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Relations between Albania and Switzerland after Second World War

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In the aftermath of the Second World War, Albania and Switzerland, two small-scale European countries, stood on the margins of completely domestic and foreign approaches. Switzerland - whose armed neutrality had been guaranteed by international covenants ever since the 1815 Congress of Vienna - was among the few countries that remained truly democratic amidst the left and right-wing dictatorship tendencies that overwhelmed Europe back in the 30s. The tiny alpine country with few underground riches managed to ensure a sustainable prosperity by upholding the right to voting and not participating in the Second World War. Switzerland counted many Albanian settlements established mainly by Albanian political migrants or Kosovar workers.

The Second World War left Albania completely devastated with countless casualties and a new political force, i.e. the CPA, coming into power as liberator, but which nevertheless omitted to acknowledge the bilateral agreements or diplomatic relations established during the 20s and 30s. Given its unchallenged power and the specific circumstances deriving from the WWII, the CPA embarked on pushing Albania's foreign agenda towards the communist East. A mountainous economically depleted and weak country with many underground riches. Back in 1947, our diplomatic sources reported that Albania was home to only one Swiss citizen named Elena Badel, working as a teacher in Tirana.

The countries had no record of diplomatic relations, Switzerland recognized Albania as an independent state after WWI. Two Albanian consulates were opened first in Geneva and then in Berna in the 20s to closely monitor the activity of Albanian settlements. Our sources report six Albanian honorary consuls delegated

in Switzerland, namely in Zurich, Bern, Lausanne, Chiasso, Lucerne, and Basel in 1926.

Path towards establishing diplomatic relations

According to Albanian diplomatic sources, it was the Swiss left wing that showed interest in Albania for the very first time. The Communist Party of Switzerland sympathized in 1946 with the "Albanian people's dauntless fight under the leadership of the Communist Party of Albania during the WWII", thus echoing the newly-established economic and social order in the press. In 1947, the CPS participated in the elections and won a considerable number of seats in the Federal Assembly. Albania and Switzerland exchanged information only on the number and repatriation of Swiss citizens living in Albania, upon Switzerland's request. The Swiss Legation in Belgrade was the center of communication between the two countries.

In 1948, which marked a split between Albania and Yugoslavia and eventually led to the interruption of the Yugoslavian technical and financial assistance, the Swiss government had no intention to embark on establishing diplomatic relations with Albania since the country was of no strategic or diplomatic interest. However, economic priorities propelled Switzerland to propose to the Albanian Government through its Legate in Belgrade to enter into commercial relations for products interesting both countries, which was initially turned down by the Albanian government as unnecessary for as long as the countries had no record of diplomatic relations. During this period, the Swiss Government received several invitations from private companies on commercial exchanges, which were nevertheless left unaddressed or given a negative reply. Albania was officially and completely reliant upon the soviet assistance and

loans, and trapped by the Moscow dictatorship in terms of foreign policy.

Stalin death gave rise to Khrushchev thaw, which threw Hoxha's stalinist regime into turmoil. The country embarked on the quest for alternative resources to let the Albanian economy breathe no matter the course of events. Switzerland was perceived as a neutral country with great economic capacities that had openly shown its commercial interest towards Albania. The Albanian government started a diplomatic survey targeting Swiss representatives in Budapest, Roma and Belgrade on the Swiss approach towards establishing diplomatic relations with Albania. The reason behind the survey was that commercial relations of mutual interest shouldn't be hindered just because the two countries had no record of diplomatic relations. Swiss diplomats shared the same opinion, but nevertheless they stated that Switzerland was extremely attentive and conservative in terms of its foreign relations. And Albania was actually perceived as a member to the Eastern Bloc and Warsaw Treaty ever since May 1955. Although neutral, Switzerland was a Western country and a fierce protector of liberal democracy.

