

Your HE President of the EU Commission

HE Commissioners

Prime Ministers,

Ministers and Colleagues

- I guess I am the only Albanian in this room, working and pledging on a behalf of an International Organisation.
- Well, with due respect to my position, i am overwhelmed and most emotional as an Albanian, by the immense support shown here today.
- The November earthquake was maybe the longest minute of my life so far. It is daunting for a mother to see kids in a feeling of terror, and yet consider yourself lucky because it all happened once u are home and all safe at the end.
- It is heartbreaking to hear testimonies of those who lost their dearest ones and face the uncertainty of the future for the ones that had lost their home.
- But when a disaster strikes it is heartening to see how people consistently act on their desire to help.
- Governments and people of the region arrived first, providing prompt and vigorous help to the victims, taking the sorrow of the victims as their own.
- Help can can take many forms.
- It is not bureaucracy and a “business as usual” agenda that gives a sense to cooperation and solidarity. It is affinity, empathy, kinship. That’s what we tried to do from RCC and what we strive to do

every day: to give a face to altruism in a process where people are participating.

- On behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council, although we are not a donor organization per se - we pledge 60,000 Euro of Albanian membership fee to be considered as part of the relief fund.
- To conclude: The Western Balkans is a small region, with around 18 million people and with limited financial and human resources. Natural disaster recognise no borders.
- That is the reason why we have proposed to the WB to establish a Western Balkans Emergency Response and Assessment Team, as a pool of regional rapid response and assessment teams that will be deployed in case of emergency humanitarian disaster in the Western Balkan and I reiterate our determination to take these initiatives on board, in the interests of long-term regional stability.