



Albania

Last update:	4 August 2009
Author:	
Population:	3,619,778 (July 2008 est.)
Prime minister:	Sali Berisha (Democratic Party)
President:	Bamir Topi
Governemental type:	Emerging democracy
Ruling coalition:	Democratic Party (DP), Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI)
Last election:	Parliamentary 28 June 2009
Next election:	Presidential July 2012
Sister parties:	Socialist Party of Albania



Albania is a country which shows two faces nowadays. On the one hand, the country is modernizing reasonably fast. The conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in 2006 shows that Albania is willing to move to “Brussels” and that the country is making progress in achieving this goal. On the other hand, the country shows some severe internal problems that could slow down the process of modernization. Corruption is, for instance, still a big problem and is damaging the country’s economic potential in a serious way. The fact that the local elections of 2007 could not meet the international democratic standards, shows that democratization and transparency should still be high on the political agenda during the coming years. The election of the new Albanian president in August 2007 underlines this idea. In sum: Albania is a country in transition, that should be watched with great interest by both the Balkan countries as the European Union.

ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL SITUATION

President

The head of state is the President, elected for a five-year term by a two-thirds majority of Parliament. The President has no legislative or executive power, but represents the state in foreign relations, and is chief commander of the army. Since July 2007, the President of Albania is Bamir Topi, a researcher who once served as agriculture minister and leader of the Democratic Party.

Parliamentary elections 2005

The general elections of 3 July 2005 brought a decisive victory to the rightist political forces in Albania. The Democratic Party (DP) of former President Sali Berisha became the biggest in the new legislature with 56 seats. The electoral 'Alliance for Freedom, Justice and Welfare', composed of parties ideologically close to the DP, became the third biggest political force with 18 seats. Together, they obtained an absolute majority in Parliament and formed the new government.

The Socialist Party (SP) lost the elections with 42 seats, and became the opposition after being in power since 1997. Former PM, Fatos Nano, resigned as party leader and Tirana mayor Edi Rama, became his successor. The loss of the lefties could be partially explained by the split within the SP itself: the Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI) was created months before the elections, founded and led by former PM Ilir Meta. The SMI gained 5 seats, while the Social Democratic Party won 7 seats.

The electoral process was finished without major problems, as concluded by the OSCE and EU monitors. The poll was seen as a major test for the future of the country, which in the past witnessed many re-runs due to fraud and



violence. Berisha's new government reiterated his pledge to, among other things, fight corruption and crime and bring Albania closer to Euro-Atlantic institutions. Several months later, however, a poll showed that the majority of the population saw none of these changes.

Local elections 2007

On 18 February 2007 local elections were held. Overall, it was a close call between the two major fractions, the centre-right coalition and the left opposition. The centre-right coalition won with a margin of 49,5% to 41%. On an individual level, however, the SP gained the most votes. It became the biggest party with 20.9%, the DP finished second with 19,4%. More importantly, the SP won the elections for the major cities, including Tirana where SP-leader Edi Rama was voted for his third term as Mayor.

Despite the positive evaluation of the elections by the domestic politicians, international observers concluded that Albania failed to meet the international standards. The fairness of the elections was an important test for Albania, to see whether they could meet the standards necessary to pursue their own international ambitions of future membership of NATO and the EU. EU Enlargement Commissioner Uli Rehn stated: "Respect for democratic principles is a fundamental commitment under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement which Albania signed in June of last year."

Presidential elections 2007

In June 2007 Presidential elections were to be held as Alfred Moisiu's mandate as President was expired. Albania's leading political parties decided, however, to defer the election of the President, opting instead for talks aimed at finding a consensus candidate. But no consensus could be found between the opposition and the government and the political instability led to a political deadlock. While the ruling DP pushed for the candidacy of Bamir Topi, the opposition SP insisted that the President was to be from the opposition bloc. On 27 July, the political deadlock was finally broken when Mr Topi was sworn in as President. This, however, took five voting rounds as the opposition at first boycotted several election rounds.

