

Albania's relations with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation The process and advantages of this cooperation

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Abstract

Based on the need for a broader and deep analysis of Albania's relations with international organizations, as a integration and development process, this study will examine the relations between Albania and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This analysis will consist in a geo-historical aspect, starting from the fall of the communist regime until today. This research will focus on the commercial, political and the economic field, and will also analyze the reasons of its membership, the advantages and problems during its transition period. This analytical study is based on documents of high state institutions and articles of scientific assessments.

The organized structure and content of this research explains the intents and purposes of Albania's relations in accordance to internal and external development plan. The main aims were to take advantage of the international forum, economic and political support and seeking potential political and economic allies is one of the main causes of Albania's membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The efforts and priorities of the foreign policy of Albania were to restore the stability in the country, facing with the challenges that arise since the isolation of the country. This article presents the concept of Albania's foreign policy following the collapse of the communist regime and relations with the Islamic countries, with the main goal of increasing political-economic co-operation, which became the main agenda of Albania's foreign policy makers.

Keywords: international organization, OIC, international relations, transition.

Introduction

Given the difficult situation in all areas currently underway in Albania, the transition from a centralized economy to the market economy is accompanied by great economic and political difficulties. The difficult conditions that Albania came out from rigid regime, was a necessary to make steps towards strengthening the relations with the Arab world¹. The democratic processes in the country that led Albania to great openness, and in particular to the freedom of religion, encouraged member states of the Islamic Conference to propose Albania country as a full member. Under these conditions, the assistance of Islamic countries on loans and funds from various institutions was very important. The democratic processes of Albania in the political, economic and social perspective led to freedom of religion, have driven the various member countries of the organization like Turkey, Egypt, to suggest Albania's entry

¹ Arkiva e MPEJ, Dosja 78, nr prot.1908, Tirane 1/7/1991, 80,87-88.

into the organization and this step of Albania's membership will give a way for Albania to a significant number of benefits such as, political, economic and social fields, etc.

The collapse of communism set the stage for the western wing as the most vital and successful. The West has taken the place of the superpower, irreplaceable and decisive in resolving conflicts not only in the Middle East but also beyond this region². Small countries such Albania with low economic and political potential will need to seek support for their economic developments, in the same time seek the implementation of democratic principles in international relations. Following the collapse of the rigid communist regime that presumes the changes in the country's economic, political and social system according to the Western model, in the same time the alignment of Albania with the European Union up to its membership. To build up the foreign policy of a small country as the present case of Albania is that the treatment of the historical factor has to be considered as the main pillar, where the determining factor is their continuous democratization, the historical factor is neither taken for historical curiosity nor is it required to correct it, putting "in the place of historical injustices" at every cost and denying slow developments and new national interests³.

The historical background of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

In order to assess the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as an institution, its extension, its functioning and its transformation, the history and geographic scope of this international institution should be seen. As it is named, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation aims the inclusion of all Islamic countries in this international organization. At the end of World War II, the concept of the Islamic world changed to a considerable extent. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which held somehow the legitimacy of the mobilization of the Islamic world, has joined for the first time in an organization and began the efforts for a common political attitude. This movement has to be seen as an unlimited geography extension of countries in the composition of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The OIC was established in Rabat, Morocco in 1969, two years after the sixday war and shortly after the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was set on fire. Islamic countries with the initiative of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Iran, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Somalia, Nigeria, being former allies to the West, in particular the US, initiated the establishment of an Islamic Organization with the main objective of enhancing the Islamic solidarity of the member states of this organization, supporting and cooperating among them in various fields such as, economic, cultural, scientific, social, etc. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation was established in May 1971 in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah after a high-level conference of heads of state and government on 22-25 September 1969 in Rabat-Morocco, followed by the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Jeddah March 1970, and Karachi on December 1970. It has grown in membership from the twenty-two countries that attended the founding conference in

² Goga Harilla, *Shqipëria mes zhvillimeve të Sotme Ndërkombëtare. Shtëpia Botuese Dituria, Tiranë 1999*, p.8

³ Goga Harilla, *Shqipëria mes zhvillimeve*, 20-27.

