

## **Regional Relations of Albania in the Perspective of the Global Press The Beginning of the 1970s of the 20th Century**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on Albania's relations with neighboring states during the years 1970–1973, as seen through the lens of the foreign press. The newspapers and articles from foreign news agencies, some of which had left-leaning orientations and noticeable propagandistic tendencies, were exclusively served to the high party dome of the Albanian political hierarchy after being translated by the Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA). The distinctive feature of this study lies in its reliance on the foreign press as the primary documentary source. Despite the existence of previous serious studies on these relations, particularly from the perspective of foreign newspaper pages, this paper brings a novelty by enriching the historical framework of the period. This paper aims to present the perspectives held by the foreign press regarding Albania's relations with regional states, such as Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, etc. Joint actions have been rare in reciprocal relations among these peoples, often marked by conflicts and contradictions. The beginning of the 1970s in the 20th century was characterized by a positive atmosphere in Balkan regional relations, despite different political systems and orientations. Albanian-Greek and Albanian-Yugoslav relations, with their past differences, transitioned from a frozen state to normal positions. Albania had active relations with Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and others during this period. Albania exhibited strictness in these relationships, showing no ideological fluctuations but remaining loyal only in diplomatic, trade, and cultural aspects. This study aims to comprehensively and analytically examine Albania's regional relations, reflecting foreign press articles and culminating in conclusions. Qualitative methods, as well as a collective, descriptive, and analytical research approach, were employed during the research process for this paper.*

**Keywords:** *global press, Albania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, diplomacy, ideology.*

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to present the perspectives held by the foreign press of the time regarding Albania's relations with regional states such as Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, and others. The articles from newspapers and the writings of foreign news agencies, translated by the Albanian state news agency, the Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA), were made available only to high-ranking Albanian party officials. The novelty of this study lies in its reliance on the foreign press as the primary documentary source. There have been several serious studies by both Albanian and foreign historians and researchers on the relations between Hoxha's communist state and regional states, particularly from the perspective of foreign newspaper pages. This paper specifically brings a novelty by enriching the framework of these relations during the period between 1970 and 1973.

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The history of reciprocal relations among Balkan states after the end of World War II was characterized by conflicts and contradictions, with tranquility and "friendship" being quite rare. In the early 1970s, a thawing process was observed in Balkan regional relations. The best demonstration of this change was seen in Albanian-Greek and Albanian-Yugoslav relations, which began to normalize during this period. Starting with talks and trade exchanges, continuing with cultural exchanges, and culminating in the establishment of embassies. Even relations with Yugoslavia experienced a kind of relaxation, despite occasional tensions. The 1970s witnessed the development of a new era between the two neighboring countries, characterized by unprecedented cooperation, especially in the economic and cultural fields (Biberaj, 2014). However, it should not be forgotten that the relations between Yugoslavia and Albania, both before 1966 and after 1981, were largely influenced by the treatment of the Albanian population in this region of Yugoslavia.

Kosovo would experience strict control from 1918 onward, except for a temporary calm from 1996 until 1981. In the field of cultural relations, a significant event in 1971 was the Agreement between the Universities of Tirana and Pristina, an agreement that was reaffirmed several times during the 1970s decade (History of the Albanian People, 2009). Meanwhile, Greece, which had severed diplomatic relations with Albania in 1939, reestablished them in 1971, and trade exchanges increased (Lory, 2007). Albania's relations with regional countries were quite active, as reported in the pages of the Italian magazine "L'informatore agrario" (Rizzoti, 1973),

Even Albanian-Italian relations, despite substantial changes in political, economic, and social aspects, were characterized by historical sympathy. Apart from political judgments, it was practically impossible to hear a negative opinion about the Italian people in Albanian public opinion.

Albania had active relations with Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and others during this period. In this paper, an effort is made to select articles from various regional, European, and American newspapers to provide a more objective overview from different perspectives in the initial study.

## Methodology

During the research work, qualitative methods have been applied, conducting a comprehensive study that is exploratory, descriptive, evaluative, and analytical based on the presentation and analysis of foreign press writings. Initially, a preliminary research method was employed, gathering available facts and data. These chronologically collected data have helped provide a clear picture of how the foreign press reflects the communist-era relations of Albania with regional states. The period from 1970 to 1973, which the study encompasses, is based on articles from various newspapers and editorials from news agencies.