Parliamentary elections 2009

On 28 June 2009 Parliamentary elections were held. After a lengthy counting process Albania's Central Electoral Commission (CEC) confirmed the poll was won by incumbent PM and DP Berisha. Berisha's right-wing 'Alliance for Change' coalition had secured 70 seats in Parliament, while the SP gained 65 seats. The SMI won four seats, and the Greek Minority Party (PBDNJ) came in last with one seat. As the DP fell one seat short of taking the reins, for 71 seats are needed to form a government in the 140-seat National Assembly, it extended a hand to the SMI and the two parties formed a coalition. "[Joining the ruling coalition] was the only one in the country's interest", said SMI leader Meta.

Due to several cases of conflict and political parties filing complaints to the CEC about election fraud, the official election results came after nearly a month. Mainly the SP accused the ruling party of fraud. It claimed the DP was trying to influence the vote by declaring victory before the counting was completed. After the official results the SP rejected to recognise the outcome, also because the CEC rejected its request to do a recount in some smaller regions. Consequently, Rama stated that the SP will launch a political campaign to seek early elections. However, not every SP loyalist supports Rama's stance. Moreover, after SP's lost in the poll criticism has risen concerning Rama's management of the electoral campaign and calls have mounted for Rama to resign as party chairman.

Following the results Berisha called on the opposition to build bridges with the next government in order to set a standard of cooperation necessary for the reforms required by the EU. It is, however, unlikely that the Socialist opposition will build bridges with the next government.

International monitoring

The 2009 Parliamentary poll was widely seen as a test to determine whether the country is ready for EU integration.



The elections were observed by an international mission that included more than 400 monitors from the OSCE, the Council of Europe and a delegation of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The observers said the poll was "marked by some improvements" compared to the last election but it did not yet meet international standards. "Progress was made with regard to, for instance, the adoption of an improved legal framework". But the observers also noted that these improvements were overshadowed by a "polarised political climate and violations during the campaign", which undermined public confidence in the electoral process. Though the election campaign had been marred by violence, including two deaths –among which a deputy of the SP– the voting day itself passed largely calm and without any of the problems that many had feared.

Aftermath of the elections

On 2 September PM Berisha and LSI leader Meta signed a coalition agreement, forming the 'government of European integration'. Meta will take the post of deputy PM and of Foreign Minister. The LSI will also hold two other key portfolios, the health and economy and energy ministries, as well as 20 per cent of lower government posts. The officials stated that the cabinet's common goal is to "create a cabinet that will bring Albania into the EU". The SP will lead the Parliamentary opposition.

Gender representation

In July 2008 Parliament adopted the "Gender Equality in Society" in a step to increase women's presence in decision-making. This law includes a 30% quota in appointed and elected positions; and the adoption of a 30% quota in the Electoral Code in November 2008. With the adoption of these new changes, political parties are obliged to guarantee that 30% of women candidacies is put forward in both national and local elections. As a result of the new law, in the last poll on 28 June a percentage of 15% of women gained seats in Parliament. This is far more than the 7.1% of women in the outgoing Parliament.

IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES

Gender and minority political participation

The situation concerning women's issues remains worrisome. Despite the considerable number of women's NGOs, their political influence continues to be restricted. It is disturbing that political parties, despite existing gender structures, do not meet their own criteria of women's participation in candidate lists for elections.

After the 2005 elections, 10 women (7,1% of total number of seats) entered the 140-seats Parliament. This is only a marginal increase compared to the previous mandate, when there were 7 women MP's. With the above percentage, Albania is ranked 114th out of 189 countries.

Political participation of minorities is not high on the agenda in Albania, perhaps because Albania – in contrast to neighbouring countries – has not encountered any ethnic, racial or religious problem or conflict. Officially recognised are the Greek, Macedonian and Montenegrin national minorities, while the Roma and Aromanians are recognized and respected as linguistic minorities. However, in the 2005 electoral process, minority populations, notably Roma, continued to be marginalized and were subjected to election intimidation and attempted 'vote buying'. According to the OSCE, further efforts are needed to improve their registration as voters and participants.

