

German-Albanian Business Conference 2026 House of the German Economy (DIHK), Berlin

On **30 April 2026**, a major event **focusing on Albania** took place at the House of the German Economy in Berlin. The central themes were the country's current **economic situation**, the development of key industries, and the growing interest of **German investors** in the country in the southwestern Balkans.

Four important economic organisations – the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (**DIHK**), the German Eastern Business Association (**OA**), the Federation of German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (**BGA**), and the German-Albanian Economic Association (**DAW**) – pooled their expertise to present Albania in both established and emerging sectors.

The conference was supported by the **Albanian Embassy in Germany** and the German **Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy** (BMWE). Albania was represented at a high level, including two **Deputy Ministers** from the **Ministry of Economy and Innovation** and one **Deputy Minister** from the **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**.

The conference participants were welcomed by **Dr. Volker Treier** (**DIHK**), who noted a sense of **"Gold Rush atmosphere"** among several companies regarding Albania. **Dr. Thomas Steffen**, State Secretary at the **Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy** (BMWE), also underlined the country's positive economic development. At the same time, irreversible reforms in the areas of legal certainty and the fight against corruption are crucial for sustainable economic development and the country's goal of joining the EU. The **Albanian Ambassador**, **Adia Sakiqi**, thanked all organisers for making it possible to hold a major German-Albanian conference in Berlin again after many years.



From left to right: DAW President Artan Pojani, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development Fatmir Guri, State Secretary in the German Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy Dr. Thomas Steffen, from the Albanian Ministry of Economy and Innovation: Deputy Minister Enkelejd Musabelliu and Deputy Minister Dr. Olta Manjani, Albanian Ambassador to Germany Adia Sakiqi, Managing Director of the German Eastern Business Association Michael Harms, Member of the Executive Board and Head of Foreign Trade of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce Dr. Volker Treier

Albania is making rapid progress on its path toward the European Union. At the most recent conference of the **"Berlin Process,"** held in **London** in October 2025, Albania and Montenegro were deemed to have a good chance of joining the European Union by 2030. The progress related to this look promising. At the same time, the EU and

all member states emphasize their commitment to the performance-based approach. The Albanian government is aware of the considerable effort that still lies ahead.

In her opening address, **Dr. Olta Manjani**, Deputy Minister for Economy and Innovation, emphasized Albania's dynamic development: with **3.8% growth last year**, the country leads the economies of the Western Balkans. At the same time, she sees potential for further structural strengthening in Albania. While **service exports**, particularly in tourism, are growing strongly, **industry, agriculture, and goods exports** offer additional opportunities.

The goal is **high-quality and sustainable growth**. The Ministry promotes a diversified, productive, and competitive economy integrated into European and global value chains. Key priorities are:

- Strengthening industry
- Expanding renewable energies
- Improving infrastructure
- Investing in skills

Adapting the workforce to market requirements is a high priority. Cooperation with Germany is particularly valuable in this regard: **German companies bring know-how**, technology, and strong **vocational training systems**, while **Albania** scores with a **young workforce**, competitive costs, and its proximity to EU markets.



Economic Monitor – Albania

Dr. Ricardo Giucci, Managing Director of **Berlin Economics** identified in his presentation the **reasons** for the 3.8% growth of the Albanian economy. **Service exports** were among the strongest **growth drivers**, with their share of GDP rising significantly – from 22.8% in 2021 to **31.2% in 2025**, reflecting the **tourism boom** of recent years.



Despite global uncertainties, growth forecasts for the coming years continue to **point upward**.

The appreciation of the Albanian Lek (ALL) led to a **decline in inflation**.

Since October 2025, **SEPA payments** have been possible, saving an estimated **71 million euros** per year per year on cross-border payments.

In addition, there are consistently high inflows of **foreign direct investment** (2025: 6.0% of GDP), particularly in the **real estate sector**.

An on-site target group analysis also identified **investment potential** in the following areas:

- **Tourism**
- **IT & Business Process Outsourcing**
- **Plastics industry**
- **Medical products**

Panel I: Infrastructure – Renewable Energies – Industry

With **Corridor VIII**, part of the trans-European transport network, Albania is advancing the modernization of its transport infrastructure together with the EU. The aim is to connect the **Adriatic** with the **Black Sea** and to establish Albania as a **central hub** in the Western Balkans.

An important infrastructure project is the redesign of the **port landscape**: the **existing multipurpose port of Durrës** is planned to be converted into a **passenger and yacht harbour**, while a modern **industrial and container port** will be built in **Porto Romano**, approximately 15 km north of Durrës. These plans were presented by [Deputy Minister Enkelejd Musabelliu](#).