In August 1970, the Polish newspaper "Zallniezh Valnaschi" published an article titled "The Balkans Yesterday and Today," written by journalist Elisabeta Znamarovska. According to her, Balkan states have different political systems and orientations. Throughout the history of reciprocal relations among these peoples, common actions have been rare, with more frequent conflicts and contradictions. Consequently, these states have sought stronger allies than themselves. On the other hand, powerful European states interested in maintaining their positions in the Balkans have benefited from this lack of harmony. Elements of conflict still exist, such as the situation of the formal war between Greece and Albania, accompanied by Greece's claim over the so-called "Northern Epirus issue." Considering peace and stability in the region, several plans have emerged for the normalization of inter-Balkan relations. In 1947, Yugoslav President Tito and Bulgaria's Gjergj Dimitrov planned the creation of a union among their states, Albania and Romania.

However, this plan did not materialize. Ten years later, with the initiative of Romanian Prime Minister Kivu Stoika, a call was made for a meeting of Balkan leaders to coordinate the process of Balkan peace and security, but this plan also failed. In 1959, the Soviet Union called for the return of the Balkans to a "zone of peace" (Znamarovska, 1970).

The Yugoslav newspaper "Borba," dated May 28, 1970, published an article by Dragoslav Rancic titled "Trade Amidst the State of War," which discusses the situation between Albania and Greece. The article states that, from a legal perspective, these two countries are a curiosity of our time. During World War II, in 1940, when fascist Italy exploited Albanian territory to attack Greece, they formally found themselves in a state of war. Even afterward, the Greek-Albanian border has been marked by a tense and uncertain situation. At times, the right wing in Athens has reinforced this state by asserting territorial claims over Northern Epirus and propagating negative portrayals of the Greek ethnic minority in the Albanian state. Through diplomatic channels and with the intervention of countries with which Albania and Greece have normal relations, Athens and Tirana established a system of private trade exchanges in 1953. The agreement was concluded in Paris but remained unexploited due to the limited mutual interest and the failure to determine payment methods. However, Greece is now being visited by a trade delegation from Albania, which, together with Greek economists and government officials, is expected to finalize a concrete agreement on commodity exchange between the two countries. According to the information available, Greece will export metal industry products and cotton to Albania in exchange for asphalt and Albanian timber. There are also discussions about establishing a joint maritime agency responsible for the transportation of foreign goods to Albania and the exchange of petroleum industry products (Rancic, 1970).

Official discussions on the normalization of relations with Greece were taking place in Tirana, while pro-government newspapers in Athens were signaling the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Such initiatives can lead to greater trust among the states in the region, paving the way for broader cooperation.

This economic delegation echoes in the Turkish press as well. The newspaper "Cumhuriyet," under the headline "Albanian Trade Delegation Continues Contacts in Athens," reports that the parties reached an agreement and defined the methods of payment and exchanges between the two countries. From the initial contacts, an agreement was reached for Greece to export goods worth \$800,000, while Albania would export goods worth \$700,000. During their stay in Greece, the Albanian delegation visited various industrial enterprises with which they may reach agreements of interest in the future ("Albanian trade delegation continues contacts in Athens", 1970).

The Polish press highlights the participation of representatives from the American company "Standard Oil Pappas" in these negotiations. This participation indicates the intentions of the United States to explore possibilities for its entry into Albania (Modestova, 1970). According to the correspondent of the United Press International Agency, the trade agreements concluded in Athens laid the foundation for further expansion of trade between the two countries. It is noteworthy that the Athens Chamber of Commerce, which hosted the Albanian delegation, assessed the volume of trade between Greece and Albania as satisfactory ("Albania and Greece", 1970).

Additionally, the establishment of postal connections between Albania and Greece also received coverage in the press at the time. The Belgrade newspaper "Renaissance" ("Albanian-Greek diplomacy" the Hungarian newspaper "Nepsabadshag" ("Albania and Greece", 1970) and the Romanian newspaper "Skentea" ("Greek-Albanian relations", 1970) particularly emphasize this fact, taking into account the state of war that still exists between the neighboring countries.

The Greek newspaper "Akropolis," in a commentary titled "Albania and Greece," emphasized that Greece aims to pursue its policy of progressive improvement and strengthening of its relations with neighbors, especially Albania. With its measured steps, Athens does not seek to create a sensation but rather aims to further improve the atmosphere in the Balkans. Nevertheless, Athens made its intentions and willingness to move forward on the path of cooperation and reconciliation with Albania very clear ("Albania and Greece", 1970).

