

WEEKLY NEWS

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Press Conference of Prime Minister Berisha

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(continues page 2)

Press release

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(continues page 2)

Premier Berisha receives IFC programs donors group

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(continues page 7)

In this issue you will find;

- Premier Berisha: Devoll cascade project a step toward Albania becoming a small energy superpower in region

(page 8)

- Premier Berisha gets acquainted with draft-study for construction of a Tirana business park

(page 8)

- Premier Berisha invites SP to reflect on a broader consensus about Electoral Code

(page 7)

Premier Berisha: Next year elektoral process with e-electors' list and e-identity cards

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(continues page 7)

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conversation with Mr. Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs about the law on former secret police files. The press office reports that Premier Berisha held on Saturday at 6 p.m. a phone conversation with Mr. Fried. The conversation was held in an open and friendly spirit and focused on the issue of the files and other problems of common interest.

Press Conference of Prime Minister Berisha



I am here today to reiterate my stand on the lustration law on the eve of the Parliament voting that is to take place tomorrow. Firstly, I submit that the ruling majority does not target any revenge, but it wants to

accomplish a major and moral obligation towards the Albanian society, the condemnation of the communist crimes; it is an expression of distancing ourselves from the barbarity of that system applied through the class struggle principle.

By this law we try to make tens and thousands of executed souls rest in peace, to ease the soil on those who died of torture, hunger, disease and other barbarity in the concentration camps.

By this law we target to heal the spiritual wounds of hundreds and thousands of Albanians that leaked blood, tears, pain, suffering and misery for 48 years. The executions, imprisonments, banishments carried out during Hoxha regime, the after Second World War Hitler, as it was called at the Conference of the 42 democratic parties of Europe summoned in Paris in May 1991, were more numerically than those committed in Hungary, Rumania, Czech Republic, Poland taken together. By this law, we lay a foundation to social peace, the essential condition of a free society.

The current lustration law is a moderated version of the Czech law of 1991. On those commenting on its legality, I say that the Czech law of '91 has been examined by the Constitutional Court of Czechoslovakia in 1992 and was found legal. Following the break up of this state into two independent states, Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Czech Constitutional Court examined again the lustration law and still found it legal.

In the year 2000, as the application time of the law was extended, the Czech Constitution Court still found it constitutional. And a lustration law, legal for the Czech Republic which has experienced oppression 10 times smaller than Albania, cannot be but legal in the latter. But, in addition to this the Albanian law of '95, an almost identical copy of the Czech Law, has been considered constitutional by the Constitutional Court of Albania. The actual lustration law has experienced moderation and not radicalization as compared to the Czech law and the Albanian law of '95.

This happened because we took into account the suggestions of the opposition during the discussions and negotiations held for this law. We stick to the amendments made. According to the Czech law: several additional terms are added to the items on the judges, prosecutors, investigators, lawyers and other related persons to the judiciary.

The European Court of the Human Rights in Strasbourg has not accepted in any case to examine the foundation of the lustration laws as these laws are considered legal and the lustration as indispensability to social peace and the future of these countries. The follow-up to the lustration law has been the establishment of the lustration prosecution office, lustration court of penal prosecution and the legal punishment of the people who have taken part in the political processes during the communist dictatorship, such as Polish case.

The European Court of the Human Rights has demanded a fair judicial process, based on the rule of law regulations, on the people who have committed crimes. This court has advised against the methods used during the dictatorship regarding their judgment in a free society.

Tens of Albanian citizens were addressed to the European Court of the Human Rights to examine their special requirements as they were affected by the lustration laws and had their rights restricted. But, the Court has not generally acknowledged their right. It has acknowledged temporary restrictions of the human rights in the course of these processes.

Ladies and gentlemen

In 2007, The European Court of the Human Rights assessed that the former collaborators of the regime represent two potential risks. They can be morally

converted or they can fall a victim of the blackmail because of their actions in the past. Therefore, the information provided that lustration is required. Furthermore, lustration presents the moral integrity and credibility. According to the Polish Constitutional Court, the lustration confirms the necessary moral qualities for exercising the public functions as described in line with the relevant laws such and respect to the fundamental values of freedom and rights. The European Court of the Human Rights writes in 2007 that in the Central and Eastern Europe one can actually find a lot of aged people with bloody hands. Some of them are devoted supporters of the human rights. If so proposes revenge, let us say, against the people who in the near future have collaborated with the secret police, they raise their voice, in line with the traditional arrogance used in their past and present position. They defend in their way those human rights which they denied to the others in the course of their life in a brutal way and in cold blood. This is Europe stance, the right of the free countries toward lustration. There is no other specialized institution more reliable than the European Court of the Human Rights regarding lustration.

