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**Public perception of WEU's contribution to stabilising
democracy in Albania – reply to the annual report of the Council**

REPORT

**submitted on behalf of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations
by Mrs Pulgar, Rapporteur**

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¹ Adopted unanimously by the Committee.

² *Members of the Committee:* Mrs Squarcialupi (Chairman); Lord Russell-Johnston (Alternate: *McNamara*), Mr Eversdijk (Vice-Chairmen); MM Aleffi, *Amoruso*, de Assis, Debarge, Evin, Gehrcke, *Ghesquière*, Mrs *Guirado*, Mr Henry, Ms Hoffmann, Ms Jäger, Ms Jones, Mrs Katseli, MM Kollwelter, Legendre, Mignon, Niza, Onaindia (Alternate: *Arnau Navarro*), Pottakis, Mrs *Pulgar*, Mr Rodeghiero (Alternate: *Robol*), Ms Süßmuth, MM *Taylor*, Timmermans, *Vis*.

Associate member: Ms Kaland.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

Draft Recommendation

*on public perception of WEU's contribution to stabilising democracy in Albania –
reply to the annual report of the Council*

The Assembly,

- (i) Impressed by the massive show of solidarity with the Kosovar refugees on the part of European public opinion and by the financial and human effort being made by humanitarian relief agencies to alleviate their desperate plight and give them shelter under decent humanitarian conditions;
- (ii) Stressing that it is essential for public opinion both to support the work WEU and its member countries have been doing since 1997 with a view to helping to stabilise democracy in Albania, in particular by dispatching the Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE), and also to recognise that it is necessary to increase the financial and human resources required for dealing with the dramatic turn of events in Albania;
- (iii) Noting with regret, however, that the vast majority of the European public and media still know next to nothing about WEU's activities in Albania;
- (iv) Deeply perplexed, therefore, about the fact that neither the Secretariat-General, nor the Council, nor the member governments are seeking to publicise more widely the success of the work being done by MAPE which, among other things, has trained some 2 000 Albanian police officers since the start of its mission;
- (v) Failing also to understand why the Council, in adopting its emergency plan in February 1999 for an international police operation in Albania – which formed the basis for its decision in March 1999 to extend the MAPE mission – did not use that opportunity to launch an extensive publicity campaign in order to secure the necessary political support for the operation in question;
- (vi) Recalling that it is particularly important for WEU's contribution to stabilising the situation in Albania to be more widely debated in the parliaments of the member countries, particularly in view of the need to make provision for similar action in Kosovo once the hostilities end,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Mount, as a matter of urgency, an effective publicity campaign providing information about WEU and its activities in Albania and the Balkans so that they are better known and appreciated by the public and parliaments of the WEU member countries and elsewhere;
2. Invite the member governments to intensify the debate with the appropriate parliamentary bodies so as to provide them with more information about the need to increase, where circumstances so require, the technical, human and financial resources available to WEU for the purpose of helping to stabilise the situation in the region in question, including effective police service in the refugee camps and at the borders concerned;
3. Provide the Assembly with more regular and detailed information on this matter so that it can support more effectively the efforts the Organisation is making in the Balkans.

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mrs Pulgar, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. Experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the Dayton Agreement showed that external military intervention in a civil war was not sufficient to achieve a lasting peace acceptable to all sides. Subsequent to humanitarian aid being provided and peace-enforcement and stabilisation measures being implemented, there followed a new task of political and economic reconstruction. The future of peace in a region such as the Balkans, marked by political and economic instability, exacerbated by continual internal and international armed conflict since the early 1990s, will be determined by success or failure in this task.

2. Like Bosnia and Herzegovina, though under somewhat different circumstances, Albania is keen, after four decades of virtual isolation and eight years of continuing instability, to rebuild its political and economic structures. The success of this undertaking will determine the future stability of the region. The partial opening up of borders and communications through television, the press, radio and the Internet, that have now become established across the various Albanian communities, Kosovo and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), make any attempt to compartmentalise peoples put asunder by historical forces yet bound by culture and language a vain endeavour, other than in the short term.

3. The armed conflict between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) over the future of the province of Kosovo has direct consequences for Albania, the extent of which cannot be gauged as yet. Albania, which was passing through a sensitive stage of defusing political tension and social and economic reconstruction, now finds itself in the front line of a conflict for which it was unprepared, particularly in humanitarian terms. The European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as the craftsmen of the reconstruction of civil society, have a major responsibility for helping the country through this time and making preparations for the future of the part of the region to which the country belongs.

4. Italy¹ and Greece, as full members of the EU and WEU, also have a frontline responsibility in this process, since the consequences of instability in Albania and the region have direct repercussions on their territories, in the form either of illegal immigration or arms and drugs trafficking. Bilateral cooperation with the Albanian Government plays an important part in stabilising the internal situation and can have a moderating influence on its current stance in the conflict. The continuing development of economic ties and trade between Albania and its neighbours will have a beneficial effect on regional stability but in order to achieve this, conditions must be created propitious to the success of the reforms necessary for the country's recovery.

5. One of the main tasks that falls to governments is to guarantee the security of people and property alike. In Albania's case, the restoration of a level of internal security is essential for undertaking political and economic reform and to improve the negative picture, by and large, that the European media all too frequently paint of the country and its people. The coverage given in the media to the phenomenon of criminality and the image portrayed of an all-powerful Albanian mafia are real obstacles to foreign investment. The absence of such investment merely prolongs Albania's state of dependence on aid and hinders economic development. Under such circumstances and given the unstable political context, the setting-up of a police corps, suitably equipped and trained to use the West's modern policing methods, will contribute towards strengthening democratic institutions and creating the conditions necessary for achieving stability in Albania.

6. The work undertaken by MAPE (WEU's Multinational Advisory Police Element) is central

¹ Albania is the main beneficiary of development aid from Italy. For the period 1998-2000, Italy has earmarked projected assistance of some US\$ 127 million, an amount which will no doubt be increased because of the effects of the war in Kosovo. Source: Italy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Main aspects of Italian assistance to Albania (Rome, October 1998).

to bringing about recovery. Although, militarily speaking, WEU was not directly involved in Operation Alba, its present task will no doubt have a greater impact in the short and medium term. Operation Alba undoubtedly helped prevent outright civil war and enabled the country to move beyond a political impasse. However it was never intended to rebuild Albania. That enormous task is one for the EU, the OSCE, the IMF and the World Bank, donor countries and, to a large extent for Albania's neighbours, and also depends on how the conflict in Kosovo develops.

II. The pyramid finance crisis and Operation Alba

(January-April 1997)

7. Among the "socialist" states of central and eastern Europe, Albania was a special case, turned in on itself and set apart from the geopolitical manoeuvrings of the cold war. The regime set up by Enver Hoxha was one of voluntary self-sufficiency, intended to preserve the country from external influence and guarantee internal security. After Hoxha's death in 1985, Albania moved into a transitional phase under the leadership of Ramiz Alia and, in 1991, a new constitution was adopted that marked a progression towards democracy. In April 1992, Sali Berisha was elected President and his Democratic Party took power.

8. Supported initially by the United States and the European Union, specifically on account of Albania's strategic importance in terms of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in an attempt to forestall any crisis that might arise in the province of Kosovo, attached to Serbia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, both home to large Albanian communities, President Berisha's policies became increasingly authoritarian. At the same time, notwithstanding external aid, economic decline led to a growing number of Albanian citizens seeking work in neighbouring countries, Italy and Greece especially.

9. In 1994, the Albanian Government's domestic policies hardened. Leading members of the left-wing opposition Socialist Party, including the former Prime Minister over the transitional period, Fatos Nano, were accused of corruption and, in the wake of a "political" trial, sentenced to prison. The 1996 general election was marked

by irregularities, to the Democratic Party's advantage (it gained 101 of the 140 seats). The OSCE, which had been asked to monitor the elections, had noted the existence of fraudulent practices but did not challenge the results. Nevertheless the United States and the European Union were concerned by the consequences of the political instability in Albania for the situation within the region and, although critical of President Berisha, lent him their support.

10. In early 1997, under pressure from European and international sponsors, the Albanian Parliament passed legislation intended to turn round the economy and regulate the transactions of finance companies that flourished in the 1990s after Albania became open to the outside world. Most of these operated so-called "pyramid finance" schemes whereby interest on sums deposited was paid from the money brought in by new deposits and from earnings on investments. Such companies, for the most part, under the thumb of Albanian and foreign organised crime, served primarily for money-laundering purposes. Although subject in theory to accounting controls, the pyramid companies collapsed leaving most of their customers with no hope of getting their money back.

11. For the majority of the population who had already suffered the rigours of the tough economic climate, final responsibility lay with the government, which in its turn was unable to pay compensation for losses incurred. Demonstrations in protest broke out in all the major cities and the police, overwhelmed, were obliged to withdraw, in some cases leaving their equipment in the hands of the demonstrators. The town of Vlore, where some of the larger finance companies had their "headquarters", was at the centre of the movement to challenge the government, and President Berisha in particular, whose resignation was called for. Economic discontent turned into political protest, attracting the support of an unlikely coalition of political opponents of every hue (headed by the Socialist Party), bereft savers (among them many civil servants) and underworld organisations (taking advantage of the confusion to tighten their grip on their territory or dispose of their rivals).

12. Initially (between January and March) the government and President Berisha tried to contain the situation by clamping down hard on any

unrest, but the disruption spread to parliament. The United States and the European Union became highly critical of Mr Berisha who, to appease the demands of the opposition, ended up by sacking his Prime Minister. On 3 March, parliament re-elected Mr Berisha as President, but he was forced to give ground politically and, on 11 March, appoint a Socialist Party member, Bashkim Fino, as Prime Minister. Outside Tirana the situation worsened with "national salvation" committees springing up and demanding the President's resignation. Army and police arms depots were ransacked and large numbers of Albanians began to make for Italy across the Adriatic Sea, as refugees but also with the intention of emigrating. The prospect of civil war with wide-ranging regional consequences caused Greece, Italy, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, NATO and WEU to take stock of the situation, without agreement being reached, however, on what the next step should be.

13. Eventually, following a United Nations Security Council Resolution² a European stabilisation force under Italian command, known as the Multinational Protection Force (MPF), was set up and deployed on Albanian territory from April 1997, with the agreement of the Albanian authorities. Operation Alba was launched, based on a "coalition of the willing" comprising 11 states³ and formed outside NATO and WEU structures.

III. Operation Alba and action to stabilise Albania

(April -August 1997)

14. Although the Albanian crisis was predictable, the reaction of European and international institutions was initially marked by a degree of indecision. In the first few weeks, during which spontaneous rioting occurred, it still seemed as if the government and Mr Berisha, as President, could retain control. When the unrest took a political turn, the risk of a civil war emerged, with the possibility of its extending into the Serbian province of Kosovo. To the west, in Italy, the

daily arrival of Albanian citizens in uncontrolled numbers, aroused serious concern.

15. International mediation did not commence until March when it became clear that the Albanian Government had lost control of the situation. The southern ports were in the hands of the insurgents, the arms taken from the army and the police had been handed out among the populace, the security forces were demoralised and divided and militias made up of supporters or opponents of President Berisha were being formed. The Council of Europe, the OSCE and the European Union redoubled their efforts to exert pressure to achieve a political solution to the crisis. Mediation was also conducted through parliamentary channels, by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

16. In a Resolution⁴ it adopted on 29 January 1997, that same Assembly expressed disquiet at the consequences of the stalemate reached in the political situation in Albania⁵ and the likely repercussions on democracy and stability in the country. It attributed responsibility to both government and opposition alike. Two days earlier, troops had been deployed in Tirana to counter possible rioting in connection with the pyramid finance crisis which was spreading to other parts of the country. On 19 February, when the government could no longer contain the crisis, which was acquiring an increasingly political momentum, the President of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mrs Leni Fischer, publicly asked Albanian political leaders "to show responsibility in handling the crisis that followed the collapse of pyramid investment schemes" and acknowledged its political nature in stating that "the problem today is that this financial scandal exacerbates unresolved political tensions between government and opposition"⁶.

17. In March 1997, following the proclamation of a state of emergency (on 2 March), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe decided to send an official delegation to Albania to help restore civil order and contribute

² Resolution 1101, 28 March 1997.

³ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

⁴ Resolution 1114 (1997) on honouring of obligations and undertakings by Albania; 29 January 1997.

⁵ Albania became a member of the Council of Europe on 13 July 1995.

⁶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; press release dated 19 February 1997.

to getting dialogue going between government and opposition⁷. This piece of parliamentary diplomacy, together with initiatives taken by the OSCE, the EU and the Italian Government, helped get the political dialogue off the ground once more. On 9 March 1997, President Berisha agreed to the opposition being brought into government and to general elections being held the following June. On 10 March, the Vlore insurgents came together in a so-called "National Salvation Committee" to hold talks with the Italian Ambassador to Albania, Paolo Foresti, and said they were prepared to accept the terms of the 9 March agreement. On 11 March, a Socialist Party member, Bashkim Fino, was appointed Prime Minister. Notwithstanding these concessions, violence and instability became endemic in the south of the country while President Berisha mobilised his support. On 12 March, Mr Fino issued an appeal for international aid and negotiations with the insurgents.

18. Europe's two defence organisations, NATO and WEU, were monitoring events in Albania but remained on stand-by; no decision to intervene was taken or even seriously contemplated. While the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the EU continued their shuttle diplomacy, the internal situation went on deteriorating. On 15 March, President Berisha signed a pardon for Fatos Nano, the unchallenged leader of the Socialist Party (released from prison the previous day), in the hope that he could call a halt to the political unrest. However, part of the opposition had become radicalised and was preparing to overthrow the President by force. At the same time the number of Albanians landing in Italy, brought there in boats controlled by criminal elements, was running into the thousands, re-kindling the debate on the need for unilateral or multilateral armed intervention in no uncertain terms.

19. At Italy's request, on 28 March 1997, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1101 authorising the deployment of an armed force whose mission would be to guarantee security for the distribution of humanitarian aid over a three-month period. After consultations with other European states held outside the

⁷ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; press release dated 5 March 1997. The mission took place from 5-7 March 1997.

traditional institutional frameworks, Italy assembled the MPF and, with the approval of both chambers of the Italian Parliament, Operation Alba was implemented as from 11 April. In an unstable environment, it was intended to fulfil three major objectives: ensure safe delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid, take control of the Adriatic ports from which refugees and other would-be immigrants were leaving for Italy and stabilise the internal situation so as to allow elections to take place in June 1997.

20. Over five months, the 7 000 or so men under Italian command making up the MPF were to succeed in attaining the required objectives in an environment which in principle was hostile to them. The presence of the MPF prevented supporters and opponents of Mr Berisha from clashing elsewhere than in the political arena – which would not have helped the Presidency – and by controlling the Adriatic ports, it succeeded in containing the activities of the criminal fraternity virtually without firing a shot. On 29 June 1997, the first round of parliamentary elections was held. Although the campaign was marked by incidents, these did not prevent voting, supervised by the OSCE, from taking place. On 18 July, the final results were announced, with victory going to the Socialist Party (99 seats out of a possible 155 as against 29 to Mr Berisha's Democratic Party). On 23 July, President Berisha resigned and on 24 July, Rexhep Mejdani (Socialist Party) was elected President of Albania. Operation Alba ended on 11 August.

21. The lessons to be drawn from that operation were summarised by Admiral Guido Venturoni, MPF Commander, at the ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Brussels Treaty:

"Mission Alba was the first crisis-management mission conducted in Europe by a multinational military force comprised of Europeans only and, in my opinion, it proved both the determination and the capability of the European countries to plan and conduct peace-support operations in a difficult situation like Albania.