From left to right: Rico Koch (Notus Energy), Deputy Minister Enkelejd Musabelliu, Albert Valteri (Everest), Dr. Tobias Stricker (Knauf), Moderator: Michael Harms (German Eastern Business Association)

German power producer specializing in **wind and solar parks** as well as **battery storage systems** worldwide, also sees its **market in Albania**. NOTUS Energy has already won one solar plant tender and is working on two further wind farm projects, as explained by **Rico Koch**, Head of International Project Development at the Potsdam-based technology company.

Industrial development is also progressing: the Albanian company [Everest](#), a manufacturer of aluminium profiles with more than 25 years of experience, exemplifies Albania's transformation into a **knowledge-based industrial location** with increasing **value-added depth**. **CEO Albert Valteri** presented his internationally oriented company, with locations in the Balkans, Malta, and the USA, which supplies the automotive, shipbuilding, building technology, and PVC sectors.

Panel II: Services – Tourism – ICT – Trade

The services sector, particularly tourism, was the focus of the second panel. In 2025, Albania welcomed around **12 million tourists**, as reported by Deputy Minister Enkelejd Musabelliu. Clear trends are emerging: while **coastal regions** stand for **party and luxury tourism**, the inland and **mountain regions** score **with nature, culture, and authenticity**.

Tirana has developed into a dynamic, **modern capital** with a high quality of life, **world-class architecture**, and growing international appeal. At the same time, sustainable tourism concepts are to be implemented in regions such as the **Vjosa Valley** – with Europe's last wild river.

In parallel, the strong growth in tourism requires considerable investment in **roads, bridges**, and local and long-distance **public transport**, including bus and rail connections. The multitude of these projects makes Albania an **attractive market for the construction industry** – a potential also highlighted by **Dr Tobias Stricker**, Head of Strategic Investments at the internationally active building materials manufacturer [Knauf](#).

In the **energy sector**, Albania is increasingly focusing on diversification: **photovoltaic and wind power plants** are set to complement the previously dominant **hydropower**. Albania aims to become an exporter of green energy in the medium term. This is why [NOTUS Energy](#), a

Albania's international visibility was considerably boosted by its role as a **partner country** at the world's leading tourism trade fair, **ITB Berlin** in 2025, as explained by **Volker Adams** from the [German Travel Association](#). He pointed out that for a country of 2.8 million inhabitants the **management of 12 million tourists** represents a tremendous achievement.

The **ICT sector** is also experiencing strong growth: companies such as [Hyretech](#) and [DataMax](#) are using Albania as a location for **highly qualified specialists**. **Hyretech**, from the Stuttgart region, deliberately develops IT talent for the German market at its Tirana office- who work and stay in in Albania, as explained by entrepreneur **Christian Dölker**.

The company **DataMax**, with locations in Munich and Tirana, advises and supports companies on building AI and data competencies, according to Co-Founder **Bujar Bakiu**.

German retail was also present: **Lidl** that regards Albania as an

important **logistics hub**, is currently **expanding its supply chain network** in Albania and is working closely with local farmers. In doing so, Lidl supports its suppliers in **meeting high international food standards** such as IFS and GLOBAL G.A.P. Lidl is represented in Albania and Kosovo by **Ermir Bajrami**, CEO of Lidl Albania.

Insights from the Panels



DAW Honorary President [Hans-Jürgen Müller](#) drew an overall positive conclusion. The economic indicators and sectoral developments were impressive and confirmed Albania's progress on the **path to EU membership**.

However, he gave cause for reflection, noting that the EU accession negotiations are a political mechanism and that **no automatism** for sustained **positive economic development** can be derived from them.

What is decisive, he argued, are stable economic framework conditions – in particular, progress in judicial reform and the fight against corruption, which, while having achieved considerable successes in politics and the judiciary, still represents a challenge for the **business community**.



From left to right: Bujar Bakiu (DataMax), Volker Adams (German Travel Association), Deputy Minister Enkelejd Musabelliu, Moderator: Antje Wandelt (Delegate of the German Industry for the Markets: AL/KS/NMKD), Ermir Bajrami (Lidl), Christian Dölker (Hyretech)

The Workshops

Investment Opportunities and Investment Protection

With the [Albanian Investment Development Agency \(AIDA\)](#), Albania has a central institution for promoting foreign investment.



AIDA Director Laura Plaku presented the country's corresponding incentive system for interested investors.

In addition, representatives from business and government explained specific projects, such as the [Tirana Free Economic Zone](#), presented by **Dritan Delija**, and the restructuring of the [Port of Durrës](#) by **Port Director Liburn Aliu**.

Legal framework conditions and **investment protection** were examined and discussed by **Georg Scherpf** ([Luther Rechtsanwalts-gesellschaft](#)).