Thus, on May 6, 1971, diplomatic relations were established between the two neighboring countries.

As "Le Monde" writes, these two countries have opposite regimes, but both are deeply entrenched. Despite fundamental ideological, social, political, and economic differences, after a long period of tension, these two states managed to reach a state of normalization. Now, a line of economic and cultural cooperation will be opened between them ("Albania-Greece Neighborhood", 1971).

This fact is reflected in many newspapers with different orientations. It is also the merit of Albanian diplomacy that managed to reduce tensions and make a kind of Balkan equilibrium possible.

The Turkish newspaper "Yeni Gazette" on May 8, 1971, under the headline "Greece and Albania Establish Diplomatic Relations after 32 Years," writes that Greece has established diplomatic relations with its small neighbor, a satellite of China in Europe. According to a statement from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives at the ambassadorial level will be exchanged soon ("Greece and Albania", 1970).

According to the Italian press, the negotiations for the establishment of diplomatic relations took place over the past five months in New York, in complete secrecy during meetings at the United Nations. This event resonated in the global press, where many newspapers from France, East and West Germany, Austria, the United States, and others provided these news updates, which were well-received by the European and wider public opinion ("Albania and Greece establish diplomatic relations", 1971).

The Parisian newspaper "Le Monde" writes that the importance of improving relations with Greece and elevating them to the level of embassies represents a dual significance. Not only do these two countries live under completely different regimes in terms of ideology and social organization, but they were also the only neighboring countries in the region that did not have normal relations ("Normalization between Tirana and Athens", 1971).

Similarly, the relations between Albania and its northern neighbor progress in the same spirit.

The Turkish newspaper "Ulus" published an article by A.Sh.Esmer titled "Yugoslavia and Albania." According to this article, Albanian-Yugoslav relations were strained until the summer of 1968, but they took a turn for the better after that year (Esmer, 1970). This situation was facilitated by the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union. This event demonstrated that such a threat could also be posed to these two neighboring countries. The danger became even greater with the promotion of Brezhnev's doctrine of limited sovereignty. Thus, in these difficult days, the two countries reassessed their relations. In April 1970, on the occasion of the anniversary of the occupation of Yugoslavia by the Nazi German army, the Albanian newspaper "Zëri i Popullit" published an article highlighting the resistance of Yugoslav partisans, recalling their collaboration with Albanian partisans in the struggle for the liberation of Yugoslavia. The article emphasized that these two countries would fight together against "imperialist plunderers" of any kind. The Yugoslav press also reflected the same sentiment on the anniversary of the Italian attack on Albania, with the newspaper "Borba" praising the "heroism" of the

Albanians during World War II. However, reciprocally, Albanian-Yugoslav relations would still be at a low level.

In the pages of "The New York Times", the official efforts of Tirana to improve relations with Yugoslavia are highlighted. Enver Hoxha described the "good neighborly relations" with Yugoslavia in a speech delivered on May 30, 1970, in the northern city of Bajram Curri. On the other hand, Tito expressed during a rally held in Zabljak, southern Yugoslavia: "...Regarding Albania, we have no interests other than having a good relationship. It is true that our systems are different, but this should not be a reason for bad relations at the border...". Scholars agree that Tito's speech is the warmest gesture ever made by Yugoslavia towards Albania ("Albania is expanding diplomatic relations", 1970).

On June, 18th 1970, Tanjug News Agency published a press conference held by the Spokesperson of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, Dragolup Vujica. He emphasized that, as announced by the Yugoslav government, continuous efforts were being made toward the normalization and further development of Albanian-Yugoslav relations. The current results in this direction, although still limited, indicate that there are all possibilities for further concrete cooperation ("Albania and Yugoslavia", 1970).

The French newspaper "Le Figaro," under the title "After the normalization of relations with China, Yugoslavia can improve its relations with Albania," published a correspondence by Mira Traiković from Belgrade. Among other things, it stated that one of the positive effects of the normalization of relations between China and Yugoslavia could be a closer improvement of relations between Albania and Yugoslavia, considering the guidelines of Marshal Tito (Traikovic, 1970).

The rapprochement with Yugoslavia is progressing noticeably, expressed journalist H. Hartie in his article for the newspaper "Journal de Genève". During his visit to Albania, he observed a significant presence of Yugoslav tanker trucks along the Elbasan-Pogradec road, and on numerous occasions, Albanian drivers assisted their colleagues in times of difficulty (Hartie, 1970).

