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REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

MINISTRY FOR EUROPE  
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# PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SWITZERLAND-ALBANIA

29 SEPTEMBER 2020



years of diplomatic relations  
1970 - 2020



Switzerland - Albania



**IMPRESSUM**

Embassy of Switzerland in Albania  
Rruga Ibrahim Rugova 3/1  
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# 50 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SWITZERLAND - ALBANIA

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On behalf of the Swiss representation in Tirana, Albania

## 1 Introduction

The year 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Albania. This anniversary presents a great opportunity to discuss the past 50 years and take a closer look at the history of the development of these intergovernmental relations. The present project, which was initiated by the Swiss Ambassador in Tirana, Adrian Maître, is made up of a Swiss and an Albanian project team. The Swiss project team consists of Dr. Franziska Zaugg, M.A. Samantha Guzman from the University of Bern, and M.A. Zef Ahmeti from the Albanian Institute in Switzerland. The two perspectives of the Swiss and the Albanian subproject will be brought together in a joint presentation in autumn 2020: The Swiss and Albanian perspectives will not only show how diplomacy between the two countries have developed since 1970, but also how it has been perceived by the individual countries and at the international level.

Since Albania is still a blind spot both historically and politically for many Swiss people, and since many people refer to the small state on the Adriatic Sea in the same breath as Kosovo, the Swiss sub-project will begin with a brief introduction on the history of Albania in the 20th century, in order to provide readers with a basis on which the development of diplomatic relations between Albania and Switzerland can be explained.

The introductory part discusses the eventful first half of the 20th century in Albania; for example, the proclamation of Albanian independence on 28 November 1912 by the Albanian national movement under Ismail Qemali, the effects of the two Balkan Wars in 1912/1913 on Albania,

the appointment of Prince Wilhelm von Wied by the London Ambassadors' Conference in May 1914, Albania as a theater of war in the First World War from 1914-1918, Albania's path to democracy under Fan Noli, the seizure of power by Ahmet Zogu and his self-staged coronation as King of Albania followed by the transition into a dictatorship, the growing dependence on and later occupation by fascist Italy in April 1939, the enlargement of Albania to a "Greater Albania" after the German-Italian Balkan campaign in April 1941, the Italian capitulation in September 1943 and the occupation of Albania by Nazi Germany, the victory of the Communist Albanian Liberation Front in late 1944 and then later, the ensuing dictatorship of Enver Hoxha until his death in 1985.

In the main part of the work, against the background of international developments (1945-1990), the first unilateral Albanian contact and growing cooperation between socialist Albania and democratic Switzerland will be discussed under the heading "Cold War". In particular, the role of the first Swiss ambassador to Albania, Hans Keller, will be highlighted. It was not until 48 years after Switzerland recognized Albania that diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of Albania were officially established following Keller's appointment in 1970. To this day, Switzerland and Albania go beyond international cooperation by taking part in numerous political, social and economic exchanges; notable examples include Switzerland's current involvement in the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) project on the 870 km long natural gas pipeline and also with Swiss support for the victims of the November 2019 earthquake in Albania.

This brochure is based in particular on primary sources, i.e. on files from the Swiss Federal Archives, the Austrian State Archives (OeStA/HHStA), the UN and League of Nations Archives in Geneva and the Archives of Contemporary History (AfZ) at ETH Zurich; online, digitized documents from the Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland (Dodis.ch) as well as documents published by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (EDA) were used. Secondary literature on Swiss-Albanian relations is scarce, however, the following publications provide a good foundation: Zef Ahmetis' publication *Der lange Weg zur Errichtung diplomatischer Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Albanien* (2012), Robert Elsie's *Historical Dictionary of Albania* (2010), Elez Biberaj's *Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy* (1998), Thomas Bürgisser's *Wahlverwandtschaft zweier Sonderfälle im Kalten Krieg, Schweizerische Perspektiven auf das sozialistischen Jugoslawien (1943-1991)* (2017) and Heinz Klarer's *Schweizerische Praxis der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung* (1981). Contemporary newspaper articles on significant historic events are also included in order to illustrate the reactions from both the Swiss and international public.

## 2 Beginnings

In the 15th century, the Albanian territories, divided up at that time between various principalities, were gradually conquered by the Ottomans. Between 1478/79 and 1912, Albania, along with numerous other areas of the Balkans, was part of the Ottoman Empire and divided into various administrative districts referred to as vilayets. Therefore, Albania was not an independent state, but rather belonged to the periphery of this great empire. Albania's first mention in Switzerland's diplomatic files can be

found in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although it was still part of the Ottoman Empire at that time. Throughout the sources analysed, Albania was repeatedly mentioned as a possible destination for Italian expansionist desires:<sup>1</sup>

- > "... il est à craindre que les Italiens n'aient certaines ambitions [...] en Albanie ..."<sup>2</sup>
- > "...qu'il existe, ainsi que je Vous l'ai déjà écrit, une entente spéciale entre l'Italie et l'Autriche-Hongrie sur la question de l'Albanie."<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1 The Early Years, 1912-1939

As a result of Ottoman rule, a nation-state movement formed relatively late in the Albanian territories compared to other European states. In the autumn of 1912, the representatives of the Albanian independence movement led by Ismail Qemali felt it was the right time to put their goals into practice and founded an Albanian state. The Ottoman Empire had recently found itself participating in the First Balkan War with Serbia and Bulgaria and therefore had no means of reprimanding or acting against the secessionists.<sup>4</sup> The representatives who travelled from the Albanian provinces of the Ottoman Empire finally proclaimed Albanian independence on 28 November 1912 in Vlorë, a city in southern Albania.

This first declaration of independence was followed by three different letters of recommendation to the Swiss government, but Switzerland found it difficult to declare Albania as an independent country.<sup>5</sup> At the London Ambassadors' Conference on 16 December 1912, however, the major European powers of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, the German Empire and Great Britain recognised Albania's separation from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup> The



Representatives of the Albanian national movement under Ismail Qemali

official creation of an Albanian state only came about after the end of the Second Balkan War - and not under Ismail Qemali; the six major powers: Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Austria-Hungary and Russia recognised the independence, sovereignty and neutrality of Albania at the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the London Ambassadors' Conference on 15 July 1913, but appointed a foreigner, Prince Wilhelm von Wied, as their new ruler.<sup>7</sup> After his coronation on 3 May 1914, he sent a letter to the Swiss government. However, the Swiss government still hesitated to recognise the Adriatic state, because they argued that Austria-Hungary, which the Swiss representation in Vienna considered as "Créatrice de l'Albanie", had not yet recognised the young state itself.<sup>8</sup> In July 1914, when World War I began, Switzerland completely denied recognition of Albania and throughout the four years of the war, Italian, Serbian, Greek, Austro-Hungarian and French units besieged and crossed into Albanian territory.<sup>9</sup>

It was only several years after the conclusion of the war on 3 March 1922 that the Swiss government decided to recognise the newly formed Albanian state, *de jure*.<sup>10</sup>

