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Belgrade “relatively optimistic” after first day on East River

KosovoCompromise Staff

Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic said he was “relatively optimistic” about the prospects of finding a compromise solution for the Kosovo status, after the first day of meetings with foreign dignitaries on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

Serbian president Boris Tadic launched a fresh diplomatic initiative in New York on Monday ahead of crucial talks on future status of Kosovo, scheduled on Friday.

Tadic and Jeremic met with Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and top Greek diplomat Dora Bakoyannis as part of high-level consultations aimed at promoting the Serbian proposal for the new status of Kosovo, which includes economic independence for the Albanian-dominated province.

“For the first time, there is a visible interest for the Serbian stance even in countries which previously did not want to hear our position”, Jeremic said. “I am relatively optimistic ... But there is an opening that we have to fill”.

President Tadic said that Serbia remains open to a compromise solution on Kosovo’s future status, but warned that Belgrade cannot accept any outcome which would harm its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The next round of talks on Kosovo’s status will be held in EU’s New York offices on Friday, following the top-level meeting of foreign ministers of the Contact Group with high-ranking officials from the EU and NATO on Thursday.

Western diplomats, speaking ahead of next round of talks between Serbia and the Kosovo Albanians, said that there are “still slim chances that two sides might come up with a compromise solution”.

They warned that otherwise the Kosovo Albanians might unilaterally proclaim independence.