In the meantime, Swiss traders' interest for medicinal plants growing in Albania amplified. In 1956 a contract of \$ 800 000 was concluded. The Swiss Government proposed a commercial agreement to be signed between the countries given the large volume of commercial exchanges between the countries. The Albanian government would only become party to such agreement upon the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The enthusiasm of the Swiss Government was however offset by their reluctance to enter into diplomatic relations given that the matter takes up a lot of time and that they were pretty conservative with regard to foreign policies and international relations. The

said interest was quickly mirrored by the Swiss media with many reporters requesting Albania a visitor visa to establish contacts with their fellow colleagues and start writing stories on the country. Albania however was not that positive about these requests and left them unanswered. The spirit prevailed from second half of the '50s up to 1962.

Once the diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union came to an end, the observers predicted that Albania would be walking in the footsteps of Yugoslavia in 1948 and would approach the West. On the contrary, Hoxha entered into mutual support relations with the communist China, thus depriving the country of an outstanding opportunity to open up. Considering the friction between East and West at the time, West would have welcomed Albania in its bloc, by investing in its strengthening, detached from the communist bloc. Having this in mind, the Albanian Government decided to wait and see if the Swiss Government would change its approach. But Albania was still a member to the Warsaw Treaty, which impeded the diplomatic relations from being established with a neutral pro-western country like Switzerland having no particular political interests toward Albania. The Albanian Ambassador to France Dhimitër Lamani visited the Swiss Embassy on 12 November 1961. During the meeting with his Swiss fellow targeting the bilateral relations between the countries, Lamani proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries. This was actually the Albanian Government's first proposal to Switzerland. The Swiss Ambassador told his Albanian fellow that Switzerland, given its small-size and limited economic capacity, relied on two criteria when establishing diplomatic relations with another country: 1) presence of Swiss citizens and 2) commercial interest. The Albanian proposal would be subject to a review based on these two criteria.

The Swiss Ambassador, during his return visit in January 1962, stated that the Swiss Government was reviewing the Albanian proposal. He moreover suggested that the first step towards the establishment of relations should be commercial, because Switzerland needed to have its commercial interest towards Albania strengthened in order to move the establishment of diplomatic relations process. The Albanian Ambassador was skeptical about the point made by his Swiss fellow and clarified that Albania considered the establishment of diplomatic relations as a political action contributing to the development of relations in other areas, but given that the Swiss Government was quite conservative in this regard, he asked that the Swiss proposals be further elaborated on, in order to move forward with the commercial relations. The proposal was mainly driven by the country's interest in iron nickel and consisted of exchanging the ore with Swiss watches and machinery. The Albanian Government was positive about the proposal and requested it to be made official.

The Ministry of Commerce approved in March 1962 the commercial exchange of iron, chrome and oil sand with Switzerland. This was to advance the establishment of diplomatic relations. Switzerland made its first demand in May 1962. The Swiss firm Vatter sent a letter to the Albanian legate in Paris asking for data on the Albanian chrome quality because it was interested in purchasing 200 000 tons of the ore. In the same year, the Swiss Government requested the establishment of relations between the airlines of the two countries. Following the proposal of the Swiss PTT Administration in July, the Albanian Government authorized in September 1963 the Ministry of Communications to enter into agreement with the Swiss PTT Administration to establish the phone service between Albania and Switzerland.

The Albanian Government repeated its request to advance the establishment of diplomatic relations every year whenever possible, while the Swiss Government increased its demand for raw materials which were exchanged with processed products. The communication continued through respective representation bodies in Vienna. In May 1964, the Swiss Ambassador informed his fellow Albanian Ambassador in Vienna that his government had authorized the embassy to take charge of all communications and relations with Albania.

Albania leaving the Warsaw Treaty in 1968 in the aftermath of events in the Czech Republic was hailed by the Swiss representatives. In October 1969, the Swiss Ambassador in Vienna, following the communications exchanged with the Albanian representative stated "You are now independent; there's nothing standing in the way of our friendly relations".