In addition, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1996 approved the resolution which should turn into a legal platform of the lustration in the former communist countries. This resolution gives a crystal clear response to two important issues of the lustration process: Can there be retroactive justice and can it be considered a crime the action which used to be obligatory in line with the laws of the regime. The second issue is related to the judges and prosecutors in these countries. Regarding the first issue, the resolution answers that judgment and punishment of a person on any action or failure to act and which was not considered a penal offence at the time the crime was committed, according to the legislation in force, but which is considered a crime in the light of the general principles of the known rights of the civilized nations, is allowed.

Thus, through this, the temple of European democracy has totally legalized the retroactive justice, has declared a crime every offence committed, whatever the laws of the country, but which are considered a crime in a free country. While in regard to the judges and prosecutors who have given political rulings it is said: if a judge has allowed executions, or a guard in jail has allowed an inmate is tortured, then he should

be judged and sentenced, if found guilty. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2006 goes even further. It requires international investigation on the crimes committed under communism. The lustration law, due to be voted tomorrow, does not target revenge. I highlight that it aims easing the pain of the souls of tens and thousand of people buried because of wanting free speech, trust in God, their property and trust in Albania. It aims thousands of men and women, children and old people who died in the concentration camps because of hunger, disease and torture, actually rest in peace.

This law targets to curb hatred through removing from their posts a number of functionaries, who have blood in their hands or who have violated human rights and freedoms by means of the methods of the system.

Our law is several times more moderate than the Polish Law, although when the Polish used to travel without a visa to the USA, or when they were receiving Gregory Peck through filling their squares, in Albania Xhelal Koprencka and the other inmates, were executed by the dictatorship only because they had the courage to demand their country to open to the USA.

Our lustration law is clearly far more moderate than the German law, although Eastern Germany of 17-18 million inhabitants numbered a total of 250 citizens shot during 45 years through communist regime trials versus 6 thousand citizens shot in Albania.

The Albanian lustration law is clearly more moderate than the Czech law, although when the Czech Republic was experiencing the Prague Spring, we Albanians, were suffering the notorious punishments of shooting and hysteria, we lived through the cultural revolution when the Czech people were reading Charter 77; in Albania the intellectuals were fired because they had dared to mention human freedom and rights.

Thus, this law is legal as much as it is legal in Czech Republic, a successful EU and NATO integration country. It cannot be illegal to the country that lived through the most savage communist barbarity. The lustration laws have not been approved by consensus in all the former communist countries of Europe. It has happened the same as in Albania that the communist restored to power, abrogated them partially or totally, or as it happened in Serbia where Sheshel's and Milosevic's party kept hostage the law.

As mentioned above, there have been cases when these laws have been approved with 49.4% of the votes of the Parliament, exploiting the abstention of the

others. I am not here to apply this practice, but to Mr. Rama, who in his discourse allowed himself the language of the street against me, I would like to say as follows. Your defense of a handful of people in the Albanian justice who have decided about the political

assassinations of the poets and intellectuals, have ordered tying with barbed wire and dragging along Shkodra squares of the corpses of the Albanian youth and this over the period 1989-1990, it desecrates their martyred spirit and it testifies that today you keep the same spirit adopted by the members of the notorious presidium of the People's Assembly, which according to the original documents when they have discussed on their decisions, in regard to assassinations, in one case they have named the victims as: "low people that should be sentenced, only because they demanded the free speech."

Mr. Rama, we are going to vote even without you tomorrow because you, while defending the people who have ordered hanging innocent Albanian citizens, also destroy the human values of the free man. While defending those who ordered shooting, hanging and dragging of the corpses of the intellectuals and innocent citizens, this testifies that in your spirit is still preserved the class hatred on the victims of the barbarous system. May God save your spirit from this hatred!