Benedikt (Benoît) Blinishti, who represented Albania in the League of Nations, addressed Federal Councillor Giuseppe Motta with these enthusiastic words, "Je suis convaincu, que le Gouvernement Albanais, qui a pour unique but le prompt développement du pays, emploiera tous ses efforts pour affermir et développer les bonnes relations entre la Suisse et l'Albanie".<sup>11</sup> As a result, two Albanian consuls in Bern and Geneva began their work in the interwar period. Even though Albania had only a relatively short national history, the country on the Adriatic Sea had one distinct and progressive advantage over Switzerland: women's suffrage was introduced as early as 1920 - more than 50 years before Switzerland. Under Fan Noli, the country embarked on a path towards democracy. However, its progressive government was overthrown in late December of 1924 by Ahmet Zogu with the help of Russian White Guards and the government in Belgrade.<sup>12</sup>

## 2.2 The Years of Fascist and National Socialist Occupation

After 1924, Albanian foreign policy under King Ahmet Zogu, who was self-appointed in 1928, showed a clear and growing dependence on Italy.<sup>13</sup> This was most vividly illustrated in the First and Second Tirana Pacts of 1926 and 1927. On the one hand, Italy's economic and military influence increased further, while on the other hand Albania's independent foreign policy was curtailed. The First Tirana Pact was signed on 27 November 1926 and established for five years as a "friendship and security pact". In the Second Tirana Pact, the "Defence Alliance", was even

extended to twenty years.<sup>14</sup> Other foreign entities were forced out of the country by the Italians and although Switzerland recognised Zogu as King of Albania in 1928, ultimately, Italy was the only country he could turn to for foreign policy and cooperation.<sup>15</sup> When Zogu became aware of this overwhelming dependence, he desperately sought support from the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente;<sup>16</sup> however, both refused. The end point of this development culminated in the Italian invasion of Albania in April 1939 by the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini. Albania now became part of the fascist “mare nostrum” and



de facto, a sort of Italian colony.<sup>17</sup>

Source: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, PAAA Altes Amt, Tirana 4/8

On 7 April 1939, Mussolini and his troops occupied Albania. Switzerland officially represented the interests of Albania alongside the American

government, as the USA had not approved the Italian takeover of Albania. Finally, fascist Italy capitulated in September 1943. This did not mean the end of the war for Albania however, because it was subsequently occupied by the German *Wehrmacht*.<sup>19</sup> This historic chapter concluded with the retreat of the German forces in November 1944, when the Albanian Communist Liberation Front (Lëvizja Nacional- Çlirimtare) won the war against the occupiers and also against domestic adversaries with the help of Western, particularly British, support. Ultimately, this development helped pave the way for the beginning of Enver Hoxha's dictatorship.<sup>20</sup>

### 3 The Cold War and Swiss Albanian Relations

Albanian foreign policy during the period of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania from 1944 to 1990 can be divided into four phases: the first three being the Yugoslav, Soviet and Chinese phases, and a final fourth phase of total isolation from other socialist states and also, for the most part, from the western world.

It is striking that, after varying levels of contact between 1944 and 1969, Switzerland had already appointed a permanent representative in Albania from 1970 while the Chinese phase was still ongoing. This further emphasises that diplomatic contact between Switzerland and Albania continued to exist even during the greatest period of isolation for the small Adriatic state. This exchange was possible in large part because Switzerland was one of the non-aligned states.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.1 Sporadic Diplomatic Exchanges, 1944 -1970

#### 3.1.1 Under Yugoslav Patronage: The Period Between 1944 and 1948

Only a few months after the end of the Second World War, the Albanian delegation during a congress of the Red Cross Societies submitted a request on 9 November 1945 to the Swiss representation for contact and exchange.<sup>22</sup> Although the Swiss representation was still waiting for socialist Albania to be recognized as a state, there was already great interest in economic exchange from official representatives as early as 1946. Diplomatic records show that the Yugoslav diplomatic mission was in fact representing the interests of Albanian citizens in Switzerland during this period and thus acted as a link between the two states. However, in autumn 1948, Hoxha broke with Tito's Yugoslavia and, after the closure of the Albanian legation in Belgrade, the Swiss legation in Belgrade was no longer able to fulfil its obligations towards Albania.

#### 3.1.2 Under Soviet Patronage: The Period Between 1948 and 1961

In the following years and until autumn 1954, the Swiss representation in Budapest was responsible for Albania. After that, sporadic contact was established via Belgrade, since once again, the Albanian embassy had an existing branch there, beginning in 1954. In the period up to 1961, (the period of Russian patronage) Swiss-Albanian relations were limited to only a few exchanges. However, as the following document shows there were an increasing number of Albanian requests to establish lasting relations with Switzerland.

Die Albanier haben vor einigen Jahren, im Januar 1956, einerseits unserem Vertreter in Budapest gegenüber und andererseits durch ihre Delegation bei der Europäischen Wirtschaftskommission in Genf gegenüber Vertretern der Handelsabteilung den Wunsch geäußert, diplomatische Beziehungen mit unserem Lande aufzunehmen und einen Handelsvertrag abzuschliessen. Im Juni 1958 wurde gegenüber unserer Vertretung in Belgrad mündlich diesen Wunsch erneut Ausdruck gegeben, und im vergangenen Dezember gelangte schliesslich der albanische Gesandte in Paris im selben Sinne an unseren dortigen Botschafter. Wir haben diesen Vorstössen keine Folge gegeben. Unsere Vertretungen haben noch immer Weisung, bei ihren offiziellen Kontakten mit den Albanern alles zu vermeiden, was als Anerkennung der Volksrepublik oder als Einleitung diplomatischer Beziehungen gedeutet werden könnte.

Source: 26. July 1962, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#364\*, dodis.ch/18981

#### 3.1.3 Under Chinese Patronage: The Period Between 1961 and 1978

A 1961 report by the Swiss legation in Belgrade discussed the deteriorating relations between Albania and Yugoslavia.<sup>23</sup> Due to rising tensions between Russia and China, Switzerland decided in 1962 to continue waiting for official recognition of the Albanian state. Through this approach, Switzerland hoped to avoid the possible accusation of taking sides from any of the involved states. However, a trick was to be used in everyday diplomatic life: As the following document shows, Swiss outposts should act under the façade that Switzerland had long since recognised Albania. The declaration was as follows: Switzerland would indirectly recognize Albania by approving the two Albanian consulates in Bern and Geneva in the interwar period.<sup>24</sup>

#### Notiz betreffend die Anerkennung des volksdemokratischen Regimes in Albanien durch die Schweiz

Eine ausdrückliche Anerkennung kommt allerdings heute kaum in Frage. Sie riskierte, vor dem Hintergrund der ideologischen Auseinandersetzung zwischen Moskau und Peking im Ausland als Parteinahme gedeutet zu werden und andererseits in der schweizerischen Öffentlichkeit unnötig Aufsehen zu erregen.

Wir glauben daher, dass dem Bundesrat vorgeschlagen werden sollte, das Departement zu ermächtigen, das albanische Regime durch konkludentes Handeln de iure anzuerkennen. Wir würden unseren Aussenposten lediglich Weisung erteilen, sich künftig gegenüber den albanischen Vertretungen so zu verhalten, als ob wir das volksdemokratische Albanien schon bisher anerkannt hätten.

