

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002062/24
to the Commission
Fredis Beleris (PPE)
(14 October 2024)**

Subject: Edi Rama's announcement at the UN General Assembly about the creation of a sovereign state for Bektashi Muslims in Tirana

Speaking at the UN General Assembly on Sunday 22 September 2024, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama announced his country's plans to establish a sovereign Muslim microstate in Tirana.

According to the information made available so far, this autonomous and independent state will be called Sovereign State of the Bektashi Order. It will have its own diplomatic documents, borders and a separate administrative structure. The new state within the Albanian state will only grant citizenship to Shia Muslims, members of the Sufi religious community.

In view of the above:

1. What is the Commission's take on this potential new state and whether its creation is in breach of the agreements made in the context of Albania's path to EU accession, and if it is, what additional criteria can be introduced?
2. Does the creation of such a state, where there will be no elections, meet the Copenhagen political criteria, which every country must satisfy, namely stability of institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities?
3. What diplomatic moves will the Commission make to ensure the peaceful coexistence of all religious communities in Albania?

Submitted: 14.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(21 March 2025)**

The Commission attaches the utmost importance to the respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion, enshrined in Article 10 of the EU Charter of Fundamental rights ⁽¹⁾, and for freedom of expression, religion, interfaith tolerance and dialogue, as stated in Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU ⁽²⁾.

However, it would emphasise that under Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the EU does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities.

The Commission will continue to monitor the respect of freedom of religion or belief in Albania through the stabilisation and association process and the enlargement process and will assess progress through its annual enlargement report.

In this regard, the 2024 Albania report ⁽³⁾ states that 'Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is generally upheld in Albania'.

The Commission has no comments, at this stage, on this specific announcement made at the United Nations General Assembly by the Albanian Prime Minister.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT>

⁽³⁾ SWD(2024) 690 final, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a8eec3f9-b2ec-4cb1-8748-9058854dbc68_en?filename=Albania%20Report%202024.pdf