But at the same time it was probably a failure for existing European institutions.

I say this with regret, although Italy was at the helm, because a "coalition of the will-

ing” should not be the preferred option for future European crisis-management operations.

It is an option and a workable one, sometimes the only possible solution, but in the end it is certainly preferable to make use of existing security organisations like WEU or NATO and their (...) standing Pol-Mil structures, rather than (...) *ad hoc* arrangements, as in the case of Alba (...)”⁸.

IV. The Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE)

(May 1997 to date)

22. In an interview with the *Financial Times* in 1998, the WEU Secretary-General, Mr Cutileiro, acknowledged that Albania had been a missed opportunity for WEU⁹. In his address on 17 March, Admiral Venturoni confirmed the fact in stating that, “The Albanian crisis, although evident since January 1997, did not generate any preventive action. As a matter of fact the slow and somewhat hesitating response by the international community and the Euro-Atlantic institutions proved unable to prevent the crisis”.

23. In reality, the situation was a complex one and there was no political consensus, in WEU, the European Union or in NATO, on what course to adopt. Despite the irregularities reported during the 1996 elections and the authoritarian stance adopted by the Albanian Government, President Berisha continued to attract support from some governments, through political affinity or from a wish for regional stability. The choice rapidly proved untenable when it became obvious that the Albanian Presidency could no longer control the situation and that the country was heading for civil war. Successive interventions by the Council of Europe and the OSCE served as an illustration of those uncertainties, at least until parliamentary elections were held in June-July 1997.

1. WEU and Albania: the deployment of MAPE

24. The Albanian crisis did not escape WEU’s attention and the Organisation’s politico-military

⁸ Brussels, 17 March 1998.

⁹ “Europe’s defence rookie awaits a call to action”, *Financial Times*, 9 March 1998.

structures studied and put forward various intervention scenarios, while awaiting any political decision that might come. The WEU Assembly was the first to speak out on Albania in Recommendation 609, adopted by its Standing Committee on 13 March 1997. In this text, addressed to the WEU Council, the Assembly recommends that it:

“(…)

3. Ask the Planning Cell to draw up contingency plans for possible operations in Albania covering the full range of Petersberg operations¹⁰ from humanitarian and rescue tasks to peacekeeping tasks and peacemaking, including control over the restitution of arms and munitions”.

25. On 14 March, the WEU Council, meeting at the request of the French Presidency, tasked the Politico-Military Group (PMG)¹¹ with following up and evaluating the situation in Albania, with the support of the Secretariat, the Planning Cell and the Satellite Centre¹². On 8 April 1997, the Politico-Military Group (PMG) was tasked with a study of the experience acquired by WEU during the police operation in Mostar to see how it could be drawn upon to rapidly set up a multinational advisory police element in Albania.

26. On 17 April, the Council decided to send a fact-finding mission to Albania whose aim would be to study arrangements for the deployment of an advisory police force and on 2 May, the Permanent Council decided to establish a multinational advisory police element (MAPE) under WEU authority with the task of advising on police matters in Albania. On 9 May 1997, on the

¹⁰ These include humanitarian and rescue tasks (evacuation of nationals), peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking (Petersberg Declaration, Part II, paragraph 4; Bonn, 19 June 1992).

¹¹ The Politico-Military Group (PMG) was established in 1994 and is composed of national delegations representing the political and military authorities of the participant countries. It meets as and when required to provide politico-military support to the Council for all matters relating to WEU’s operational role in the framework of Petersberg missions and to the politico-military activities conducted under the Council’s authority.

¹² Internet: <http://www.weu.int/emcp/situation.htm>.

eve of the WEU ministerial meetings in Paris, a draft mandate was submitted to the Council for adoption. On 12 May, an advance police element arrived in Tirana, where the situation had stabilised since the arrival of an advance party for Operation Alba. The terms of the MAPE mandate endorsed by the Council on 13 May 1997 are as follows:

“Article 2:

(a) The MAPE will give the Albanian police authorities the necessary information and advice on appropriate aspects of policing and restoring order. For the purpose of training instructors, it will give advice in the following areas:

- organisation;
- public order;
- monitoring of borders;
- logistics and communications.

The MAPE will advise the Albanian police on their responsibilities in the electoral process and will notify WEU HQ, and the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union, immediately of any deficiencies that may constitute a threat to the holding of free and fair elections.

(b) The MAPE will work mainly at a high level of responsibility with the Albanian police.

(c) The MAPE will be led by a Head of Mission, who will report direct to the WEU Council, notably by means of regular reports, and receive instructions and political guidance from the Council.

(d) To ensure that the activities of the MAPE are well integrated into the overall international advice and support infrastructure in Albania, the element will establish links with national and multinational activities in this area and with the MPF.

(e) The first activity of the MAPE will be to dispatch an advance party. The Head of Mission and the advance party will keep the situation under constant review in preparation for the early arrival of the main element, in particular by preparing a

Memorandum of Understanding with the Albanian authorities in close consultation with all the other international missions”.

27. On 24 June, a memorandum of understanding on third party liability, defining the procedures for compensation and settlement of disputes between MAPE and the Albanian authorities, was signed in Tirana. This agreement was followed by the deployment of the WEU unit on Albanian territory. On 22 July, at the initiative of the German Presidency, the Permanent Council decided to extend MAPE’s mandate until 12 October 1997, and on 16 September it was extended for a further six months until 12 April 1998. The extension was accompanied by a concept for a long-term programme, due to be implemented in stages. The Planning Cell was instructed to work out the details of this programme in which all 28 WEU states were entitled to participate.

28. The main elements of the programme are as follows:

“(a) Advice

(...) the MAPE should contribute to the development of an overall police concept in close coordination with the Ministry of the Interior (...).

(b) Basic training

(...) it is recommended that a basic training programme lasting about three months be conducted (...) in parallel with continued ‘train the trainer’ activities. (...)

(c) Specialised training

Taking into account the basic training provided, the need for specialist training should be assessed. (...). Specialised training should also include a ‘train the trainers’ programme in order to enable the Albanian police to gradually take over the training programme.

(d) Evaluation

(...) It is recommended that evaluators be deployed following completion of the first three-month training cycle. This work will involve visits to local police stations and commissariats to evaluate whether the training received is being put into practice.

(e) Logistic and equipment support for the Albanian police

Advice, training and evaluation will only be fully effective when the Albanian police have the necessary equipment and logistic and infrastructure support to sustain their efforts. (...) A coherent equipment programme, linked to training progress and any other desired conditions (...) could be coordinated by the MAPE. This work will be conducted in close cooperation with the European Commission and other possible contributors (...). Contacts with the European Commission have confirmed that close cooperation in the implementation of a long-term programme is envisaged. A European Commission expert will provide the MAPE with assistance on the matter".

29. MAPE has a staff of 95 officers from 23 WEU states¹³ and works in close conjunction with the European Union, which is heavily involved in the Albanian reconstruction effort. MAPE is funded mainly through the PHARE programme providing economic assistance to central and eastern European countries. Its presence is readily accepted by the authorities and the opposition and especially by those who benefit directly from the mission, namely Albanian police officers, who, given the lack of an army, are the only security force with credibility – as the events of September 1998 served to demonstrate.

2. MAPE's future and the impact of the war in Kosovo

30. MAPE's mission started in a political climate which was assumed to be moving towards greater stability. However, since the June 1997 elections the internal situation has continued its downward slide. The threat of inter-Albanian armed conflict has faded but the country is still suffering the backlash from that period. The new Socialist majority and the Democratic Party opposition, after a short truce under the scrutiny of the European organisations (EU, OSCE and the Council of Europe), returned to their old confrontational ways – at times with

¹³ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and United Kingdom.

violent overtones. While the situation in Kosovo and the massive influx of ethnic Albanian refugees have temporarily stopped feuding between these two factions, partisan tensions could equally well be fuelled by a prolongation of the war.

31. An unspecified number of weapons is still in circulation, despite campaigns for their recall and threats of forcible confiscation. Illegal emigration, under the control of the underworld, to Italy and other western European countries continues, alongside drugs and arms trafficking. Some weapons have been diverted to Kosovo to equip the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) forces and the rise in violence in that Serbian province led to fear of a flood of Kosovar refugees and conflict between Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). Indeed, this is effectively what has been happening, since NATO air strikes began over FRY territory.

(a) MAPE's importance in developing WEU's operational capabilities

32. WEU's police mission has had a beneficial effect not just on Albania but also on the Organisation. This is something of a consideration since, once again, it is a matter of regret that an operation such as this has failed to catch the public eye in WEU member states and the other countries that hold various categories of status within the Organisation. MAPE's presence on the ground placed WEU in the front line of the developing crisis that has meanwhile turned into the conflict in Kosovo. Stabilisation of the internal situation in Albania remains a priority but is also largely dependent on the regional context.

33. As a result of MAPE's work there has been greater cooperation between WEU and the European Union and NATO, which, having moved beyond the framework of discussions or purely theoretical exercises, is now taking place in real conditions, in a complicated and unstable environment. The Planning Cell, Situation Centre, Military Committee and Satellite Centre are all carefully monitoring the situation in Albania and Kosovo and improving the work carried out by MAPE.

34. Thus, on 10 July, the Council tasked the Military Staff to prepare a feasibility study on possible options for an international police operation in Albania to assist the Albanian Gov-

ernment in its tasks of maintaining public order and exercising its customs functions. (...) Ongoing reflections within NATO would be taken into account and duplication of work avoided.

35. Noting the relevant feasibility study, on 29 September the Council tasked the Military Staff to further explore ways to widen and better focus the geographic and functional scope of WEU's support for the maintenance of law and order, given the necessary security conditions and material and financial support. Along with the Council Decision on an Initial Planning Directive, approved on 20 October, the relevant documents were transmitted to the EU and NATO¹⁴.

36. On 10 November, the Permanent Council approved a set of PMG (Politico-Military Group) recommendations "relating to a mid-term review of MAPE's current mandate, thus identifying ways to focus MAPE's work more closely on key priorities for the training and modernisation of the Albanian police"¹⁵. The following measures were approved:

- a new training concept based on the integration of MAPE training into the existing training programmes of the Police Academy,
- increasing the information flow between the head of the MAPE Mission and the Council,
- a constant evaluation of the results achieved in terms of involvement of Albanian police officers in MAPE activities,
- the reinforcement of relations with international organisations and bilateral missions operating in Albania¹⁶.

37. Following an initiative by the Italian Presidency, on 27 October 1998, the European Commissioner responsible for humanitarian affairs, Ms Emma Bonino, was invited to address the Permanent Council¹⁷. Several suggestions she

¹⁴ Second part of the forty-fourth annual report of the Council to the Assembly on the activities of the Council for the period 1 July to 31 December 1998. Assembly Document 1641, 8 April 1999, page 4.

¹⁵ *Idem*.

¹⁶ *Idem*, page 10.

¹⁷ This was the first time that a member of the European Commission had addressed WEU's

made have been subsequently taken up and implemented (for instance: information-sharing with the Situation Centre, collaboration with the Satellite Centre). On 7 November 1998, members of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) gave a briefing to the Military Staff on organisational and procedural issues¹⁸.

38. From the second half of 1998, monitoring the situation in Kosovo acquired an increasingly important place in WEU action in Albania, since the crisis there has major repercussions on Albanian internal policy. The Democratic Party has taken up cudgels on the side of the armed struggle and an independent Kosovo, while the government led by Fatos Nano banked on an improvement in relations with the FRY, FYROM and Greece – all opposed to such a political option or with reservations on that score. Moreover, the border between Kosovo and Albania is adjacent to areas won over to Mr Berisha's Democratic Party, where the government has not succeeded in establishing its authority. The constant flow of refugees, most of whom concentrate close to the border, and the overt presence of KLA (UÇK)¹⁹ and FARK²⁰ forces has added to the instability within the country caused by apprehension about what action either the opposition or the government may take in order politically to gain the upper hand.

39. In July 1998, the WEU Council "tasked the MS (Military Staff) to prepare a feasibility study concerning a possible extension to the MAPE Mission in Albania. The study was discussed on 24 July 1998, and the MS was tasked to produce a more detailed study. The revised study, which presented the Council with three main options, two requiring the deployment of an international military force to provide a secure

Permanent Council.

¹⁸ Second part of the forty-fourth annual report of the Council to the Assembly on the activities of the Council for the period 1 July to 31 December 1998. Assembly Document 1641, 8 April 1999, page 13.

¹⁹ Kosovo Liberation Army (*Ushtria Çlirimtare E Kosovës*). The KLA appears to have been founded in the course of the 1980s and made its first public appearance in Kosovo in June 1996.

²⁰ Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo, known by the acronym FARK (*Forcave Armatosure Republikes e Kosovës*). Reputedly close to the Democratic Party, the FARK appear to have been formed in 1998 by KLA dissidents.

environment, was examined by the Council on 29 September 1998. Additional details and a possible reduction in the options were requested. A supplement to the feasibility study has since been prepared, setting out the military implications of the various options and introducing certain modifications to the original range of possibilities. These extended from providing training and advisory teams in the 12 Police Directorates, to deploying advisors country-wide down to police unit level. Following the issue of an Initial Planning Directive by the Council on 28 September 1998, a draft Contingency Plan and a Declaration of Intent Request (DIR) Message were drawn up and circulated to the WEU nations on 13 November 1998, with the approval of the Council²¹. The collating and study of replies to the DIR message is still continuing.

40. The Satellite Centre is also involved in planning WEU activities in Albania and Kosovo. On 26 November 1998, the Permanent Council "tasked the Centre to carry out general security surveillance of the Kosovo region with particular emphasis on the state of implementation of the agreements signed in Belgrade on 16 October 1998 between the FRY and OSCE and on 15 October 1998 between the FRY and NATO, as well as on the situation of refugees and displaced persons and of the related infrastructure. This task was put forward following a request from the European Union, based on Article J 4.2 of the Treaty on European Union, on monitoring of the situation in Kosovo"²². The EU, NATO and the OSCE were given access to satellite imagery dossiers prepared according to procedures developed by the WEU Space Group.

41. Since the start of its mission, and working within somewhat restricted budgetary guidelines relative to its real needs, MAPE has trained some 2 000 police officers at the Tirana training centre²³. On 2 February 1999, the Permanent Council decided to extend MAPE's mandate for another year (until April 2000) with the possibil-

ity of a further extension. In April 1999, the Permanent Council assigned the MAPE command to General Pistoiese of the Italian Carabinieri.

42. Far more than a mere police advisory mission, WEU action in Albania made it possible for the Organisation to improve its planning, crisis-monitoring and crisis-management procedures, in cooperation with the EU, NATO and the OSCE. However, regrettably, the mission has not received the publicity it deserves in view of the importance of its contribution to stabilising Albania, without which that nation, faced with having to deal with the consequences of the war in Kosovo, would today be in an even more difficult situation. This failure to gain media attention considerably reduces WEU's political visibility, especially in the present context, and hardly adds to its credibility in the European defence debate.

(b) The importance of public support for action taken by WEU

43. As far as Albania is concerned, MAPE action went beyond the context of mere technical assistance; it could be perceived as the expression of a European policy for bringing stability to Albania and minimising the risks to that country of a major confrontation over Kosovo, not just between Kosovars and the Serbian authorities, but also between NATO and the FRY. MAPE was part of a far wider effort on the part of the European Union and the OSCE to help Albania reform its institutions and resume the path of economic development, without which any attempt to prevent Albanians leaving their own country is unrealistic. Today, in the absence of a foreseeable outcome to the Kosovo problem (autonomy, partition or immediate or gradual independence) a solution needs to be found to the problems of an entire region, with the common ground between them, referred to earlier, being the creation or carving out of an Albanian homeland in south-eastern Europe.