Mr. Rama, we are going to vote even without you, not because we wish so, 'cause for months and we have tried to vote it together, but because you have defended a small group of people who have ordered their execution, hanging and public dragging along Shkodra and Saranda streets of the corpses of the young people; this testifies that you are set to be rewarded by them the same as your spiritual fathers. However, Albania is actually another country, a free country. The people who have committed monstrous crimes will leave.

I can say many things with the language you employed two days ago, but I shall restrain myself. I would like to say that through defending publicly a group of people who have ordered hanging, shootings and dragging of corpses along Albania streets following the collapse of the Berlin Wall you testify that you consider the Albanian justice as one unit of that party which has committed monstrous crimes and has been the mastermind of grave ones.

The conscience of this nation cannot be violated further. This law is nothing more than a handful of soil less on the spirits of tens and thousands of Albanians that became the martyrs of the free speech, trust in God, freedom, and Western vocation of the Albanian nation. Finally, I would like to say that the law and Sali

Berisha are not for the revenge. In the 90-ies two young people joined the movement I was leading and since the first meeting they appealed for hanging sentence. I said I was against hanging, but I was not to allow revenge and thus they went their way. These

young intellectuals were Edi Rama and Adrian Klosi. This is true. I have thought that this person from a radical in 1991, at least would have spiritual force and courage to separate him from the past. Never in my life do I accept the son is guilty because of the father. I didn't accept Rama as such, but I offered to him the seat of the lawmaker in 1991 because he has also participated in the movement, I do not deny this and I have considered finding a common language with this man. I didn't intend to hurt anyone. It belongs to the gentleman to distance himself and condemn those actions. I preserve a deep respect for his mother, a doctor by profession. But, I cannot accept to stay silent because of Spiro Koleka, the chief organizer of the shootings of Albanian technical intelligentsia from Maliq marsh up to Shkëlqim Bumçi who was sentenced with 20 years imprisonment.

It is not good to use the same way of speaking as he did. There is still time until tomorrow for him to reflect and to vote this law that carries in itself even the compromise with his party.

Question: Mr. Prime Minister, You said that you will vote the draft law tomorrow without the opposition, but it seems that you will vote it without the support of international partners, who during the past days have intensified their statements, as well as meetings with You for this law. According to our sources, the Assistant Secretary of State Department, Daniel Fried has talked with you today and has demanded not to harm the authority, or independence of the judicial system. Is this true?

Prime Minister Berisha: I see you are more well-informed than me. Today, I did not have a conversation with the Assistant Secretary of State, Daniel Fried. It is true that there have been several statements about the law, but, I want to guarantee the Albanians and every partner and friend that the tomorrow voting is not a challenge against anyone. The tomorrow voting is the fulfillment of a major moral obligation toward tens and thousand of Albanians; we do not even know where the tombs of some of them are.

What I want to say is that categorically this is not a law of revenge, but this government and this state is obligated to implement it in compliance with the rules of a rule of law. What was constitutional for the Czech people was constitutional for the Albanians. It can not be anti-constitutional today for the Albanians. The law,

article, Constitution: its spirit can not sleep on the crime. No, never. Its spirit is integrity, ethics and not the hiding and protection of crime. Under no circumstances.

Question: Mr. Prime Minister was this answer, that the law is constitutional, also an answer to ambassador Withers and not only to Mr. Rama?

Prime Minister Berisha: I am not aware that ambassador Withers has said that the law violates the Constitution. But, on the other side, I think there is a European Court of Human Rights, which is the supreme authority of evaluation of all the compatibility of actions, and I guarantee the Albanian citizens and all those whose rights will be temporary harmed by this law that can be free to go to this Court.

Question: Before the voting in parliament, in your speech you have mentioned the name of Mr. Shtylla, as one of the executors of the time. Later on, he has stated that you were one of the persons to ask him to act as the chief prosecutor, and have handed him the case of Mrs. Nexhmije Hoxha. Are these statements true?

Prime Minister Berisha: Really? Very interesting. This is completely false. Regarding Mr. Shtylla, first of all, it is the memory. Mrs. Nexhmije Hoxha has been arrested in December '91, when Sali Berisha has been in opposition, and had even withdrawn from the government of Stability. You can judge yourself about my power on the prosecution.

For you to know, and I say it in full sincerity, the man who arrested Nexhmije Hoxha was Ramiz Alia and she has confirmed it herself, and he arrested her to save himself. These are true. Thus, do not mix things. The evaluation should be done when law on lustration has come into force.

