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## **PRESIDENT REFUSES TO DECREE ALBANIA'S NEW MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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EXIT (10 January 2019)

Today President Ilir Meta refused to decree the nomination of Gent Cakaj as Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) of Albania.

In a letter to Prime Minister Edi Rama, the President stated his reasons for not approving Ramas nomination to replace the current minister Ditmir Bushati with Gent Cakaj.

According to the President, Gent Cakaj clearly lacks experience in politics, diplomacy, administration, state affairs. He also cites earlier statements of Cakaj that seem to show his support for the redrawing of borders between Kosovo and Serbia, which the President considers to be unacceptable, dangerous, and against the regional foreign policy of Albania, NATO and EU.

Furthermore, President Meta states that the Albanian National Security Agency (NSA) gave security clearance to Cakaj within 24 hours from his application on 3 January 2018, despite the fact that Cakaj lived in Kosovo, Hungary and Belgium for several years. Metas assessment is that the government-dependent NSA did not fully investigate Cakajs background before providing him with security clearance certificates at national, NATO and EU level. Moreover, since June 2018 Gent Cakaj seems to have exercised his duty as deputy prime minister of MEFA without having undergone the necessary security clearance.

Earlier this week the President had decreed the nomination of seven ministers and a deputy prime minister, following Ramas dismissal of more than half of his cabinet. Ditmir Bushatis dismissal by Prime Minister Rama, which raised eyebrows in diplomatic circles in Europe, was the only one President Meta had not decreed. Bushati will have to continue in his duty as Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania.

<https://exit.al/en/2019/01/10/president-meta-refuses-to-decree-albanias-new-minister-of-foreign-affairs/>

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