In the light of the above, Albania was visited on 1-3 June 1969 by the new Swiss Ambassador to Belgrade Beograd Hans Keller, former Ambassador to Beijing. In January 1967, Hans Keller was transferred from Beijing to Belgrade and visited - on the occasion - the Albanian Ambassador to Belgrade Vasil Nathanaili. Keller expressed his desire to visit Albania as a tourist. Nathanaili pointed out the long-held issue of the two countries not having entered into diplomatic relations. Keller expressed his optimism for the future of these relations. Nathanaili described Keller as "very influential, likable and funny". He suggested the Albanian Embassy in Belgrade to be close with Keller for he had the impression that Keller had been charged with advancing the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

At the outset of his visit to Albania in June 1969, Keller stated that he had been charged by his own government with talking to the Albanian authorities on the relations between the two

countries. Given Albania's closeness with communist China and China's influence over the Albanian politics, Keller said the following in the meeting with the Minister of foreign Affairs Nesti Nase: "There's still too much to be done between the countries. We think that it's high time to communicate...We have already pointed out in Beijing the issue concerning the relations between our two countries. We are willing to establish diplomatic relations and we can discuss about the modalities. For the moment, we are not going to establish our own embassy in Tirana, but this may happen in the near future. The representatives of your country are more than welcome to Switzerland. If your government agrees, my government will accredit me as ambassador to Albania." Nase welcomed the decision of the Swiss Government. He proposed both parties to issue a press release on the most recent development in terms of relations between the two countries. The Ambassador welcomed the proposal, but stated that they should wait first for the National Assembly of Switzerland to approve the decision in order for it to become official. Keller proposed in the meantime that the commercial exchanges between the two countries should be further strengthened and Albania could now purchase from Switzerland all the goods it used to purchase in France or

First term of the Swiss Confedera- te Ambassador Hans Keller

The Ambassador Keller arrived in Albania on 28 September and stayed one week. Credentials were submitted on 2 October 1970. Besides Haxhi Lleshi, the President of the Presidium of the People's Assembly, Keller met the Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Reis Malile, etc. The ambassador addressed no political issues during the visit. Keller was predominantly

interested in economic issues. He expressed his conviction that there was huge potential for both countries to develop commerce, technical and scientific cooperation, culture, sports and tourism. He pointed out that despite distinct social systems, the cooperation between the two countries should be further expanded and took as an example the relations between his country and China: "Our long-held principle is to keep good relations with as many countries all over the world as possible and develop commercial, cultural, tourist and sport relations".

He reiterated the statement in his meeting with Shehu. The latter acknowledged Keller's active role in establishing diplomatic relations with Albania and thanked him for that. However he added "Albania is a country that allows nobody to interfere with its domestic affairs and doesn't meddle with the domestic affairs others". The ambassador acknowledged that distinct social systems were not an impediment to the development of commercial and economic relations and that his duty in Albania was to explore new areas of cooperation in commerce, economy, culture and science, training of Albanian experts, electrification of the country and, given the common geographical features, training of engineers on designing HPPs, over which Switzerland was highly experienced given the lack of oil and natural gas, and farming due to the mountainous terrain of the two countries.

By dodging the heated topics mentioned during the conversation with Shehu, especially Albania's stance towards the USA, Keller highlighted the Swiss experience and success in HPP construction. Shehu pointed out that nothing could stand on the way of developing state relations between the two parties. He also asked for Albanian specialists to be sent to Switzerland to be trained on HPPs. Actually, they were sent in the first half of 1971.

Keller gave an impetus to commercial relations between the two countries. In March 1971 the Swiss Government asked to purchase corn from Albania which immediately responded positively. Cultural exchanges, training of farming specialists etc. were intensified. In October 1971, the Swiss Embassy requested the accreditation of a military attaché, but the request was left unanswered. A commercial attaché was accredited instead.