44. Reconstruction of the police force is an essential prerequisite for the proper foundation of the rule of law in a country that is armed to the teeth and, because of internal disorder and external factors (such as economic sanctions against the FRY or crisis and war in Kosovo), without any real economic prospects in the short term. Under such conditions, action taken by MAPE can only be successful in the medium to long

²¹ Second part of the forty-fourth annual report of the Council to the Assembly on the activities of the Council for the period 1 July to 31 December 1998. Assembly Document 1641, 8 April 1999, page 10.

²² *Idem*, page 15.

²³ WEU: Press Release No 9/99, 9 March 1999. A second training centre was opened in Durrës on 9 March 1999.

term. In the present circumstances it seems wise to extend its mandate and widen it to cover management and monitoring of humanitarian aid for refugees from Kosovo indefinitely, and to increase material and human resources. Maintaining and reinforcing MAPE is more than ever essential in a country where political debate can turn into armed confrontation as happened during the disturbances of August-September 1998.

45. For this, it is absolutely essential to obtain massive public support for the work WEU has started to do in this connection. This is particularly important in view of the need to foresee and plan now for appropriate measures to be taken to restore order and peace in Kosovo when the hostilities end and the refugees return. WEU should play an important role at this point, on the basis of the experience it has gained in Mostar and Albania.

46. However, there has been practically no reference in public discussion or in the media to the advisability of making use of WEU and its experience of policing to assist in the *post bellum* process of stabilisation and democratisation in the Kosovo war zones. There is talk of United Nations police units, of the OSCE, but not a word about WEU. One of the reasons for this is the almost total lack of public information on WEU's contribution to the stabilisation of law and order and democracy in Albania since May 1997. Neither the Secretariat-General, nor the Council, nor the member governments have so far made any significant effort to keep members of parliament and the media adequately informed of the scale of WEU's action in Albania or to seek the necessary public support for it.

47. The Secretariat-General has issued five or six short press releases on Albania and MAPE since 1997 but unless such communications are accompanied by a more energetic publicity campaign, they sink without trace among the innumerable items of information reaching the media every day.

48. The second part of the forty-fourth annual report of the Council contains a certain amount of information on MAPE but it is too general for members of the Assembly to use to give public support to the Organisation's efforts in this area.

49. The Bremen Declaration contains a short paragraph on MAPE to the effect that:

"Ministers underlined the importance of the extended mission, on the basis of Article J.4.2 of the Treaty on European Union, of the WEU Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE), in supporting the process of stabilisation and democratic reform in Albania. MAPE's enhanced geographical coverage and increased operational mobility will enable MAPE to better respond to the needs of the Albanian authorities in building a police force according to European norms".

50. This is an extremely important decision that would merit detailed explanation to the public. But it was not through WEU but from a notice in the Official Journal of the European Union published on 9 March that it was learned that the Permanent Council of WEU had already, on 2 February 1999, adopted an emergency plan for an international police operation in Albania, which formed the basis for an official request from the European Union to WEU, on 9 March 1999, to prepare and implement a joint action pursuant to Article J.4.2 of the Maastricht Treaty, including an enlarged MAPE mission in Albania. The only information to come from the WEU Council was a short press release issued on 9 March 1999, stating that "a new MAPE training centre was officially opened at Durrës on Tuesday, 9 March".

51. Communications of that sort give no idea of the importance and scope of the new police mission in Albania. The Council has therefore once again missed an opportunity to obtain the necessary public support for its actions by mounting an effective publicity campaign. At present, it is primarily members of the Assembly who are making remarkable efforts to alert the public to the situation and in the regions concerned. The President of the Assembly and a delegation of the Presidential Committee took the lead, with the Chairman of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations, and set an example with their recent visits to Albania and FYROM and their reports not only to the Council but also to the media. Several members of the Assembly have also made remarkable efforts in writing articles that have appeared in the international press, notably the President of the Assembly, Mr de Puig, one of its Vice-Presidents, Mrs Durrieu, the Chairman of the Political

Committee, Mr Baumel, and the Chairman of the Defence Committee, Mr de Decker.

V. Conclusion: the need for a publicity campaign to accompany a European policy on south-eastern Europe

52. The Albanian people have been dispersed throughout the Balkans since the Balkan Wars at the start of the century. The weakness of the "Kingdom of the Eagles" relative to its neighbours has not been conducive to finding a real solution to the problems of the Albanian diaspora. The Albanian People's Republic's self-imposed isolation in the post-war period, in the face of the cold war and attempts to destabilise it on the part of the Yugoslav Federation in the 1950s, put the "Albanian question" on hold. It was taken up again in the 1960s and 1970s by the Kosovar Albanians, demanding that Kosovo should have the status of a republic within the Federation. After violent clashes, the solution of an autonomous status for the province was agreed, but in 1989 that status was abolished. It would also be true to say that relations between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo have always been marked by mutual suspicion and fear and religious prejudices on both sides of the community divide. The aim of the independence movement was not to create a multinational state with an Albanian majority but an Albanian state that would merge with present-day Albania, ultimately with the possibility of Albanians from FYROM being drawn into a Greater Albania. If this aim were to become a reality it would also have repercussions for other neighbouring states with ethnic Albanian minorities, frequently concentrated in areas bordering on Albania (northern Greece and the Italian region of Puglia, around Bari, for example).

53. The conflicts in the Balkans have radicalised the Kosovar communities for some time to come and, notwithstanding the present emphasis in diplomatic thinking, the way out of the present crisis is through independence for the entire area or a division of territory between the two separate communities with *de facto* independence for Kosovar Albanians. What is very worrying is the lack of a common European resolve and of any joint preparatory initiative to ensure post-war conditions are as good as they can be made to be, avoid another Kosovo in FYROM and draw Serbia and Montenegro into the process of

bringing about greater convergence between the EU and the central and eastern European countries. Calls for a conference on south-eastern Europe or the launch of a Marshall Plan for the Balkans make comforting reading in newspapers and are reassuring to public opinion across the states of the European Union which is concerned about what will happen when the war is over. However they beg the question of where to find statesmen of vision equal to that of a Marshall, a Schuman, a Monnet or a Spaak, able to come up with ideas to put to the countries of the region that represent an alternative to well-worn IMF or World Bank formulae and rigid compliance with "macroeconomic balances", which are the hallmark of developed economies but which have proved to be of limited value when it comes to guaranteeing public stability and security, without which there can be no lasting economic development.

54. It is not a matter of reconstruction but of establishing genuine rule of law and a social, economic, cultural and security fabric that allows the peoples of the region to flourish in an environment of respect for their different cultures, traditions and beliefs. This obviously presupposes not only that the financial means are there but also that sensible use is made of them within a planned framework, in partnership with local representatives of the public and private sectors, not simply and solely with governments. European political and economic agencies have a major responsibility here and resources must not be frittered away, as has been allowed to happen over the past ten years. Each organisation has its special characteristics which should be used, although duplication must be avoided. The EU has economic capabilities. The Council of Europe, through its Conventions on human rights, minority rights and regional languages, and its legal expertise, has a central role in establishing the rule of law and civil society. The OSCE is able to deal with the wider aspects of security matters and use the experience it has acquired within the region in the area of confidence-building and arms and forces reduction. NATO is able, through its various partnership programmes, to deal with armed forces reorganisation, a task that WEU could share, where preparations for involvement in Petersberg-type operations are concerned.

55. The expertise acquired by a group such as the Friends of Albania (FoA), which was set up in 1998, may be useful in bringing about a return to stability and for economic development in south-eastern Europe. The group, which operates within the OSCE framework and brings together 23 states and eight international or Europe-wide organisations²⁴ was officially formed in Brussels, on 30 September 1998. The FoA's objectives are "to reinforce and focus international attention in supporting Albania in its efforts to consolidate the democratic process, achieve stability and security and further economic development.

56. Political will and adequate financial resources are two essential elements in any strategy for rebuilding south-eastern Europe. This must produce results for the peoples concerned as quickly as possible; otherwise the situation, after a period of sustained interest, runs the risk of degenerating into a spiral of economic and political instability, exacerbated by the after-effects of war. This is a challenge all the institutions with the necessary resources and technical expertise will have to face. As to human resources, these exist in the region already. There is no need therefore to "export" bureaucrats, "experts" and other consultants who are not answerable for the options they advocate and cannot be held to account in the event of failure. Four years after

Dayton, Bosnia is still a disaster area. Albania, despite having been the recipient of every conceivable form of aid over the past seven years²⁵ is chronically unstable and its economy almost wholly underdeveloped with no prospect whatsoever of improvement in the short term, a situation exacerbated by the fall-out from the war in Kosovo. The Albanian people and the peoples of south-eastern Europe deserve sound, skilled advice and assistance from those who speak on behalf of a Europe of which they have ever been and are still an integral part.

57. That endeavour will have to be accompanied by a much more systematic and determined drive in the area of communications policy by the governments concerned, if they really want the electorate to support the action that is necessary to stabilise the region and, in particular, any call for an increase in financial and human resources in this connection. This is above all a major challenge for WEU and its Council. If the Council does not make a greater effort to seek public support for its action in Albania, the widespread opinion not only in the media but also among many political leaders in Europe that WEU serves no useful purpose may result in it being completely left out of the international community's efforts to restore order and peace in Kosovo in the post-war period.

²⁴ The Friends of Albania's first meeting at senior civil servant level, held in Rome, on 23 October 1998, was attended by representatives from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United States, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law), EBRD, the European Commission, the EU Presidency, IMF, NATO, OSCE, WEU, and the World Bank.

²⁵ Between 1992 and 1998, the amount of aid from European, international, bilateral and other sources is said to have totalled some 2 billion euros (see fact sheet at Appendix I). Over the period 1991-98, the EU made a contribution estimated at €700 million (for all types of aid programme).

APPENDIX I

Surface area (km ²)	28 748
Population (millions)	3.25
Population density (inhab./ km ²)	115
Fertility rate (‰)	2.7
Life expectancy	71
GNP in volume (in billions of \$)	2.5
per capita (\$)	750

Fact sheet on Albania

GEOGRAPHIC POSITION AND SURFACE AREA: 28 748 km².

Located between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY: Serbia and Montenegro), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece, bounded by the Adriatic Sea to the west.

POPULATION¹: 3 249 000 inhabitants (*estimated mid-year population for 1995. Last census in 1989 indicated 3 182 000*). Age structure: 0-14 years: 32.9%; 15-64 years: 50.9%; 65 years and over: 9.2%

DIASPORA: 6 million (Kosovo, FYROM, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, United States, Germany).

LANGUAGE: Albanian

CURRENCY: new lek (in 1998: 100 new lekë = €0.6)

CAPITAL: Tirana (population 500 000 inhabitants according the last estimate in 1995)². Administrative divisions: 36 districts.

RELIGIONS: According to the 1998 Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom, the Republic of Albania has no official religion. At present, a large section of the population is muslim.

HISTORY: In 1912, after four centuries of Ottoman domination, Albania proclaimed its independence in Vlore (in the south). The country was governed from 1925 to 1939 by President Ahmed Beg Zogu, later proclaimed King Zog. It was forcibly annexed to the Italian "empire" in 1939, brutally invaded by the Wehrmacht in 1943, and regained independence in 1944, with the help of the Soviet Union.

Enver Hoxha founded communist Albania in 1946.

After severing ties with Moscow in 1961, Albania turned towards Beijing.

In 1977, after breaking off relations with China, Albania found itself totally isolated from the rest of the world. Enver Hoxha's system of socialist autarchy was to last until his death in 1985.

In 1990 and 1991, his successor Ramiz Alia was confronted with growing popular protest, which was put down by the authorities. Thousands of Albanians tried to flee the country. Under pressure from the people, Alia introduced reforms leading to the demise of communism.

¹ <http://www.undp.org/popin/regional/europe/index.htm> *Regional Population Information Europe*, National Report submitted by the Government of Albania. CES/PAU/1998/14, 9 November 1998, Regional Population Meeting, Budapest, 7-9 December 1998.

² *ibid.*

In 1991, Albania opened up to the rest of the world, but its regional importance was only really recognised with the eruption of the Balkan crisis. The United States, Germany and Italy placed their hopes in Sali Berisha's Democratic Party which came to power in April 1992.

Sali Berisha's election to the presidency marked the start of a second phase of political and economic transition fraught with conflict.

1994 saw the beginnings of new unrest. In May 1996, the organised chaos of the parliamentary elections led to violent demonstrations around the country. The collapse of the pyramid finance companies led to a massive wave of popular protest, which was supported by the Socialist Party. Following mediation by Italy and the international community, the Government gave way to a coalition of national unity which prepared the elections of 29 June 1997 under the leadership of the Socialist Bashkim Fino.

After numerous difficulties, the UN Security Council finally gave its authorisation for Operation Alba (Resolution 1101, 28 March 1997), the aim of which was to provide humanitarian aid and protection to OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) observers. WEU has had a Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE) in Albania since 1997, advising on police training.

There have since been two changes of government.

POLITICAL SITUATION: The President is Rexhep Mejdani (Socialist Party), who was elected by parliament on 24 July 1997 for a five-year term.

Prime Minister Pandeli Majko (Socialist Party) leads a left-wing coalition government.

Legislature: single-chamber People's Assembly, 155 seats, to which members are elected for a 4-year term, most by direct popular vote and some by proportional vote.

FOREIGN POLICY: Albania was among the first former communist countries to join NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1994. It was admitted to the Council of Europe in 1995. Since the end of the cold war, Albania has been moving towards a policy of developing its diplomatic relations. Since 1992, it has made Euro-Atlantic integration the focus of its foreign policy. For that purpose, it has strengthened its ties with Italy and considerably improved its relations with Greece. These countries are Albania's two main economic partners.

Between 1994 and 1996, Albania joined a number of international forums: Central European Initiative (CEI); Balkan Conference on Stability, Security and Co-operation in south-east Europe (July 1996); South-east European Co-operative Initiative SECI (December 1996) and Process for Stability and Good Neighbourliness in south-east Europe, an EU initiative known as the Royaumont initiative, (December 1995).

In 1998, the conflict between Serbians and Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo had repercussions for Albania. The country has had to take in about 371 000³ refugees from the province since the start of the NATO air strikes. This massive influx of refugees threatens to upset the delicate balance between north and south in Albania. The demographic weight of the poorer and more densely populated north will receive a considerable boost from the flood of refugees from Kosovo or any future unification of the two regions. When he was in power between 1992 and 1997, former President Sali Berisha, now leader of the opposition, passed a law on citizenship under which all Albanian immigrants,

³ Figures at 29 April 1999. Source UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.ch/news/media/kosovo.htm>.

including Albanians from Kosovo, were granted the right to apply for Albanian citizenship and Albanian passports⁴.

MILITARY MANPOWER⁵: (1998 est.) availability: 749 633 – fit for military service: 609 986 – reaching military age annually: 32 367.

ALBANIAN PRESENCE IN ITALY: according to ISTAT⁶ figures published on 1 January 1998, 72 551 of the 1 240 721 residence permits issued to foreigners lawfully residing in Italy were granted to male Albanian immigrants. And 13 800 of the 22 853 to arrive in Italy landed in the region of Puglia, most of them Albanians.

The crisis in Kosovo has brought an increase in the numbers seeking asylum. In 1998, 4835 applications were filed by Albanians and Kosovo Albanians between 1 July and 30 September, compared with 1869 in 1997. More than 60% were rejected.

The Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* estimates that some 8 000 immigrants have landed in Puglia since the outbreak of hostilities in the Balkans, about 80% of them refugees from Kosovo. The highest number of arrivals recorded so far was 1389 on 27 April 1999.

