

Joint Declaration
on
the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between
the Italian Republic and the Republic of Albania

We, the Prime Minister of the Italian Republic and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, meeting in Rome on 12th February 2010,

- stressing that the strategic partnership between Italy and Albania is based on a privileged bilateral relation made of shared values and strong political, economic, commercial and cultural ties, as well as on historical bonds and consolidated friendship between their civil societies,
- founded on the mutual views and understanding on a wide range of international issues, strengthened through longstanding cooperation in the International organizations and reinforced by the common membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a cornerstone for building peace and stability in the framework of our strategic partnership,
- recalling Albania's aspiration to become a member of the European Union confirmed by the application for EU membership presented by Albania on April 28th, 2009,
- expressing the common interest to support regional cooperation initiatives, such as the Central European Initiative, the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and the Adriatic Cross Border Cooperation Programme,

Have decided as follows:

1. Based on Italy's longstanding and enduring support to Albania's European path, the Government of Italy reiterates its commitment to work closely with its European partners in order to grant Albania visa liberalization as soon as possible, as well as the status of a candidate country for EU membership with a view to a swift integration of Albania into the European family to which it naturally belongs. To this aim, both sides will cooperate in the field of pre-accession assistance to Albania through European programs and instruments and will promote the exchange of experts in relevant sectors,
2. Within the framework of the cooperation with the UN system, both countries will intensify their efforts to promote a reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council and the specialized agencies, with a view to

enhancing the representativeness, transparency and effectiveness of the multilateral system,

3. To the aim of promoting regional stability and international security to better face new threats and challenges, as terrorism and organized crime, both countries agree to intensify their efforts to improve cooperation between their judiciary bodies – also in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean - and law enforcements agencies and to work closely in peace-keeping and stabilization operations.
4. Both Countries will endeavour to strengthen their economic relations, inter alia, by encouraging Italian companies – also in the framework of EU financial instruments – to establish new joint ventures and seize new investment opportunities in Albania, bearing also in mind its cross-road position in the Region. Moreover, Italy and Albania will reinforce the existing cooperation in specific areas such as science, high-technology, defense industry, environment, agriculture, services, as well as transportation, infrastructures, especially in the framework of the Pan-European Corridor VIII.
Specifically, the two Countries will reinforce their cooperation in the field of energy, building upon the bilateral Protocol signed in Tirana on March 10, 2009.
5. Both Countries will improve their cultural, technological and scientific cooperation, inter alia, by encouraging joint cultural projects and cooperation among universities and relevant institutions on scientific, cultural, archaeological, technical and medical research, while continuing to promote the teaching of Italian in Albanian secondary schools and encouraging Universities' capacity to teach the Italian language in Albania and the Albanian language in Italy.
6. In view of the new Development Cooperation Agreement for the 2010-2012 period, the Italian Government confirms its support to the economic and social development of Albania, with a particular focus on the rural and private sector and SMEs, and to a more effective action of the Albanian Government in the social sectors (health, welfare, environment, vocational education and training). To this aim, Albanian Government will actively support and promote Italian Cooperation activities while both parties will promote exchange of experience between their business communities as a valid tool in cementing our bilateral relations and in fostering trade and economic ties.

7. Both Countries will also step up their efforts for the development of a broad-based dialogue and better mutual understanding between their civil societies including the setting up of a civil forum; specifically, they agree to encourage inter alia the initiatives taken by local administrations, associations, NGOs, trade unions, with a view to enhancing people-to-people contacts, and to foster the integration of the Albanian community in Italy, moving from its consolidated active role. Both parties will continue to support the initiatives for a reinforced inter-Parliamentary dialogue.

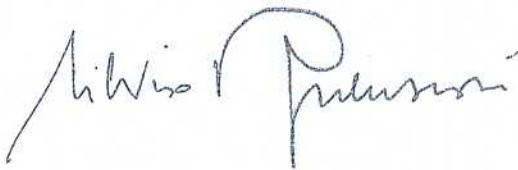
In order to assess the existing cooperation and to launch new initiatives aiming at further developing our strategic partnership, we have decided to hold meetings, alternatively in Tirana and Rome as follows:

- a) Annual Summits at the highest political level;
- b) Regular meetings between the two Foreign Ministers;
- c) Periodic consultations at High Officials' and at experts' levels on bilateral relations and on international affairs of common interest, such as EU related matters, as well as regional and multilateral issues.

Rome, 12th February 2010

Silvio BERLUSCONI

Prime Minister of Italy



Sali BERISHA

Prime Minister of Albania