The Yugoslav newspaper "Narodna Armija" published an article titled "Albanian-Yugoslav Relations: Common Interests." Among other things, it emphasizes that recent events have given a distinct tone to the relations between the two neighboring states. It is precisely the international circumstances that raise awareness in both countries of their shared interests. Neither Yugoslavia nor Albania need to demonstrate the forced narratives of the Western press, which attribute the normalization of these relations solely to foreign influences, especially China ("Albanian-Yugoslav relations", 1970). According to the article, the key factor for the transition from stagnation to bilateral relations lies in the interests of the people, which leads them toward cooperation. This tendency is further reinforced by the potential role of Kosovo, an Albanian ethnic group living within the borders of Yugoslavia, as a bridge. This positive trend has been observed in the official politics of Tirana as well, where despite ideological differences and non-interference in internal affairs, the possibility of successful cooperation is acknowledged. The public opinion in Yugoslavia warmly welcomed the willingness of the University of Tirana to collaborate with the University of Pristina, just as it would appreciate the scientific and technical services of Albania if such an agreement were reached. Considering that Albania's new five-year plan coincides with the beginning of Yugoslavia's medium-term plan, the opportunity for economic cooperation in mutual interest would be highly valued ("Albanian-Yugoslav relations", 1970).

According to an article in the American newspaper "Chicago Daily News", "...Yugoslavia intends to restore diplomatic relations with Albania in the foreseeable future, thereby bringing an end to the protracted miniaturized Cold War that has endured between these two nations for 22 years...". The publication additionally asserts that Belgrade's approach towards Tirana is undergoing a substantial transformation. The

objective is to cultivate enhanced cooperation and amicable relations between these neighboring states, with the establishment of the Yugoslav Embassy in Albania being considered as the initial stride towards achieving this goal ("Albanian-Yugoslav relations", 1970). In this case, the Austrian newspaper "Die Presse" confirms that "the response from the Tirana government is positive" ("Tirana and Belgrade", 1970).

The Tanjug News Agency has released a report on the commencement of negotiations between the economic delegations of Yugoslavia and Albania, aimed at finalizing the protocol for the exchange of goods for the upcoming year. The plenary meeting of the two delegations involved a comprehensive analysis of the potential for expanding trade and establishing long-term economic cooperation. Leading the Yugoslav delegation in these discussions is Deputy Secretary for Foreign Trade Boris Shnuderl, while the Albanian delegation is headed by Deputy Minister of Trade Vasil Kati ("Economic Delegations", 1970).

Hungarian press publications also cover the meetings between the government economic delegations of Yugoslavia and Albania, focusing on the protocol agreement concerning the circulation and exchange of goods for the year 1971 between the two nations. This agreement foresees a further increase in the circulation and exchange of goods. According to the agreement, Yugoslavia is set to export various products to Albania, including metallurgical goods, iron and colored metals, pharmaceutical and chemical industrial products, precision technical equipment, machinery, industrial equipment, automobiles, plastic materials, and more. On the other hand, Albania is expected to import chemical and food industrial products, chrome, bitumen, construction materials, fruits, vegetables, tobacco, and artisanal products from Yugoslavia ("Economic relations between Albania and Yugoslavia", 1970).

According to J.P. Bryle in the French newspaper "La Croix," the chapter on the disagreement between Belgrade and Tirana represents one of the most interesting and, in many respects, dramatic episodes in the recent history of the Balkans. Despite lingering ideological disagreements, Albania understands that supporting the independence and cohesion of neighboring Yugoslavia is in its interest. This explains why Tirana is so cautious not to take advantage of Yugoslavia's internal difficulties. It has been officially declared that in the event of aggression against Yugoslavia, the Albanian population would be called upon to cooperate in joint defense. While ideological disagreements remain unchanged, relations between Albania and Yugoslavia have significantly improved (Bryle, 1971). The French press also recognizes the improvement in relations between Belgrade and Tirana, particularly citing the regular visits of Albanian language professors between the University of Tirana and the University of Skopje ("Yugoslav-Albanian relations", 1971).

On February 5, 1971, diplomatic relations between Albania and Yugoslavia were restored at the embassy level ("Two neighboring peoples", 1971).

The Yugoslav magazine "Nin" reported on the event with an article titled "Neighbors, Exchange of Ambassadors." When it was simultaneously announced in Belgrade and Tirana that the governments of both countries had decided to elevate their diplomatic representations to the embassy level, it did not cause any major surprise in European opinion, as it was considered a logical continuation of the improvement in relations. ("Neighbors, exchange of Ambassadors", 1971).