The Albanian Government proposed in 1973 to sign a commercial agreement based on the reciprocity principle, but the Swiss Government considered its implementation difficult since the Swiss commercial companies were not state-owned; commerce was rather a private activity, therefore no reciprocity principle could apply. According to the Swiss Government, lack of such an agreement was in no means an impediment to the development of commerce, because it was a private activity.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade proposed the expansion of commerce with Switzerland. Many arguments were deployed - the volume of commercial exchanges with Switzerland having reached \$ 4 million per year, thus indicating a growth potential, was one of them. On the other hand, with Italy and France, as TPE members in the future, Albania could not sign a commercial bilateral agreement because it had not recognized the TPE as a body yet. Based on these, once Keller left the office in 1974, the Albanian Government insisted to have its proposal on a commercial agreement between the two countries accepted. The text would be identical with the text employed in the agreement with Austria and Sweden. The Swiss Government would recommend its commercial companies the Albanian market to purchase and sell goods. The delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Trade arrived in Switzerland on 20 October 1974, and after 8 days of negotiations,

the commercial agreement between the two countries was signed on 28 October 1974. The Swiss Government requested the Article 2 to provide for that "Both governments agreed to give each other the treatment of the most favored nation".

Albtransport had concluded in 1974 with the Swiss airline Swissair an agreement on the sale of tickets for passengers and goods. In 1979, despite special planes for Albanian Statesmen, Swissair was negotiating for other planes to land in Tirana.

In the end of 1977 the first exhibition with art works, textiles and confections was opened for four days in Zürich by the Albanian enterprise Albimpeks. The exhibition was organized by the private Swiss company Oundijan located in Zürich.

In January 1978, the "Friends of Socialist Albania" Association was established in Switzerland, chaired by Roland Rimoz. The Steering Committee consisted of five members who had visited Albania as tourists through the friendship association in France. The association was founded on their own initiative. As denoted from the embassy correspondence, they consisted of tourists who had been in Albania, had aligned with the left wing and propagated the Albanian reality. The Embassy in Vienna tried to immediately contact them, get some additional information and send them propagandistic materials.

Political clashes - if we can name them such - between the representatives of both parties were mainly caused by the different approaches of these two small countries towards engagement in international conferences and organizations. Albania refusing the invitation to participate in the Helsinki Conference in the founding meeting of CSCE by reasoning that no benefit would arise

of it given the presence of great powers in the conference was considered as quite interesting from Switzerland and somehow justifiable for a small country like Albania or Switzerland. However, contrary to Albanian authorities, they considered participation as an opportunity to positively impact the conference proceedings and argued that one could actually be part of discussions and debates only by attending the conference. This opinion had been forwarded to Albanian authorities by Ambassador Keller and other diplomats.

Albania took on the same attitude towards Switzerland's invitation to participate in Colombo Conference in the framework of Non-aligned Movement. Albania refused to participate by reasoning that states with different regimes would be attending, and some of them had moreover entered into direct agreements with the great powers, therefore they could not counter their purposes. The Swiss Government had another approach, according to which small countries should interest peace in Europe and that this could be achieved on the table. Thus, they could openly express their opinion about the intentions of great powers. "Sitting on the same table doesn't mean caressing"-said the Swiss representatives to their Albanian counterparts. However, the Albanian Government distrusted such tables and upheld that, instead of talking, military measures should be adopted to be prepared in case of potential attack by the great powers. According to them, talking was of no use. Switzerland started to label Albania as an "isolated country" in its meetings with Albanian officials, which was actually denied by the Albanian party.

Split between Albania and China, July 1978

The straining of relations with China and the split between the two countries deprived Albania of the only and last source of foreign assistance, which threw the country in an extremely difficult position. The main concern distressing Switzerland and the West was whether Albania would further strengthen its relations with the USSR in its quest to get a source of economic assistance after the split with China. However, Hoxha refused to open the country up to the West or former soviet allies. The country became more and more closed off-external factors were regarded as potential risks threatening Hoxha's power. The principle of "relying on own forces" turned pretty soon into the headline of Albania's economic development. However, the Swiss Government considered that economic cooperation was actually the only weapon to keep Albania on the right side.

