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## **EU COMMISSIONER JOHANNES HAHN AND ALBANIAN PRIME MINISTER EDI RAMA MEET IN TIRANA**

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EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn met with the Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama in Tirana today, to discuss progress in EU integration related reforms and recent political developments in the region.

The Commissioner underlined that it is important to continue the good momentum of last year to deliver tangible results in the reforms agenda is crucial in light of the upcoming decision by the EU Council on opening accession negotiations with Albania in June 2019.

The justice reform continues to deliver results, and the institutional restructuring of the judiciary should be completed within the coming weeks. Commissioner Hahn highlighted the recent action against organised crime as a positive sign in this regard which needs however to become part of a solid track record and followed-up with prosecution and final convictions. The fight against organised crime and the fight against corruption at all levels remain priorities in the EU-Albania relations.

He expressed concern about the still high number of unfounded asylum applications from Albanian citizens in some EU Member States. The underlying causes need to be addressed and the cooperation with the Governments of the affected EU Member States further intensified.

The Commissioner reiterated that the strong commitment to the EU integration process by Prime Minister Rama is key and that the constructive political dialogue between all political parties and the readiness to work together in the interest of all Albanian citizens is essential for the European future of Albania. A cross-party agreement on electoral reform to address the recommendations from OSCE/ODIHR would be a good opportunity to show such readiness.

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