

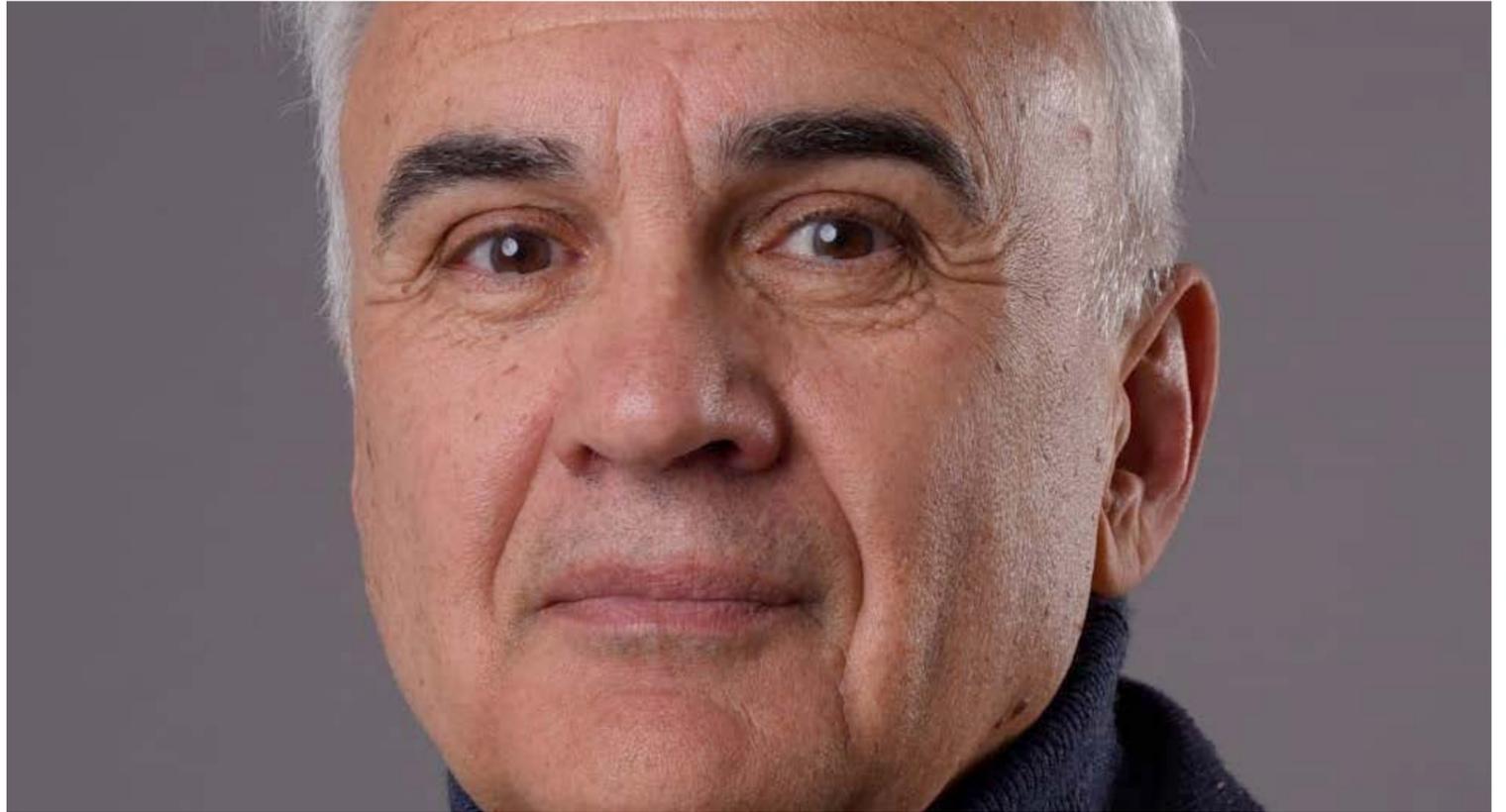
IADC'S NINO MEROLA EXCLUSIVELY FOR ADN

'We Stay Safe and Get Ready for Change'

"As Italian Cooperation we are not directly involved in the emergency situation, but we are very much committed with the Albanian Authorities on several issues and sectors really important for the restarting phase and the immediate future" says Mr. Merola

by Genc Mlloja

SENIOR DIPLOMATIC EDITOR



"In such a difficult moment, Albanian doctors and nurses getting the flight for Italy have touched our heart. We are proud of our friendship and grateful for the Albanian support and presence," has said the Head of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (IADC) in Tirana, Nino Merola.

