

ZERI, 12 March 2004

**From the Prime Minister's visits to Brussels
Rexhepi meets Romano Prodi and participates at the roundtable of ESI for
Mitrovica**

During the meeting of the Prime Minister with the Head of the European Commission Romano Prodi, they have discussed the formal relationship between Kosovo institutions and the European Commission. The general situation in Kosovo was also discussed.

Meanwhile, at the roundtable of ESI for Mitrovica Rexhepi declared that the project should not be dismissed and he is requesting that Kosovo and international authorities should consider it seriously. The Prime Minister of Kosovo, during the visit in Brussels, yesterday met with the Head of the European Commission Romano Prodi. During the meeting of the Prime Minister with the Head of the European Commission Romano Prodi, they have discussed the formal relationship between Kosovo institutions and the European Commission. The general situation in Kosovo was also discussed.

Officials of the European Commission say that President Prodi in the meantime has reemphasized the importance that the European Union affords to the UN Security council Resolution 1244 and the implementation of the standards plan, in which the European Union is also involved, especially during the first meeting of the Energy Working Group which is chaired by an European Commission official. In the meantime, the Prime Minister of Kosovo has discussed yesterday at the roundtable in Brussels the new project of the European Stability Initiative. However, after a second round of talks between Albanians and Serbs and informal European representatives after the London meeting there is still no concrete result, except measuring the pulse of Albanians and Serbs regarding the project.

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Bajram Rexhepi and the representative of the Serb coalition for Return, Oliver Ivanovic, have expressed their interest in the proposal, but the last word has not been spoken yet. ESI, a non-governmental organization, is trying to find a compromise solution between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo for many aspects of the Mitrovica problem, in the meantime they have created the idea of creating a new municipality of Zvecan-North Mitrovica. Prime Minister Rexhepi has refused to declare whether he is for or against a new municipality which has been proposed, but in the meantime he has not dismissed the general proposal of the German organization, according to him this project entails many aspects that are

important to the public and for the extension of the central authority also to this part of Kosovo, which for the moment is still under Serb control.

‘The ESI project must be considered carefully, according to him. One should not dismiss it outrightly, it should be considered seriously at the central level and at the international level’ said Rexhepi yesterday when asked if the proposal to create a new Zvecan-North-Mitrovica municipality is acceptable to him. ‘I am interested in other issues: the return of property, the dismantling of parallel structures, the recognition of central authority within the state borders...’, said Rexhepi. Meanwhile the ESI project has attracted also the interest of the European Union and institutions dealing with the Balkans. EU officials said that EU is following the project, but refuse to prejudge if they think its good or bad, for now leaving the EU’s real intentions regarding the fortune of Mitrovica unknown.

‘We follow the ESI project for Mitrovica with great interest, and we welcome the initiative and every concrete solution that is acceptable to both sides, Albanian and Serb’, say sources of the European Union.