Rabat, Morocco, to fifty-seven countries. Preserving the Holy Places and support to the Palestinian people to regain their rights has been part of the aims of the Islamic Conference⁴. The current name was approved on 28 June 2011 at the 38th meeting of the Islamic Conference of Council of Foreign Ministers held at Astana, Kazakhstan, where the OIC Charter was also amended.

OIC institutions and its features

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest international organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread across four continents, Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. The main body of the OIC is the meeting of heads of state every three years and the meeting of foreign ministers once a year. The General Secretariat headed by the Secretary General manages and organizes the work of all relevant institutions and sectors. Based on the OBI charter, member states are equal, respect for self-determination rights, and non-interference with the internal affairs of member states, respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each state, resolving the conflict between member states on a peaceful path through dialogue between member states⁵.

The structure of this organization is based on the UN and the former common market of European countries framework. The Islamic Organization has a universal nature in terms of religious, cultural, etc., where, in addition to the general secretariat, there are other auxiliary bodies in the organization of Islamic countries. There are the four committees formed at the meeting held in Makkah in 1988, such as; the Palestinian Affairs Committee, the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee, the Science and Technology Issues Committee and the Culture and Information Committee.

In addition, there are bodies that depend on the secretariat general; Islamic Center for Trade Development (ICDT), Islamic Center for Historic, Cultural and Artistic Studies - Istanbul (IRSICA), Trade Development Center - Kazablanka (ICDT), Islamic Center for Trade Development (ICDT). Specialized institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), as well as independent bodies such as the Union of Islamic Chambers of Commerce and Industry-Karaci (ICCI), City Organizations and Islamic-Makah (OICC) capitals⁶. Parliamentary Union of OIC member states (PUIC) has established in 1999, with the main objectives to provide a framework for comprehensive and fruitful cooperation and coordination among parliaments of OIC members in international arena, since that time Albania become a member of the Union.

Charter and membership criteria of OIC

The principles underlying the Islamic Cooperation Organization's charter are; a) Full equality between member states, b) Respect for the right of self-determination

⁴ Dovutogllu. Ahmet, 2010, Thellësia.. , Logos, 305, Shih, Leci. Elmas, (2011), Organizatat dhe Institucionet Ndërkombëtare, Tirane, 279-280.

⁵ Feltham. Ralph G,(2010).Diplomacia, AIIIS, 127.

⁶ Arkiva e MPEJ, Dosja 1543, Tirane 19/10/1991, 64-68. Shih, Dovutogllu. Ahmet, 2010, Thellësia,305-6.

and non-interference with the internal affairs of member states, c) Respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each member country, d) Resolving the conflicts that may eventually arise in a peaceful way such as negotiation, intermediation, etc, e) Non-use of force against territorial integrity.

According to the founding charter of OIC, the goals of this organization are; solidarity and Islamic support among members, co-operation in economic, cultural, political and other fields, as well as maintaining their identity and rights, preserving holy places and eliminating racial differentiation. OBI has signed and ratified a number of multilateral agreements with member states such as the agreement on trade and economic cooperation between member states, the agreement on investment protection between the members of the OIC, agreements on the arrangement of trade preferences among member states, the agreement of the statute the Member States' telecommunications unions, the Convention on the Fight against Terrorism, the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam, and so on.

Any state with a Muslim percentage has the right to become a member of the Conference by submitting a request, showing the desire and readiness to adapt to the card, which has to be filed to the Secretary General of the OIC and to submit it at the conference of foreign ministers. Acceptance is made with the approval of two-thirds of the members. Each state may withdraw from membership in the Islamic Conference by filing a written notification to the General Secretariat of the OIC, which informs all member countries⁷.

Albania's membership in OIC

In September 1979, during a visit by the Albanian Minister of Trade in Iraq, was recommended to state that our goal is not only trade but to expand friendship with the Iraqi people and other Arab peoples. Expanding relations with Arab countries was the main goal of foreign policy during the 1980s⁸. Albania's foreign policy towards Arab countries is to support friendly countries with all of our strengths in their difficult moments and this has been expressed by President Nasser during a message he sent to our country. At the invitation of Husni Mubarak at a conference "The Future of Arab and Muslim Nations after the Gulf War" where was discussed on the forms of cooperation and the future of Muslim countries⁹. This occasion was make use of expanded ties with the Arab world.

