

## The IAPP Inaugural Event in Albania and the National Peace Council Assembly

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Albania's national IAPP Inauguration event took place in the International Hotel in Tirana, the capital of Albania (population about 480,000) on November 25. Soon after the IAPP inauguration on the Balkan level, which took place in Pristine, Kosovo September 23–24, we started preparations for the inauguration on national level. Our goal was to have at least thirty members of Parliament or ex-members of Parliament at the launching; therefore, with Mr. Apostoli, chairman of UPF in Albania and a former Member of Parliament, we worked hard to make sure MPs take seriously our invitation and attend the event. Actually, November 28 and 29 are Albanian national holidays and most MPs and other important figures travel with their families; therefore we had to work hard.

In the end, 140 people attended the inaugural event of the IAPP in Albania and thirty MPs or ex-MPs attended and signed our launching document. Among participants, we had Alfred Moisiu (president of Albania 2002–2007), Prof. Dr. Vasilika Hysi, deputy Speaker of Albanian Parliament, two former deputy prime ministers, seven Members of Parliament, eleven erstwhile government ministers and other figures in society.

### Session one

The session was moderated by the chairman of UPF Albania Gaqo Apostoli. The congratulatory addresses were given by Alfred Moisiu, the honorary chair of IAPP for Europe, Mrs. Erna Hennicot Schoepges, former president the Parliament of Luxemburg (1989–1995) and Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, president of Universal Peace Federation for Europe, Eurasia and Middle East.

Five eminent speakers presented their papers on the topic of our IAPP event "Parliamentarian Communication and Cooperation with Civil Society." The first speaker was Prof.

Dr. Vasilika Hysi, Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Albania followed by Prof. Dr. Shezai Rrokaj – Member of Parliament and Chairman of National Peace Council of Albanian UPF. Next speaker was Prof. Asoc. Dr. Grida Duma, Member of the Albanian Parliament followed by Mr. Hydajet Hyseni, a multiple-time Member of Kosovo Parliament and the first Chairman of UPF Kosovo. Next speaker was Mrs. Mesila Doda, a former Member of Parliament followed by the last speaker of the session, Rev. Jack Corley, who talked about the vision and mission of IAPP and its goals and objectives.

At the end of the session eight public figures were appointed as ambassadors for peace. Among them was Prof. Dr. Paskal Milo, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs and for many years a Member of Parliament, Prof. Ass. Dr. Grida Duma – current Member of Parliament, Hon. Agron Duka – Member of Parliament, Dr. Mesila Doda, a former Member of Parliament, Hon. Shefqet Muci – former Government Minister, Dr. Albina Deda – former Member of Parliament, Hon. Diana Culi, former Member of Parliament; Mrs. Suzana Jahollari, Prefect of Tirana. At the end of the session all MPs and other dignitaries signed the inaugurating document displayed in a big board.

### Competitive leadership

On the afternoon of the same day, November 25, we held the Assembly of the National Peace Council of the Universal Peace Federation Albania. We do it each two years and also make the elections of the new leadership for the next two years. After organizing Local Assemblies in Local Peace Councils in ten different cities and also electing the leadership of Local Peace Councils, we gathered to make the analysis of UPF's work for the last 2 years and also plan the goals for the next 2 years.

The Assembly was moderated by the Chairman of National Peace Council Prof. Dr. Shezai Rrokaj. Congratulatory remarks were given by Mr. Jacques Marion – Vice-President of UPF Europe and also Hon. Hatixhe Hoxha – Charwoman of UPF Kosovo.

UPF could organize 64 activities during the last two years and also appointed 230 ambassadors for peace. Short presentations were given by the Coordinator of the Albanians' Peace Council Mr. Ali Lacej, Vice Chairs of the Presiding Council of UPF Dr. Flamur Shehu and Mrs. Majlinda Mema and also by the Vice Chairman of National Peace Council Mr. Astrit Memia. Also, a presentation of all activities organized during the last 2 years were given by Mr. Gani Rroshi.

