

ALBANIEN

Minister of Economy, Culture, and Innovation

Ministry for Economy, Culture, and Innovation

Blendi GONXHJA

Born on 15 June 1970 in Tirana. Since January 2024, he has been appointed as the Minister of Economy, Culture, and Innovation.

Prior to this role, starting from November 2018, Blendi Gonxhja headed the General Directorate of Road Transport Services, an institution under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy. During his tenure in the Directorate, road transport services underwent an epochal transformation, thanks to modernization and the digital revolution. This included the simplification and facilitation of all procedures for citizens, as well as investments in infrastructure and the re-qualification of regional directorates to ensure dignified working conditions and services in line with international standards. A notable achievement during this period was the creation of Retro – the Albanian Collection of Historical Vehicles, a long-awaited project desired by craftsmen, restorers, and collectors of early mopeds and vehicles of historical interest. This cultural movement, which extends throughout Albania, gained recognition by becoming a member of the International Federation of Historical Vehicles (FIVA).

In 1998, Blendi Gonxhja held the position of Chief of Cabinet in the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, where he was actively involved in the development of protective and sustainable policies.

In 2000, he was appointed Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Tirana. After serving as an advisor to the “Rothschild” and “Packard” foundations in 2003, he ventured into entrepreneurship in the field of transport services in Greece and Albania.

In August 2015, Blendi Gonxhja joined the new team of the Municipality of Tirana, taking on the role of General Director of Enterprise no. 1 of City Workers.

From October 2015, he headed the Agency of Parks and Recreations, founded by the Municipality of Tirana, during a time of substantial initiatives for the capital. These initiatives brought about the transformation of the Great Artificial Lake Park and the requalification of public facilities.

Blendi Gonxhja graduated from the “Jordan Misja” Art School in Tirana in 1989 and from the Higher Institute of Arts (now the University of Arts) in 1993. He was one of the leading protagonists of the student movement for democracy and one of the founders of the first opposition party. In 1991, he led the student strike for the abolition of the dictatorship’s cults.

In July 1996, Blendi Gonxhja testified before the International Relations Committee of the US Congress at the “Hearing on Human Rights and Democracy in Albania”. In the same year, he was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship at the Department of Eastern European Studies, University of Michigan (USA).

Throughout his years of public engagement, Blendi Gonxhja founded and led many non-governmental and humanitarian youth organizations and associations, such as the Youth Federation, the Student Council, and the Swiss Foundation in Aid of Schools “SAA”. He played key roles in the Forum for Democracy and the Democratic Alliance. Another important commitment was the role of Cultural Coordinator for the first group of the US Peace Corps in Albania.