Euro-Atlantic integration

On 18 February 2006 Albania concluded the negotiations on an Association and Stabilisation Agreement (SAA) with the EU, which started in 2003. The requirement for concluding this agreement was implementation of reforms in several crucial fields, such as the fight against organised crime, corruption, and making significant improvement in freedom of media, or consolidate the management of public sector, to enforce its own legislation, ensure the efficiency and independence of the judiciary, and protect property rights. The SAA agreement has been negotiated since 2003, while the positive opinion of the EC to start negotiations came out in the end of 1999.

According to a statement of foreign minister Besnik Mustafaj, Albania's Euroatlantic integration is an absolute



priority of the government. The country is seeking to fulfill the requirements for establishing closer relations with both NATO and the EU as soon as possible. The country hopes to receive a NATO membership invitation during the organisation's summit in 2008. To this end, it also cooperates with other countries from the region, notably Croatia and Macedonia.

European integration has been the utmost priority of all Albanian governments since 1991 and it is also one of the few issues the ruling Socialist and Democratic Party in opposition agree upon. Despite the fact that membership of the EU is still far away, many European leaders have reiterated that Albania belongs to Europe and will sooner or later be accepted as a full member. The conclusion of a preliminary SAA was a very important step on the way to Europe. Similar EU association agreements were reached a long time ago with all the accession countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Economic situation

Analysing the political situation in Albania, one should never evade the question of the economic development of this particular country. After long years being righteously labelled the poorest country in Europe, nowadays Albania has safely escaped this position. However, only Moldova and Serbia have a lower GDP per capita than Albania (2005 figures).

Still, Albania is lagging behind its Balkan neighbours and has serious problems with the grey economy sector, which analysts estimate might equal up to 50 percent of the whole economy. A similar problem is the unemployment rate: officially it was 14.4 percent in 2005, but local sources estimate it reaches the 30% of the labour force. The economy is bolstered by annual remittances from abroad of 600 to 800 million dollar, mostly from Greece and Italy; this helps offset the towering trade deficit.

The UNDP's Human Development Index of 2006 (combination of wealth and quality of life) ranks Albania at place 73, leaving behind other European countries like Ukraine, Turkey, the three South Caucasus republics, and Moldova. The index reflects the major economic and social progress in Albania, which in 2003 was at place 95 in the same index. The real GDP growth in Albania is around 6 percent.

In its 2005 Progress Report, the European Commission is quite encouraging in her judgement of the economic situation. The report advises stable macro-economic policy and the removal of administrative barriers to attract investors. "Albania should also develop a strategy to promote employment and social cohesion", recommends the EC.

Crime and corruption

In the case of Albania, economic growth goes along with corruption, illegal trafficking of drugs and people, organised crime and social exclusion. Albania is often referred to as one of the key points for illegal traffic to Western Europe, and despite obvious efforts to reverse the flow, not much seems to have been improved. The political elite has been persistently accused of having a hand in these illegal trade activities.

Transparency International ranks the country in 2006 at 111th place among 163 countries, with a corruption perception index ranging between 2.4 and 3 out of 10. Although Albania in 2006 leaves behind countries like Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, the country fails to show any significant improvement in its level of corruption. About 60 percent of the population ranks corruption as the biggest social problem, much higher than unemployment or local incomes. During his elections campaign, current PM Sali Berisha said (in April 2005): "Everybody, whether inside the country or outside, knows that corruption is the biggest problem in Albania." He himself had a poor record with corruption fighting in the past. It was during his presidency in the mid 1990s that fraudulent "pyramid" savings schemes were allowed to continue their activities unchecked in spite of warnings from the central bank and international donors.

Corruption in Albania not only has devastating effects on the incomes of the population, it also ruins the foundations of the democracy in the country, as accusations of corruption to top-ranking politicians and civil



servants remain unanswered. The crisis in the Socialist Party in 2001 emerged mainly with public accusations of corruption between the camps of Meta and Nano.

Good governance and democratisation

The positive trend marked with the last elections (national in 2001 and 2005 and local in 2003/4) promises to indicate the end of a decade of turbulent political developments in Albania, where extreme political polarisation, bloodshed and lack of transparency took place on a regular basis. The brutal clashes of the past decade are gone. Recently, President Moisiu has summoned the main political parties to open up dialogue in view to amending the law on local elections.

