

- **VOTE 40: Mitrovica elections**
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Tirana demonstration

Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! expresses its regret at the news of the tragic events in Tirana on Friday 21st January, when 4 citizens were killed and tens of others were injured. We offer our sincere condolences to the families of those killed and we express our deepest sympathy. We wish the injured a speedy recovery.

Albanians wherever they are in the Balkans, including here and in the Republic of Albania, have numerous reasons to protest and demonstrate due to miserable living conditions, the suppression of their national dignity and the lack of prospects as citizens. The Albanian nation is the poorest and with the highest unemployment in Europe. Albanian politicians are richer than all their colleagues in Europe, in comparison with their respective state budgets.

In the institutions of the Albanian state usually we see parties without people whereas on Friday we saw the people without a party, angry with the government and abandoned by the opposition. This demonstration showed the gap between the discontented citizens and complacent government officials, as well as confirms the gap between the people and the opposition. Discontented Albanians, wherever they are, must organize and express their discontent with the language of their will and interests. Otherwise, without political organization, there will only be partisan profit and national loss.



Public meeting in Mitrovica

VOTE 40: Mitrovica elections

This week, Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! participated in the re-run of elections in the municipality of Mitrovica, prior to voting day on Sunday 23rd February. A series of public meetings were held in villages until events were canceled in respect for those killed in demonstrations in Tirana.

On Friday 21st January, a large public meeting was held in Mitrovica's "Rexhep Mitrovica" hall of culture. The meeting was opened by Zanita Halimi, candidate for Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE!, who reminded the audience that a vote for the movement, is a vote against the partition of Mitrovica. The audience was then addressed by candidate Faruk Mujka, who said that the people of Mitrovica had always chosen the right path throughout history, in demonstrations, in war, and would again on the 23rd February. He was followed by candidate Nazmi Mikullovc, who described the serious economic situation facing Kosova and explained Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE!'s commitment to revitalizing Kosova's economy. The next candidate to address the crowd was Ali Jonuzi, who reminded them to vote for the return of the Albanian flag in Kosova and for the right to unite with Albania. Visar Ymeri, candidate and member of the leadership of Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! commented on how all parties, working together over the last few years, have never attempted to resolve the lack of sovereignty in the north or to make Trepça functional. Albin Kurti stressed the importance of Mitrovica for Kosova's economy, reminding the audience that Kosova's potential economic development has been historically measured by Mitrovica's development.

Serbia and EU membership

This week, Serbia took another step towards membership in the EU, as the EU Parliament voted to ratify the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia. At the same time, the EU Parliament passed a new resolution which reminded Serbia that cooperation with the Hague Tribunal was the condition of its membership. The only condition with regard to Kosova was that Serbia be 'constructive' and

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engage in talks between Kosova and Serbia as soon as possible.

The SAA with Serbia now has to be ratified by individual EU member states and Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! reminds those states that Serbia's path to the EU is being speeded up despite its consistent violation of the principles at the heart of the EU. Serbia has yet to apologize for the pain and suffering it caused to our people and it continues to obstruct the sovereignty and independence of our country. As such, it consistently violates the EU membership principle of good neighborliness, by actively and systematically attempting to destabilize Kosova internally through the sponsorship and direction of illegal parallel structures inside Kosova, and externally through lobbying against recognition of our independence. Serbia is also constantly seeking to obstruct the democratic functioning of our institutions by refusing to allow the Serb minority to recognize Kosova's institutions, thus perpetuating their non-integration and Kosova's lack of democracy. Serbia is also obstructing the construction of an integrated regional free market by blocking the operation of CEFTA and refusing to meet its obligations as a signatory, because it does not recognize us. Serbia is acting every day to deny Kosova's people the right to a peaceful, normal life, and perspective. It is neither just nor fair that Serbia should be welcomed into the EU without being required to transform its behavior towards us. Requiring that Serbia be constructive in future talks is like asking Serbia to behave politely as it negotiates away our freedom. Serbia must apologize for the crimes it committed; it must recognize Kosova; and, it must give up its claims to and violations of our territory and independence.

VENDOS 40

**BASHKË ËSHITË
E MUNDSHME**