In an exclusive interview with Albanian Daily News Mr. Merola unveiled that IADC had not stopped any of its activities. "Every initiative is being brought forward, in the interest of the friendship and partnership with Albania," he said, adding that in this period of restrictions, the Agency is working on planning, mandatory documentations and fundamental revisions, essential issues to speed its action when being able to get back to normal life. "In simple words, we stay safe and get ready for change."

IADC's head thought the Albanian Authorities had made good experience of what happened in other countries, such as Italy, the first in Europe to counter the emergency. "The spread of the virus in Albania is quite limited. It's a positive result of the measures that have been taken by the Albanian Authorities," he said.

Although not directly in-

involved in the emergency situation caused by Covid 19 the Italian Cooperation is very much committed with the Albanian authorities on several issues and sectors really important for the restarting phase and the immediate future, in order to reduce as much as possible the negative impact of the present situation, said Mr. Merola of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation which has a total amount of 39 projects in Albania where it operates since 1991.

In a comment on the opening of the EU accession talks of, a decision made last March, Mr. Merola considered it as a great result for Albania but also as a major achievement for the European Union. "There was a large willingness in Europe to get to this point. I agree corona virus will not overshadow it at all. From now on, it is necessary to support even more the Albanian Institutions to deal with the standards requested by the negotiations," said the IADC Head in Tirana, Nino Merola in the following interview:

Albanian Daily News: Mr. Merola how have you and the Italian Cooperation staff felt about Albanians' solidarity with the Italian people at these painful times of

the fatal hit of the coronavirus pandemic which has taken the lives of thousands of people and has disrupted the normal life in Italy but also in Albania and other countries worldwide?

IADC's Head Nino Merola: All our staff, as all the Italian citizens, have been very much impressed by your expression of solidarity, friendship and memory. In such a difficult moment, Albanian doctors and nurses getting the flight for Italy have touched our heart. We are proud of our friendship and grateful for the Albanian support and presence.

-There have been a lot of ongoing activities of the Agency in Albania. Please can you tell us what is happening with them?

- First of all, it's important to say we didn't stop any of our activities. Every initiative is being brought forward, in the interest of the friendship and partnership with Albania. In this period of restrictions, we are working on planning, mandatory documentations and fundamental revisions, essential issues to speed our action when we'll be able to get back to normal life. In simple words, we stay safe and get ready for change.

-Even though it is unpredictable to say when this pandemic will be over, have you framed any exit plan from the current deadlock? What projects can restart the normal operation in the near future?

- For us it's not a real deadlock. Of course, there's a slowdown in the field, but our offices and headquarters are in a preparatory implementing stage. When the green light comes on, our support will go to Albanian Institutions, Municipalities and local communities, especially the ones far from the Capital, in order to revitalize the economy as soon as possible and keep improving the citizens quality of life.

-Mr. Merola, in your opinion how is the pandemic situation being managed in Albania by the authorities and the people finding themselves in a total lockdown, and secondly, what can you say on the situation of those who have been engaged in your projects?

- As a person and as a citizen I think the Albanian Authorities made good experience of what happened in other Countries, such as Italy, the first in Europe to counter the emergency. The spread of the virus in Albania is quite

limited. It's a positive result of the measures that have been taken by the Albanian Authorities.

-"Together, we got over the humanitarian emergencies," has been a slogan for action of the Agency. What Albania is facing is an emergency. Have you had communication with relevant government bodies with regard to the impact of the pandemic and cooperative alternatives on how to overcome its repercussions in economy, social life and environment?

- Well, I may say that as Italian Cooperation we are not directly involved in the emergency situation. We are not targeting anything strictly related to the virus Covid 19, but we are very much committed with the Albanian Authorities on several issues and sectors really important for the restarting phase and the immediate future, in order to reduce as much as possible the negative impact of the present situation.

More in detail, concerning the social life, we are close to award many projects of the next Italian-albanian Debt Swap Program (IADSA), belonging mainly to the social dimension in many Municipalities throughout the Coun-

try. From the economic point of view, we are focusing on sustainable tourism, working side by side with the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. Worth to mention also our initiatives for the sustainable development of Blue Economy and the enhancement of Albanian natural capital. Your natural beauty is amazing. It is an undisputed asset to protect and promote.