I want to add something very important. The Albanian and Czech law of '95 have an article that authorizes the Prime Minister, and maybe the President of the country and some other officials to make exceptions. I have removed this article, because this article was criticized then and gave the impression I could abuse with it. This was a good move, and not because it was completely unnecessary, but it is better not to have any comments.

Question: Will you make the necessary numbers to vote the law tomorrow, and in case you have the majority of votes, do you think it can put in danger the parliament, because lawmakers and politicians of the left and right wing can result to have files?

Prime Minister Berisha: There will be justice. This is our obligation. As you have noted, in 18 years, our society has been enriched with great values, but I can not say it was enriched with penance. None has

expressed repentance; none has apologized, except Sali Berisha in '90, with the thesis "co-sufferers and accomplices".

With this thesis, as I have often repeated, I did not ever intent the former persecuted people, but the other

rest, because I can not say we were glad and happy to be oppressed, and I can not also say we were not responsible, because we used to vote with the fear of terror, because there were no elections held, but the result was 99 per cent in favor.

Question: Mr. Prime Minister, you came into power in '92 with a great support thesis then from the Albanians, with the anti-communism thesis and lustration law, which you composed only at the end of '95. In 2005, you came into power with another thesis, the anti-corruption, and a great problem for Albanians. Meanwhile, at a time when, we were waiting for you to make bigger efforts in the fight against corruption, you go back to your anti-communist thesis in the threshold of 2009 elections. Will this help you?

Prime Minister Berisha: Let's go back to '92. Of course, Albania should have been the first to draft the most severe lustration law, due to what it had gone through. But, I personally, chose the Czech law, and as I have explained, I did this for many reasons. I can not say, I could deal with the lustration at a time when Albania was in misery and hunger, when the shops were empty and with an 80% of unemployment. We did some things, shops were filled from the freedom of market and then we dealt with Czech law.

In 2005, we came into power with the thesis of the government of clean hands. Are you aware of any other government that has removed the country from the list of 24 most corrupted countries, climbing 95 positions? Why do you quote phrases that worsen the image of Albania and do not quote phrases that improve its image? They have written about a government which is a champion in reforms against corruption. And these are not my statements, but the most serious organization has evaluated the fight against corruption. You are saying that we are not dealing with this fight, when in the last months; we have taken a series of measures, which I guarantee that will be successful. We eliminated corruption for the construction permits, which are one of the basic procedures of a state. I assure that this fight remains the top priority. The lustration law has been discussed for two years in parliament, and we have done several efforts. A few days ago, during a conversation with a foreign friend, I was told from him that in June, the opposition seemed to agree with the law. And this is the reason why we used to postpone it, waiting to come to an agreement, and reach a compromise, but not on fundamental things, not if the compromise is to

leave a small handful of people head the justice. There are 350 prosecutors, 350 judges in Albania, and 95 per cent of them have to do with communism crimes, as much as you do. The Albanians do not deserve justice only from those who have blood on their hands. No, this is not acceptable.

Question: Does the approval of the law tomorrow affect some of the judges that are dealing with the hottest files, such as Gërdec or the Durrës-Kukës road?

Prime Minister Berisha: This law was sent to parliament in October 2006, when none of these files exited. Do you think these files should serve as immunity for those who have blood on their hands? This can not happen.

I can say that after this law, the parliament will receive the law on the Institute of National Memory. Again, it will not be revenge; again we will keep the Czech version, which determines a wide platform for national consciousness on the consequences of communism.

Question: Mr. Prime Minister, In case, that the Constitutional Court and President will not turn back the law, how reliable will be the verification authority, if we take into consideration that two opposition members will not be present?

Prime Minister Berisha: You can be sure, that the opposition members have their places. But, there is an article that authorizes civil society to propose its members, in case no political party does fill the place. But, I invite the opposition to participate. Because, in this aspect, this is the end of the empty allegations, this is the end of banal rhetoric, in the absolute meaning of the word. Gentlemen, these are archives and none can be harmed without clear documents. I hope the opposition will participate in the committee, otherwise, it will mean that it goes 'in extremis' to sabotage this process, which can not be sabotages.

Question: In fact, there are some changes between the version of 2006 and version of 2008, the circle of prosecutors and judges to be verified has been extended.