Albania has started to build relations for co-operation with Muslim world before the 1990s. A visit of the OIC delegation to Tirana in the beginning of the 1991, headed by Secretary General Dr. Hamid Al Ghabid accompanied by the Secretary General of the World Islamic Calling Association Dr. Mohamed Sheriff, were received by President Ramiz Alia, and members of the government. The main discussion was the possibility of cooperation with Muslim world and investment in Albania by providing medical assistance and other fields to the Albanian government. So, the government of Albania

⁷ Arkiva e MPEJ, Dosja 1542, 58.

⁸ Hoxha, Enver. 327-328.

⁹ Arkiva e MPEJ, Dosja 213, (Kajro 19/3/1991), 24.

purpose was to be member of IDB, in order to receive financial support¹⁰. The difficult situation in the Balkan region, in particular in Bosna Hercegovina and Kosovo and the genocide exercised over this population pushed the Secretary General of the OIC to convene specifically in order to discuss the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina of Albanians in Kosovo and the genocide exercised against this population, in order to make the international Muslim community aware of this issue.

The Albanian government under the leadership of President Ramiz Alia on December 7, 1991, was admitted as an observer to the Islamic Cooperation Conference. Dr. Hamid El-Gabid the Secretary General of the OIB sends an invitation to the Information Minister to attend as an observer at the Second Conference of Information Ministers held in Cairo from 15 to 16 January 1992¹¹. At the end of 1992, under the leadership of President Sali Berisha, the Albanian government became a full-fledged member of the Islamic Conference. Berisha, at that time the President of Albania, stated that the goal of membership was to obtain the possible aid from Islamic countries. The condition for economic support, Berisha informed the government Albania, was joining the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He hoped this would provide desperately needed aid and push the West to give more. Berisha said; "There is no tendency to see religion play a political role in Albania". To stress the point, he invited Pope John Paul II and NATO Secretary General Manfred Werner to Albania. Albania soon became the first former communist country to request membership in the NATO alliance¹².

Another reason for Albania joining the Organization of the Islamic Conference was the war in Bosnia. According to former government officials, Berisha offered Albania as a "gateway" to the Bosnian Muslims for arms and foreign fighters, despite the UN arms embargo on Yugoslavia in place since September 1991. He offered this with the knowledge of at least the United States, which was looking for ways to support the Bosnian Muslims.

Reasons for Co-operation with OIC

The establishment and development of this cooperation is not based only on ideological or historical reasons. Firstly, the OIC was born and developed as a reality reflecting the development of multilateral relations which appears in the form of state cooperation as the need for the development of the peoples of the region. Secondly, this wide and diverse territory includes natural resources from the richest of gas, oil, coal, etc. Third, OIC members are important international and strategic communications points favoring its members both from a commercial and political point of view. Lastly, some of the member countries have developed the tourism industry and possess significant development potential in the areas of economic, energy, etc. The official orientation of post-communist Albania continuous to be on the Euro-Atlantic integration, the natural connection with Western civilization. It is clear that this orientation does not hinder friendship, but it also encourages co-

¹⁰ Arkiva e MPEJ, Dosja 1542, 19 tetor 1991, 19, 50, 47, 70-71.

¹¹ Arkivi i OIC, IS/SG-INF/2-91, Jeddah, 4 janar 1992, Arkivi i MEPJ, (1992), dosja 1059, nr. 92/2.

¹² Abrahams.Fred, (2015),*Modern Albania: From Dictatorship to Democracy in Europe*, New York University Press.

operation with other states in the Middle East¹³.

Co-operation with this organization does not contradict our interests as a state in this organization, where more than one-third of the population and one-third of the UN member states belong. Islamic organizations have always been alongside the Albanian people in different areas such as economic, political, cultural, scientific, tourism, and agriculture, etc., despite the fact that its investments were not in the level due to the fact that Albania just emerged from self-isolation. Minister of Trade Mr. Ylli Cabiri suggested to the government that after the visit of Secretary General Dr. Abdullah Nasif of the Islamic World League in Tirana, on May, 1991, express interest in the possibilities of cooperation and the creation of favorable conditions that make it possible for membership in the Islamic Development Bank, which provides significant value assistance for long-term and advantageous loans.