According to different analyses, civil society has the necessary legal framework to develop in Albania; however, there are not many people who organise themselves. According to the European Commission, professional organisations as well as NGO's and Trade Unions remain weak due to public apathy, and lack of organisational experience, financial resources and advocacy skills.

The new code of procedures in the Parliament has the potential to make its work more transparent. A newly created Civil Service Commission is working more effectively. However, the new government continued the practice of changing almost entirely the civil service after coming in power – a reason for strong criticism by the World Bank director for Albania, as well as the Ombudsman.

Regarding human rights some concerns remain. In its Progress Report, the EC says: "Further effort should be made to ensure that law enforcement officers are aware of their human rights obligations, and that there is considerably better enforcement of these obligations, with transgressions being systematically punished. Albania should fully implement the 2004 master plan for improved treatment of detainees. Albania should foster the freedom of media and expression by adopting new laws on defamation, media ownership and press freedom which are fully in line with international standards. Further efforts are required to complete the legal and administrative framework for the protection of minorities. The national strategy to improve the living conditions of the Roma should be fully implemented."

Relations with the neighbours

Generally speaking, Albania maintains good relations with its neighbours, and has (or is) seeking free trade agreements with all the Balkan countries. Also the combat of trafficking and organised crime is a topic on which regional co-operation is being sought.

Of great importance is the delicate issue of the Albanians living abroad. Due to historical reasons, between two and three million ethnic Albanians live in countries neighbouring Albania – mainly in Kosovo, Southern Serbia and Macedonia. In the recent past, these Diaspora communities have staged armed conflicts, demanding more political and social rights and/or independence.

Despite some talks of creating a "Greater Albania", which would unite all ethnic Albanians, the Albanian government acted moderately during the crisis in 1999 in Kosovo and in 2001 in Macedonia and thus won the trust of the international community. The Kosovo refugees who came to Albania during the NATO military operation in 1999 returned after the conflict ended.

The declaration of independence of Kosovo on 15 February 2008 initially caused concern over rising tensions in the region, but so far Albania has kept a low profile. It was the second country to recognise Kosovo after the US, thus first waiting for the new republic to be backed by a superpower. Although relations with the Kosovo leadership are warm, unification of Albania and Kosovo has not been mentioned as a serious option, and such ideas are generally discouraged by Albanian politicians. Only a few very small political parties in Albania and Kosovo nowadays call for the creation of a Greater Albania. In the past, Albania has also prosecuted several ethnic-Albanian extremists on charges of inciting interethnic hatred in Macedonia and Kosovo.



It could be added that the prospects of integration into European structures offer a good substitute to the idea of Greater Albania. The government has stressed that it rather sees an "Albanian zone" consisting of all Albanian-inhabited regions being integrated into the EU and NATO than a Greater Albania.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Socialist Party (SP)

<http://www.ps-al.org/>

Party leader: Edi Rama

66 seats in Parliament

The SP is the successor to the communist party, the Albanian Workers' Party. The party participated in the first free elections under its old name and won a clear majority – 169 of the 250 parliamentary seats in April 1991. The party changed its name to Socialist Party in June 1991. After the elections, a government of national salvation was formed in a bid to cope with the growing crisis. In the 1992 and 1996 elections the PSSH lost a large share of its supporters, winning only 38 and 10 seats respectively.

Arguing that the 1996 general elections were not fair and free, the Socialist Party representatives refused to take their seats. In the general elections in 1997 and 2001 the PS was the biggest party and formed the government. In the last elections (2005) the Socialist Party became the second biggest party with 42 seats, and thus came in opposition.

As a result of the elections results, party leader Fatos Nano resigned his post in September 2005. He now heads the newly established National Committee which will have an advisory status in the party.

Edi Rama, the famous mayor of Tirana, who won the world-renown title Mayor of the Year 2004, became the party leader. With him, a new era of development began, as he never had direct links with the former Stalinist regime. Rama is an artist by profession.