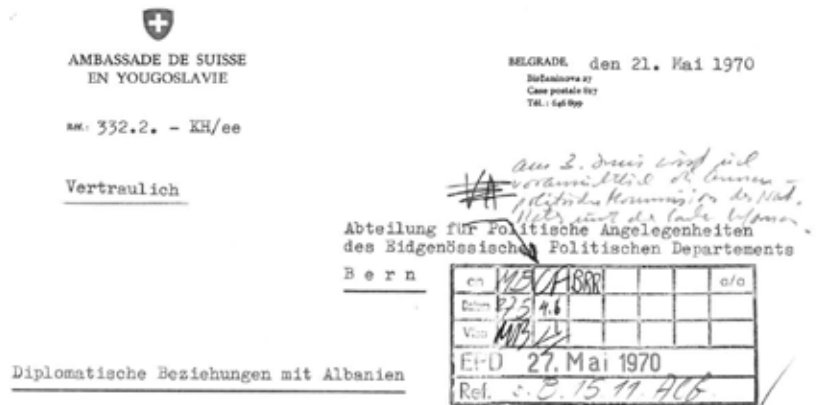
Source: 26 June 1962, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#364\*, dodis.ch/18981

Although diplomatic relations remained inconsistent, Swiss-Albanian trade intensified between 1965 and 1968. In March 1969, there were already concrete ideas about what future cooperation between Switzerland and Albania might look like.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2 The Beginning of Constant Diplomatic Relations

In May 1970, the Swiss Ambassador to Belgrade, Hans Keller, wrote a letter to the Federal Political Department or *Eidgenössische Politisches Department (EPD)* encouraging the establishment of diplomatic relations with Albania. Keller's suggestion came as no surprise since the Albanian mission had already expressed the same desire to him during his term of office in Beijing in 1966. China's patronage of Albania lasted until 1978 and it was a great advantage towards the development of permanent Swiss-Albanian diplomatic relations that the first Swiss ambassador for Albania, Hans Keller, had already been appointed ambassador to Beijing from 1963 to 1966.

Keller himself stated that during his term of office in Beijing he had been in contact with three diplomatic representatives from Albania, including former diplomat Nesti Nase, who was appointed in 1969 as the Albanian Foreign Minister. In order to get a picture of the situation within the country itself, Keller and his wife travelled to Albania for several days early in the summer of 1969.<sup>26</sup> During his stay he was even allowed to visit some factories - a rare opportunity in Albania at the time. Keller also reported that the visa applications for himself and his wife were issued fairly quickly - in contrast to other people he knew who had also applied for visas.<sup>27</sup>



Source: Schreiben des Botschafters Hans Keller, 21 May 1970, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, dodis.ch/34480.

#### 3.2.1 The Role of the First Swiss Ambassador to Albania

In the spring of 1970, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Albania was rigorously discussed within the Swiss government. On 1 July 1970, the Federal Council finally took an affirmative decision: Hans Keller was appointed the first Swiss ambassador to Albania, 58 years after the first proclamation of an independent Albanian state.<sup>28</sup> Franz Blankart, secretary to the head of the Federal Department of Political Affairs (EPD) - today known as the EDA - congratulated Keller in a letter and also emphasised the positive influence of the intensification of diplomatic contact between the two states. He wrote, "Once again you are called upon to perform a pioneering diplomatic feat. [...] A step whose negative consequences I believe has always been overestimated has now become possible and has been accepted without criticism by the public and also by Moscow. This is essentially your merit and shows that - contrary to the often-held opinion - an ambassador has the possibility of feedback, i.e. of influencing the decisions of headquarters, by all means is given."<sup>29</sup>



From 28 September to 5 October 1970, Keller travelled to Tirana for his inaugural visit.<sup>30</sup> The fact that Keller was simultaneously serving as ambassador to Belgrade and also accredited as “Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary” in Albania was not out of the ordinary due to the fact that such side-by-side accreditations still exist today in the Swiss diplomatic service. What was particularly extraordinary about Keller’s dual role was that he was deployed between two countries that had a tense relationship with each other. What immediately stands out in Keller’s career is his tenure as First Secretary in the newly opened Swiss legation in Moscow from 1946 to 1949 and an ambassador in Beijing from 1963 to 1966. Switzerland was one of the first Western countries that had established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China and was already recognized on 17 January 1950. Therefore, Keller can be considered a diplomatic pioneer when it came to establishing and maintaining stable political contact with socialist states. It is hardly surprising after his service in Beijing that Keller was sent to the two Southeastern European countries mentioned above. The documents in Keller’s estate in the Archiv für Zeitgeschichte at ETH Zürich also provide insights into the fact that Keller was extremely critical of autocratic leadership styles. However, he always had an eye on the positive aspects of socialist states and was able to build a bridge between those states and the Western states through his own personal commitments.

### 3.2.2 Hans Keller: A Dedicated Figure

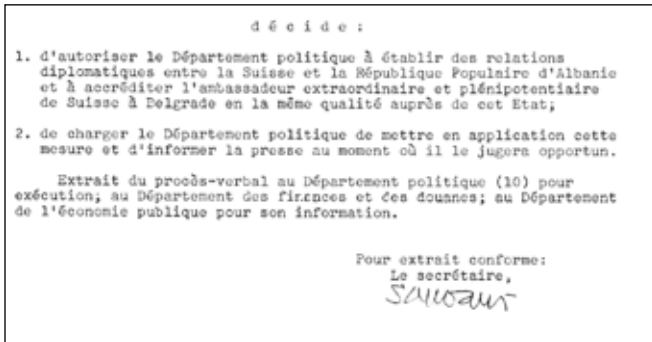


Source: <https://dodis.ch/P184>

- Born on 19 August 1908 in Zurich
- Studies law in Zurich and Lausanne, receives a doctorate in political science
- During the Second World War served as a delegate in Bratislava and liaison man between Switzerland and Slovakia, appointed Vice-Consul of Switzerland in 1942 after opening official consular representation.
- Participated in the rescue of persecuted Jews by issuing so-called “letters of protection”.
- At the end of the Second World War the Soviet Army took him to Budapest and interned him.
- 1945 - Second Secretary of the Swiss legation to Prague
- 1946-1949 - First Secretary at the newly opened Swiss legation in Moscow
- 1949-1952 - First Secretary at the Swiss legation in Ankara
- 1956 - Swiss business manager in Colombo (Ceylon) and Bangkok
- 1960 - Head of the new Technical Cooperation Service in the EPD and Delegate of the Federal Council in Asia and Africa
- 1962-1966 - Swiss ambassador to Beijing (first contact with Mongolia and Vietnam)
- 1967-1974 - Swiss ambassador to Belgrade (also to Tirana from 1970)
- Dies on 14 December 1999

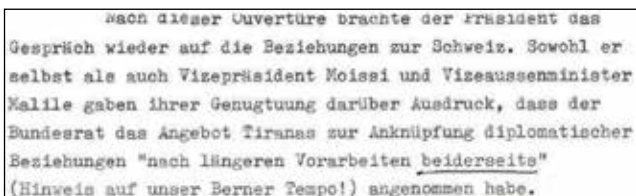
Source: Nachlass Hans Keller, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte, ETH Zürich

The decision of the Swiss Federal Council on 1 July 1970:



Source: 1 July 1970, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, dodis.ch/34482.