Foreign Minister of Albania, Muhamet Kapllani, seeing that Albania's relations with the outside world and in particular with the Arab world are expanding, and the traditional and spiritual, cultural and economic ties are getting closer and closer, asks the Secretary General of OI. Hamid Alghabidi to express on behalf of the Albanian government its participation in the Organization of the Islamic Conference with the status of the observation country which is in the interest of the overall cooperation and understanding, friendship and brotherhood of both sides. With the official request of the government in 1990, Albania was accepted as observer state in the 7 December 1991.

On 30 November - 3 December 1992 at the invitation of the King of Saudi Arabia and the Secretary General Dr. Hamid Al Ghabid, President of the Republic of Albania Prof. Dr. Sali Berisha paid a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and participated in the extraordinary 6th edition of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of this organization which carried out the work from 1 to 3 December 1992 in Saudi Arabia's Xheddah, Mr. Berisha delivered a speech in which among others (according to the final press release of this extraordinary conference on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed the desire for Albania to become a full member state in this organization, the conference approved the "requests of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Zanzibar and the Tajik Republic for full membership in the OIC¹⁴.

The circumstances of establishment of the cooperation

In democracy and alliance with the West

One of the reasons for Albania's membership in international organizations is the collapse of the communist regime. It begins in the first months of 1990, where President Ramiz Alia states in his speech on 1 May in Korça that "*the country's democratization is an irreversible process*" until the spring of 1992 when the relay takes over democratic forces. Resettlement of diplomatic relations with the United States, USSR, Great Britain, Germany, Italy and many other Western countries. Albania participates in the OSCE and becomes a member of the IMF. Balkan relations are reinforced, particularly

¹³ Murati. Shaban, (2012), Hije në Diplomacinë Shqiptare, Botimet Eneas, 99,124.

¹⁴ Arkiva e MEPJ, Viti 1993, Dosja 29, 5, shih, Leci. Elmas, 2011, Organizatat dhe Institucionet Ndërkombëtare, , Tirane, 281.

with Turkey, where its presence has not ceased to be present during the 1980s¹⁵. Major economic transition reforms have been taken into consideration; price liberalization, devaluation of the local currency, restoration of the fiscal system. Since Western aid was below the level of needs and what was hoped, Albania directed to the Arab and Muslim world.

At the time of the rule of law

The first government after the elections of August 1991 presented the parliament to the first package of economic reform bills. Following the adoption of Law 7512 on the Protection of Private Property and the free initiation of independent private activities, and Law 7501.

Despite the transformations that occurred in all areas such as liberalization of trade, privatization of agricultural activities, financial independence of state-owned enterprises, etc., and the development steps walked at a slow pace.

After the first pluralistic elections

The first step that led to the first pluralistic elections on 31 March 1991 was the first demonstration in Shkodra in January 1990, and in March 1990 was followed by an anti-communist demonstration in Kavaja. The opening of the embassies on July 2, 1990, the massive entry into them and the search for asylum were the first steps that showed that Albania is towards the irreversible European path. Thus "*December students*" formed the first opposition party after nearly 50 years, the Albanian Democratic Party on December 8, 1990, which is based on the ideals of democracy, freedom, pluralism and the free market.

Following the adoption of the constitutional package proposed in April 1991

With the collapse of the communist regime in 1990-91, the first steps were taken in efforts to adopt a democratic constitution. In the circumstances created by the cancellation of the 1976 constitution, the new system with full consensus among the political parties adopted the main constitutional provisions for the well-functioning of the new governing system. These provisions were modified over the years and in 1998, following the completion of the draft the country went to a popular referendum. Consequently, the constitution was adopted by direct ballot, referendum on October 21, 1998. Thus, the era of improvements and adjustments to constitutional changes has taken the first steps towards democratic change. This decision gave legal power to the constitution making it the main document of building and functioning of the Albanian state, which was congratulated by international organizations.

Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and its membership criteria

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is a financial development institution established at the Conference of Ministers of Finance of Islamic Countries held in Jeddah in December 1973. The Bank was officially opened on October 20, 1975. Its branches are four; First; Regional Office in Rabat Morocco, opened in 1992, the second; Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia opened in 1994, third; Regional Office in Almaty, Kazakhstan in 1997 and quarter; Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal 2007. The Bank's

¹⁵ Lory. Brenard, 2007, Evropa Ballkanike nga 1945 në ditët tona, Shtëpia Botuese Dituria, 232 -235.

goal is to promote the economic development and social progress of member states in accordance with the principles of Islamic Law.