Then Mr. Apostoli introduced all the elected Chairs of Local Peace Councils who gave short message for all the members of National Assembly. At the end, the new leadership of UPF Albania was elected and the Presiding Council of UPF will be led by Mr. Gaqo Apostoli as chairman and three vice chairs – Mrs. Majlinda Mema, Mr. Flamur Shehu and Dr. Niko Veizaj. On the other hand, the leadership of the National Assembly will be Dr. Rajmonda Stefa as chairwoman and three vice-chairs – Mr. Niko Faber, Mr. Astrit Memia and Mrs. Nora Malaj. Prof. Dr. Shezai Rrokaj who was the chairman of National Peace Council, will serve as the honorary chairman of IAPP Albania. We are very grateful for the great work of the previous leadership of UPF and wish great success to the new leadership.

After all the effort invested, the IAPP seems set to act as a vanguard for peace and justice in Albania.



### Europeans voice support for Albania

As reported by Martine Masner, European leaders held a meeting for "Supporting Albania as the Strategic Nation for Vision 2020" for two days in June, in Tirana, Albania. The purpose of this meeting was for all regions of Europe to visit their twin city in Albania, and to discuss with the local members about how to advance the providence specifically. Before the leaders' meeting started, European leaders were visiting their respective cities and shared afterward their experiences with everybody, and the Albanian community leaders also gave their feedback.



### A community leader

Manjola Vasmatics expressed herself in the following way: The twinship project between Albanian communities and European regions gives me a "visionary feeling," and I hope we can catch this moment and allow Heavenly Parent to use this project to show a model of building one global family with True Parents. This is God's project and we want to do our best to make it a substantial reality.

Mrs. Maryvonne, regional leader of Iberia, visited us. I can say that the difference between the understanding of what is happening in Albania before and after the visit is big. Even though we shared in Prague and exchanged some email, we could not grasp our realities so well. Dr. Maryvonne had the chance to meet and share with our members, to talk to the guests and see how they

receive True Parents as the Second Coming. She was visiting the holy ground and living in the center with other devoted brothers and sisters.

She took part in activities that are part of our daily center's life. Members and guests felt so warmly embraced from her humble and sincere attitude. We could see the possibility for counselling from professional members who have a lot of experience especially in business, even by using technology though zoom or skype. My feeling is that we can learn, feel and we hope to inherit a lot from our elders who had the chance to receive direct guidance from True Parents. It looks like members in Albania are eager to receive such foundation and build on it.

At the same time, I hope Iberian brothers and sisters and all the other regions as well will not feel more stress or a burden from this project as another direction coming from the headquarters, but will see it as an opportunity to stand as one united Europe and have great give and receive collaboration. I hope Albania can give you some more pride along with your life-long efforts to bring the providence forward.

I really want to thank Mr. David Pique for donating a computer, and all Iberian family members for donation they gave. I hope to use this well and I wish and pray that this will return to your region as great blessing in the future, and whatever you have sown here will be ripen in your countries. One more thing I want to say that Sunday Service with regional leaders was a beautiful thing for all. It looked like a heavenly army equipped with the power of true love could conquer anyone. If there will be a next time I really would love to have a bigger Sunday Service where we can freely invite our guests, because I'm sure they will be in good hands. An Italian perspective Guiseppa Cali, regional leader of Italy and San Marino expressed his sentiments as well. I was very surprised to learn that Pristina, the capital city of Kosovo, is a beautiful city, with a bright spirit, full of young people and vitality. People are dignified, the environment generally is clean and the citizens are also very active culturally and socially. It is clear the effort they are making to build a new future for their country, even though they are still in pain for the recent war.

Spending four days in a center with an STF team and young Albanian members brought me back to the early times when we all were living in communities, with reduced personal space, some physical difficulties. We shared such a family spirit and a sharing life style. This made me forget any problems and I enjoyed my stay with them. I would never exchange that for the comforts of a hotel, also because this is the best way to connect heart to heart with members.