with the attached proposal for FY 17 IVLP.

Post proposes 16 nominations, depending on availability of funds.

**Regional Programs (16 nominations)**

**MRP and EURP**

1. **EURP Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security** (November 30 - December 16, 2016)
2. **MRP - U.S. Agricultural Trade and Food Safety** (February 20 - March 10, 2017)
3. **MRP - The Contemporary U.S. Economy: Financial Markets, Trade, and Economic Development** (February 27 - March 17, 2017)
4. **EURP - Current U.S. Social, Political, and Economic Issues for Young European Leaders Program** (March 20 - April 07, 2017)
5. **MRP - New and Traditional Broadcast Media** (March 27 - April 14, 2017)
6. **EURP - Towards a More Safe and Secure World: Cooperative Efforts in Combating International Crime** (April 17 - May 05, 2017)
7. **EURP - Towards a More Safe and Secure World: Cooperative Efforts in Combating International Crime** (April 17 - May 05, 2017)
8. **MRP U.S. Foreign Policy: Energy Security** (May 08 - 26, 2017)
9. **EURP - Advancing Gender, Ethnic, and Cultural Minority Rights** (June 05 - 23, 2017)
10. **EURP - Advancing Gender, Ethnic, and Cultural Minority Rights** (June 05 - 23, 2017)
11. **EURP - U.S.-European Security Issues** (July 10 - 28, 2017)
12. **EURP - U.S.-European Security Issues** (July 10 - 28, 2017)
13. **MRP - Accountability in Government** (July 10 - 28, 2017)

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- 14. Role of NGOs in Promoting Women's Issues (July 24 - August 11, 2017)
- 15. EURP - Social and Economic Entrepreneurship for Young Leaders (July 24 - August 11, 2017)
- 16. MRP - Combating Trafficking in Persons (August 07 - 25, 2017)

Post would like to take advantage of the winter incentive program for the first two programs: EURP Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security (November 30 - December 16, 2016) and MRP - U.S. Agricultural Trade and Food Safety (February 20 - March 10, 2017.)

EVDB nominations are in the uploading process

Thank you so much for your wonderful support

Best  
Tirana Team

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US Embassy, Tirana  
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### Mission IVLP FY 17 Proposal

	NAME	POSITION/ ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF PROJECT
1	[REDACTED]	Program Officer, Ministry of Interior	EURP Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security (November 30 - December 16, 2016)
2	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] European Integration and Projects Department, Ministry of Agriculture	MRP - U.S. Agricultural Trade and Food Safety (February 20 - March 10, 2017)
3	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Supervisory Department, Bank of Albania	MRP - The Contemporary U.S. Economy: Financial Markets, Trade, and Economic Development (February 27 - March 17, 2017)
4	[REDACTED]	Member of Parliament (DP)	EURP - Current U.S. Social, Political, and Economic Issues for Young European Leaders Program. (March 20 - April 07, 2017)
5	[REDACTED]	Journalist/ Editor, Ora News TV	MRP - New and Traditional Broadcast Media (March 27 - April 14, 2017)
6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Cooperation, International Coordination and Translation, Albanian State Police	EURP - Towards a More Safe and Secure World: Cooperative Efforts in Combating International Crime (April 17 - May 05, 2017)

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7	[redacted]	Directorate for the Investigating of Narcotics and Trafficking, Albanian State Police	EURP - Towards a More Safe and Secure World: Cooperative Efforts in Combating International Crime (April 17 - May 05, 2017)
8	[redacted]	Advisor to [redacted] Minister	MRP U.S. Foreign Policy: Energy Security (May 08 - 26, 2017)
9	[redacted]	[redacted] Soros Foundation	EURP - Advancing Gender, Ethnic, and Cultural Minority Rights (June 05 - 23, 2017)
10	[redacted]	Diversity Specialist, Human Resources Directorate, Albanian State Police	EURP - Advancing Gender, Ethnic, and Cultural Minority Rights (June 05 - 23, 2017)
11	[redacted]	Diplomat	EURP - U.S.-European Security Issues (July 10 - 28, 2017)
12	[redacted]	[redacted] Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	EURP - U.S.-European Security Issues (July 10 - 28, 2017)
13	[redacted]	[redacted] Albanian Helsinki Committee	MRP - Accountability in Government (July 10 - 28, 2017)
14	[redacted]	[redacted] Women Forum of Elbasan	Role of NGOs in Promoting Women's Issues (July 24 - August 11, 2017)
15	[redacted]	[redacted] Junior Achievement in Albania	EURP - Social and Economic Entrepreneurship for Young Leaders (July 24 - August 11, 2017)

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16		Anti-Trafficking and Asylum, Ministry of Internal Affairs	MRP - Combating Trafficking in Persons. (August 07 - 25, 2017)
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