Keller reported on his inaugural visit to Belgrade that Haxhi Lleshi and Spiro Moisiu expressed their pleasure in establishing diplomatic relations and proclaimed:<sup>31</sup>



Keller's inaugural visit to Tirana:

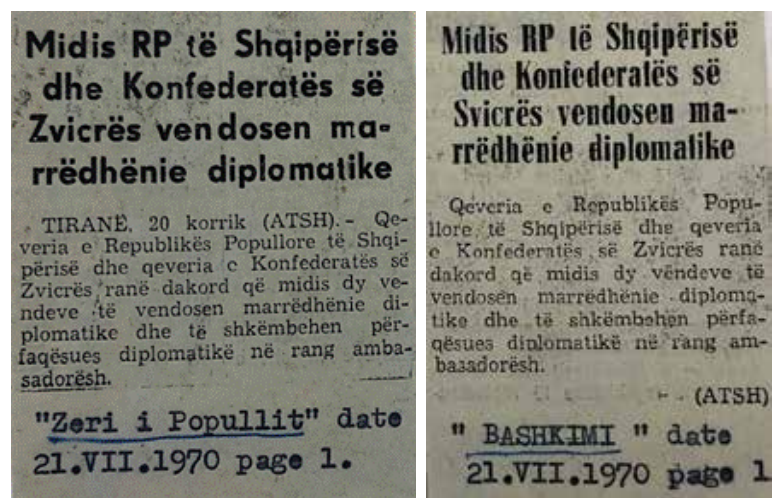


13. October 1970, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, dodis.ch/34485.

Press reviews: The few Albanian newspapers reported briefly while Swiss newspapers included more detailed reports.

Zeri i popullit

Bashkimi

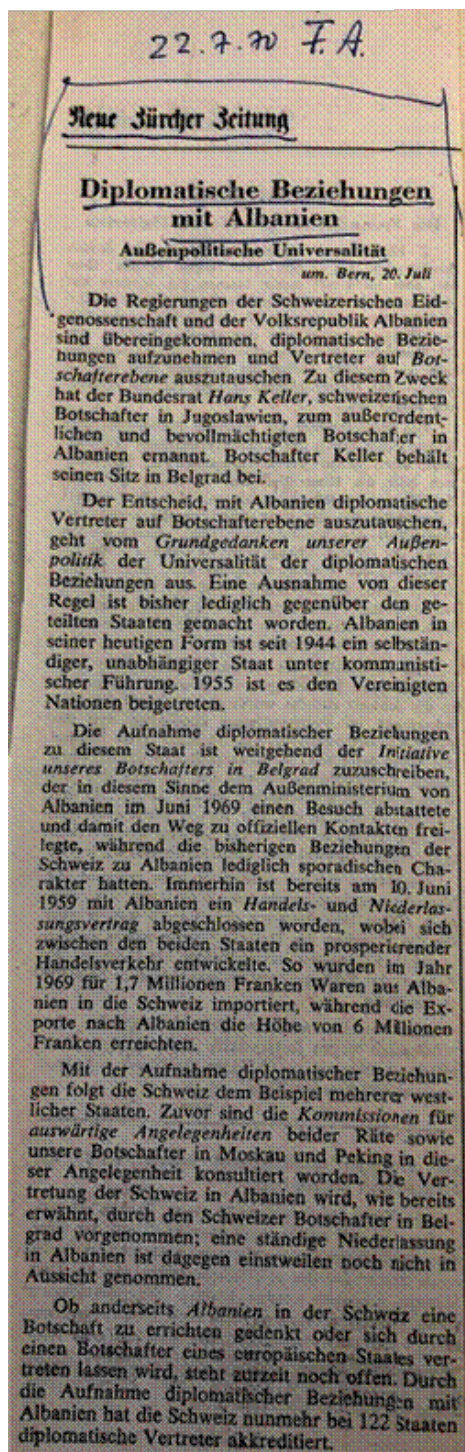


Source: 21 July 1970, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#10\*

From left to right:

- 1) Translators
- 2) Spiro Moisiu, Vice President
- 3) Hans Keller, Swiss Ambassador
- 4) Haxhi Lleshi, President of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the People's Republic of Albania
- 5) Charm Malile
- 6) Musin Kroj
- 7) Koco Prifti
- 8) Secretary

Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 22.07.1970:

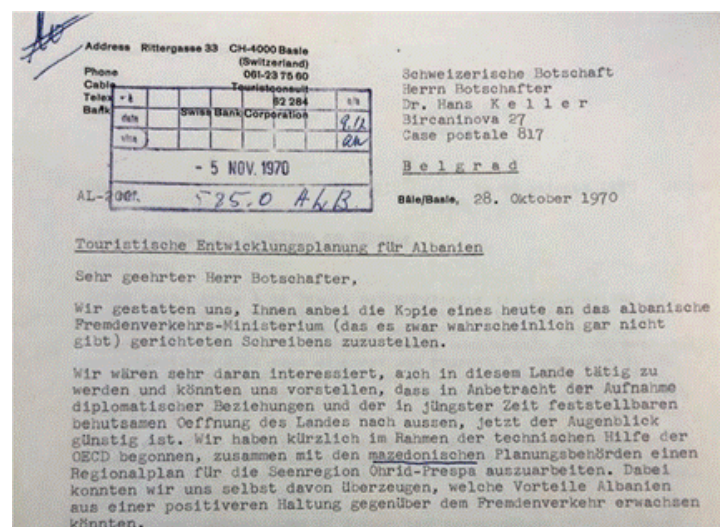


Source: 22 July 1970, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#10\*.



Source: Badener Tagblatt, 21 July 1970 BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#10\*.

Naturally, the appointment of a Swiss ambassador to Albania had not escaped the attention of various interested parties in the economy – for example, as early as 1970, the Basel-based company Touristconsult advertised possibilities for tourism at Lake Ohrid and other destinations throughout Albania.<sup>32</sup>

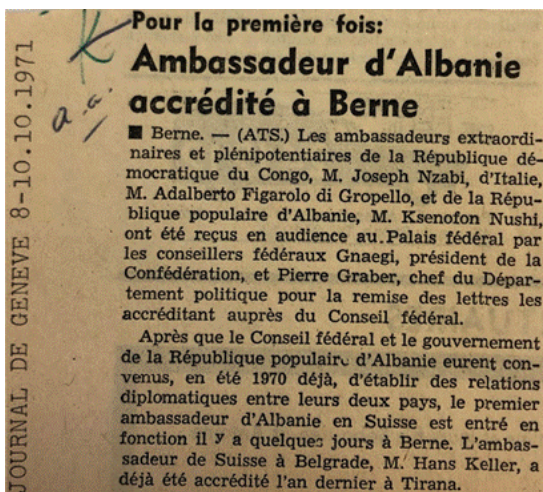


Source: Touristconsult an Botschafter Keller, 28 October 1970, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*.