If sustainably managed, the Albanian communities may well benefit from it, for a long time ahead. Safeguard and enhancement of the Albanian cultural heritage is also an important issue in our agenda: it's a main asset of the Country worth to be developed, not only for its economic potential but also because it will contribute to create a new, attractive image of Albania.

-Seeing things from the optimistic perspective in what way can the project Made with Italy be redesigned in the new circumstances as it is spread in many fields throughout Albania?

- I would rather say it's not needed to redesign it. It is an important and useful instrument for the next restarting



From now on it is necessary to support Albania even more, says Mr. Merola

phase, that's the most critical one in every Countries. Made With Italy is the brand of an effective partnership. This concept and all the people that are part of this community of change will be boosted. At the same time, we are expanding to other social and economic areas this participative approach to the development processes.

More in detail, for the brand Made With Italy, we are foreseeing the inclusion of every cooperation activity for the Albanian education system and in support of new local development agents. In this perspective, we are look-

ing for a community of people linked to the territories, that lives and loves their cities or villages, that pays attention to the added values of their homeland. I'm talking about active promoter of the sustainable development of the territories. Their cooperation with our management will enhance the positive activism of the new Albanian generation and youth entrepreneurship. In these perspective, supporting new ideas will contribute to the Albanian restarting phase.

-Mr. Merola, Albania got the green light for the open-

ing of the EU accession negotiations last March which I think cannot be overshadowed by the blow of the coronavirus pandemic. First, how do you assess such a development and secondly, what new contribution can be made by the Agency in the new stage? For example, I have in mind the project, "Supporting the Albanian School of Magistrates in the framework of the constitutional reform" launched in November last year.

- It is a clear, great result for Albania. As well, it is a major achievement for the European Union. There was a large

willingness in Europe to get to this point. I agree coronavirus will not overshadow it at all. From now on, it is necessary to support even more the Albanian Institutions to deal with the standards requested by the negotiations.

Particularly, we, as Italian Cooperation in Albania, are keen, ready and supportive in some specific and essential issues where Italy can add value and provide effective solutions. First of all, as a top priority, the Rule of Law. The Italian Cooperation will side the sectorial Albanian Institutions to fasten the judicial reform and achieve the targets set by the European Union.

The initiative you mentioned is implemented by the High Council of Judiciary of Italy, an Institution of constitutional importance. For this purpose, the commitment of our Embassy is strong and steady. I take the chance to underline another ongoing activity. Our Ministry of Agriculture is strictly working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Albania in order to comply with the European standards and achieve a higher level of development in this sector so important for rural communities.

77TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUBLIME SACRIFICE

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Marked

TIRANA - Poland's Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) has commemorated the Sunday-falling 77th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, in which Warsaw's Jews rose up against the Nazis.

To mark the occasion, IPN deputy head Mateusz Szpytma laid flowers at a memorial to the insurgents, reported PAP news agency on Saturday.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising broke out on April 19, 1943, in the final phase of the ghetto's liquidation, launched by the Nazis a few months earlier. The insurgency which lasted until May 16 was a symbolic act with slim to no chance of success. In an uneven, almost one-month-long struggle, the poorly-armed fighters of the Jewish Combat Organisation (ZOB) and the Jewish Military Union stood up to SS and Wehrmacht

forces, the Security Police and their auxiliaries.

On May 8, 1943, the then commander of the uprising, Mordechai Anielewicz, together with a group of ZOB soldiers, committed suicide in a bunker at 18 Mila Street. Just a handful of fighters managed to escape from the burning ghetto through the sewage system. Among them was the last commander of the uprising, Marek Edelman.

It is presumed that about 6,000 insurgents died in the fighting. Survivors were mostly deported to German concentration camps. What remained of the Warsaw ghetto was razed to the ground by German troops led by SS General Juergen Stroop, who, after having been tried in Poland for crimes against humanity, was hanged on March 6, 1952, in Warsaw's Rakowiecka St. prison. The Warsaw ghetto



The IPN paid tribute to the insurgents of the Warsaw ghetto uprising

was established on October 12, 1940. A German decree required all Polish Jews from Warsaw to move into a designated area which German authorities sealed off from

the rest of the city in November 1940. At its peak, the ghetto's population reached over 400,000 Polish citizens of Jewish descent. The first wave of mass deportations

from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka German Nazi extermination camp started on July 22 and lasted until September 12, 1942, embracing some 300,000 Polish Jews.