This significant diplomatic development received extensive coverage in the global press. Many newspapers such as "Le Monde" in France, "Magyar Hirlap" in Hungary, "Il Popolo" in Italy, and "The Times" in the United States reported on the exchange of embassies between Albania and Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav newspaper "Politika" on April 18, 1971, published a comment titled "Relations with Albania." The article emphasized that the relations between the two

countries were in a new phase, characterized by an increase in cooperation. The main concern of Tirana and Belgrade was strengthening economic ties, increasing trade exchanges, and reaching agreements on the scope and volume of cultural cooperation. The protocol for the exchange of goods for the year 1971 reached a value of \$13.2 million, representing a 60% increase compared to the previous year. The connections between the two countries would not be limited to trade alone ("Ties with Albania", 1971). A group of Albanian experts on electric power, mining, and forestry was expected to arrive in Montenegro to explore the possibility of importing electricity from Albania and utilizing bauxite and timber resources to meet Montenegro's capacity needs. Furthermore, there are two cultural cooperation projects between Tirana and Belgrade, of which only one will be finalized. These pieces of information were also reflected in the Romanian press, such as the newspaper "Skentea" ("Albania and Yugoslavia", 1971) as well as in the Italian newspaper "Unita" ("Albania and Yugoslavia", 1971).

On February 14, 1972, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug reported that the Albanian Film Week was opened at the Youth House in Belgrade, initiated by Kosovafilm. The opening speech was delivered by the director of the Youth House, Rale Zalenovic. Sanedin Muhaxin, a representative of Kosova film, spoke about the development and activities of Albanian cinematography, highlighting its achievements. Albanian and Yugoslav flags were displayed on both sides of the stage. The evening continued with the screening of the films "The Eagle's Dance" and "The Guerrilla Unit" ("Albania and Yugoslavia in diplomatic relations", 1972).

At the cultural level, an increase in collaborations between the two countries is observed. The newspaper "Plamen Bratstva" ("Kruja", 1972), published an article titled "Kruja, the Mirror of Skanderbeg's Era," while the newspaper "Rilindja" on July 2, 1972, featured a summary of Dritëro Agolli's novel "The Brilliance and Fall of Comrade Zyl" ("Cultural Relations", 1972).

The article titled "Albania Beyond Schemes" by Giuseppe Dell'Ongaro was published in the Italian magazine "Gli stati," issue number 2, in May 1972. The author, focusing on the situation in the Balkan region, elucidates the concept of the "Balkan Alliance." A Balkan peninsula liberated from the influence of Great Powers interconnected through a comprehensive and collective system of treaties that clearly define the relationships between each state, could serve as a valuable element of stability in the most delicate area of Europe, yielding noticeable benefits for all. Yugoslavia is still involved in the so-called "Balkan Pact" concluded in 1952 between Belgrade, Athens, and Ankara, which has never been formally denounced. Romania, which also seeks original and autonomous choices and has openly expressed its interest in multilateral agreements in demilitarized zones, is a part of the Warsaw Treaty and the NCEC. Greece is strongly linked to the Atlantic Pact, despite the political and social diversity of the regimes. These are some of the obstacles that arise in front of projects aiming to make the Balkans a platform for true tension reduction in Europe. Italy is interested in Balkan stability, not only in its neighboring state Yugoslavia but also in Albania. According to Rome's perspective, despite fundamental changes in political, economic, and social aspects, Albania has maintained a sympathy towards Italy that has developed over the years and with the fading of wartime memories. Except for political judgment, it is practically impossible to hear a negative opinion about the Italian people in Albanian public opinion. This is evident, among other things, in Ismail Kadare's novel "The General of the Dead Army." In this novel, a former general and an Italian priest embark on an official mission to Albania to collect the remains of soldiers who fell during World War II and return them to their homeland. Through this anxious pilgrimage from one grave to another, from one lost tomb to another, dug near a village, reminiscences of war, and military events, are recalled, alternating with the constant contrast of life unfolding around them. Despite being framed within the ideological schemes of the regime, there are no traces of current enmity towards Italy. (Dell'Ongaro, 1972).

Relations with Italy should be seen primarily within the framework of trade. Analyzing the trade exchanges of the past three years, Italy imports wheat, minerals, and their derivative products, cotton, and textiles from Albania, while exporting naval vessels and their components, agricultural machinery, electrical machinery, plastic materials, and artificial textile fibers. However, it should be emphasized that the export-import ratio is skewed in favor of the latter.