In 1996 party leader Fatos Nano took the first steps towards social democratisation. Nano appealed to the party to scrap all references to Marxism and to reform the party leadership. Still, about 40 percent of the current membership were members of the Stalinist Workers' party, but the communist group within the party has become smaller. The party relies on support from rural areas, although support in the main cities has been rising. The Socialist Party is the largest political organisation in Albania (109.000 members), which is partly due to the structures it inherited from its communist predecessor.

In spring 1993 Nano was charged with mass corruption allegation by the State Control chief, who was from the Democratic Party. Nano was arrested and convicted to 12 years in prison. Berisha's party then thought the Socialists would quietly distance themselves from the public sphere, but produced exactly the opposite result: Nano won a status of a political prisoner and became a symbol of the Left. In 1996 Nano was re-elected party leader whilst he was still in prison. As part of the turbulent events of 1997, then president Berisha issued a decree pardoning his greatest rival Fatos Nano.

PS returned to power after the 1997 elections. Consequently, the former Secretary General of the party, Rexhep Mejdani, became President of the country. Chairman Fatos Nano became Prime Minister. Fourteen months later Nano resigned, in the wake of unrest as a result of the murder of a leading democratic politician. An attempted uprising by opposition supporters almost toppled the coalition.

Pandeli Majko replaced Nano. With this replacement, a new generation came to power, with no ties to the Communist past. However, at the next Congress of the Socialist Party, held in October 1999, Nano was re-elected as party leader. After this, Majko resigned as Prime Minister. Still, the 30-year old Ilir Meta became the new Prime Minister, defeating Makbule Ceko, confidante of Fatos Nano. The crisis, however, continued. Last years the party went through its most severe post-communist crisis, due to the rivalry between Meta and Nano, who in a way represent the divisions between 'new' and 'old', between reform and conservative camps. In 2002 alone Albania lived through three Prime Ministers: Meta had to resign under pressure in January, after an internal party campaign,



led by Nano, to topple him. He paved the way for Majko to return to the post.

The crisis deepened when time came to elect the president, as Nano expressed interest in the post. Complicated developments took place, and compromises were made. Finally, a retired general Moisu became president, while Nano returned to the post of Prime Minister, appointing his party rivals Majko and Meta to the cabinet. The conflict situation remained and led to the resignation of Meta on the eve of the 2003 local elections, followed by the resignation of two other ministers.

After the re-election of Nano on the party Congress in December 2003, his opponents founded a new political movement named the Socialist Movement for Integration, led by Meta. Ten other deputies among which popular ex-members of the Chairmanship joined the movement. The aim is to set up a new party, if Fatos Nano does not resign both as Prime Minister and party leader, and if the party does not democratise. This party will be based on social democratic values and will include the one member one vote principle.

On 25 July, party-leader Edi Rama expelled former leader Fatos Nano from all high ranks in the party. Berisha blames Nano for his role in the political deadlock of July 2007, when the Albanian parliament voted a new president. For a long period of time, this was impossible due to a parliamentary boycott by the mp's of the SP. Nano ended the deadlock by urging seven mp's to end their boycott and to vote for Topi. This action was the direct reason for the measures taken by Edi Rama. Nano declared to come with a new political movement in September.

The Socialist Party is a full member of the Socialist International.

Social Democratic Party (SDP)
Party leader: Skender Gjinushi
7 seats in Parliament

The party was founded in April 1991, in the aftermath of the first free parliamentary elections of March/April. In the second election a year later, the SPD won 7 out of 140 mandates. For a while, it participated in the Democratic Party led coalition, providing two junior ministers. It left over the proposal to amend the constitution. The SDP failed to secure a mandate in the elections of May 1996, which were generally recognised as fraudulent, and in December 1996 joined the 'Forum for Democracy' which included the Albanian Socialist Party. In June 1997 it managed to secure 8 of 155 seats in the parliamentary elections and formed part of the SP-led government coalition.

At the 2001 elections it got four members of parliament. At the last elections in July 2005 it increased its representation, now holding seven seats in Parliament. All seven MPs were elected through the proportional list. The party is led by Skënder Gjinushi, the Minister of Education 1987–1991. Gjinushi later became the speaker of the Albanian parliament.
SDP is a full member of the Socialist International.