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT:

Prime Minister	Pandeli Majko (SP)
Agricultural and Food	Lufter Xhuveli (AP)
Culture, Youth and Sports	Edi Rama (Independent)
Defence	Luan Hajdaraga (SP)
Education and Science	Ethem Ruka (SP)
Finance	Anastas Angjeli (SP)
Foreign Affairs	Paskal Milo (SDP)
Health	Leonard Solis (HRUP)
Information	Musa Ulqini (SP)
Justice	Thimio Kondi (Independent)
Public Order	Petro Koci (SP)
Labour and Social Affairs	Kadri Rrapi (SP)
Local Government	Arben Demeti (DA)
Public Economy and Privatisation	Ylli Bufi (SP)
Public Affairs and Transport	Ingrid Shuli (SDP)
Economic Cooperation and Trade	Ermelinda Meksi (SP)
Institutional Reforms	Arben Imami (DA)

⁴ *WEU and crisis management in the Balkans*, Report submitted on behalf of the Political Committee by Mr Baumel, Chairman and Rapporteur, Assembly Document 1627, 9 November 1998.

⁵ <http://www.stratfor.com/kosovo/albania.htm?section=2>.

⁶ *Istituto di Studi Statistici Italiano*.

APPENDIX II

The Albanian economy

In five years, Albania has moved from being a totally planned and isolated economy to a market economy. The strong growth in the Albanian economy between 1992 and 1996, with GDP increasing 45% in real terms, was suddenly cut short by the “pyramid crisis”. The optimistic-sounding figures concealed a very different picture, a permanent trade deficit propped up by transfers from Albanians abroad.

The financial crash in January 1997, caused by the collapse of the “pyramid investment schemes”, dragged the country into an economic and political crisis (January-July 1997) which brought it to the brink of bankruptcy and civil war.

Owing to the weakness of the country’s institutions, the 1997 crisis took on unprecedented dimensions. In order to prevent a recurrence, the Albanian Government has embarked on a strategy of political, economic and social reforms. The key points in the strategy are: (i) to normalise the political structure and introduce democracy; (ii) to restore order; (iii) to deal with the poverty caused by the 1997 crisis; (iv) to stabilise the macro-economic factors; (v) to reform the financial sector and manage the consequences of the pyramid schemes; and (vi) to privatise the strategic sector. The Public Investment Programme (PIP) for 1998-2000 reflects the main features of that strategy. The financial resources of the PIP amount to the equivalent of approximately US\$ 350 million, 80% in the form of aid and foreign trade credits. The Albanian Government contribution in 1998 was approximately US\$ 50 million. Albania’s principal financial partners are the European Commission (PHARE Programme: US\$ 289 million to the end of 1997) and the World Bank/IDA⁷ (US\$ 273 million from 1992 on – 197 million for the PIP). Bilateral aid amounting to US\$ 490 million in the period 1992-1997 was granted by the USA (US\$ 163 million), Germany (US\$ 107 million), Italy (US\$ 82 million dollars), Japan (US\$ 58 million), Switzerland (US\$ 46 million); Kuwait (US\$ 23 million).

After the initial success of the six-months emergency economic programme, funded with the help of the IMF Post-Conflict Emergency Assistance Policy, two World Bank loans and additional assistance from the EU, EBRD and bilateral donors (October 1997-March 1998), the country was again plunged into crisis and its current growth rate is more or less nil.

Industrial production is very low, and the country owes its survival to transfers of capital from the diaspora (some US\$ 400 million per annum), the parallel economy and international aid⁸.

The European Union is the principal donor, its aid to Albania totalling 709 million ecus in the period 1991-98, including 393 million in commitment appropriations in technical aid under the PHARE programme and cross-border cooperation and 105 million in macro-financial aid to support the country’s balance of payments⁹, with *per capita* aid higher than in other Eastern countries¹⁰. The rest of the funds provided by the Union – approximately 211 million ecus – are used for humanitarian aid, food deliveries (EAGGF) and loans guaranteed by the EIB. In the 1997 crisis, for example, the EU gave Albania substantial support through a number of channels: ECHO (1.85 million ecus for drinking water and 6.5 to help refugees and displaced persons in Kosovo), the PHARE programme (14.5 million ecus in special aid and 14 million in budget support), the EU food safety programme (10 million).

⁷ IDA: International Development Association.

⁸ *Le Monde*, 1999 edition, p. 45.

⁹ European Parliament, Session document, 27 January 1999, A4-0041/99; Report on the proposal for a Council decision on the allocation of macro-economic aid to Albania COM(98)0507-C4-0590/98-98/0273(CNS), Committee on External Economic Relations; Rapporteur Leonie G.L. van Bladel.

¹⁰ Unofficial figures: the European Union has been assisting Albania through the PHARE programme since 1991 and the Cross Border programme since 1994. The strategic objectives of EU action are to reorganise and strengthen the public authorities in Albania, to reorganise the country’s social and economic policy, and to revitalise the private sector. Between 1991 and 1998, the EU provided Albania with financial assistance amounting to more than 703.4 million ecus under the following headings: PHARE programme, 497.9 million ecus; EAGGF, 120 million ecus; ECHO, 26.6 million ecus; EIB, 46 million ecus; other, 12.9 million ecus.

The country's external debt situation continues to worsen¹¹.

In such circumstances, financial assistance from the international community takes on crucial importance and reliance on outside funding is one of the worst problems besetting the Albanian economy. This explains the EU Council decision to grant macro-economic aid in the form of a long-term loan and 20 million ecus (bringing EU aid up to €34.5 million in 1998) to support the balance of payments¹².

..Albania still has to solve the problem of its debt to Russia, China, former Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Romania. Despite the aid granted by the EU and the international community, the stabilisation, rehabilitation and democratisation of the country are still proceeding at an uneven and inadequate pace. Current growth is around zero. Any signs of growth and development in the Albanian economy are now affected by the conflict in Kosovo. Foreign investors are put off by the political instability of the region. According to the *Financial Times*¹³ trade is already suffering. However, the Kosovo crisis could have some "good effects" for Albania if NATO and the other organisations involved undertake projects that will help to improve things for the civilian population (road network, drinking water, etc.).

¹¹ The size of the external deficit determines access to financial support from the IMF.

¹² European Parliament, Session document, 27 January 1999, A4-0041/99; Report on the proposal for a Council decision on the allocation of macro-economic aid to Albania COM(98)0507-C4-0590/98-98/0273(CNS), Committee on External Economic Relations; Rapporteur Leonie G.L. van Bladel.

¹³ *Concern over stability of Albania* by Stefan Wagstyl, *Financial Times*, 14 April 1999.

Macro-economic budget indicators
(million lekë)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total budget deficit	10.905	17.202	16.509	20.054	31.718	41.676	62.829
Internal financing	10.837	11.624	15.817	15.381	28.524	37.712	30.406
External financing	150	5.578	692	4.673	3.194	3.964	32.423
% of GDP	21.5%	13.7%	9.0%	8.7%	11.3%	12.2%	13.8%

Total EU aid 1991-98
(million ecus)

Type of aid	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total 1991-98
Total PHARE programme	10.0	110.0	75.0	49.0	88.0	53.0	70.4	42.5	497.9
EAGGF		120.0							120.0
ECHO		2.0	0.5	1.7	1.2	1.7	16.3	3.4	26.6
Food security DG VIII							10.5		10.5
Other actions		0.3	0.6	1.1	0.4				2.4
EIB loans					34.0	12.0			46.0
Total EU aid	10.0	232.3	76.1	51.8	123.6	66.7	97.2	45.9	703.4

Source: EU Commission

*Total PHARE aid 1991-98**(million ecus)¹⁴*

Type of aid	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total 1991-98	Total 1991-99
PHARE national programmes		15.0	10.0	5.0		1.7	6.0	6.3	44.0	50.0
• Agriculture		4.4		3.0	18.4	17.0	7.0	8.0	57.8	65.0
• Infrastructure		2.8	7.0	3.0	2.0				14.8	14.8
• Private sector development			6.0	7.0					13.0	13.0
• Health			3.3			1.5	1.6	2.5	14.0	27.2
• Water and environment		1.2	2.5	2.4	4.2	2.5	2.5	0.7	16.0	17.6
• Education					8.5		5.0	3.0	16.5	23.7
• Local community development		1.6	1.2	0.8	1.9	8.6	6.3	8.9	29.3	36.6
• Public administration reform				0.3 0.5		1.7		1.1	0.3 3.3	0.3 3.3
• Harmonisation of legislation							0.5		0.5	0.5
• Coordination of aid										
• Financial and audit sector										
Total PHARE national programmes		25.0	30.0	22.0	35.0	33.0	34.0	30.5	209.5	252.0
PHARE cross-border programmes				20.0	18.0	20.0	20.0	12.0	90.0	110.0
OSCE election support							1.5		1.5	1.5
Balance of payments support		35.0	35.0		35.0				105.0	105.0
Special budgetary assistance							14.9		14.9	14.9
PHARE humanitarian aid		50.0	10.0	7.0					77.0	77.0
Total PHARE	10.0	110.0	75.0	49.0	88.0	53.0	70.4	42.5	497.9	560.4

¹⁴ European Parliament, Session document, 27 January 1999, A4-0041/99; Report on the proposal for a Council decision on the allocation of macro-economic aid to Albania COM(98)0507-C4-0590/98-98/0273(CNS), Committee on External Economic Relations; Rapporteur Leonie G.L. van Bladel.

Aid to Albania
(unofficial sources)

EUROPEAN UNION:

- (1991-1998) more than 709 million ecus
 - in 1998 alone 24.5 million ecus: 14.5 in special assistance under the PHARE programme and 10 under the Community food security programme.
 - (1998-99) 105 million ecus under the PHARE programme + 32.5 under the cross-border programme (Italy and Greece)
- Total: 870.5 million ecus.

WORLD BANK:

- since 1993 466.6 million \$ +
 - estd. 1999-2001 145 million \$ Country assistance programme +
22 million \$ Rehabilitation credit +
5 million \$ Economic recovery technical assistance project+
10 million \$ Private industry recovery project +
12 million \$ Coastal conservation
28 million \$ Health care system
- Total: 688.6 million \$

IMF:

- since May 1997 47 million \$ Extended Structural Adjustment Facility

EBRD:

- 3.5 million \$ Albania Euromerchant Fund
- 10 million \$ SME recovery credit line (Banca Italo-Albanese and Tirana Bank)
- already invested 74.3 million ecus (approx.)
- Total: 87.8

UNDP:

15 million \$

BILATERAL AID:

- 1992-1997 490 million \$: EU 136 million \$; Germany 107 million \$; Italy 82 million \$; Japan 58 million \$; Switzerland 46 million \$; Kuwait 23 million \$
- **ITALY:** 1998 215 billion Lire +
 - 1998-2000 210 billion Lire (30 billion in grants and another 180 billion in the form of a loan with special conditions) +
50 billion Lire Defence cooperation
20 billion Lire Direct aid to the population
-
- 495 billion Lire = approximately 250 million euros

Total¹⁵: approximately 2250 million euros

¹⁵ This does not include aid of 62 million euros, which the EU has promised to grant Albania as a country receiving refugees, in addition to the 150 million euros for the refugees themselves (1999).

*Statistical data*¹⁶

Population (<i>million</i>)	3 249 754 (<i>June 1995 estd; last census 1989: 3 182 000</i>)
Aged 15-64 (%)	42.1
Crude Birth Rate (CBR)‰	22.2
Annual growth (1990-95)	0.23%
Density (<i>pop./km²</i>)	115.0
Total fertility rate (TFR 1990-95)	2.7
Infant mortality ‰	22.5 <i>4% higher in rural areas</i>
Life expectancy (<i>year</i>)	71 ¹⁷
Urban population (1995) %	58
Number of emigrants 1990-95	300-350 000
Number of Kosovar refugees in Albania ¹⁸	371 000
<i>Socio-cultural indicators</i> ¹⁹	
Human development (HDI)	0.655
Number of doctors (‰ <i>pop.</i>)	1.41 (1995)
Higher education %	9.6 (1993)
Internet address (‰ <i>pop.</i>)	0.32
<i>Labour force</i> ²⁰	
Total (<i>million</i>)	2
Female (% of <i>labour force</i>)	41
Children aged 10-14 (% of <i>age group</i>)	1
Unemployment rate (%)	14 (Oct.97) <i>officially, but likely to be as high as 28%</i>
<i>Health</i> ²¹	
Public expenditure on health (% of GDP 1990-95)	2.7

¹⁶ <http://www.undp.org/popin/regional/europe/index.htm> *Regional Population Information Europe, National Report* submitted by the Government of Albania. CES/PAU/1998/14, 9 November 1998, Regional Population Meeting, Budapest, 7-9 December 1998.

¹⁷ International Monetary Fund, Staff country Report No 98/62, August 1998.

¹⁸ Figures at 29/04/1999. Source UNHCR. <http://www.unhcr.ch/news/media/kosovo.htm>.

¹⁹ World Development Report 1998/99, p.194.

²⁰ <http://www.stratfor.com/kosovo/albania.htm?section=2>.

²¹ World Development Report 1998/99, p.202.

APPENDIX III²²*The situation of the refugees in Kosovo**Kosovo*

- population: 1 956 196
- Albanians in Kosovo: 1 800 000
- Number of people forced to leave their homes in the past year: 960 000
- Number of refugees who have left Kosovo since the outbreak of war: 700 000

Kosovo displacement statistics:

Albania: 371 000

FYROM: 154 400

Republic of Montenegro: 62 800

Bosnia and Herzegovina: 15 000

Total : 603 200

Receiving country	Arrivals
Austria	811
Belgium	676
Croatia ²³	188
Czech Republic	115
Finland	481
France	1 777
Germany	9 974
Iceland	23
Israel	106
Netherlands	1 011
Norway	1 732
Poland	635
Spain	103
Sweden	444
Switzerland	33
Turkey ²⁴	5 407
United Kingdom	161
TOTAL²⁵	23 677

²² Source: UNHCR, 28 April 1999. <http://www.unhcr.ch/news/media/kosovo.htm>.

²³ of whom 88 bilaterally without UNHCR/IOM involvement.

²⁴ of whom 1 980 bilaterally without UNHCR/IOM involvement.

²⁵ of whom 2 068 bilaterally without UNHCR/IOM involvement.

APPENDIX IV

*Chronology: Albania 1997-99**1997**January*

- 23/01/1997 The People's Assembly passed a law banning pyramid finance schemes and imposing penalties of up to 20 years in prison for operators. Most of the schemes had collapsed by 23 January.
- 24/01/1997 Violent clashes in Lushnja, in the south, between 5 000 demonstrators and riot police.
- 26/01/1997 Angry crowds set fire to buildings in towns across southern Albania as the protests mounted. Thousands of demonstrators marched through Tirana where they clashed with police. The People's Assembly decided to grant special powers to the President to restore law and order. They included the use of troops to unblock roads and to guard government buildings.
- 27/01/1997 Armed troops took up positions around the central bank and state television headquarters in Tirana.
- 31/01/1997 The cabinet met and approved a law aimed at establishing procedures for redistributing to more than 200 000 savers the US\$ 300 million confiscated from the Xhaferri and Populli schemes.