At the Islamic Development Bank, IDB has joined 57 countries from four continents: Africa, Asia, Europe and South America¹⁶. For membership in IDB, each state must meet certain conditions. First, the country must have been previously accepted as a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); secondly, must pay the first tranche of its minimum registration at IDB's central bank; and thirdly, to accept such terms and conditions as may be set by the Board of Governors of IDB. IDB's goal is to promote the economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim communities in non-member countries individually and collectively in accordance with Islamic principles. IDB's mission is to promote a comprehensive development, and focus on priority areas such as poverty alleviation, education promotion, and people's wellbeing. The goal is to support the Muslim world with the power of innovation, to promote joint activities between member states, research institutions, technology, and to secure enterprise development.

Albania's cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank

By the end of 1990, Albania expressed the desire to take steps to co-operate with IDB. During a meeting of representatives of the Albanian government in Cairo with the Vice President of the Islamic Development Bank Dr. Kayed Abdulkhak who expressed the desire to visit Albania for a chance of cooperation by building in our country schools and health institutions. He points out that IDB finances only for member states in building educational and health facilities that are provided free of charge. The Bank of Albania offered its readiness for cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank and in March 1991 was the first visit of its representatives in Tirana¹⁷. After full membership in the OIC, Albania automatically became a member of IDB. Following the visit of President Sali Berisha to Saudi Arabia, the first international economic forum was held in Tirana on April 14-16, 1993. In addition to other areas of interest there is infrastructure, education, health, cooperation and investment¹⁸.

On May 13, 1993, IDB opened the first bank in Albania, which was registered as the first second-tier bank in Albania, and in 1994 marked the start of the operational activity of the Arab-Albanian Islamic Bank (A.A.I.B). In 2003, the Bank has changed its name from the Arab Albanian Islamic Bank to the United Bank of Albania (UBA). In August 1997, Prime Minister Nano during a meeting with senior executives of the United Bank of Albania, formerly A.A.I.B. praised the activity and projects of this bank stressed that the Albanian government will continue to provide the necessary support for the normal functioning of operations and financial markets without any prejudice based on the motto as "*bankers and banks have no nationality*"¹⁹.

Albania is also a member of the Islamic Corporation for Private Sector Development (ICD), which is part of the Islamic Development Bank group. During the proceedings

¹⁶ <https://www.isdb.org/who-we-are/about>

¹⁷ Arkiva e MPEJ, Dosja 1543, 7/02/1991, 5,7.

¹⁸ Arkiva e MEPJ, Viti 1993, Dosja 33, 4.

¹⁹ Zeri i popullit, E enjte 14 gusht 1997, f.2.

of the 8th General Assembly, the agreement between the Deputy Minister of Finance Sherefedin Shehu and the President of the Islamic Development Bank, Dr. Ahmed Muhamed Ali, has been signed in Jeddah – Saudi Arabia. In this way, the Albanian government undertook an important step towards the use of funding from the Arab world. The Albanian government signed a loan with the Islamic Bank for financing the Kalimash-Rexhepaj road segment, 5.6 km long, which is one of the hardest parts of the Durrës-Morinë road with a sum of 30 million USD²⁰. This was the second case when institutions of the Albanian state accepted the terms of foreign laws. Though our country has long been associated with the Islamic Conference and is also part of the Islamic Development Bank, receiving such loans has been avoided for various reasons. Berisha during the two mandates secured loan from the Islamic Bank for the ambitious program for investments in road infrastructure. The Islamic Development Bank for Reconstruction and Development, an organization part of the Islamic Conference, accorded to the Albanian government more than \$ 200 million of loans, which the government intends to use to build the Tirana-Elbasan road. IDB has also given a fund for upgrading the Milot-Morine, road segment of Qafe Plloce-Korce Fund \$ 80 million.²¹ Membership at OIC took special importance in recent years after being seen by the government as a potential source of funding for the Tirana-Elbasan road financing.