### 3.3 Development of Diplomatic Relations from 1970 -1985

After his visit to Albania from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1971, Ambassador Keller wrote in his report numerous perceptions he had during his first year as the Swiss Ambassador to Albania. He always tried to emphasise the positive and to advance cooperation despite obstacles. Today, the cultural, scientific and social cooperation is in the foreground, however, at that time economic aspects seemed to be of the most interest: "Economically, Albania is still a humble economic partner. But even so, this market, as small as it is, should not be neglected. The urge for better living conditions grows stronger year after year. Like everywhere else, Albania will not be stopped. The sooner you put down business roots there, the more likely you will be to make your mark in later years. Therefore, it should be worthwhile for the further development of this country to closely follow the expansion of bilateral economic relations and not to grow tired despite the difficulties."<sup>33</sup>

One year after Switzerland appointed its first ambassador to Albania, the first Albanian ambassador to Bern was also accredited in 1971:



Source: Journal de Genève, 10 October 1971, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#1\*.

The following table shows the growth in trade relations; however, growth was less intensive in 1975/76 following an increase before 1974. Whether this decline was related to Keller's retirement in March 1974 is unclear to this day.<sup>34</sup> In the table from 1976 it is easy to see what the main exports were from Albania to Switzerland: tobacco, tomatoes, essential oil and various types of carpets were imported. From Switzerland to Albania, other goods were in demand in much larger quantities and at higher prices: television equipment and spare parts, medicines, coffee beans, chemical dyes, various other chemicals, including triacetin and cellulose acetate, which is used, among other things, to manufacture textiles.<sup>35</sup>

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Import 000/dollars	1.545	3.600	3.100	1.530	2.265	2.245
Export 000/dollars	820	1.051	1.285	3.650	750	1.294
Amount "	2.365	4.651	4.385	5.180	3.115	3.539

Source: BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*.

- Tobacco	200 tons
- Tomatoes	500-1000 tons
- Etero-oil essences	26.000 dollars
- Rugs	10.000 m <sup>2</sup>
- Carpets	6.600 m <sup>2</sup>
- Stamps	2000 dollars

- Television equipments and spare parts	566.000 dollars
- Chemical colours	306.000 dollars
- Various chemicals	335.000 dollars
- Medicaments	268.000 dollars
- Cellulose acetat	136 tons
- Coffee in beans	300 tons
- Triacetin	7 tons, etc.

Source: BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*

During his stay from 27 May to 3 June 1976, the then ambassador, Hansjörg Hess, noticed that he and his wife were often able to move around without further accompaniment or supervision. Although he reported to the Federal Political Department (EPD) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs that there was little to buy in the stores in Albania, most people were happy. Overall, Albania has made significant progress in providing for its population since World War II and political independence has allowed the regime's disadvantages to fade into the background.<sup>36</sup>

However, Albania had long been a big step ahead of Switzerland in one essential way: women's equality was well advanced in the public sector. For example, women worked as mechanical engineers and did military service long before this was made possible in Switzerland.



Factory worker in Fieri 1971, Source: BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#24\*.

Economically, Albania did not catch up in the last two decades of socialist rule. In fact, Enver Hoxha's turning away from China and his growing fear of possible attacks from both the West and the East plunged Albania into an economic crisis.<sup>37</sup> Instead of investing urgently needed funds for education and social services, Hoxha pushed ahead with the construction of over 200,000 single and multi-person bunkers.



Women in Albanian military, 1980, Source: BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

2. #efters nachten meine Frau und ich ohne weitere Begleitung Spaziergänge in der Stadt Tirana und Autoausflüge in die Umgebung. Fremdenfeindlichkeit konstatierten wir nicht; dagegen wurden wir und unser Mercedes überall als Weltwunder angestaunt. Die Leute in Dörfern, die Mädchenbrigaden auf den Feldern, wie auch die jungen Leute beim täglichen Corso in Tirana scheinen gut gelaunt, fröhlich, einfach aber nett und sauber gekleidet. Verblüffend ist das geringe Angebot und die schlechte Qualität der Artikel des täglichen Gebrauchs; ein niedriger Lebensstandard, wie wir ihn uns kaum vorstellen können, doch ist glaubwürdig, dass seit Kriegsende bedeutende Fortschritte in der Versorgung mit elementaren Lebensmitteln wie Zucker, Brot, Früchten, Gemüse etc., mit Elektrizität und öffentlichen Transportmitteln, in Leistungen des Gesundheitswesens (Medikamente, Aerzte und Erholungsheime), in Haushaltgegenständen, Radio, Fernsehapparaten und Fahrrädern gemacht wurden. Dieser relative Fortschritt und das Gefühl, nach jahrhundertlangen Kämpfen endlich unabhängig zu sein (abgesehen vom fernen China) scheinen bei der grossen Masse die Nachteile des Regimes aufzuheben.

Botschafter Hess, Aktennotiz «Über meinen Aufenthalt in Albanien 27 May to 3 June 1976» an EPD und EVD, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*.



Source: Tirana, Stern, April 1980, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

Tito's death in 1980 also had indirect impact on Albania as the unity of Yugoslavia began to crumble. In 1981, there was severe unrest in Kosovo: ethnic Albanians, including numerous students, demonstrated in Pristina and in other towns throughout Kosovo against discrimination in the social and educational system. The Yugoslav government reacted with brutal reprimands.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Albania amongst others became a country of refuge for ethnic Albanians from Yugoslavia.<sup>40</sup> For foreigners from Western European countries, however, Albania remained a closed country, as the Tribune de Lausanne wrote on 20 October 1980, it was: "Pays sans églises, sans voitures, sans touristes".<sup>41</sup> For many Swiss, Albania was still "the Land of the Skipetars" – a title created at the end of the 19th century by Karl May, who himself had never travelled to Southeastern Europe at the time of writing his novels.<sup>42</sup> It was a country far removed from the Swiss way of life, somewhere on the Adriatic Sea, and whose head of state, Enver Hoxha, was only known to have allowed a very select few compatriots to leave the country and was not interested in letting tourists

enter. Therefore, the Tages Anzeiger proudly announced an exclusive reader's trip planned for autumn 1979, for it was precisely this secrecy that had aroused the interest of Swiss investigative journalists.<sup>43</sup> Albania did not behave like the rest of Europe - no country, whether capitalist or socialist, could be compared to it.