February

- 4/02/1997 The Gjallica, another large pyramid finance scheme, collapsed. The government started paying out the frozen assets of two of the country's collapsed pyramid finance schemes, Populli and Xhaferri.
- 5/02/1997 Violent unrest erupted in Vlore. Vefa Holdings and three other companies – Kamberi, Canaj and Silva – announced that they had formed a Financial Union in order to boost confidence among their depositors and as a first step towards being awarded a banking licence.
- 6/02/1997 Up to 30 000 protesters occupied Vlore City centre. The police had to intervene.
- 11/02/1997 The Republican Party (3 seats in the People's Assembly) announced its withdrawal from the coalition led by the Democratic Party and demanded the resignation of the government.
- 12/02/1997 The Government called off a move by Prime Minister Alexander Meksi to declare a state of emergency in Vlore.
- 15/02/1997 President Sali Berisha delivered a speech to the members of the ruling Democratic Party of Albania in which he admitted that his government had made mistakes.
- 16/02/1997 Anti-government demonstrations spread north from Vlore to the town of Fier.
- 19/02/1997 Leni Fisher, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, appealed to the political leaders in Albania to show responsibility in handling the crisis following the collapse of the pyramid investment schemes²⁶.
- 20/02/1997 The Albanian Prime Minister, Mr Meksi, resigned.
- 24/02/1997 The European Council called on the Albanian authorities to continue to carry through political and economic measures with determination and to respect the basic principles of democracy. The Council welcomed the Commission's suggestions on assistance for Albania through the PHARE programme²⁷.

²⁶ Strasbourg, Ref. 102(97), <http://www.coe.fr.cp/97/102a%2897%29.htm>.

²⁷ EU Bulletin 1/2-1997 Mediterranean and Middle East (3/24).

28/02/1997 New disorders in Vlore, three more people were reported killed and at least 10 were wounded in shootings in the city.

March

- 1/03/1997 President Berisha ordered the resignation of the government headed by Prime Minister Alexander Meksi. This constituted Berisha's first major concession to his opponents. The People's Assembly declared a national state of emergency.
- 2/03/1997 Violence escalated in Vlore as rebels managed to overrun the SHIK (the National Information Service) headquarters.
A state of emergency was declared in the south of Albania.
- 3/03/1997 The authorities moved to enforce the state of emergency. A national curfew (from 07.00 to 08.00) was imposed and tanks were deployed in strategic areas. Violence continued in the south of the country: Vlore, Sarande, Gjirokaster and Delvine. The People's Assembly re-elected Berisha (113 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstentions) as President for a second five-year term in defiance of the rebel demands for his resignation.
The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called for a government of national consensus in Albania and supported the call for rapid, concerted and effective action by the international community to help Albania in the current situation²⁸.
- 4/03/1997 The Army Chief of Staff, General SHEME Kosova, was dismissed and replaced by Major General Adem Copani, Berisha's personal military adviser.
- 5/03/1997 The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe sent a mission to Tirana to try to help restore peace and dialogue between the Albanian Government and the opposition. The former Austrian Chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, was appointed OSCE special envoy to Albania.
- 6/03/1997 President Berisha agreed to suspend military activity against the rebels in the south for a two-day period, starting at 06.00 on 7 March. The offer was largely ignored by the rebels.
- 7/03/1997 The EU declared its readiness to support the OSCE in this endeavour to achieve peaceful reconciliation in Albania. It welcomed the steps taken by the Council of Europe and asked the OSCE and the Council of Europe to work together to strengthen democracy in Albania²⁹.
- 9/03/1997 President Berisha agreed to form a broad-based government of national reconciliation – which would include Socialist Party members – and to hold general elections by June 1997. He also extended his previous amnesty offer to the rebels by a week. The agreements were welcomed by the opposition, who nevertheless conceded that they had little influence over the rebels in the south. The agreement between Berisha and the opposition was brokered by diplomats from Italy, Greece, the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.
- 10/03/1997 A group of rebel leaders from Vlore held talks with the Italian Ambassador to Albania, Paolo Foresti, aboard an Italian warship in the Adriatic. After the talks, the Italians issued a statement saying that the rebels would consider ending the uprising in return for the deal reached between Berisha and the opposition.
- 11/03/1997 President Berisha appointed Bashkim Fino, a member of the opposition Socialist Party of Albania and former mayor of Gjirokaster, as the country's new Prime Minister. Rebels in Vlore announced the formation for the first time of a formal body, the National Committee for Public Salvation.
Weapons were being looted from dumps in Mjekes, near Elbasan, 55 kms from Tirana.
- 12/03/1997 The security situation in Tirana deteriorated sharply.

²⁸ Strasbourg, Ref. 114(97), <http://www.coe.fr.cp/97/114a%2897%29.htm>.

²⁹ EU Bulletin 3-1997 Common Foreign and Security Policy (2/13).

- In one of his first statements Fino called for talks with the rebels and appealed for outside military assistance to restore order in Albania.
Emergency meeting of ambassadors from NATO countries in Brussels.
Berisha swore in a new government of “national reconciliation”.
- 13/03/1997 The WEU Assembly’s Standing Committee unanimously adopted Recommendation 609 on the situation in Albania. It recommended that the Council monitor very closely the development of the situation in Albania, instruct the WEU Satellite Centre in Torrejón to provide ongoing assessments and ask the Planning Cell to draw up contingency plans for possible operations in Albania³⁰.
Albanian President Berisha, with the support of his country’s political classes, called for international military intervention to restore constitutional order in the country and protect its integrity.
- 14/03/1997 The WEU Council issued a declaration on Albania calling on the parties to refrain from the use of force and to establish a dialogue so that the democratic process could resume its course.
- 15-16/03/1997 EU foreign ministers’ meeting in the Netherlands; the Albanian crisis was on the agenda but no solution was adopted.
- 15/03/1997 President Berisha officially pardoned Fatos Nano, Socialist Party Chairman and Prime Minister in 1991, imprisoned in April 1994 for misappropriation of state funds and other offences.
- 19/03/1997 The government managed to restore order in Tirana by mobilising hundreds of armed vigilantes.
The Italian cabinet met in an emergency session to discuss the refugee crisis, by which time some 10 000 Albanian refugees had entered the country.
The Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called for a tripartite task force (Council of Europe, European Union, OSCE) to give immediate international support to the new coalition government in Albania³¹.
- 20/03/1997 The Albanian authorities reopened Tirana airport to prove that order had been restored in the capital.
At its meeting, the OSCE Permanent Council agreed a decision expressing support for Dr Vranitzky’s work and declaring the Organisation’s readiness, in coordination with other international institutions and organisations, to assist Albania in democratisation and in preparing and monitoring the elections, and to explore the possibility of monitoring the surrender of weapons.
- 24/03/1997 The EU Council expressed its support for the OSCE’s efforts and decided that the EU would cooperate “within the coordinating framework of the OSCE”.
The EU General Affairs Council decided to send an “Advisory Mission” and start a programme of humanitarian aid.
- 25/03/1997 EU foreign ministers met in Rome to mark the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Fino and ministers travelled to Rome to make a collective appeal to the meeting for the creation of a multinational force for Albania. Divisions within the EU over the issue meant that no decision was taken at the meeting.
- 27/03/97 By Decision No. 160, the OSCE Permanent Council decided to establish “an OSCE presence” in Albania. It was also decided that the OSCE would “provide the coordinating framework within which other international organisations can play their part in their respective areas of competence, in support of a coherent international strategy and in facilitating improvements in the protection of human rights and basic elements of civil society”.

³⁰ See Recommendation 609 on the situation in Albania A/WEU/ SC (97) PV 1.

³¹ Report by René Van Der Linden EPP, Netherlands. <http://www.coe.fr.cp/97/102a%2897%29.htm>.

- 28/03/1997 An accident occurred at sea between an Italian patrol boat the “*Sibilla*” and an Albanian vessel near Brindisi, in which some 80 Albanians died.
The UN Security Council authorised the intervention of a temporary multinational force in Albania. Its task was to secure the completion of the humanitarian operation³². This force was deployed under Italian command within the framework of Operation Alba, in compliance with Article VII of the United Nations Charter, for a period of three months.
- 29/03/1997 The UN Security Council voted in favour of the OSCE proposal to allow individual states to help the Albanian Government restore order³³.

April

- 1/04/1997 Bashkim Fino travelled to the rebel-held south for the first time since the insurgents had seized the region.
The Socialist Party of Albania leadership voted unanimously to re-enter the People’s Assembly (the 10 Socialist Party members had boycotted the Assembly since disputed parliamentary elections in May and June 1996).
- 2/04/1997 Bashkim Fino met Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, in Gjirokaster. The talks centred on Italian efforts to organise a multinational force to back the humanitarian operation in Albania.
Fino held talks in Athens with Greek Prime Minister, Kostas Simitis, concerning Greece’s participation in the multinational force.
Events in Albania also had a major impact on domestic politics in Italy. The Olive Tree governing coalition won the backing of the main opposition parties for its proposal to send an Italian-led force to Albania. But the Communist Refoundation refused to back the government.
- 4/04/1997 First meeting of the Steering Committee of countries that decided to participate in the MPF (Multinational Protection Force).
- 4-5/04/1997 A Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly delegation visited Albania on a fact-finding mission on 4 and 5 April 1997, to establish contact with the new coalition government and representatives of all political parties. The visit was a direct follow-up to Assembly Recommendation 1316 (97), adopted unanimously on 19 March 1997³⁴.
- 7/04/1997 The Italian Senate endorsed the deployment of Italian troops by 154 votes to 119, with 2 abstentions.
- 8/03/1997 A WEU Planning Cell evaluation mission visited Albania.
- 9/04/1997 The People’s Assembly voted to end press restrictions which had been imposed in early March as part of a wider state of emergency.
- 10/04/1997 The WEU Council decided to task the Politico-Military Group to undertake to reorganise the Albanian police, with the dispatch of a 20-strong detachment³⁵.

³² *Terre Magazine* No.93, 1998, p.40

³³ Composition of the Multinational Protection Force for Albania

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of troops</i>
Italy	2500
France	1000
Turkey	700
Greece	680
Spain	450
Romania	400
Austria	120
Denmark	65
<i>Total</i>	5915

³⁴ Ref.180(97), <http://www.coe.fr.cp/97/180a%2897%29.htm>.

³⁵ See Written Question 347 put to the Council by Mrs Squarcialupi and Mr Bratina on 11 July 1997.

- The PMG was asked to study the experience acquired by WEU during the mission in Mostar, in order to consider how a multinational advisory mission to Albania might be organised.³⁶
- 11/04/1997 Advance units of the force began securing Tirana.
- 13/04/1997 The National Council of the ruling Democratic Party of Albania (Democratic Party) met and backed Berisha's leadership of the party.
The exiled pretender to the Albanian throne, Leka Zogu, son of King Zog who had reigned from 1929 to 1939, returned to Albania and called for a referendum on the restoration of the monarchy.
- 15/04/1997 More than 1 000 troops (Italian, French and Spanish) arrived in Durrës.
- 17/04/1997 A small force of Italian troops entered Vlore and held talks with rebel leaders. Ekeren Osmani, the self-styled defence commander of the rebel Committee of Public Salvation assured the Italian troops of his full support.
Vranitzky (head of the OSCE delegation) said that the leaders of the main political parties had agreed on 29 June as the date for the early parliamentary elections, but had not reached a consensus on the nature of the poll.
- 19/04/1997 The National Reconciliation Government voted to dismiss General Agim Shehu as Deputy Interior Minister and Chief of the country's police force.
- 20/04/1997 President Berisha rejected the government's decision and said that General Agim Shehu would remain in his post.
- 22/04/1997 The Committee of Heads of Political Departments of the EU discussed the situation in Albania and expressed approval for WEU's decision to send a fact-finding mission to Albania.
- 23-25/04/1997 WEU fact-finding mission, including representatives of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, within the framework of the proposed programme of assistance to the Albanian police.
- 24/04/1997 The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe agreed unanimously that it should take a central role in preparing and monitoring the Albanian parliamentary elections, in liaison with the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE³⁷.
- 26/04/1997 14 dissident members of the Democratic Party announced that they had established a new political party, the Movement for Democracy.

May

- 2/05/1997 The Council of WEU decided to set up a Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE) for Albania³⁸. MAPE's tasks were: to respond to needs for advice on training (particularly in the fields of organisation, border monitoring, logistics and communication) and support expressed by the Albanian authorities and to advise the Albanian police on their responsibilities during the elections.
- 4/05/1997 An Albanian cargo vessel carrying 1 229 Albanians was allowed to enter the Italian port of Bari after rejecting a request made by the Italian navy to return to Albanian waters.
- 7/05/1997 During talks in Tirana between OSCE Special Envoy Vranitzky and Albanian Prime Minister Fino, the latter asked for MAPE to be deployed in connection with the elections planned for June.
- 9/05/1997 Albania's main political parties, including President Berisha's Democratic Party and Fino's Socialist Party signed a contract which committed them to holding fresh

³⁶ *WEU police forces – reply to the annual report of the Council*, report submitted on behalf of the Defence Committee by Mr Giannastasio, Rapporteur; Doc. 1609, 13 May 1998, p.18.

³⁷ Ref.252(97), <http://www.coe.fr.cp/97/252a%2897%29.htm>.

³⁸ See Written Question 347 put to the Council by Mrs Squarcialupi and Mr Bratina on 11 July 1997.

- elections before the end of June. The contract was brokered by former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky.
- The People's Assembly passed legislation regulating the operation of pyramid investment schemes.
- 12/05/1997 The WEU Council reached agreement with the Albanian Government that the police element's mandate would not extend beyond 12 August³⁹.
- 13/05/1997 The Democratic Party placed its own new electoral law before the People's Assembly. Fino and key members of his cabinet were in Washington for talks with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.
- A MAPE advance element was deployed in Tirana. The rest of the mission was to follow after the signature, on 24 June, of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Albanian authorities.
- 15/05/1997 Vranitzky announced that he had arranged a compromise and elections would take place on 29 June.
- 16/05/1997 The People's Assembly approved the new electoral law, promulgated by President Berisha later in the day.
- 17/05/1997 The Socialist Party and its allies indicated that they would boycott the election unless Berisha and the Democratic Party agreed to a number of demands, including the appointment of a Central Electoral Commission by the Government of National Reconciliation, the guaranteed presence of international observers during the election and the replacement of the current chief of the country's security apparatus, the National Information Service (SHIK).
- 22/05/1997 Vranitzky announced that all the main political parties had agreed to contest the 29 June election.
- 23/05/1997 The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Leni Fisher, welcomed the agreement reached between the Albanian political parties on the election law⁴⁰.
- 26/05/1997 Announcement of the composition of a 17-member central election committee. International conference on Albania convened in Rome.

June

*Launch of European Commission Customs Assistance Mission (ECCAM)*⁴¹

- 2/06/1997 The EU Council adopted a common position on Albania, with a view to promoting democracy and restoring political stability and internal security in the country.
- 4/06/1997 A series of bombs exploded in the capital, Tirana, and an assassination attempt against President Sali Berisha was reported.
- 12/06/1997 The Vienna-based OSCE stated in a public report that 32 out of 79 articles in Albania's own election law were violated during the ballot and the pre-election period.
- 16-17/06/1997 The European Council reaffirmed the determination of the Union, in accordance with the common position adopted on 2 June and its regional approach, to help Albania to return to political and economic stability, to establish internal security and to promote the democratic process. The Council of the European Union fully supported the coordinating efforts of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mr Franz Vranitzky, and the role of the MPF.
- 19/06/1997 The UN Security Council voted to extend the force's mandate by 45 days to mid-August. The force's initial 3-month mandate would have expired on 28 June.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ref.316(97), <http://www.coe.fr.cp/97/316a%2897%29.ht m>.

⁴¹ RID 3/99, p.66.

