

## **Gent Sejko: Money and banking in Albania, from antiquity to modern times**

Opening address by Mr Gent Sejko, Governor of the Bank of Albania, at the First Conference of the Museum of the Bank of Albania “Money and Banking in Albania, from Antiquity to Modern Times”, Tirana, 14 June 2017.

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Dear Professor Picard,

Dear academics, professors and researchers,

Dear guests,

It is a special pleasure for me to welcome you to the First Conference of the Museum of the Bank of Albania.

This is a special event, which brings together academics, researchers, and experts of central bank and currency museums, to establish a new bridge of communication and cooperation that will help us to take further our work at the Museum.

In our short experience in museum management, we have learned that it is very essential to cooperate with other institutions responsible for the administration of cultural heritage, as well as with scientists and experts that study and preserve them, and tell their history. Also, with the support from the Ministry of Culture, Centre for Albanian Studies and Institute of Archaeology, we have today the Museum of the Bank of Albania, whose collection displays unique and impressive items. The systematic work of our distinguished archaeologists and of the dedicated central bank employees over the years has helped in materialising the efforts for presenting the history of the Albanian currency, from the axes of the Hoard of Torovica, to the first coins struck in Dyrrhachium, to those in circulation throughout various historic periods, up to modern days.

Through over 30 exhibits and 5 educational rooms in the Museum, we show interactively the ancient history of our currency. The permanent exhibition in the lower floor displays collections from monetary systems that have existed in our territories over the past two thousand years. They are part of the numismatic collection of the Bank of Albania and the Albanian Institute of Archaeology. We have selected and studied them meticulously in a close and long process of cooperation with archaeologists, numismatists, historians and ethnologists in Albania. I take this opportunity to thank them for their valuable contribution.

Our Museum, however, is not just a money museum. It is also the museum of the central bank, which considers financial education as an essential objective. The public needs to be informed in order to be able to make judicious and sound financial decisions, which, in turn, contribute to financial stability. That is why we have dedicated the upper floor of the Museum to financial information and education. Through a number of activities, educational publications, lectures, films, and applications, irrespective of their age, visitors learn about financial products and system. The history of money originates long ago and its developments are closely related to the people that have produced it. Its role is not limited to the economic functions; it is also a historic evidence of the minting or issuing country. It speaks about periods of economic crisis or downturns, of peace and prosperity, of successes and injustices. In this context, we decided to dedicate the First Conference of the Museum of the Bank of Albania to two main topics, which we think are the gist of its exhibitions and educational activities.

1. Findings, researches and discussions in the area of monetary production and circulation, the history of the economy and banking activity in Albania and Albanian historic territories, which contribute to accurate interpretation and updating of information transmitted to the visitors

through Museum collections.

2. The educational role of central bank museums in getting to know the history of money, and banking activities and enhancing financial literacy through exhibitions, education and innovation. For this purpose, we aim, therefore, to bring together foreign central bank experts to share their perspective on the management of central bank museums, collections and educational activities.

This conference certainly underlines the commitment of the Bank of Albania to earnestly engage in both research and educational activities. We are very interested in enhancing cooperation with researchers, academia, peer museums, and specialised institutions in economic, historic and cultural heritage research.

Such cooperation is an excellent opportunity to Bank of Albania employees, who may benefit from valuable skills and expertise for our Museum. It would also contribute to new networking and collaboration in research activities.

In light of promoting and furthering cooperation, we are committed to turning our Conference of the Museum of the Bank of Albania into an annual event. Also, in 2017, the Museum of the Bank of Albania will organise a cycle of lectures dubbed as “Nights of the Museum”, which will address a variety of topics, such as numismatics, banking history, economic and financial education, philately, art and architecture. These projects aim at developing another aspect of our work at the Museum, which would focus on social developments vis-a-vis museum objects.

Dear participants,

The first conference of the Museum of the Bank of Albania coincides with the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the modern central bank of the Republic of Albania and a two-tier banking system.

In these 25 years, the Bank of Albania has served to the country's economic and financial development, supporting successfully the development of an efficient and stable financial system.

It will continue to remain an institution with ambitious objectives in the field of European integration and approximation with the European Central Bank. Today, it is undertaking a new challenge: opening to the public, not only to communicate clearly its primary objectives, but also to contribute to helping the public learn about the history of money, art and tradition that it represents.

We will work hard, so that all the interested persons, whether in Albania or abroad, will be able to learn about the history of banking, money and people that have dedicated their life and work to it.

I am certain that very soon the Museum of the Bank of Albania will be a place to visit the exhibition, and exchange opinions and ideas about banking and money

Concluding, I would like to thank you for your participation and contribution to the conference and wish success in these two days of the conference.

Thank You!