Prime Minister Berisha: Absolutely, it was not extended. The law includes judges, assistant judges, prosecutors and assistant prosecutors. But, there is a change, and it has to do with the change of term from special to political. The reason is the term used by the resolution of Council of Europe, meaning, even those punishments which did not consist of a crime based on the laws of the country at then time, are considered such, in case free countries consider them such. This is reflected in the law. Whereas, the categories have not changed. There is no effort to include the private sector. There was an effort to include the private media, but we forget that the Constitutional

Court of Albania has turned back this article in 1996. Thus, we have not included. In some aspects, the circle has narrowed and I think it was fair. The opposition asked it and we agreed and I do not regret it.

Council of Ministers approves government decree on a re-allocation of 12 billion lek fund

The Council of Ministers approved today government decree on a re-allocation of 12 billion lek fund. The premier said that this fund is the result of a better financial performance than envisaged; it stems from the well-administering of the debt and debt interest rates as well as arrangement of the contingency fund. The premier said that staff expenditure is reduced to the extent of 1, 2 billion lek and considered this a significant saving.

The premier explained that 62 million Euros from the 12 billion lek fund has been envisaged to be provided as bonus to the pensioners and administration employees.

National Committee on Coordination of Fight against Money laundering convened

Premier Berisha chaired the meeting of National Committee on Coordination of Fight against Money Laundering. Attending the meeting were ministers of the government, Governor of Bank of Albania, Ardian Fullani, Chief Prosecutor, Ina Rama, heads of member institutions of National Committee on Coordination of Fight against Money Laundering, etc.

During the meeting, every institution briefed on measure taken about implementation of National Program "On control of cash circulation in the Republic of Albania". Likewise, the meeting focused on inter-institutional coordination in fight against money laundering, as well as opportunity of intervention in data base of state bodies and public registers by General Department of Money Laundering Prevention, as well as international cooperation in the framework of sister-like programs. The participants focused on the need actions in fight with full transparence and based on clear evaluation criteria. The Premier required from the participants a great commitment to this difficult fight, considering money laundering an extremely dangerous phenomenon, and a highway of crime. The Premier stressed that crime can not be defeated without a determined fight against money laundering. The Premier added that we should fight with zero tolerance against money laundering.

The participants discussed the strengthening of structures that fight money laundering, training of the staff, as well as strengthening of IT network.

Premier Berisha receives IFC programs donors group

Premier Berisha held a meeting on Wednesday with the group of IFC program donors in support to



private sector in Southeastern Europe and representatives of donor governments of USA, Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland.

Steering Board of Private Enterprise Partnership Southeast Europe program (PEPSE) will hold its meeting this year in Albania due to importance of projects in Albania as part of PEPSE regional programs.

Premier Berisha hailed assistance of this program in the process of privatization of Albanian Power Corporation Distribution System Operator and preparation of the process of granting hydropower plan of Ashta with concession.

Premier Berisha considered as very important expertise of this project in the successful progress of these programs in a key sector such as that of electric power that will have a powerful impact on efficiency and management.

The meeting focused on opportunities to continue this assistance in infrastructure, especially in port infrastructure.

On their part, the donors' group headed by Laurence W. Carter, IFC Small and Medium Enterprise Director and Angelo Dell'Atti General Manager, PEP-Southeast Europe Infrastructure praised the constructive cooperation with the government of Albania as a model country in the region and a practice that should be applied in other Balkan countries as well.

Government considers a package of measures to help paraplegics and quadriplegics



Prime Minister Sali Berisha pointed during meeting today of the Council of Ministers to a package of measures in support of the

paraplegics and quadriplegics. The premier said that these decisions are taken in the framework of the

measures the government has adopted to improve their daily life.

While praising the human efforts of this stratum to cope with the disease and guarantee a better life quality for them, the premier highlighted that these decisions make a new evaluation of the support package for the quadriplegics and they also define several other indispensable aspects.

Premier Berisha invites SP to reflect on a broader consensus about Electoral Code

Prime Minister Sali Berisha invited today the Socialist Party (SP) to reflect on a potential broader consensus about Electoral Code. Premier Berisha made the invitation publicly following presentation of the new identity documents in the meeting of the Council of Ministers.

"I felt deeply hurt because of the hunger strike and I say this openly. Although opponents, the 10 MPs going on hunger strike were not favorable news for the country," said Premier Berisha.