Keller remained a friend to Albania. He visited Albania even after his term expired, either as a friend or as a companion to groups of businessmen interested in cooperating with Albania. In late August 1978, talks were held in Albania between the group of Swiss commercial companies' representatives and the delegation of Albanian foreign trade enterprises and Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was attended by the former (now retired) ambassador Keller, who took on to initiate the commercial relations between the two countries given his ties with large Swiss companies and influence in the business sector in Switzerland. Talks in Tirana were shortly followed by other talks between the Albanian state commercial delegation of the LPA and the Swiss Confederation state commercial delegation on 5-8 December 1978. The talk between the two delegations concluded with the signing of the Meeting Minutes, in Tirana on 07.12.1978.

The Swiss Government showed its willingness to provide aid to those affected by the earthquake of 15 April 1979, which was cordially rejected by the Albanian government based on the principle of "relying on our own forces".

Albania attended an international fair in Basel that same year on 21.04.1979 - 01.05.1979, by displaying multiple products in a separate pavilion. The Swiss Government was very supportive and benevolent in order for the pavilion to make progress and promote the Albanian goods. In May 1984, the Commercial Expansion Office in Switzerland prepared and issued the first bulletin about Albania, briefly describing the country's history, political and economic situation, economic relations with Switzerland in particular, relations between the Swiss Commercial Development Office and Chamber of Commerce in Albania, the foreign trade regime, approximation to the Albanian market, and other necessary data to go on a trip in Albania.

In May 1984, a second agreement was signed between the Albanian Government and the Swiss Federal Council in the field of road freight transport.

From Hoxha's death up to the political changes in the country, 1985 - 1992.

Hoxha's death was just like a beam of light in the end of the tunnel with regards to the Albanian politics liberalization, but the West feared Albania could possibly revert to Moscow, since the split with USSR was mainly attributed to Hoxha. The Swiss Government shared the same concern. Switzerland supported Albania's foreign policy not aligned with any of the blocs, especially its anti-soviet attitude, which made it a sustainable element with regards to Moscow's efforts to penetrate the region, given the political crisis

that had overwhelmed Yugoslavia after Tito's death and Milošević coming into power.

In 1985, when the severe economic consequences started to emerge due to the political self-confinement, the Albanian Government requested the Swiss Government to enhance its presence in the Albanian economy. However, this was hindered by the stiff Albanian law on foreign relations and Albania's inability to seduce the Swiss business given its country and population size. The Albanian Government requested in January to establish its representation body in Zürich, which had been actually projected ever since 1979, but had been postponed due to financial reasons. This was actually against the Swiss practice, according to which the commercial representation body should be part of the diplomatic mission in Bern. The commercial representation alone would have no diplomatic immunity and would pay taxes just like the representation offices of companies. Swiss authorities proposed for a consulate to be opened in Zürich, with diplomatic immunity, which would perform commercial function as well, given its inability to open an embassy in Bern. The Albanian Government turned down the proposal.

Upon the Swiss Government request, the Swiss tourist company «Kuoni Travel» and the tourist agency «Travel Agency Hans Imholz» decided to cooperate with the enterprise Albturizmi in Albania to bring tourist groups in the country. Albanian authorities also approved the visit of the General Director of the Great Book "Index of Hotels and Travels" Mr. Charle Seiler, a Swiss national and citizen.

Upon the support of the Federal Foreign Affairs Department, Swissair representatives held talks with the Ministry of Communications and Albturizmi in August 1985 on the opening of a direct airline Tirana Zürich on 1 April 1986.

The need for both governments to enter into an agreement on air transport also emerged. Upon the persistence of the Swiss company and the support of the Federal Foreign Affairs Department, talks were held between the two delegations on 14 March 1986 and a third deal was signed: the agreement on the air transport between the two countries and the relevant protocols. Swissair airline was inaugurated in June 1986 in Tirana. The inauguration event was attended by the Director for Europe and North America in the Federal Foreign Affairs Department.

