

NEW BALKAN ORDER

Albania, Western Balkans and Europe in relation
to the new port Eagle of the Adriatic
by Lirim Muharemi



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Due to the current Balkan situation, the future of Europe is fairly uncertain. On the one hand, there are countries with a high standard of living, such as France, Germany and Belgium and, on the other, in many south-eastern countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania, already EU members, despite huge potential and various riches, people are daily facing significant lacks. Despite the fact that at first glance there appears to be no concrete solution to offering the people of this part of Europe a better life, the truth is quite different. If we do not react fast enough, the same will happen with Balkan countries that are on the waiting list for accession to the EU. As a founder and father of the largest project of the century in the Adriatic Sea - Europort Shengjin - Eagle of the Adriatic - which in 2009 was ranked in the World Finance List 100, I am certain that we can find a cure for stronger Europe.

Studies of economic geography show that 50 million inhabitants of the south-eastern countries would benefit from transiting goods through Albania to the Straits of Gibraltar (America, England, southern Italy, southern France and Spain, northwest Africa), because this would reduce the distance by cca. 700 km compared to other sea routes. Goods do not currently pass through Albania because there is no port capacity. The European port capacity would be 60 million tons of goods per year, which is more

than the Balkan annual consumption of goods, which ranges from 35 to 40 million tons.

Building the port will create thousands of new jobs, which will be indirectly connected to industries and services, such as logistics, agriculture, new factories, mines, water resources, tourism etc., which are an essential part of a European port operation.

In any case, it is more than obvious that the project will raise the level of life of the people of Albania and the Balkans, since it allows endless possibilities of human creativity, innovation and implementation of numerous projects, as well as stronger integration of European citizens in a more comprehensive and more prosperous Europe. Through my life and business operations, I have personally experienced all the advantages and disadvantages of the Balkans, and the new port, as part of the future of the new Europe, will make Europe more competitive to global economic currents. Albania and other Balkan countries possess huge untapped potential and a richness that will make Europe even stronger and more united. This project is also the first step towards a common story, a story of success.

I therefore urge all Europe's policymakers to join me and together to raise the standard of the Balkan peoples, and thus create a better future for Europe and our future generations. We have spent seven years working on the project, which constitutes an enormous challenge but, at the same time, opens up new dimensions of co-creation of a successful European space. Europort Shengjin – the Eagle of the Adriatic currently represents the only way out of the financial disadvantage of Albania and other Balkan countries, while the existing Europe offers new economic and business opportunities.

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