- 23/06/1997 Leading figures for the two main political parties – the Democratic and Socialist Parties – met in Rome to sign a “pact for the future” in which they agreed to campaign peacefully and respect the results of the elections.
- 24/06/1997 A memorandum of understanding was signed between WEU and the Albanian authorities. The MAPE mission was completed⁴².
- 29/06/1997 First round of voting in elections to the 155-member People’s Assembly; a non-binding referendum was also held on the question of the Albanian monarchy. Several acts of violence occurred, the most serious near Fier, where a Socialist Party supporter shot dead an election official. Socialist Party Chairman Fatos Nano claimed that his party had won 60 of the 115 directly elected seats and 24 of the 40 seats allocated on the basis of proportional representation.
- 30/06/1997 President Berisha announced on national television that he would accept the election results and “respect all the declarations (he) (had) made”, an apparent allusion to an earlier pledge to resign from the presidency if the Democratic Party was defeated.

July

- 3/07/1997 Allegation of electoral malpractice prompted the monarchists to organise a protest rally in Tirana.
- 6/07/1997 Second round of voting.
- 8/07/1997 An OSCE report described the conduct of the election as “acceptable” and estimated turnout at around 73%.
- 13/07/1997 Re-runs were held in two constituencies.
- 14/07/1997 The Central Electoral Commission announced the referendum results: 66.74% had voted in favour of the Republic and 33.26% in favour of the monarchy. A pro-monarchy Legality Movement said that the results were invalid because of electoral irregularity.
- 18/07/1997 The Central Electoral Commission announced the official results⁴³.
- 21/07/1997 The Italian Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini, wrote to NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, OSCE representative Franz Vranitzky, and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel (in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of WEU) to alert them to question of international involvement in Albania following the withdrawal of MAPE.
- 23/07/1997 In a statement to the opening session of the new People’s Assembly, Berisha announced his resignation as President.

⁴² <http://www.weu.int/fra/empc/situation.htm>

⁴³ Results of general elections

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats</i>
Socialist Party	101
Democratic Party	29
Social Democratic Party of Albania (PSDS)	8
Union for human rights PMDN)	4
Party of the Democratic alliance of Albania (AD)	2
National Front Party	3
Legality Movement	2
Albanian Republican Party	1
Party of National Unity	1
Albanian Agrarian party (AP)	1
Independents	3
<i>Total</i>	155

- The WEU Council decided to extend MAPE's mandate for two months, from 12 August to 12 October 1997, and appointed the French Colonel Frederic Denis Head of Mission⁴⁴.
- 24/07/1997 The People's Assembly elected Rexhep Mejdani, Secretary-General of the Socialist Party, as the new President.
The Socialist Party proposed Nano as Prime Minister and Mejdani formally invited him to take office.
The new Assembly approved a law which lifted the state of emergency imposed in March.
- 25/07/1997 A new cabinet, headed by Nano and composed of members of the Socialist Party, the Democratic Alliance, the Social Democratic Party, the Agrarian Party and the Union for Human Rights was sworn in the presence of Mejdani.
- 28/07/1997 Nano submitted the cabinet and his government's programme to the People's Assembly.
- 29/07/1997 The Assembly approved both by 116 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions. The session was boycotted by Democratic Party members.
- 31/07/1997 An international conference on Albania opened in Rome. Delegates to the conference – attended by Prime Minister Nano and representatives from OSCE member states and other countries – confirmed international support for Albanian economic and political reconstruction in the aftermath of the rebellion. Adoption of the “elements for an international agenda”.

August

- 3/08/1997 Interior Minister Neritan Ceka announced that he would rid Albania's roads of gangs and robbers within 60 days.
- 4/08/1997 Sabit Brokaj, the Albanian Defence Minister, warned that high-ranking officers who had “violated the constitution” by “accepting political orders” should resign voluntarily or they would face trial.
- 5/08/1997 The National Council of the Democratic Party approved the dismissal of a number of high-ranking officials.
The visiting Greek Foreign Minister, Theodoros Pangalos, signed an agreement with his counterpart, Paskal Milo, guaranteeing that Albanian migrant workers in Greece would receive temporary work permits.
Assistance and cooperation protocol for the armed forces signed between the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence and the Albanian Ministry of Defence.
- 11/08/1997 The last members of the multinational force left Albania. A small number of Greek and Italian officers remained in the country in order to help reorganise the Albanian army and police, operating on the basis of bilateral treaties.
- 12/08/1997 The government announced that it had sent interior ministry troops to the southern towns of Vlore, Gjirokaster, Sarande and Telepene to restore order.
- 14/08/1997 Formal end of “Operation Alba”, the Italian-led UN protection force created in April.
The government announced that it had retaken control of the port of Vlore.
- 15/08/1997 President Rexhep Mejdani dismissed Major-General Adem Copani as Army Chief of Staff.
- 19/08/1997 Colonel Aleks Andoni replaced Copani as Army Chief of Staff.
- 21/08/1997 Mejdani appointed Fatos Klosi as head of the National Information Service (SHIK).
- 27/08/1997 The Constitutional Court declared the results of the 29 June non-binding referendum valid.
- 28/08/1997 Defence Minister Brokaj signed an agreement with his Italian counterpart Beniamino Andreatta, during a visit in Rome. The agreement provided for Italian assistance in rebuilding and revitalising the Albanian armed forces.

⁴⁴ *WEU police forces - reply to the annual report of the Council*, report submitted on behalf of the Defence Committee by Mr Giannastasio, Rapporteur; Assembly Document 1609, 13 May 1998.

September

- 4/09/1997 New press law.
- 5/09/1997 The Albanian Government reached an agreement in principle with IMF officials on an economic stabilisation programme.
- 10/09/1997 Albanian Prime Minister, Fatos Nano, expressed his gratitude for WEU assistance in police matters to the Permanent Council. He also stressed the resolve of his government to carry out the restructuring and modernisation of the Albanian police force according to the highest possible standards⁴⁵.
- 16/09/1997 The Council agreed to extend MAPE's mandate for six months to 12 April 1998, with the option of further extensions thereafter⁴⁶. MAPE strength increased.
- 17/09/1997 The Italian and Albanian Ministers of the Interior signed a memorandum of understanding (*Bilaterale Interni*) establishing close police collaboration on a project for training, assistance and advice to the Albanian police⁴⁷.
- 18/09/1997 Azem Hajdari, a legislator from the opposition Democratic Party, was shot and wounded inside the People's Assembly by Gafur Mazreku, an MP from the ruling Socialist Party. Demonstrations in Tirana followed this incident.
- 22/09/1997 The Democratic Party's National Council decided that the party would boycott the Assembly session "for an unlimited time" in protest at the shooting of Hajdari.
- 29/09/1997 The Supreme Court overturned the convictions of all 32 former communist officials who had been sentenced to terms of imprisonment for crimes against humanity.
- 30/09/1997 End of the six-week amnesty for people in possession of weapons.

October

- 3-4/10/1997 The WEU Secretary-General visited Albania.
- 7/10/1997 The government signed a six-month agreement with the IMF.
- 15/10/1997 Kostas Simitis, the Prime Minister of Greece, visited Albania for talks with Fatos Nano about a Greek loan of US\$ 72 million. Opening of the Administrative Centre for the Coordination of Assistance and Public Participation (ACCAPP) in Tirana. Its mission was to coordinate assistance and public participation in the drafting of a constitution for the Republic of Albania.
- 17/10/1997 Ministerial conference on Albania in Rome, under Italian chairmanship⁴⁸.
- 20-21/10/1997 International donors' conference on Albania in Brussels.
National conference of the Democratic Party. Former President of Albania Sali Berisha was re-elected as party-leader by 791 votes to 115.
- 21/10/1997 Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding for the MAPE mission within the framework of an operation to rebuild the Albanian police force.
- 22/10/1997 The main international fund lenders met in Brussels and granted an emergency aid package worth dozens of millions of dollars (to be spent on health, education and food), plus financial support of US\$ 300 million to help set up structural reforms (privatisations, especially in the banking sector) on condition that strict budgetary austerity was implemented and corruption was stamped out.

⁴⁵ See reply to Written Question 347 put to the Council by Mrs Squarcialupi and Mr Bratina on 11 June 1997.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ RID 3/99, p.66

⁴⁸ Attended by representatives of the Austrian, Belgian, Danish, Finnish, German, Greek, Irish, Japanese, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss, Turkish, United Kingdom and United States Governments. International organisations included the EU, European Commission, OSCE, Council of Europe, WEU, NATO, UN and IMF, IFAD, World Bank, EBRD, EIB, ICRC.

November

- 7/11/1997 The IMF approved a credit for the Albanian equivalent of SDR 8.825 million in support of the government's economic programme for 1997-98.
- 12/11/1997 The People's Assembly approved without amendment a bill establishing an Assembly commission to investigate the armed rebellion which had beset Albania earlier in the year. President Mejdani sent the bill back for reconsideration.
- 13/11/1997 The Constitutional Court ruled that a key article in a piece of legislation designed to regulate the operation of pyramid finance schemes was unconstitutional because it violated the principle of the separation of powers.
- 19/11/1997 The People's Assembly amended the constitution to allow the government to audit and administer private companies if their activities "endangered or harmed the economic interests of citizens".
- 30/11/1997 Deadline of residency permits for some 5 000 Albanian migrants in Italy.

December

- 9/12/1997 Five judges of the Constitutional Court filed a charge of slander against Skender Gjinushi, Speaker of the People's Assembly.
- 17/12/1997 Prime Minister Nano signed a US\$ 250 million agreement in London to develop Albania's largest onshore oilfield and build a pipeline between Vlore and Durrës.
- 18/12/1997 Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini went to Albania to discuss the repatriation process. He also announced an Italian aid package to Albania worth some L 317 billion.

*1998**January*

- 15/01/1998 In Skopje, Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano signed 8 bilateral agreements with FYROM, in order to avoid violence in Kosovo spreading into the country.

February

- 11/02/1998 The commission established by the People's Assembly in October 1997 to investigate the armed rebellion, which had beset Albania earlier in the year 1997, published its findings.
- 12/02/1998 The opposition Democratic Party rejected the findings of the commission's report and described the unrest as a "communist-led armed rebellion" aimed at destroying democracy.
- 22/02/1998 A gang of rioters, comprising civilians and local police force, attacked Shkoder, a northern Albanian town: 100 masked gang members and policemen invaded the city, attacked the police station and freed 60 prisoners. After a day of fighting, special police units from Tirana regained control and maintained order.
- 23/02/1998 Government troops managed to regain control of the town.

March

- 3/03/1998 New cooperation agreement between the Italian and Albanian Governments to continue the joint forces mission until the territorial and coastal defence arrangements were in place⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ RID 3/99, page 66.

- 10/03/1998 The Secretary-General of WEU, José Cutileiro, expressed WEU's concern over the situation in Kosovo.
- 12/03/1998 The opposition Democratic Party ended its five-month boycott of the People's Assembly. The Albanian news agency ATA reported that the Democratic Party had ended the boycott on 28 February as a sign of support for ethnic Albanians in the Serb province of Kosovo.
Memorandum of Understanding on consultation and assistance for the reorganisation of the Albanian tax administration, accompanied by a joint declaration by Italy, Albania and the European Commission within the framework of the EU memorandum on customs assistance "ECCAM-Albania" signed on 10 November 1997 (extended 15 January 1999).
- 14/03/1998 A closed session of the People's Assembly voted to dismiss Rustem Gjata from his post as Chairman of the Constitutional Court, on the charge of cooperation with internal security organs during the communist era.
- 25/03/1998 Defence agreement between Albania and FYROM.
The Foreign Ministers of the countries of south-eastern Europe – Bulgaria, FYROM, Greece, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey – discussed the situation in Kosovo with the Albanian Prime Minister at a meeting in Bonn.

April

- 7/04/1998 The WEU Permanent Council agreed to extend MAPE's mandate for a year to 12 April 1999, with the option of a mid-term review in October 1998⁵⁰. The Council approved an increase in MAPE personnel, bringing the strength up from the present 60 or so to around 100⁵¹.
- 9/04/1998 The People's Assembly voted to legalise the Albanian Communist Party.
- 14/04/1998 Prime Minister Fatos Nano reshuffled his cabinet.
- 16/04/1998 President Rexhep Mejdani refused to sanction the new cabinet.
- 17/04/1998 President Mejdani agreed to only 2 out of 9 ministerial changes.
The People's Assembly signalled its growing alarm over events in Kosovo by appealing to NATO to deploy troops on its territory to avoid the conflict spilling over.
- 18/04/1998 Prime Minister Nano accused President Mejdani of throwing the country into political crisis.
- 20/04/1998 Nano withdrew his previous remarks and the President approved two more of the proposed ministerial changes.
- 21/04/1998 President Mejdani approved two further changes.
- 25/04/1998 President Mejdani approved all the changes in the cabinet.
- 26/04/1998 For the first time Prime Minister Fatos Nano launched a fierce attack on the Serbian leadership. His statement was the strongest condemnation yet from Albania of Yugoslav military actions in Kosovo.
In a letter to the Italian Foreign Minister, Lamberto Dini, on the eve of the Contact Group's meeting in Rome at the end of April 1998, Nano requested the deployment of NATO troops along Albania's northern borders to prevent the conflict spilling over into Albania.

May

- 11-12/05/1998 The Foreign and Defence Ministers of the WEU countries met in Rhodes. The ministers instructed the Permanent Council to discuss other possible areas of cooperation with the

⁵⁰ Press release, Brussels, 7 April 1998.

⁵¹ Press release, Brussels, 7 April 1998. The WEU contribution to the efforts of the international community in Albania is based on close cooperation with the European Union and complementary with the other multilateral and bilateral initiatives.

- Albanian authorities (broadening MAPE's advisory role; continuing the training and supply of additional equipment in order to improve the ability of the Albanian police to monitor and control its borders). The President of the Assembly, Lluís Maria de Puig, stated in a speech to the WEU Council of Ministers that "WEU must decide to prepare for intervention, which will take place only if the situation deteriorates and there is no possibility of reaching a negotiated political settlement"⁵².
- 13/05/1998 The IMF approved a 3-year loan for Albania, equivalent to SDR 35.3 million, under the enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) in support of the government's economic programme for 1998-2001.
The Council of the European Union declared that in view of the new spiral of violence in which the Serbian army appeared to be prepared to become involved, the Union had to shoulder its responsibilities, in particular for taking preventive measures (protection of the Albanian-Macedonian border). WEU should also undertake investigations and make recommendations⁵³.
- 16/05/1998 WEU addressed an exclusive request for an ECCAM mission to the Italian *Guardia di Finanza*⁵⁴.
- 19/05/1998 The WEU Assembly recommended that the Council: (2) ask the Planning Cell to draw up contingency plans addressing all possible options for an effective WEU presence in Albania and FYROM which should be able to limit the repercussions of any violent conflict in Kosovo; (3) propose to the European Council, in application of Article VIII.3 of the modified Brussels Treaty and Article J.7.1 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, and on the basis of the Planning Cell's contingency plans, an effective WEU presence in both FYROM and Albania to help keep up the EU's political and economic pressure; (4) instruct the Planning Cell, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and Article VIII.3 of the modified Brussels Treaty, to prepare a set of options for possible European intervention in Kosovo⁵⁵.
- 20/05/1998 Albanian police stopped a lorry loaded with 200 kalashnikovs, 400 grenades and 500 crates of ammunition heading towards Kosovo.
- 25-28/05/1998 Clashes between Albanian separatists and the Serbian police force in the border zone with Albania.
- 28/05/1998 In answer to Nano's appeal for intervention, NATO announced that it would draw up contingency plans for the deployment of troops along the Albanian border with Kosovo in order to prevent the spread of the conflict.