The Directorate of International Organizations had proposed the MoFA leaders to establish a representation body in Geneva- the greatest hub of international organizations in Europe - as early as May 1983. The representation body would also cover the bilateral political, economic and cultural relations with Switzerland. The argument employed to move the proposal was as follows:

“In the meantime, the relations between the two countries will develop smoothly. From the commercial perspective, Switzerland is one of the largest exporters of Albanian ores, which is fair and cordial about the Kosovo question and the relations between our country with Yugoslavia. The Swiss Government not only allowed Kosovars in its territory to celebrate, but turned down all Yugoslavian interventions and protests on the ban of such celebration. Even nowadays, there is a large number of Kosovars working in Switzerland, either permanently or by season.” The proposal was not objected in principle, but its implementation was hindered due to financial reasons. In September 1986, the Albanian Government opened its Permanent Mission nearby the UN Office and specialized institutions in Geneva - a decision made in January 1987. The Mission would be covering not

only relations with international organizations, but also Albania's relations with Switzerland in the field of commerce, communication, consular actions, thus resolving all issues concerning visa to go to Albania for all those individuals transiting from Vienna. The Swiss government refused that the Head of Mission was accredited as ambassador at the Swiss Confederation. The opposite was more likely to happen.

Once Milošević came in power, the relations between Yugoslavia and Switzerland were put on a strain. In 1986, six Yugoslavian diplomats in charge of insuring and checking the Yugoslavian workers in Switzerland were banned. The time coincided with Kosovars becoming subject to an unprecedented repressive politics. The Albanian Government took advantage of the moment to further strengthen its relations with Switzerland, by enhancing its presence in the RoA, enhancing its communication with Swiss diplomats, welcoming the proposals of Swiss authorities to visit Albania etc. Under this spirit, Switzerland proposed to mediate the establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Great Britain, but the Albanian Government was already directly communicating with Great Britain.

The period marks the first official visits from the political authorities of both countries. On 18-22 June 1987, an official delegation elected by the MoFA at the Deputy Minister level visited Bern for the first time. It was led by Sokrat Plaka. The delegation gave a message to Swiss authorities on behalf of Ramiz Alia in the capacity of the President of the Presidium of the People's Assembly targeting Mr. Pierre Aubert, President of the Swiss Confederation who welcomed the delegation. Alia expressed his deep desire to enhance the cooperation and the friendship between these two small countries, out of the political and military groups in front of

armed great powers. President Aubert stated among others in the meeting that "We have a special sympathy for Albania. We have multiple similarities. Irrespective of the difficulties encountered, both countries are independent. We have been successful in terms of relations between the two countries. We have many things to say to each other and we can mutually benefit from the experience of both countries. Your visit is just the beginning of the future dialog. We should meet more often...".

The establishment of diplomatic relations with FRG in 1987 and the participation in the 1st Balkan Conference of Foreign Ministers in February 1988 were indicative of Albania's efforts to open itself up to the West and multilateral relations. This made Switzerland grow more interested in Albania.

A Swiss parliamentary delegation visited Albania on 25-28 July 1988 upon the Albanian Government's invitation. The People's Assembly that returned the visit in 1989 was chaired by its Spokesperson Petro Dode.

The Albanian movie week was held in Switzerland and the Swiss movie week was held in Albania. The Swiss anthropology was published in Albanian in Tirana in 1990 and the Albanian anthropology was published in German and French in Switzerland. Artistic and cultural ensembles held shows in different Swiss cities every year.