Advantages of such Membership

Political - Economic Advantages

Investments from Arab countries seem to encourage the government of Albania to maintain a pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli approach to the UN, which is liked by the Islamic Conference. Investing in the 41 million dollar project of the project: Vlorë - Kuç - Qeparo and also Peshkëpi - Selenica, including the bridge over the Vjosa River connecting Selenica with the national road Levan - Tepelenë. In principle, the loan agreement between the Republic of Albania and the Kuwaiti Fund for the Arab Economic Development (KFAED) for the financing of the project "Rehabilitation of the Vlora River Road", with a loan amounting to 12 million Kuwaiti Dinars. Economic, Commercial, Financial, Investment, Education, Bank, Tirana Square, Municipality, Humanitarian Aid, etc. The OBI has been used by Egypt, Algeria, the former Russian republics that have benefited from colossal investments from this bank. Albania's Ambassador to the UAE, Ermal Dredha, points out that the United Arab Emirates has contributed to important projects through the Abu Dhabi Fund for the extension of the Tirana Boulevard and the construction of the tunnel in the Elbasan road segment. Kuwait State has signed the agreement for the Fund provided to the Republic of Albania 6 loans to US\$ 75.5 million, to assist in the financing of projects in transport and irrigation sectors²².

Cultural Relations with OIC

²⁰ Ligji nr. 9830dt.12.11.2007 me dekret te presidnetit nr.5522 dt. 20.12.2007.

²¹ http://www.seetoint.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/08/Investment-report_2004-2012.pdf

²² https://kuwait-fund.org/en/web/kfund/current-news-events/-/asset_publisher/8Vn82dPrFd8B/content/signing-a-loan-agreement-in-the-republic-of-albania

Apart from relations of Albania with the Islamic Cooperation organization in political and economic terms, there are also relations in the cultural field, and special case is also cooperation in the field of sport. Albania for the first time in history participated in Islamic games. As a member of the Islamic Conference since 1992, Albanian country for the first time participated in the Olympic Games in Baku in May 2017. Stavri Bello, secretary-general of the Olympic Committee, stresses that these activities will serve the unity among peoples and the faiths despite that sport is out of religious politics. For the first time, the Games of Islamic Solidarity were developed in 2005 in Saudi Arabia.

The future of OIC

The OIC was born and established in the Cold War circumstances and particularly under the influence of Palestine developments. Achievement an unsatisfactory level that cannot give way to the various crises and to protect the interests of member countries also did not bring any significant change in the cultural, economic, and political scope in the Islamic world. The productive way the OIC is to have an active structure and use the initiative for various issues. In line with the usual development, the impact of the organization increases with its empowerment. As a result of the ineffective functioning of the internal system in the conflicts, made the expectation of this important organization, the second behind the UN, to become a loss of sense and security institution²³. Failure to perform duties and instructions is the main reason that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation did not give its expectations to the expected level.

Concluding remarks

The efforts and priorities of the foreign policy of Albania were to restore the stability in the country, facing with the challenges that arise since the isolation of the country. The reasons for Albania's membership in international organizations is the collapse of the communist regime, in democracy and alliance with the West, at the time of the rule of law, after the first pluralistic elections, and when following the adoption of the constitutional package proposed in April 1991. The Albanian state most often is pointed out as a bridge between East and West.

Although the member states of OIC has developed spirit of cooperation within countries, it still lacks effectiveness in managing and resolve the conflicts the among its members. This wide and diverse territory of Islamic Countries includes natural resources from the richest of gas, oil, coal, the tourism industry and possesses significant development potential in the areas of economic, energy, etc. OIC members with the important international and strategic communications points favoring its members from a commercial and political point of view.

The official orientation of post-communist Albania continuous to be on the Euro-Atlantic integration, the natural connection with Western civilization. It is clear that this orientation does not prevent friendship, but it also encourages co-operation with other states in the Middle East. After full membership in the OIC, Albania automatically

²³ Dovutogllu. Ahmet, 2010, Thellësia Strategjike, 323.

became a member of IDB, which was the main purpose of Albania government, in order to receive financial support from IDB. The condition for economic and political support was the purpose of joining the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In addition, the OIC should also be more involved in dealing with political problems as a matter of economic and diplomatic priority.

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