June

- 1/06/1998 Inauguration of the NATO cell/Partnership for Peace in Tirana.
- 8/06/1998 Koco Dado, head of Albania's Association of Businessmen, was kidnapped in Tirana. Ilir Cano, Tirana's Deputy Policy Chief, stated that the kidnapping could have been related to Dado's fund-raising efforts for ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo.
- 18/06/1998 Albanian customs officials in Durrës seized a lorry that had just arrived off the ferry from Italy and contained a large quantity of weapons destined for Kosovo.
- 21/06/1998 The Alliance for the State (ASH) coalition, which included the Socialist Party, won 5 out of 7 municipal bye-elections and 6 out of 9 communal by-elections.
- 26/06/1998 The Permanent Council of WEU decided that MAPE should give priority to training, advice and assistance for border police.

⁵² *WEU and crisis management in the Balkans*, report submitted on behalf of the Political Committee by Mr Baumel, Chairman and Rapporteur, Assembly Document 1627, 9 November 1998.

⁵³ Session report – May 1998, p.34.

⁵⁴ RID 3/99, p.66.

⁵⁵ Recommendation 627 on Europe and the evolving situation in the Balkans, adopted by the Assembly at the first part of its 44th session, Paris, May 1998.

July

- 6/07/1998 The People's Assembly adopted the reports of the Assembly commission investigating the civil unrest of 1997.
- 7/07/1998 Berisha ordered the Democratic Party to boycott the Assembly in protest at what he alleged was violence and corruption within the government.
- 10/07/1998 The WEU Council of Ministers tasked the Military Staff to prepare a feasibility study on possible options for an international police operation in Albania, to be pursued with the consent and cooperation of the Albanian authorities and taking into account the ongoing reflections within NATO, also in order to avoid duplication of work⁵⁶.
- 13/07/1998 A UN report recommended the creation of a disarmament project in the Gramsh region.
- 23/07/1998 A border zone between Kosovo and Albania was widened to 5 kms to help Serbian forces repel Albanian rebels.
- 24/07/1998 The WEU Council of Ministers, having examined the preliminary draft feasibility study, instructed the Military Staff to complete its study⁵⁷.

August

- 4/08/1998 Draft constitution adopted.
- 6/08/1998 Agreement on the programme of cooperation between Italy and Albania for the three-year period 1998-2000 (input 210 billion on the Italian side).
- 14/08/1998 The Americans decided to evacuate their embassy in Tirana.
- 17/08/1998 The Justice Ministry registered a new party, the New Labour Party.
- 22/08/1998 Six former high-ranking officials and members of the main opposition party, the Democratic Party, were arrested on charges of crimes against humanity during the civil unrest that swept through the country in 1997.
- 24/08/1998 A military court in Tirana ruled that the six former officials should remain in custody pending trial, for which no date was fixed.
- 27/08/1998 Following the arrests, the former Democratic Party leader and former President, Sali Berisha, rejected the invitation from Nano for talks on a new constitution and instead organised a demonstration by 3 000 supporters in Tirana.

September

- 12/09/1998 Unrest in Tirana after Azem Hajdari, Democratic Party legislator and Berisha's close aide was shot dead outside the party's headquarters.
- 13-14/09/98 Democratic Party supporters gathered on the streets of the city and eventually ransacked Nano's office, an action denounced by the government as an attempted coup. President Rexhep Mejdani called for a return to calm.
The Secretary-General of WEU, Mr José Cutileiro, condemned the murder of the Member of Parliament, Mr Azem Hajdari, and his bodyguard, and called on all Albanian parties and the Albanian population to show calm and restraint.
- 15/09/1998 The EU, OSCE and WEU strongly condemned the use of violence in Albania. In a clear joint appeal, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Mr Schüssel, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mr Geremek, and the WEU Chairman-in-Office, Mr Dini, called upon all political parties to support President Mejdani in his efforts to quell the crisis. The Government of Albania was urged to ensure the safety of the population and restore order.

⁵⁶ Reply of the Council to Recommendation 627, A/WEU/DG(98)16, Paris 13 October 1998.

⁵⁷ *WEU and crisis management in the Balkans*, report submitted on behalf of the Political Committee by Mr Baumel, Chairman and Rapporteur, Assembly Document 1627, 9 November 1998.

- 17/09/1998 In a resolution, the European Parliament firmly condemned the political violence against the democratically elected institutions of the Republic of Albania and called on the political parties to show restraint. The NATO Secretary-General called for a "return to a peaceful and stable situation"⁵⁸.
- 18/09/1998 Berisha's immunity was lifted by the People's Assembly, thereby clearing the way for his arrest on charges of seeking to overthrow the government.
- 19/09/1998 An international delegation from the OSCE held talks with Albanian politicians from all the parties in Tirana.
- 21/09/1998 Ahmet Krasniqi⁵⁹, a leading member of the self-styled ethnic Albanian "Government" in Kosovo, was shot dead in Tirana.
MAPE's current strength was 82 officers from 23 WEU countries, under the command of Colonel Alain Labrot of the French Gendarmerie.
- 23/09/1998 UN Security Council Resolution 1199 demanded a ceasefire in Kosovo, the withdrawal of Serbian troops and the beginning of direct negotiations.
- 24/09/1998 The joint OSCE, EU, Council of Europe and WEU Declaration on Albania accused Sali Berisha's Democratic Party of contributing, by its tactics and rhetoric, to new forms of violence⁶⁰.
- 25/09/1998 Zlatan Kikic, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in Yugoslavia was accused, in an official report entitled "Terrorism in Kosovo and Albania", of hosting recruitment and training centres for terrorists on Yugoslav territory. According to him, "Albanian armed forces took part directly" in these activities.
Friends of Albania group founded.
- 27/09/1998 Prime Minister Fatos Nano resigned.
- 28/09/1998 President Rexhep Mejdani asked Pandeli Majko, the 31 year-old Secretary-General of the ruling Socialist Party, to form a new government.
- 29/09/1998 The WEU Council of Ministers examined the revised study produced by the Military Staff⁶¹.
- 30/09/1998 Five Yugoslav servicemen were killed in the western part of Kosovo by shooting from Albania.
Inaugural meeting in Brussels of the "Friends of Albania" group, promoted by Italy.

October

- 1/10/1998 Albanian terrorists attacked a border post killing 4 Yugoslav servicemen.
- 2/10/1998 President Rexhep Mejdani swore in a new government, led by Pandeli Majko who became Albania's youngest Prime Minister.
A Yugoslav army border post in the south-west of Kosovo was attacked by a grenade-launcher from Albanian territory.
The Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paskal Milo, said at the UN General Assembly that he was in favour of "an immediate NATO intervention". He added that

⁵⁸ European Parliament, Delegation for relations with south-east Europe, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy. *Background note on Albania*, 7 October 1998.

⁵⁹ Ahmed Krasniqi was the Chief of the Republic of Kosovo's armed forces (FARK). The FARK were set up by Ibrahim Rugova's close friends to counter the KLA. They had the support of the Americans and the Turks and were probably based in the southern part of the country. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 1999.

⁶⁰ European Parliament, Delegation for relations with south-east Europe, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy. *Background note on Albania*, 7 October 1998.

⁶¹ Following an earlier request from the EU, based on Article J.4.2 of the Maastricht Treaty, WEU submitted to the EU a feasibility study on possible options for an international police operation in Albania (strengthened presence of MAPE). *WEU and crisis management in the Balkans*, report submitted on behalf of the Political Committee by Mr Baumel, Chairman and Rapporteur, Assembly Document 1627, 9 November 1998.

- Albania called for the presence of international observers in Kosovo and that his government considered Slobodan Milosevic "responsible for genocide".
- 3/10/1998 Albania accused Serbian forces of firing machine guns and throwing grenades at a village in the Has district in the northern part of the country, in order to draw Tirana into a wider conflict in the Balkans.
- 5/10/1998 The Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paskal Milo, on a visit to Athens, wanted to find a solution for Kosovo similar to the Dayton Peace Agreement. Albania said it was ready to put its military bases at NATO's disposal if an allied intervention against Yugoslavia occurred.
- 7/10/1998 Incident on the Albanian border: a border post was the target of shots fired from an Albanian army observation post. According to a press release, these were followed by an attempt by "several Albanian terrorists" to enter Yugoslavia illegally from Albania.
- 8/10/1998 The People's Assembly approved the new cabinet. The opposition Democratic Party maintained its boycott of the Assembly. The new Prime Minister announced that he would draft a new constitution and called for a peaceful solution in Kosovo, by openly supporting the pacifist Kosovar leader, Ibrahim Rugova.
- 9/10/1998 Albania protested to Yugoslavia after several incidents occurred on the borders of the two countries.
- 12/10/1998 NATO's 16 member states presented the Yugoslav President with an ultimatum, asking him to comply with the terms of UN Resolution 1199 of 23 September 1998 or Yugoslavia would be bombed. Albania said it was ready to put its air and sea space at NATO's disposal for a possible military operation in Kosovo. The Interior Ministry announced that the Albanian border guards had been ordered to open fire on any Yugoslav soldier who tried to enter Albanian territory. President Rexhep Mejdani, on a visit to Germany, said he was in favour of a NATO military intervention in Kosovo.
- 13/10/1998 Tirana welcomed the agreement reached by Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and American emissary Richard Holbrooke on the way to solve the Kosovo crisis.
- 14/10/1998 The Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paskal Milo, supported the agreement on Kosovo and stressed the fact that Albania's support would be "strictly political". It refused to take part in the OSCE verification mission. An Albanian from FYROM was killed on the Albanian border by Macedonian border guards.
- 21/10/1998 The Socialist Party-dominated People's Assembly approved a newly drafted constitution and agreed to put it to a countrywide referendum on 22 November.
- 23/10/1998 A new party, the Albanian Civil Party, was formed. International meeting of senior officials in Rome to take stock of the situation in Albania.
- 27/10/1998 NATO suspended its threat of air strikes to solve the Kosovo issue.
- 30/10/1998 International Conference on Albania in Tirana. WEU undertook to support, through MAPE, the current process of stabilisation and democratisation in Albania.

November

- 2/11/1998 The Italian Government decided to send a further contingent of police at the beginning of January 1999, bringing the total force up to 500, and to increase Italian patrols on the Mediterranean coast of Albania⁶².
- 5/11/1998 Two mortar shells fired in Kosovo fell on Albania.

⁶²RID 3/99, p.69.

- 10/11/1998 Three people were arrested as they were preparing a murder attempt on President Mejdani.
The Prime Minister Pandeli Majko on his first visit abroad signed a memorandum of understanding with the Italian Prime Minister, Mr D'Alema, designed to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in the areas of security, reorganisation of the Albanian police, and the fight against crime⁶³.
PMG recommendation on a mid-term review of the current MAPE mandate⁶⁴.
- 12/11/1998 Prime Minister Pandeli Majko on a visit to Athens, said that there was a "dangerous void", a "neither peace, nor war situation" in Kosovo which "required immediate intervention".
Greek Prime Minister Kostas Simitis told his Albanian counterpart that Greece was prepared to help Albania in its relations with the European Union, NATO, WEU and any other international organisation.

Following the issue of an initial planning directive by the Council, a draft contingency plan and a declaration of intent request message were drawn up and, with the approval of the Council, circulated to the WEU nations on 13 November 1998⁶⁵.

- 20/11/1998 The Hungarian Foreign Minister, Janos Martonyi, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the 40-member Council of Europe, appealed for the widest possible participation in the referendum on Albania's new Constitution to be held on 22 November 1998⁶⁶.
- 22/11/1998 The constitution was approved by referendum.
- 25/11/1998 Another Italo-Albanian summit: Prime Minister Pandeli Majko met Mr D'Alema at Bari.
- 28/11/1998 President Rexhep Mejdani signed the country's first post-communist constitution into law.
- 30/11/1998 International development conference for Albania held in Tirana. Representatives of western countries and international organisations – among them the OSCE, the World Bank, the EU and the United States – issued a joint statement which urged the government "to take concrete measures to restore law and order throughout the country" and "to protect private investments and foreign personnel".

December

- 2/12/1998 The OSCE representative in Albania, Daan Everts, rejected Belgrade's accusations about the international community's contacts with KLA ethnic Albanian separatists. Albania said it was ready to cooperate with the international community to resolve the situation in Kosovo.
- 4/12/1998 The Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paskal Milo, on a visit to Athens, thought it "essential" to maintain a NATO-led military "threat" to solve the Kosovo crisis.
The Albanian Prime Minister, Mr Pandeli Majko, visited WEU Headquarters to meet the Secretary-General, Mr José Cutileiro, and members of the WEU Permanent Council⁶⁷.

⁶³ RID 3/99, p.69 Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Memorandum of Understanding on consultation and assistance between the two Ministries of the Interior for a period of one year extended the scope of application of the previous MOU of 17 September 1997.

⁶⁴ Second part of the 44th annual report of the Council to the Assembly on the Council's activities (1 July-31 December 1998); Assembly Document 1641, 8 April 1999.

⁶⁵ Second part of the 44th annual report of the Council to the Assembly on the Council's activities (1 July-31 December 1998); Assembly Document 1641, 8 April 1999.

⁶⁶ <http://www.coe.fr/cp/98/765a%2898%29.htm>.

⁶⁷ <http://www.weu.int/eng/press/p981202a.htm>.

- Belgrade “protested vigorously” to Albania, after an incident during which 8 Albanians were killed by Yugoslav border guards.
- 12-13/12/1998 The Secretary-General of WEU, Mr José Cutileiro, visited Tirana.
- 14/12/1998 Shooting of 36 KLA guerrillas in the Albanian border zone by Yugoslav forces who claimed the KLA men were smuggling arms into Kosovo.
- 19/12/1998 Yugoslav soldiers crossed Kosovo into Albania and fired into the village of Zharke.
- 21/12/1998 The Albanian Interior Ministry said Yugoslav troops had opened fire on an Albanian military unit near Tropoja.
- Prime Minister Pandeli Majko met opposition leader Sali Berisha on 21 December to discuss ways of resolving a hunger strike by about 70 students demanding better government grants and accommodation, which had been supported by Berisha. They also discussed the Kosovo crisis and the investigation into the assassination of Democrat politician Azem Hajdari.
- 28/12/1998 The People’s Assembly called for a NATO-led intervention in Kosovo.

1999

January

Adoption of an Action Plan for Legal and Judicial Reform, prepared in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

- 12/01/1999 Release of eight Serbian soldiers held hostage in Kosovo by Albanian members of the KLA independence movement.
- 15/01/1999 45 Albanians were killed in Racak, a village in Kosovo. Serbian authorities said the victims were not civilians but KLA army militants.
- 18/01/1999 Belgrade decided to expel monitoring mission chief, William Walker, from Kosovo.
- 22/01/1999 The Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia (United States, Russia, France, UK, Germany and Italy) met in Rome.
- 26/01/1999 Sali Berisha, Chairman of the Democratic Party proposed an anti-crime pact.
- 28/01/1999 The French and Italian Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine and Lamberto Dini, announced that the following day in London, the Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia would address, a “solemn command” to the Serbs and Kosovar Albanians to start negotiating an autonomous status for this Serbian province. Sanctions against KLA separatists would consist in forbidding any supply of weapons or financial support. To achieve this, pressure would be put on neighbouring countries, especially Albania, and “military measures” would be set up. The Italian Minister said that Italy and all EU countries “should do everything to pressurise the neighbouring countries, including Albania.”
- 29/01/1999 Prime Minister Pandeli Majko said that Albania was strengthening its military equipment on the border with Kosovo.
- Further massacre in Kosovo: 24 were killed in Rogovo.
- The Contact Group on Kosovo, meeting in London, adopted the principles and fundamental points to be tabled at the Rambouillet Conference.
- 30/01/1999 A hail of bullets was fired during the night of 29-30 January into a hydraulic power station, in the northern part of Albania, only a few kilometres away from the border with Kosovo.
- The Chairman of the Democratic Party, Sali Berisha, called on Albanians to participate in the Rambouillet meeting. He also called on the US and the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance to decide on intervention and the immediate deployment of military units in Kosovo.