Swissair continued to insist on the Albanian consulate being opened in Zürich because of the visa issue affecting travelers interested in visiting Albania. Moreover, they warned that Zürich-Tirana airline could be subject to a potential shut down as no passengers traveled the line. On 4 January 1990, the Department proposed to open the Albanian General Consulate in Switzerland with the same staff and same building as the

Albanian Mission at the UN offices. An advisor and a third secretary to the Mission would be appointed Consul General and Consul. The Mission would take on the responsibilities of the General Consulate. The draft decision was prepared but not turned into DCM. The underlying reason was avoiding the Yugoslavian claims that Albania was trying to oversee Kosovars living in Switzerland to establish ties with them. Consular issues were covered by the Albanian embassy in Vienna, while political bilateral issues were covered by the Mission in Geneva. Swissair agreed with the Swiss Government in March 1990 that visas for Albanian citizens were issued in Zürich airport. Swissair opened its office in Tirana on 7 April 1990.

In January 1990, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Malile forwarded through the Swiss Ambassador in Belgrade the request for the Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs to visit Albania. In the meanwhile, the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of Cold War lead the West to lower its strategic interests. Ready to help Albania anyhow during the Cold War, Switzerland, just like other Western countries, refused to invest on a country holding tight onto the communist regime in denial of concrete facts that it was ready to renounce from the political power to the benefit of the country's democratization.

The State Secretary Federal at the Foreign Affairs Department of the Swiss Confederation Klaus Jacobi visited Albania on 1-5 November 1990, thus returning the visit to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Plaka in 1987. The visit took place on the verge of Helsinki II Conference, with the member states to CSCE meeting in Paris. It was initially claimed that Albania would join the body. Jacobi gave clear messages for the Albanian authorities. He stated that relations with Eastern Europe on which a Swiss assistance program amounting to CHF 250 million had

been also established. Moreover, he pointed out that Switzerland was very committed to human rights, political pluralism and market economy. He asserted that Switzerland supported Albania's membership to CSBE as its 35th member, but decision-making at CSBE was consensus-based, which according to Jacobi put Albania in a difficult position. "You showcase the reforms you like to undertake not only through written acts, but also through specific actions. Thus, none will oppose you. Switzerland encourages and would like to help you to become a full member to CSCE. We have been closely monitoring your evolution. A positive answer from other members interests you. But keep in mind the political and democratic reforms, free and secret ballot, human rights". The Swiss Government pressure as part of the Western pressure to uphold an incompatible stance with the situation of human rights and political pluralism in the country were crucial elements that shook the communist regime in Albania.

In this visit, Jacobi in the quality of a former professor asked to deliver a lecture in the University of Tirana. The lecture enabled him to communicate with Albanian students, the elite of Albanian youngsters that could eventually engage in democratic changes in the country. During the conversation with students and other lecturers at the University of Tirana, Jacobi tackled the internal and foreign affairs of Switzerland, as well as its activity in the CSBE. He also addressed the Albanian case. He highly appreciated Albania's democratization processes and relations with Switzerland. He also made a strong statement on the political regime in Albania: "Albania left itself in the margin of the European history during these decades and entered into a long isolation". The information was forwarded to the Political Bureau for review, but it was not the time for a letter of protest.

In September 1991, after the first democratic elections of March 1991, the establishment of the first democratic government and Albania's membership to CSCE in June 1991, the Swiss Government started to look for a suitable facility for its representation in Tirana, which concluded in 1992. The new Albanian democratic government which came out of the elections of March 1992 decided to open the diplomatic representation in Bern. This was actually concluded in 1992 and the first ambassador was Gazmend Turdiu.

The event closed a multi-year period of evolution of state relations between the two countries, climaxing with the establishment of the diplomatic relations on 20 July 1970 and the establishment of diplomatic representation bodies in two capital cities in 1992. However, the period featured positive developments, friendship and respect despite the different political and economic systems, desire to enhance cooperation in fields of joint interest, especially economic and cultural. No issues were left unaddressed.

As soon as the Cold War came to an end and a new international order was established, both countries would act out in a completely new stage of relations and intentions with regard to the foreign politics.

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**years of diplomatic relations
1970 - 2020**