Education and Training

German institutions can play a key role to the qualification of skilled workers. In the workshop on "**New Skills**", led by **Annabell Kreuzer** from the [Agency for Economy and Development / GIZ Albania](#), the current training needs were presented using the sectors **ICT** and **tourism** as examples.

Topics discussed included how Albania can contribute to securing skilled workers for German companies while simultaneously fostering local talent.

Christian Dölker from [Hyretech](#) explained his model of continuous investment in "**Tech Talent**" and job-oriented further training.

Thomas Richter from [Deutsche Telekom MMS](#) informed that Albania was being considered as a new, future-proof location for tech talent.

Anna-Lena Strehl from the [TUI Care Foundation](#) described how Albanian tour operators are being networked with international tourism markets through training measures.

Mo Khedr, engineer and architect, who invests in sustainable tourism infrastructure through his company [AURA](#), used his concept to illustrate how Albania's remote areas can be made accessible all year-round.

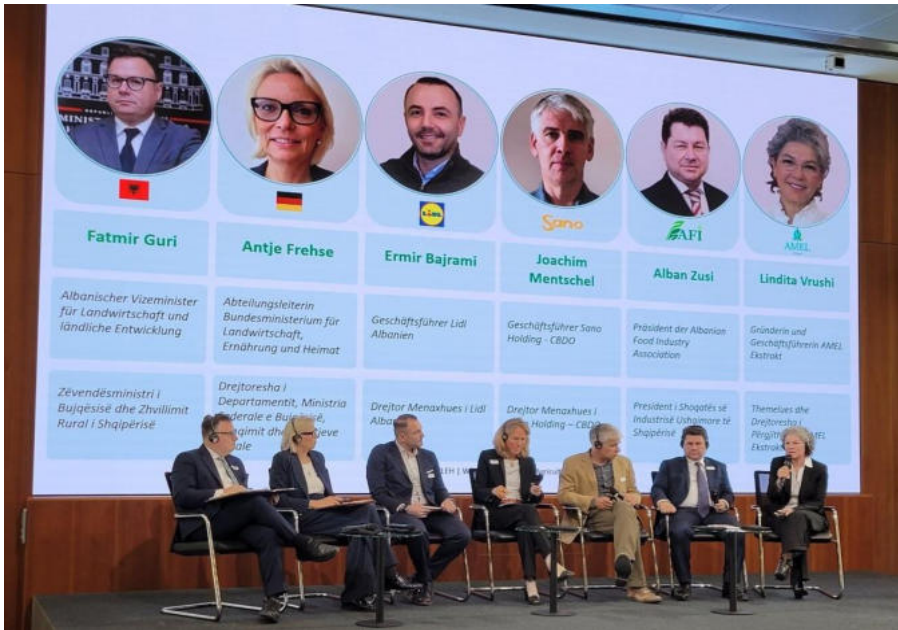
A prominent discussant in this panel was **Dr. Olta Manjani** – Deputy Minister for Economy and Innovation, whose priorities include **continuing education and training**, and who, as a government representative, aims to promote the right competencies in order to attract international investment to Albania.



Food and Agriculture – Investment and Cooperation

The expert workshop on food and agriculture, organised by the German [Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity](#) (BMLEH) addressed export and cooperation opportunities between **German and Albanian companies** in the agricultural and food sector in a panel discussion.

Following the opening policy statements by **Albanian Deputy Minister Fatmir Guri** and **Antje Frehse, Head of Division at the BMLEH**, the topics of **scaling, trade requirements, and expectations regarding cooperation** were addressed with two Albanian and two German companies.



This is creating **new opportunities for exports** between the two countries, as already demonstrated by companies such as **Lidl** (Ermir Bajrami) in retail and **Amel Ekstrakt** (Lindita Vrushi) in the field of medicinal plant extracts.

Both, **Sano** from the animal nutrition sector, represented by **Joachim Mentschel**, and the **Albanian Food Industry Association (AFI)** with its President **Alban Zusi** see prospects for German companies in the conceptual and technical modernization of agriculture in Albania.

Representatives from business and politics argued that **planning security** for investors and **alignment with EU food safety standards** are the decisive issues for the sector.

This was followed by an audience discussion, in which the **Albanian Ambassador to Germany, Adia Sakiqi**, (2nd from the left side) also participated.



Summary

The organizers view the **German-Albanian Business Conference 2026** as an important catalyst for further advancing bilateral economic cooperation between Albania and Germany. A great deal has changed in Albania over the past **10 years**. Both, **new and traditional areas for cooperation and investment** have emerged or continued to develop.

Albania is clearly **on track toward EU membership**, even though several items remain on the political and legal agenda. The changes and the statements made by participating company and association representatives show that there is still significant untapped **potential for cooperation**.