February

- 1/02/1999 Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erik Derycke, went to Tirana to discuss the Kosovo crisis with Albanian leaders.
US Defense Secretary William Cohen said the Europeans should “bear the brunt” of any operation in Kosovo and that American participation should be “as little as possible”.
- 2/02/1999 The Permanent Council of WEU adopted an emergency plan for an international police operation in Albania, based on one of the options defined in the WEU feasibility study. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright held talks with Albanian Prime Minister Pandeli Majko on economic issues, regional democracy and the Kosovo crisis. The Secretary of State asked Mr Majko to “take part, with Albanian leaders from Kosovo, KLA included, in the peace talks to be held at the end of that week in France (Rambouillet).
- 4/02/1999 In the presentation of the German Presidency’s programme at the meetings of the WEU Assembly’s Presidential, Political and Defence Committees at WEU Headquarters in Brussels, it was stated on the subject of current WEU operations that the time had come to take the necessary decisions, which would be binding on WEU and the EU, regarding the WEU police mission in Albania on the basis of “option 2 (a)”⁶⁸.
- 6/02/1999 Kosovo peace talks started in the *Château de Rambouillet*, near Paris.
- 9/02/1999 Prime Minister Pandeli Majko noted that the Albanian Government would make its military facilities available to NATO troops for any peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. He also told journalists that “if the massacres in Kosovo continue ... all Albanians in the Balkans – in Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro – have the right to collective self-defence”.
The Albanian Government set up a special working group following the kidnapping of Vlore’s police chief by smugglers.
- 18/02/1999 NATO forces mobilised as the Kosovo deadline approached.
- 19/02/1999 Deadline for agreement between Serbian and ethnic Albanian negotiators, decided by the international community.
- 22/02/1999 Heavy fighting in northern Kosovo.
- 24/02/1999 The Friends of Albania met in Vienna to review recent developments in key sectors in Albania and to discuss what progress had been made and what still remained to be done by the government with appropriate backing from the international community.
- 23/02/1999 End of the Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo.
- 26/02/1999 The Yugoslav army fired mortar shells and missiles in the Bukos region in the north of Kosovo. There were two casualties among the Albanian population.

March

- 1/03/1999 United Nations peacekeepers were obliged to stop monitoring FYROM’s borders with Kosovo and Albania, following China’s veto of a Security Council Resolution that would have renewed their mandate⁶⁹.
- 2/03/1999 The radical Kosovar leader, Adem Demaqi, who had boycotted the Rambouillet meeting, resigned from his post as political representative of the Kosovo Liberation Army.

⁶⁸ Minutes of the meeting of the WEU Assembly’s Presidential, Political and Defence Committees, held at WEU Headquarters in Brussels on 4 February 1999 A/WEU/CP/POL/DEF(99) CR 2, Paris, 5 March 1999; Appendix I to the programme of the German Presidency of WEU presented by Ambassador Hoffstetter and General Wiesmann.

⁶⁹ The UN Preventive Deployment force – 1050 Americans, Scandinavians and Indonesians – had been in FYROM since 1993.

- Yugoslav Army forces held their position along Kosovo's southern border with FYROM, forcing thousands of Albanian villagers to flee. Tank, anti-aircraft gun and artillery movements around the border town of Djeneral Jankovic and attacks on mountain villages prompted the KLA to move its own soldiers into the area.
- 3/03/1999 Six KLA representatives were invited to Washington before the resumption of negotiations on Kosovo, due to start on 15 March. The invitation did not include Adem Demaqi, who was hostile to the peace plan proposed by the great powers. In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, thousands of British troops were assembling with tanks and artillery for a peacekeeping operation across the Yugoslav border.
- 4/03/1999 The United Nations said the fighting had driven 1 200 ethnic Albanian refugees to flee to FYROM since 26 February. A further 4 000 ethnic Albanians had been expelled from their homes in the area and most had taken refuge with friends and family.
- 8/03/1999 The town of Brcko, in Serbian Bosnia was declared "neutral territory". Tony Blair, speaking at a conference at the Royal United Services Institute in London, warned President Milosevic that he would be held accountable for suspected war crimes if any more atrocities occurred in Kosovo. Blair urged the KLA "to cease its operations and accept demilitarisation" and the Serbs to reduce their forces to agreed levels and allow Nato-led troops in. The Italian Parliament ratified the Agreement between the Italian and Albanian Governments on cooperation in defence matters, concluded in Rome on 13 October 1995⁷⁰.
- 9/03/1999 A new MAPE training centre was officially opened in Durrës. Its opening marked the extension of MAPE's activities beyond its original base in Tirana and was firmly within the framework of the new mission it was preparing to undertake. The Durrës training centre would concentrate on special training in criminal investigation, traffic and border policing, and maintaining law and order⁷¹. The Council of the European Union adopted a common action plan, based on Article J.3 of the Treaty on European Union, on the European Union contribution to the restoration of a viable police force in Albania. The Council of the European Union took a decision, adopted on the basis of Article J.4.2 of the Treaty on European Union, whereby the European Union called on WEU to implement its common action plan⁷² on the European Union contribution to the restoration of a viable police force in Albania by applying the "extended option 2" of the WEU feasibility study in accordance with the objective set out in Article 1.1 of the common action plan.
- 10/03/1999 The NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana, proposed a specific "partnership for prosperity", the idea being that the Alliance could contribute towards a comprehensive aid programme for the Balkans.
- 11/03/1999 The EU Council formally adopted a common action plan on the EU contribution to the restoration of a viable police force in Albania and a Decision formally requesting WEU to implement it⁷³.
- 15/03/1999 Kosovo peace negotiations resumed at Evreux.

⁷⁰ Law no 48 of 18 February 1999, published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* No. 55 of 8 March 1999. The Agreement signed by the Italian and Albanian Defence Ministers in Rome on 13 October 1995 covered, in particular, the sectors for cooperation, for example training and practical instruction, assistance in the areas of technical logistics, health, meteorology, advice on hydrography and cartography, civil defence and military industry, exchanges of information on the organisation of defence in the maritime sector.

⁷¹ Since its mission started, in spring 1997, MAPE has trained some 2 000 Albanian policemen, WEU press release, Brussels, 9 March 1999.

⁷² Common action plan 1999/189/CFSP of 9 March 1999.

⁷³ This common action will be funded out of the Community budget to an amount of €2.1 million.

- 18/03/1999 Kosovar Albanians signed a peace deal calling for interim autonomy and 28 000 NATO troops to implement it. The Serb delegation refused and the talks were suspended.
- 22/03/1999 US special envoy Richard Holbrooke warned Milosevic of air strikes unless he signed peace agreements. Milosevic refused.
- 23/03/1999 NATO authorised air strikes. Yugoslavia declared a state of emergency.
- 24/03/1999 NATO launched air attacks on Yugoslavia in a bid to curb a Serbian offensive in Kosovo and weaken the military apparatus of Slobodan Milosevic. Russia called for a meeting of the UN Security Council, recalled its military representative at NATO and suspended cooperation with NATO.
NATO gave written assurances to the five countries bordering on Serbia, namely Albania, Bulgaria, FYROM, Slovenia and Romania.
- 25/03/1999 Belgrade broke off diplomatic relations with the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The Italian Embassy remained open.
- 27/03/1999 NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana, announced in Brussels that the Atlantic Council had authorised the transition to phase 2 of the plan of attack on Serbian forces (bombing military concentrations in the area between Belgrade and the border with FYROM and Albania).
About 20 000 ethnic Albanian refugees poured into Albania.
- 28/03/1999 Thousands of refugees flooded into Albania and FYROM from Kosovo.
NATO accused Belgrade of planning systematic "genocide" in Kosovo.
Albania asked NATO to send troops into Kosovo.
Albanian President Rexhep Mejdani called on NATO to deploy ground troops in Kosovo.
- 29/03/1999 According to Albanian reports, not confirmed by NATO, five Albanian leaders, including Rambouillet negotiator Fehmi Agani, had been executed.
The Italian Prime Minister, Mr D'Alema, received a message from UN High Commissioner Sadakho Hogata, requesting permission for an Italian humanitarian mission to the refugees in Albania.
The Albanian Ambassador to Italy, Leontiev Cuci, met the Italian Minister for the Interior, Rosa Russo Jervolino, to ask for humanitarian aid.
The Italian Government launched "Operation Rainbow".
- 30/03/1999 The Russian Prime Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, had talks with Milosevic in Belgrade. President Milosevic offered to withdraw some of his forces from Kosovo if NATO stopped its bombing campaign. NATO rejected Milosevic's offer as inadequate.
- 31/03/1999 Albania's Foreign Minister urged Kosovar Albanians to remain at home and "resist" what he called the Serb genocide.
The Albanian Ambassador to the UN, Agim Nash, claimed that "all the (Kosovar Albanian) men who had been captured had been executed or put into concentration camps". Nash said that the KLA should be armed and that there was no alternative to complete independence for Kosovo.
He also appealed for international aid in coping with the influx of refugees from Kosovo. Albania had already accepted an estimated 65 000 to 100 000 refugees since NATO air strikes began.
Albania accused Yugoslav forces of firing on two Albanian border villages where refugees from Kosovo were being housed.
Albanian TV said the KLA had ordered a general mobilisation of its forces.

April

- 1/04/1999 The President of the WEU Assembly, Lluís Maria de Puig, said that all the responsibility lay with the Milosevic regime. He supported NATO's action and called on the dual German Presidency of WEU and EU to consider tasking WEU with

organising and implementing the necessary humanitarian assistance to and evacuation of refugees⁷⁴.

The Albanian leaders who had been reported executed were found to be still alive.

According to Associated Press, the KLA had started a campaign to encourage young Albanian men who had fled to Albania to return to Kosovo and join the KLA.

Mr Josselin, the French Minister of State for cooperation and francophone affairs with responsibility for humanitarian action, went to Tirana and Skopje where he visited refugee reception centres and met the Albanian and FYROM authorities and representatives of the international organisations and NGOs responsible for organising aid.

The Albanian, Bosnian, FYROM, Hungarian and Slovenian Foreign Ministers met EU representatives in Bonn to discuss the situation of the refugees.

The European Union gave assurances to Albania, Montenegro and FYROM.

Meeting between Ibrahim Rugova and Slobodan Milosevic.

2/04/1999 Albania and Macedonia said they were overwhelmed by the influx of Kosovar refugees.

The Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels announced its decision to deploy 6-8000 men on the border between Albania and Kosovo to protect the humanitarian assistance.

3/04/1999 The President of the WEU Assembly, Lluís Maria de Puig, in an interview with the German Defence Minister, Rudolf Scharping, expressed WEU's support for the action taken by NATO and its willingness to lend assistance to the humanitarian organisations.

4/04/1999 President Bill Clinton ordered the deployment of 24 Apache fighter helicopters to Albania.

6/04/1999 Serbia declared a unilateral ceasefire for its forces in Kosovo but this was rejected by the NATO allies as inadequate. The air offensive would continue until Serbian troops left the province and until international guarantees had been put in place for the refugees to return home.

Albania redoubled its efforts to secure international financial aid to face the cost of sheltering the refugees.

Albanian President Rexhep Mejdani denounced the Yugoslav ceasefire and offered full collaboration with NATO.

7/04/1999 The OSCE reported that Yugoslavia had closed the Morina border crossing between Kosovo and Albania and had said it was safe for the refugees to return home.

President Yeltsin sent messages to several foreign leaders in an attempt to end the conflict.

8-9/04/99 Meeting of political coordinators of the G8 industrialised nations in Dresden.

8/04/1999 The Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Luxembourg was enlarged to include the eight countries close to the conflict, the EIB, the EBRD, the World Bank, the IMF, the HCR, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and WEU.

Albanian Foreign Minister Paskal Milo said that NATO forces could be deployed in his country to launch attacks on Yugoslavia.

According to Serbian news agencies, hundreds of KLA guerrillas attempted to advance into Kosovo with the backing of Albanian regular army forces.

9/04/1999 UNHCR reported that Serb forces had laid mines at the border with Albania and were moving up tanks and guns near the border.


NATO announced it was sending 8 000 troops to the Balkans to aid the flood of refugees from Kosovo⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ WEU Assembly press release 7/99, 1 April 1999.

⁷⁵ Operation Allied Harbour will be a coordinated military exercise involving 14 countries, controlled by a "mobile force land headquarters" based in Albania. The troops will be deployed as Allied Command Europe Mobile Force Land (ACE). Based at Heidelberg, Germany, it will be under the command of British Major General John Reith, formerly of the Parachute Regiment.

- Yugoslavia reopened its border with Albania and allowed approximately 2 000 people to cross the main border checkpoint near Morina, Albania.
- 10/04/1999 Yugoslavia said guerrillas were using bases in Albania; Albania said villages had been hit by cross-border shelling.
In an interview with Albanian state television, Albanian Prime Minister Pandeli Majko said that “no one should fear the creation of a Greater Albania or independent Kosovo”. He also admitted that the Albanian Government had never obstructed the KLA.
- 11/04/1999 Two civilians, two KLA guerrillas and four Albanian border guards were wounded in northern Albania. Later in the day, three KLA guerrillas and a journalist were injured in Tropoje, in Albania.
The Albanian Government accused Yugoslavia of a grave violation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Albania. The Albanian Minister for the Interior, Petro Koci, said that the villages of Padesh, Kamenika, Lugu I Zi and Tropoje had been attacked by Serb mortars and that “NATO needed to intervene to neutralise the Serb artillery near the border with Albania because it had been firing in the direction of Albanian territory in the last few days.”
Foreign Minister Paskal Milo, during a joint news conference with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, declared that Albania had decided to give NATO the right to control all its airspace, ports and any other military infrastructures in the country.
- 12/04/1999 Albania accused Yugoslavia of trying to spread the conflict beyond its borders.
4 800 more refugees arrived in Albania.
- 13/04/1999 Incursion by Serb troops into Albanian territory near the town of Kremica (confirmed by OSCE observer Andrea Angeli).
Albanian Prime Minister, Pandeli Majko, held an emergency meeting with Defence Minister Luan Hajdaraga and Albanian Army Chief of Staff Aleks Andoni to discuss the incursion.
According to the latest HCR census, there were estimated to be 314 000 Kosovar refugees in Albania.
- 18/04/1999 Yugoslavia broke off diplomatic relations with Albania, accusing Tirana of siding with NATO.
- 21/04/1999 US Apache fighter helicopters arrive in Albania.
Further armed clashes on the border between Albania and Kosovo. NATO evacuated the Kukes camp.
- 22/04/1999 The Albanian President, Rexhep Mejdani, in an interview with *Le Figaro*, said he thought a NATO force should be deployed without a prior peace agreement and that Kosovo should remain “undivided and multi-ethnic”.
- 25/04/1999 Declaration of support for Albania and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia at the summit celebrating NATO’s 50th anniversary.
The Albanian Public Order Ministry reported a further incident during the night between Serb and Albanian forces on the border.
- 26/04/1999 Pentagon officials said additional troops (2 050) would join 3 300 US soldiers already in Albania or on the way.
- 27/04/1999 Jacques Mouchet of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees asked the President of the WEU Assembly to strengthen the WEU police force.
The French Finance Ministry reported that the Paris Club had allowed Albania and FYROM to defer debt repayments to 31 March 2000⁷⁶.
Reports coming out of Albania indicated that Serb artillery was bombarding the towns of Padesh and Kamenice in Tropoja.
The President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, announced the allocation of US\$ 70 million to assist Albania and FYROM.

⁷⁶ Albania’s foreign debt is approximately US\$ 900 million at present.

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