Socialist Movement for Integration (SMI)
Party leader: Ilir Meta (www.ilirmeta.com)
www.lsi-al.org
4 seats in Parliament

After the re-election of Nano on the party Congress in December 2003, his opponents founded a new political movement named the Socialist Movement for Integration, led by Meta. Ten other deputies among which popular ex-members of the chairmanship joined the movement.
The Socialist Movement for Integration announced its conversion into an independent political party in a founding Congress in September 2004.

The Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) is a social-democratic party in nature, oriented towards a liberal market economy that operates and progresses within a social welfare state. The party is based on social democratic values



and will include the one member one vote principle. The core objective is: a cohesive Albanian society integrated into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Social Democracy Party (SDY)
Party Leader: Paskal Milo
2 seats in Parliament

In early summer 2003, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Paskal Milo split from the Social Democratic Party due to internal strife for the party leadership. His newly formed party, confusingly named the Social Democracy Party, was running in most of the municipalities in the 2003 local elections. Milo brought his party into the government on the basis of an agreement signed by the left-wing parties at the end of December 2003. In July 2004 the party announced to leave the governing coalition again because of dissatisfaction with the functioning of the roundtable meetings of the coalition.

OTHER PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT

Democratic Party of Albania (DPA)
70 seats in Parliament
Party leader: Sali Berisha
<http://www.dpalbania.org/>

The Democratic Party of Albania is a center-right political party in Albania. The DPA is currently the major governmental party, having won the elections of July 2005. Together with other, small rightist parties, it formed the government as of September 2005 and enjoys a comfortable majority in the Parliament.

The DPA was instrumental in the ending of communist rule in Albania and was in power from 1992 until 1997, under the leadership of Sali Berisha and Aleksander Meksi. The government resigned in 1997 after a civil war nearly broke out and its socialist rivals gained power. It was part of the Union for Victory coalition, which received 37.1 percent of the vote in the 2001 elections and 46 members of parliament. In the July 2005 parliamentary elections, the Democratic Party won 56 of the 140 seats and its allies won 18.

From early on the party endured internal struggles and was more than once accused by other parties – most notably the Socialist Party – of authoritarian rule by then president of the republic Sali Berisha, who was the personal physician of communist leader Enver Hoxha.

The PDA, established in 1990, was the first opposition party in Albania after 50 years of severe Stalinist rule.

In the period 1992 until the June 1997 elections, the Democratic Party of Albania enjoyed a two-thirds majority in parliament. During his rule, Berisha tried to increase presidential power but was accused of trying to impose an authoritarian regime. He also introduced changes towards a market economy, which only favoured a small percentage of the population, while the majority Albanians lived in still harsher poverty. After the uprising and the collapse of the financial pyramids, the DPA lost severely and did not want to acknowledge the result of the vote. Still today, particularly voters in the south, blame the Berisha government for their economic misfortune and tend to vote for the Socialist Party. The DPA draws most of its support from the north of the country.

The style of the PDA has always been one of confrontation, only in recent years after significant pressure by the US and the EU, the party has adopted a more co-operative behaviour. Sali Berisha was president from 1992 to 1997 when the violent events after the collapse of the pyramid schemes acted as a catalyst for removing him from power. In the period out of office, Berisha has retained his seat in parliament, but frequently boycotted the body in protest at alleged government corruption and incompetence. He often accused the incumbent government of Prime Minister Fatos Nano of masterminding a number of murders and assassination attempts on opposition politicians.

In the 1997 – 2005 period, the DPA was the biggest opposition party. It was ahead of the opposition Union for Victory, which together had 46 mandates in the 140-seats Parliament (2001–2005). The four partners were



Movement of Legality Party (ML), Republican Party (RP), National Front (NF) and Liberal Democratic Union (LDU).

Currently, the DPA has its governmental partner in the face of the Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Welfare (AFJW) with 18 seats.

The DPA has an observer status in the European People's Party (EPP).

Alliance for Freedom, Justice and Welfare (AFJW)
Consists of seven parties, together 18 seats in Parliament

The AFJW consists of seven parties, close to the Democratic Party: New Democrat Party (NDP), Demo-Christian Party (CDP), Liberal Democratic Union (LDU), Democratic National Front Party (DNFP), Albanian Democratic Union Party (ADUP), Republican Party (RP) and the Human Rights and Liberties Movement Party (HRLMP). The results for the AFJW reflect the win of 11 seats by the RP, 4 seats by the NDP, 2 seats by CDP, and 1 seat by LDU.