The fact that a certain admiration resonates in those early reports becomes clear when one reads the advertisement for the Tages-Anzeiger's reader's trip more closely:

**Albanien, der Kleinstaat im Südwesten der Balkan-Halbinsel, ist wohl die eigenartigste Erscheinung auf der Europa-Karte.**  
 Ungeachtet der Entwicklung in Ost und West hat Albanien seit Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs unbeirrt den Weg zu einer eigenen Staats-, Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftsform gesucht.  
 Rund herum, ob sozialistisch oder kapitalistisch, wurde die bevorzugte geografische Lage für den devisa-bringenden Fremdenverkehr genutzt.  
 Albanien tat das Gegenteil. Um ungestört von Fremdeinflüssen den geplanten Sozialstaat aufbauen zu können, wurden alle Grenzen geschlossen: für Touristen, für Güter, für Kapital und Kultur.  
 Jetzt sind diese Grenzen im Begriff, sich zu öffnen. Natürlich ist für den Tages-Anzeiger Albanien weder von der Wirtschaftspolitik noch von der Gesellschaftsordnung her ein Leitbild. Dennoch möchten wir unseren Lesern die einzigartige Gelegenheit nicht verbauen, dieses Land voller Fragezeichen zu entdecken. Die Reise ist dank der Mitarbeit des Reisebüros Hotelplan und des staatlichen albanischen Reisebüros Albturist zustande gekommen.  
 Wie gesagt, über Albanien ist bislang wenig bekannt. Um Sie dennoch ein wenig auf diese faszinierende Exkursion einzustimmen, haben wir hier wenigstens das wenige Bekannte zusammengetragen.

Source: Tages-Anzeiger, Werbung Lesern- und Leserreise, 7-14 October 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

Ultimately, even for admirers and interested persons, the journey to Hoxha's realm was paired with certain personal restrictions, as the newspaper warned: "Bearded people must go home. Journey to communist Albania - probably the most closed country in Europe".<sup>44</sup>



Source: Tages-Anzeiger, 13 September 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.



Source: Tages-Anzeiger, Werbung Leserinnen- und Leserreise, 7-14 October 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

When Switzerland subsequently invited Albanian journalists to visit the country at the end of 1979, Javer Malo, head of the Committee for Cultural and Friendly Relations with the Outer World in the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it was not excluded that Albanian journalists could accept an invitation. But the Albanian Foreign Ministry did not think so highly of these plans and the Swiss ambassador in Tirana, Hansjörg Hess, was convinced that Albanian media workers would not be allowed to travel to Switzerland.<sup>45</sup>

Although the persecution of political opponents had already begun in the last year of the war and Hoxha had a surveillance apparatus set up immediately after his election as head of state, with the “Sigurimi” (the Albanian Secret Police) at its head, critical voices of Albanian intellectuals often did not penetrate as far as Switzerland.<sup>46</sup> This was to change at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. Then, Swiss newspapers were writing about the treatment of dissenters in Albania, for example about the imprisonment of entire families, camps and repression. However, due to the consistent isolation of Hoxha at that time, such reports were still rare.



Source: La Suisse, 13 Dezember 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

Although the isolation of Albania declined in the last phase of the Cold War with regard to international relations, and the country already had contact with over a hundred countries, state critics were still treated with extreme severity. As early as 1979, Amnesty International estimated the number of forced labour camps to be around 31.<sup>47</sup> In 1984, another report by Amnesty International enlightened the Swiss people for the first time of the situation through facts and figures about the threats faced by Albanians who disagreed with Hoxha's government.<sup>48</sup>

Foreign journalists immediately noticed that a two-tier society was a part of normal everyday life in Albania: In 1980, for example, reporters from the magazine Stern reported on separate beach sections in places such as Durrës, with one section designated for party officials and another one for the common people.<sup>49</sup>



Source: Der öffentliche Strandabschnitt in Durrës, Stern, April 1980, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

Despite this at times, difficult, starting point and the obvious absence of democratic values, Albania slowly opened up, particularly after Hoxha's death in 1985, and Swiss - Albanian relations were to be further intensified. For example, in the scientific fields, Tirana asked whether a total of six scientists could study hydrology, cereal crops and methods of diagnosing and treating livestock diseases in Switzerland for a period between several months to at least a full academic year. On the Swiss side, it was suggested that the president of the Albanian Academy of Sciences should be invited, together with a maximum of four other scientists, to show them around some of the prominent research institutions in Switzerland.<sup>50</sup>

In 1984, economic talks were held explicitly to "promote the further development and prospects of economic relations between Switzerland and Albania". Switzerland's ambassadors, Benedikt von Tscharnner and J.-F. Riccard, and Albania's delegation, led by Pajtim Ajazi, Vice-Minister of the Department of Foreign Trade, took part. The head of the Swiss delegation also met the Foreign Trade Minister, Shane Korbeci, himself during these negotiations. With regard to bilateral economic relations between Switzerland and Albania, Ajazi expressed his government's wish that commercial bilateral exchange should be further intensified on the basis of mutual interests. Up to this point, and by that he meant in particular the period between 1981 and 1983, it was mainly Albania which made imports from Switzerland, while exports from Albania to Switzerland remained low. However, the balance sheet for the first half of 1984 appeared somewhat improved.

année	exportations albanaises (mio \$)	importations albanaises (mio \$)	solde
1981	5,3	25,0	- 19,7
1982	2,2	14,4	- 12,1
1983	2,1	14,9	- 12,8
1984 (6 premiers mois)	1,2	5,5	- 4,3

Source: "Pourparlers économiques en Albanie", 11 December 1984, BAR, E2200.48#1996/303#11\*.



## 4 Years of Opening and European Integration, 1988 -2020

In contrast to other countries in Southeastern Europe, Albania emerged after the collapse of the socialist state without a bloody civil war. However, the conflicts between the former constituent republics and provinces of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which ran along ethno-religious lines, had burdensome effects on Albania. Unlike the former Yugoslavia, the years of Albania's opening, its transformation into a democracy and its path towards European integration were not due to ethnic-religious tensions, but rather a result of mismanagement and corruption of old and new elites and of sometimes, violent conflicts. Swiss and German newspapers supported this claim in their reports.<sup>51</sup> The precarious living conditions in which a large part of the Albanian population found themselves in made it possible for many members of the former elite to settle abroad and destroy any files or reports which might incriminate them. However, despite these existing gaps in the archives, Albanian historians have been working since the beginning of the 1990s until today to critically examine the socialist past as well as the transition and make it accessible to the general public. An important example is the "House of Leaves" in Tirana, a museum with exhibitions on the Albanian secret police or Sigurimi.<sup>52</sup>

### 4.1 Opening and the Social Crisis after the Fall of the Communist Regime

Since the end of the 1980's, Albania's foreign policy has opened up slowly, the first visible sign of this being its participation in the first

Balkan Conference in Belgrade in February 1988, and its willingness to establish relations with the European Community, known today as the European Union, has now been officially expressed. Nevertheless, people abroad, including those in Switzerland, were aware that the domestic political transition in particular would continue for a long time to come. Various formative institutions such as the Sigurimi, would not cease to exist only in a matter of days. Reports from Switzerland had estimated that in 1990 there were still between 20,000 and 40,000 political prisoners in Albania.<sup>53</sup> At the beginning of the 1990's, many Albanians left their country because of the precarious situation, and in spring of 1991, Switzerland offered its help to Italy as the first host country. In September, a Swiss delegation travelled to Albania in order to ascertain on the spot which aid was most urgently needed. It classified the food supply as insufficient and the medical care as critical. The opening of a Swiss embassy in Tirana was also an important signal. Up to now, the Swiss ambassador in Belgrade had also been deployed as ambassador to Tirana, which meant that there was no representative embassy building in the Albanian capital.<sup>54</sup>