The article raises the question: which part of the political "world" does this country align with? The East, the West, or the Third World? The Albanian system is based on an orthodox communist regime that explicitly adheres to Marxism-Leninism but maintains correct relations with neighboring states based on non-interference. Albania has withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact and does not belong to any military bloc, officially placing both "Soviet revisionism" and "American imperialism" on the same plane, as well as the Warsaw Pact and the Atlantic Pact. In the international arena, Albania becomes involved in ideological and political discussions and conflicts taking place worldwide. Thus, Albania stands as the only country with unique and incomparable characteristics (Dell'Ongaro, 1972).

The affection between the two peoples is also appreciated by the newspaper "Il Tempo". According to the newspaper, despite Italian being removed from the curriculum in Albanian schools over 25 years ago, where Russian and English are taught instead, it is still spoken more than any other foreign language and understood by a large portion of the population. This is partly due to the popularity of Italian television shows followed with great interest in Albania. Television antennas can be seen on the rooftops of houses facing Italy, regardless of official policies prohibiting this. Programs such as *Cansonnissima*, *Rischia Tutto*, and the Italian football championship are highly watched, and the streets resonate with the catchy songs of Peppino di Capri and Orietta Berti (Italy and Albania, 1973).

The agreement signed in November 1972 by the Italian Undersecretary of State Orlando will remain valid until the end of 1974, acknowledging Tirana's goodwill to expand the exchange not only in the economic aspect but also in other sectors such as culture and infrastructure.

Albania's relations with regional countries are quite active, as stated in the pages of the Italian magazine "L'informatore agrario". The director of the magazine, Alberto Rizzoti, emphasizes that Albania aims to develop proper diplomatic relations not only with communist countries but also with capitalist ones. After China, which is the largest exporter to Albania, Italy ranks second, providing agricultural machinery, seeds, household electrical appliances, and more. Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, and France follow in the rankings (Rizzoti, 1972).

According to the Italian newspaper "Nuova Unità", regarding Romania, it states that the latter was interested in Albania's participation in the preliminary talks in Helsinki, and this interest seems to be shared among other states. It appears that both Yugoslav and Greek diplomacy have been mobilized in this direction. President Tito of Yugoslavia himself explained the normalization of relations with Albania in a speech in Montenegro. It is evident that this goes beyond the economic aspect and reflects a new orientation embraced by several Western and Eastern European states, which could lead to Albania's participation in the preliminary talks in Helsinki ("Albanian diplomacy", 1973). Undoubtedly, Albania's potential presence in Helsinki would provide new arguments against the continuation of bloc politics.

The Turkish magazine "The Week" published information in English about the signing of the cultural plan between Albania and Turkey. According to the information, this agreement, initially signed in 1965, was reviewed and extended. The Albanian cultural delegation was led by Misto Treska, while the Turkish delegation was led by Melih Erçin. The expansion and development of cultural relations were discussed, and at the same



time, a new program and fundamental principles for cultural exchanges were established (“Albania-Turkey relations”, 1973).

In recent years, it is a fact that the relations between Balkan states have shown significant improvements, primarily in terms of economic contact. Friendly relations exist with Romania (“Albanian-Romanian relations”, 1970), Bulgaria (“Albania and Bulgaria”, 1970), and Hungary, and despite some ideological differences, there is a sense of tranquility prevailing.

## **Conclusion**

The articles and editorials from the foreign press that have been examined shed light on Albania's relations with its regional neighbors in the early 1970s, characterized by a spirit of cooperation. The data gathered from the foreign press provides a clear picture of the official stance of Tirana regarding these countries.

Specifically, Albania improved its relations with neighboring states such as Yugoslavia and Greece, taking into account their historical past and the challenges that arose during the Cold War period.

The foreign press, both regional and beyond, portrayed step by step the dynamics of diplomatic movements, becoming to some extent promoters of these positive changes. The improvement of diplomatic relations led to trade developments, the exchange of goods, as well as cultural and social exchanges among the regional countries.

The improvement of Albania's relations with its neighboring countries, despite their differing political and economic systems, signifies a step forward in Albanian diplomacy during that time. Albania demonstrated great strictness in these relations, showing no signs of ideological wavering but remaining loyal solely in the diplomatic, trade, and cultural aspects.

In the future, we aim to further expand our work, encompassing Albania's relations with European countries and beyond.

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