



Tirana, May 19, 2026

Subject: Concern regarding internal democratic principles within the Democratic Party of Albania

To: Mr. Manfred Weber

**President
European People's Party (EPP)**

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you in a spirit of respect and constructive engagement, guided by the fundamental principles enshrined in the EPP Manifesto: democracy, the rule of law, accountability, and political pluralism.

At a time when an entire generation in Albania, within the Democratic Party, is striving to contribute to the end of a prolonged transition and to advance European integration, we are witnessing efforts by representatives of what is perceived as the “old political establishment” to close internal space, retreat into personal interests, and resist change. These tendencies risk undermining both the spirit of renewal and the broader European path of Albania.

The EPP stands at the core of the European political family, grounded in democratic principles, freedom and the rule of law which affirm that it is the citizen who ultimately decides. I recall these principles to emphasize that there is a generation in Albania that firmly believes in them, and the Democratic Party, as part of the EPP family, should represent and channel this aspiration for change.

These values are not only the foundation of our shared political identity, but also the benchmark against which the credibility of every member party must be assessed.

Unfortunately, we are currently facing internal obstacles that prevent the exercise of this responsibility through democratic means. We are unfortunately witnessing developments inside the Democratic Party of Albania that raise serious concerns regarding internal democracy and respect for statutory rules.

My concern relates specifically to the situation within the Democratic Party of Albania, and I wish to bring to your attention a series of recent developments that raise serious questions regarding adherence to internal democratic standards and statutory obligations under the current leadership of Mr. Sali Berisha.



As a member of the Party Leadership, I led a six-month nationwide campaign in preparation for the May 2026 leadership elections, receiving significant support from members of the Democratic Party across Albania. Youth, professionals, intellectuals, and free citizens took part in my meetings.

There was a strong sense of hope and motivation among them, as there is a widespread desire for change in Albania. Change that, in my view, in their view, in the vast majority of the Albanian citizens, cannot be achieved without a renewal of the leadership of the Democratic Party.

Despite meeting all statutory criteria, I was effectively prevented from participating in the leadership race, without any formal justification or official decision being made.

All we requested was the opportunity to compete within a democratic process.

Mr. Sali Berisha, 82 years old, has led the Democratic Party for 36 years. He must assume responsibility for the systemic losses that have contributed to the weakening of the Democratic Party of Albania—both as a matter of principle and in accordance with the Party Statute.

He has become a symbol of the “old political establishment” and, in the interest of democratic renewal, he should step aside.

Particular concern arises from the open violation of Article 46 of the Party Statute, which explicitly foresees the resignation of the Chairman following a loss in general elections, without the possibility of immediate re-candidacy. The failure to apply this provision raises legitimate concerns regarding respect for internal democratic rules and institutional accountability.

Furthermore, several additional developments merit careful and balanced consideration:

- The exclusion or expulsion of my supporters from the Party without any justified or transparent reasoning.
- The exclusion or expulsion of party members who have merely expressed concerns regarding accountability and the need for internal reform;
- A lack of transparency concerning voter lists and the democratic standards necessary for a fair internal electoral process asked from the candidates, media, ONG and institutions
- The non-consideration of candidacy applications submitted within the officially opened timeframe;
- The exclusion or expulsion of Candidates for the internal election of the Party all over albania without official decision or justified or transparent reasoning based on the statute



Particularly troubling was the fact that although the party leadership announced the opening of candidacy submissions only eighteen hours before the deadline, when applications were NOT ALLOWED even to formally be submitted because the responsible office remained closed and the documentation was neither received nor reviewed.

Dear president,

The issue at stake is not an individual candidacy, but the preservation of democratic standards, internal pluralism, and institutional credibility within a party that represents the largest opposition force in Albania and is part of the European People's Party family.

Taken together, these developments risk negatively affecting not only the internal democratic functioning of the Democratic Party of Albania, but also public confidence in the democratic values represented by the wider European political family.

In light of the above, I respectfully invite the leadership of the EPP to consider a principled and constructive engagement with this matter, with the aim of encouraging internal dialogue, reinforcing respect for statutory norms, and safeguarding democratic standards within the party.

Given the importance of these concerns, I would also kindly request that this communication be shared with the relevant EPP structures and bodies responsible for democracy, political governance, and institutional standards.

Allow me to reaffirm my unwavering commitment to the core values of the European People's Party democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, accountability, and European integration and my conviction that these principles must guide political conduct at every level.

Yours sincerely,

Ervin Salianji

Member of the Executive Board of the Democratic Party of Albania



Short Polical Bio of Mr. Ervin Salianji

- **2013 – Present**
Member of the Presidency (Executive Board) Democratic Party of Albania
- **2013**
Coordinator for Legal Affairs and Public Denunciations Democratic Party of Albania
- **2014**
Head of the Department for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Democratic Party
- **2017**
Elected Member of Parliament - Achieved one of the strongest
- **2017 – 2021**
Secretary of the Parliamentary Group, Democratic Party of Albania
- **2021**
Elected Member of Parliament, Parliament of Albania
Won in a competitive electoral district assigned by the Democratic Party (Korca Region)
- **2021**
Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Group, Democratic Party of Albania
- **2023**
Political Leader for Local Elections (Kavaja, Tirana)- Winning result
- **2024**
Political Leader of the Democratic Party Elbasan Region
- **2025- present**
Member of the Presidency (Executive Board) Democratic Party of Albania