The fact that unrest broke out despite the largely peaceful transition was primarily due to economic and political reasons. The Albanian economy collapsed at the end of 1996 as a result of a hugely corrupt banking system, speculators who lured their customers in with pyramid schemes and then robbed them of their savings, and high inflation. There were mass protests, namely in Vlorë, but also in other Albanian cities.<sup>55</sup> People accused the government of violating its supervisory duties and profiting off of the schemes of speculators. The result was a devastating economic and social crisis. In 1997, a humanitarian emergency occurred - people in Albania were starving and 3,081 Albanians

subsequently asked for Swiss asylum. Due to the fact that Switzerland and Albania had already been exchanging information for more than 25 years at that time, that Albania was one of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) so-called partner countries, and that the SDC ran a coordination office in Tirana in the 1990s, made it possible for Switzerland to provide rapid emergency aid. In 1997, Switzerland's financial support for Albania in the technical cooperation sector amounted to 9% of the total funds deployed in Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe and 7% in Financial Cooperation. The former included expenditure in the political, state-building, economic, educational, scientific, cultural, health, social, agricultural, energy and environmental sectors. Financial cooperation (financial grants) included energy, environment, health, infrastructure and other sectors which are not further defined in the SDC's annual report.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.2 Diplomatic Exchange Today

In an interview on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Swiss Embassy in Tirana in 2017, Christoph Graf, then Swiss Ambassador to Tirana, said: "Since the 1990s, Switzerland has invested CHF 330 million in development funds in Albania. Due to the good results of the projects and the will to reform, the funds have been increased in recent years".<sup>57</sup> There are good reasons why around 20 million Swiss francs a year are spent in Albania: On the one hand, Albania is developing rapidly - so the money is well invested. On the other hand, Albania is still one of the poorest countries in Europe, with youth unemployment at almost 30%. Supporting Albania is also an act of European solidarity, Graf said in an interview. A European solidarity that is based on geographical

circumstances and is not bound to the European Union.

Switzerland and Albania are still engaged in political, social and economic exchanges today. A significant example is the recent Swiss participation with the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) project on an 870 km long natural gas pipeline. Although trade between the two countries is modest in volume, it has grown steadily over the past twenty years. Several large and a growing number of small and medium-sized Swiss companies have established themselves in Albania making the total number of Swiss companies to be around thirty.<sup>58</sup>

Albania is also a priority country for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).<sup>59</sup> In this context, a comprehensive cooperation programme was set up, which also made it possible for Switzerland to provide rapid support for the victims of the November 2019 earthquake. Concerning relations between the two countries, great importance is attached to cooperation not only at the economic level but also at the social, educational and humanitarian levels. For example, the Swiss representation in Tirana, with SDC funds and the help of Norway and the UNDP have procured emergency respiratory equipment for Albania during the current COVID-19 crisis.

## 5 Conclusion

Fifty years is a significant amount of time, and in the past five decades, the world has undergone innumerable radical changes. From a Cold War that changed so many things to the existence of a new kind of Cold War in the modern age, Swiss-Albanian, or Albanian-Swiss relations, began in 1970 when Albania was one of the most isolated countries in Europe. It is especially due to the experienced diplomat Hans Keller that these relations did not stop at these beginnings, but rather that they developed and that there still exists a lively economic and social exchange today. Albania, with its linguistically talented inhabitants, its cosmopolitanism and the wonderful nature that the country has to offer, is quickly becoming a travel destination for more and more Swiss people. Cooperation between the two countries has also increased on the scientific level in recent years. With all this in mind: All the best to Switzerland - Albania / Albania - Switzerland, for another 50 years of successful diplomatic cooperation.

<sup>1</sup> Zef Ahmeti, "Der lange Weg zur Errichtung diplomatischer Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Albanien" (St. Gallen: Albanisches Institut, 2012), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> English translation: "...it is to be feared that the Italians have certain ambitions in Albania...". Le Ministre de Suisse à Paris, Ch. Lardy, au Président de la Confédération et Chef du Département des Affaires étrangères, A Deucher, 4 March 1897, in: Yves Collart et al. (Ed.) *Diplomatische Dokumente der Schweiz*, Vol. 4, (1890-1903), Bern 1994, Doc. 242, p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> English translation: there is, as I have already written to you, a special understanding between Italy and Austria- Hungary on the question of Albania." Le Ministre de Suisse à Rome, G. Carlin, au Président de la Confédération et Chef du Département politique, E. Brenner, 12 June 1901, in: Yves Collart et al. (Ed.) *Diplomatische Dokumente der Schweiz*, Vol. 4, (1890-1903), Bern 1994, Doc. 365, p. 805.

<sup>4</sup> Note from 29 November 1912, OeStA/HHStA PA XII 417, Türkei Liasse XLV/6b, Balkankrieg cc. See also on the nation-state movement in Albania: Nathalie Clayer, "Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe", Paris: Editions Karthala 2007, pp. 702-705.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmeti, "Der lange Weg", p. 4

<sup>6</sup> Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), p. 66.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Elsie, *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), p. 483.

<sup>8</sup> Heinz Klarer, "Schweizerische Praxis der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung", Vol. 24 (Zürich: Schulthess, 1981), p. 91. See also: Ahmeti, "Der lange Weg", p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Schweizer Legation in Wien, Hans de Segesser, 25 May 1914, BAR, E2001#1000/1503#18\*.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmeti, "Der lange Weg", p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> English Translation: "I am convinced that the Albanian Government, whose sole aim is the rapid development of the country, will make every effort to consolidate and develop good relations between Switzerland and Albania." Benedikt (Benôit) Blinishti, Vertreter Albaniens beim Völkerbund an Bundesrat Giuseppe Motta, 14 March 1922, BAR, E2001B#1000/1503#18\*. See here also: Klarer, *Schweizerische Praxis der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung*, p. 92f.

<sup>12</sup> Bernhard Tönnies, *Sonderfall Albanien: Enver Hoxhas „eigener Weg“ und die historischen Ursprünge seiner Ideologie* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1980), p. 366. For more information on the development of the Albanian independence movement, see also: Nicola Guy, *Birth of Albania: Ethnic Nationalism, the Great Powers of World War I and the Emergence of Albanian Independence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Massimo Borgogni, *Tra Continuità e Incertezza. Italia e Albania (1914-1939). La strategia politico-militare dell'Italia in Albania fino all'Operazione "Oltre Mare Tirana"* (Mailand: Franco Angeli, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Hubert Neuwirth, *Widerstand und Kollaboration in Albanien 1939-1944* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), p.24. See also, Tönnies, *Sonderfall Albanien*, p. 384.

<sup>15</sup> Zogu was crowned king on 1 September 1928. See: Schmidt-Neke, *Verfassungen Albaniens*, p. 34. For further details on the basic statute of the Albanian Kingdom from 1 December 1928, see *Ibid*, pp. 139-161.

- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp. 390-392. The "Balkan Entente" was a military alliance between the states of Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Romania and is sometimes referred to as the first "Balkan Pact" with reference to the later, second "Balkan Pact" of 9 August 1954.
- <sup>17</sup> Franziska Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime in der Waffen-SS. Von "Grossalbanien" zur Division "Skanderbeg"* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2016), pp. 50-59.
- <sup>18</sup> Klarer, *Schweizerische Praxis der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung*, p. 335.
- <sup>19</sup> On the establishment of a new puppet government, see also: Neubacher, *Sonderauftrag Südost*, p. 13f. and Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime*, pp. 88-95.
- <sup>20</sup> Hubert Neuwirth, *Widerstand und Kollaboration* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), p. 235.
- <sup>21</sup> On the non-alignment and the self-image of Switzerland, see: Thomas Bürgisser, *Wahlverwandtschaft zweier Sonderfälle im Kalten Krieg. Schweizerische Perspektiven auf das sozialistische Jugoslawien (1943-1991)* (Bern: DDS/Quaderni di Dodis, 2017), pp. 487-497.
- <sup>22</sup> Klarer, *Schweizerische Praxis der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung*, p. 209.
- <sup>23</sup> Schweizer Botschafter in Belgrad, Ganz an Generalsekretär des EPD, Minister Bruno Kohli, 7 March 1961, E2001E#1976/17#258\*, dodis.ch/10659.
- <sup>24</sup> See note on the recognition of the People's Democratic Regime in Albania by Switzerland, 26 June 1962, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#364\*, dodis.ch/18981.
- <sup>25</sup> Keller, Frage nach Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen, 12 March 1969, BAR, E2001#1980/83#907\*.
- <sup>26</sup> Keller Bericht Albanienreise 1- 4 June 1969, 9 June 1969, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, p. 1.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ahmeti, "Der lange Weg", p. 27.
- <sup>29</sup> Sekretär des Chefs des Eidgenössischen Politischen Departements, Franz Blankart an Hans Keller, 8 August 1970, AfZ, Nachlass Hans Keller, Belgrad - Tirana, 6.5.1 Korrespondenzen 1969-1975.
- <sup>30</sup> Keller an Bundesrat Pierre Graber zu seinem Antrittsbesuch in Albanien, 13 October 1970, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, dodis.ch/34485.
- <sup>31</sup> Kellers Bericht über seinen Amtsantrittsbesuch in Tirana, 13 October 1970, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, dodis.ch/34485.
- <sup>32</sup> Touristconsult an Botschafter Keller, 28 October 1970, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*.
- <sup>33</sup> Keller, Bericht seines Besuchs in Albanien vom 7-14 October 1971, 25 October 1971, BAR, E2001E#1980/83#907\*, dodis.ch/34479.
- <sup>34</sup> The last visit from Keller to Albania was in mid-March 1974. See: Bericht Keller an den Bundesrat hinsichtlich seines Abschiedsbesuchs in Albanien, 15 March 1974, AfZ, Nachlass Hans Keller, Belgrad - Tirana, 6.5.1 Korrespondenzen 1969-1975.
- <sup>35</sup> "Trade and Exchange between Albania and Switzerland", BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*.
- <sup>36</sup> Botschafter Hess, Aktennotiz «Über meinen Aufenthalt in Albanien 27 May to 3 June 1976» an EPD und EVD, BAR, E2200.48#1994/166#17\*.
- <sup>37</sup> See for example, article in NZZ, "Nach dem Bruch zwischen Peking und Tirana" from Verschlechterung der wirtschaftlichen Situation in Albanien, 21 July 1978, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.
- <sup>38</sup> The estimates vary between 200-250,000 bunkers, see: Franziska Zaugg, "Wider den Feind, der nie kam - Bunkersysteme in Albanien" published on the website, Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte (2013), <http://portal-militaergeschichte.de/node/975>.
- <sup>39</sup> Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Kosovo. Kurze Geschichte einer zentralbalkanischen Landschaft*, (Wien: Böhlau, 2008), p. 297.
- <sup>40</sup> On the effects of the 1981 unrest in Kosovo on Albania, see also: Ethem Çeku, *Kosovo and Diplomacy since World War II* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2016) pp. 157-175.
- <sup>41</sup> English Translation: Country without church, without cars, without tourists. AFP, "Pays sans églises, sans voitures, sans touristes. Et l'Albanie crée la femme", Tribune de Lausanne, 20 October 1980.
- <sup>42</sup> Zaugg, *Albanische Muslime*, p. 300-303.
- <sup>43</sup> Tages-Anzeiger, "Werbung Leserinnen- und Leserreise", 7-14 October 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.
- <sup>44</sup> Fritz Kübler, "Barträger müssen wieder heim", Tages-Anzeiger, 13 September 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.
- <sup>45</sup> Botschafter Hess an Politische Abteilung I und II sowie an Information und Presse, "Albanien: Kulturelle Kontakte", 4 December 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#27\*.

<sup>46</sup> See here personal reports in: Anita Niegenhell, Gabriele Ponisch, *Wir sind immer im Feuer: Berichte ehemaliger politischer Gefangener im kommunistischen Albanien*, Reihe: Albanologische Studien Bd. 2, (Wien: Böhlau, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> ATS, "L'opposition albanaise accuse", *La Suisse*, 13 December 1979, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*.

<sup>48</sup> Vladimir Pilman, "Todesstrafe für Kindertaufen" in: *Die Ostschweiz*, 31 July 1984, BAR, E2200.48#1996/303#11\*.

<sup>49</sup> Georg Karp und Axel Karp, "Der rote Unbekannte", *Stern*, April 1980, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#21\*, p. 98.

<sup>50</sup> P. Barraza an EDA, "Relations culturelles et scientifiques avec l'Albanie", 8 July 1980, BAR, E2200.48#1994/167#27\*, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Diverse Zeitungen, bspw. Christine von Kohl, "Aufbruch ins Chaos. Korruption, Gewalt, Lug und Trug – ist Albanien am Ende?", *Die Zeit*, 7 March 1997, BAR, Zeitungsartikelsammlung Albanien, J1.289 2001/16 859.

<sup>52</sup> <https://kommunismusgeschichte.de/lernen/ausstellungen/article/detail/house-of-leaves-the-museum-ofsecret-surveillance-tirana-albanien/> (Accessed: 23 August 2020).

<sup>53</sup> Bericht p.B.58.2 – Albanien, 24 October 1990, p. 3f. Kopie zur Verfügung gestellt durch EDA.

<sup>54</sup> Briefing Marco Cameroni, Chef Presse- und Informationsdienst EDA über schweizerische Abklärungsmission in Albanien, 6 September 1991. Kopie zur Verfügung gestellt durch EDA.

<sup>55</sup> Elez Biberaj, *Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy* (Boulder: Westview 1998), p. 322.

<sup>56</sup> Jahresbericht Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (DEZA), 1997.

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.luzernerzeitung.ch/international/diplomatie-schweizer-botschafter-graf-albanien-lebtdiereligioese-toleranz-ld.80376> (Accessed: 23 June 2020).

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/vertretungen-undreisehinweise/albanien/bilaterealebeziehungschiweizalbanien.html> (Accessed: 23 June 2020).

<sup>59</sup> See in detail: [https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/albania/en/2018-02-22-albania-coop-strategy\\_EN\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/albania/en/2018-02-22-albania-coop-strategy_EN_reduced.pdf) (Accessed: 2 August 2020).

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**years of diplomatic relations  
1970 - 2020**