Republican Party (RP) 11 seats
Party leader: Fatmir Mediu

The Republican Party is a conservative, landowner's party founded in 1991. Throughout the whole post-communist period, it has been close to the bigger DPA of Sali Berisha. It is the biggest party within the AFJW, with 11 seats, which makes it the third biggest party of the country. Its leader was appointed Minister of Defence in 2005.

New Democrat Party (NDP)
4 seats
Party Leader: Genc Pollo
<http://www.pdr-al.org/>

The NDP was founded in 2000. In the 2001 elections, it became the third biggest party, attracting mainly disaffected voters of the DPA. Its leader, Genc Pollo, is a former deputy chairman of the DPA. He is also a former Minister for Education and Science (1992-97) and a current one (2005 -). The party has observer status in the European People's Party (EPP)

Christian Democratic Party of Albania (CDPA)
2 seats

The Christian Democratic Party is a small political party. In the 2005 Parliamentary Elections in Albania, it won two seats. Its first election was in 1996, where it won no seats but 1.3% of the vote. It also ran candidates in 1997, where with 1% it won one seat, and in 2001 where it won zero seats with 1% of the vote.

Liberal Democratic Union
Party leader: A. Starova
1 seat

The Liberal Democratic Union is a small conservative party. It participated in the Union for Victory opposition bloc in the past elections, and currently in the AFJW.



Environmental Agrarian Party (EAP) Party leader: Luftër Xhuvëli
4 seats

The Environmentalist Agrarian Party founded in 1991. Initially the party was known as the Agrarian Party of Albania (Partia Agrare e Shqipërisë). It is a reformist party that supports a free market economic system. In the June 2001 elections, it received 2.6 percent of the vote and three seats in Parliament. In the 2003 local elections, the party contested in alliance with the Socialist Party of Albania in some areas. Together, they won in three municipalities. In the 2005 parliamentary elections the party got 4 seats. In 1998 Xhuvëli became Minister of Agriculture. Under the Majko government he was made Minister for the Environment in February 2002. In 2003 he had to resign on the order of then PM Nano. In 2005 he again became minister – this time with the portfolio environment and water.

Democratic Alliance (DAP) Party leader: Neritan Ceka
3 seats

DAP is a centrist party, founded in 1992 by Gramoz Pashko, after he was expelled from the Democratic Party. Pashko was co-founder of the Democratic Party, but got into a power struggle with his counterpart Berisha, and lost. The Democratic Alliance Party was in government together with the Socialists from 1997 until 2005. Since 1997 Neritan Ceka, former Interior Minister is the leader of the party. DAP is a member of the European Liberal Democrats (ELRD)

Human Rights Unity Party (HRUP)
Party leader: Vasil Melo
2 seats

HRUP is a centrist-liberal party in Albania. The party was founded in 1992 to represent Albania's ethnic Greek population as the continuation of the Democratic Union of the Greek Minority (Omonoia), banned under the autocratic régime of Sali Berisha that was toppled in a popular uprising in 1997. The HRUP joined a Socialist-led coalition in 1997. In the 2001 elections it won three members of parliament. At the last elections in July 2005 it won two seats in parliament. The party leader is Vasil Melo. The party is represented in the ELDR group in the Council of Europe. The Minister of Labour and Equal Opportunities in the current government is from the HRUM – Mr. Thoma Mico.

Further reading:

- [OSCE Election Observation Mission Report](#)
- [OSCE Presence in Albania](#)
- [EU: Albania Country Profile](#)
- [EU: Albania Strategy Paper 2005](#)
- [Wikipedia on Albania](#)
- [Mjaft!](#)
- [BBC Country Profile Albania](#)
- [UNDP Albania](#)
- [UNDP Human Development Reports 2005](#)
- [International Crisis Group: Albania page](#)
- [CIA World Factbook – Albania](#)
- [Transparency International CPI](#)



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