

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

Brussels, 17 March 1997

6702/97 (Presse 82)  
P. 27/97

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on Albania**

Ministers discussed at Apeldoorn on 15 and 16 March the grave situation in Albania. Welcoming the initiatives of the OSCE, they heard a report on the mission to the area on 14 March led by Mr Vranitzky, personal envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, with EU participation. They noted the request of the new Albanian government to the EU for external assistance.

In their discussion Ministers took note of the following elements.

- The EU is strongly committed to helping Albania to restore civilian structures and law and order.
- The need for the Albanians to accept responsibility for rebuilding their country and society and thus to enable the EU to help them.
- The Commission is ready to provide immediate humanitarian assistance as soon as conditions are sufficiently secure to assure its delivery.
- The Union which has already provided substantial economic and financial assistance to Albania, is ready to resume such assistance in collaboration with the International Financial Institutions once sufficient stability is restored.

6702/97 (Presse 82 - G)

EN  
1

- External assistance is needed immediately for the restoration of security in particular in and around Tirana. Among the Member States there was readiness to send an Advisory Mission in the civilian as well as police and military fields. In this context consideration will be given to the needs of the mission for protection and communication.
- Consultations should take place in New York on the need for a UN Security Council Resolution.
- Further steps will be coordinated with the OSCE as well as the Council of Europe.

The Presidency will send, as a matter of urgency, a high level mission to Tirana comprising also representatives of the OSCE, the Commission and Albania's EU neighbours, Greece and Italy. Its aim is to discuss with the Albanian government ways in which the EU can best help to achieve the above elements and to make recommendations to the Presidency. The mission will also examine the protection need of the Advisory Mission.

---