

Foreword

The assessment that we are products of the past is an invitation, rather than a rule. Knowing yourself and the history that surrounds you is of great importance to the future, and not only for Albanians.

If you travel through Albania, you begin to understand that time has passed even more than the books that have been written about it. Albanian spiritual riches are often associated with the appearance of the old and the vintage, which could be a house, bridge or religious object. Considering the importance of the universal values they carry, some of them are monuments of cultural heritage and part of UNESCO.

Today, some Albanians have left their homeland and reside in different places around the world. For various reasons, they are looking for ways to be more present in their country of origin, or to retain fragments and pieces of their cultural heritage to present to future generations. In the process, national identity and coexistence with other nations are naturally harmonized.

As human evidence of this commitment, five impressive villages in Albania are highly appreciated by the people familiar with the distance from the country of origin. This makes their keen sense of appreciation as special as it is human. The five selected villages are as different from each other as the coordinates of a homeland you await to discover with each passing day. They are separated by great distances, but in the space between them, they carry culture, identity and history.

Engaging the diaspora in their homeland is a government priority but also a human objective that links the desire to migrate with that of maintaining ties with the homeland. It is an energy which, with concrete examples like this project of five villages, demonstrates the contribution stemming from a desirable relationship with homeland. Government policies that strive for sustainable social and economic development of Albania are measurable with votes, whereas love for the homeland is less imaginable for the energy it can offer the country.

The project of five villages modestly 'translates' the invisible into an act evaluating the need for the contribution of the diaspora as a form of communication and assess-

ment of the quality of life in Albania. It is harmonized to the human aspect where the Italian culture learned in migration serves to 'illuminate' the originality of Albanian cultural values.

Albania is striving to offer its own tourist and cultural attractions. State policies would be poor if they did not include, as part of human and professional engagement, such projects which treat cultural heritage as opportunity for development.

Albania has recognized the necessity and contribution of the diaspora as an integral factor for improving economic life. This project of five villages revealed expected qualities for the substance of the Albanian-Italian relationship. It interconnects cultures and recreates the homeland from the distance of migration. Naturally, the five villages return to the 'coordinates' of a homeland where the known unknown is rediscovered.

To view the homeland through the diaspora eyes is more than just tourism. This is Love. As such, this project has surpassed itself.

Thank you!

Pandeli Majko

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