Premier Berisha: Next year electoral process with e-electors' list and e-identity cards

The Council of Ministers approved in its routine meeting the decision On approval of the final design of the identity documents: electronic identity-cards and electronic passport.

Premier Berisha said that this process is moving according to Schedule and that the Albanians will vote in net year elections with the new cards.

Prime Minister Sali Berisha informed that this design will have the figure of our national hero George Kastrioti Scanderbeg on the background.

Decision on acknowledge of owners' right to use vouchers approved

Today, the government approved the decision acknowledging the owners' right to use vouchers about preemption of 80% of the value of public objects being privatized while the remaining 20% to be bought by lek. Premier Berisha ordered the Economy Minister and Finance Minister to set up working groups to examine the modalities of the vouchers use on the part of the owners, naturally not in lek value, but as vouchers valid for use to preempt 80% of the value of public objects being privatized or put up for auction. Premier Berisha highlighted the need of conducting a detailed study and full review of the legislation and previous decisions. But, he emphasized that his government considers vouchers valid, as issued by the mid '90-ies.

Premier Berisha receives Italian actress and producer Maria Grazia Cucinotta

Prime Minister Sali Berisha had a cordial meeting with the famous Italian actress and producer Maria Grazia Cucinotta. On her first visit to our country, Ms. Cucinotta said she was impressed by Albania development and



expressed her most positive assessments of Albanian art and culture. She pointed to the talent of several Albanian artists whom she had the opportunity to meet and cooperate with in Italy. Premier Berisha thanked Cucinotta for choosing Albania for a major project such as the telefilm, a television serial about which she had come in Tirana. This is in cooperation between the two countries and with participation of Kosovar and Italian actors. Premier Berisha emphasized that the government of Albania would constantly support more and more major projects which help development of the stage and cinematographic art in Albania. And he considered the film as a great transistor of culture and love between the peoples and that plays a role in the education of the young generations.

Ms. Cucinotta expressed her satisfaction at the cooperation with Albanian artists during this project and expressed her willingness that soon, as a producer, to come again here and implement new projects.

Premier Berisha: Devoll cascade project a step toward Albania becoming a small energy superpower in region

In the presence of Premier Berisha, at the venues of the Sheraton Hotel in Tirana, the representatives of Albania Ministry of



Economy, Trade and Energy and EVN AG, Austria and STATKRAFT AS, Norway signed the BOT type concession agreement for building three hydroelectric power stations along the Devolli River. The implementation of this project has the great advantage of optimizing the use of the Devolli River cascade through three planned hydroelectric power stations. Premier Berisha hailed the signing of the contract with two of the biggest energy companies in Europe and considered the Devolli project one of the most major

ones in the history of the country and crowning of the policy of the government to turn Albania into an attractive country for the FDI. The representatives of the two companies, Burkhard Hofer, EVN Chairman of the Executive Board and Ragnvald Naero, Executive Vice President of Statkraft AS extended thanks to the government of Albania for the successful implementation of this contract. They said that Devolli cascade project is one of the biggest investments in Albania and Europe in the hydro-electricity field. They expressed their trust in Albania that has achieved a lot in the course of these years and has developed a favorable business environment. Premier Berisha considered Devoll cascade project a step toward Albania becoming a small energy superpower in region. Premier Berisha said that 5 thousand workers will be recruited and 2500 others will be the support staff of constructing this building masterpiece in its genre as it plans 62 tunnels. The premier emphasized that the concession with these two companies of experience in building, management, environment protection and energy field is a guarantee of success of this project, friendly to environment and based on



es; it is not a project of decades, but of because it carries the most advanced to save the potentials regarding sediments. Berisha said that thanks to this project Albania several other billions as the investors will by the inviting news of a project based on 62 km tunnel built by the two best companies in the field of energy.

Premier Berisha gets acquainted with draft-study for construction of a Tirana business park

Premier Berisha received the representatives of a consortium of Albanian, German, Albanian companies. The representatives of this consortium, chaired by German company Lindner, leading company in the European immovable properties market, presented to Premier Berisha a draft-study for construction of Tirana Business Park, near the Albanian capital airport. This study is one of the greatest projects in the field of immovable properties market, which is an 85 million euro investment extended in a surface of about 21 hectares.