



FOCUS

Sustained National Protests and Deadlock While the International Community Asks for Choosing Dialogue ASAP

In early January, the opposition ignited another mass protest against the agreements with Serbia and Montenegro (concerning the Association of Municipalities and Demarcation issues) and demanding the resignation of the Government. The protest was staged at Prishtina's main square opposite the seat of the government. Turnout was considerable, but information on the number of participants differed. While the police counted 8.000 protesters the organisers spoke of about 100.000. The situation escalated at the end of the demonstration, as groups of protesters started tossing bricks, pyrotechnics and Molotov cocktails at government buildings and police forces, who responded with tear gas. The date for the next anti-government protest has already been set for 17 February, the anniversary of Kosovo's independence.

At the same time, the international pressure for dialogue and overcoming the political deadlock is mounting. German Ambassador to Kosovo, Angelika Viets, urged parties to find a solution for the situation through political dialogue, underlining that early elections would not help solve the crisis. Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, has joined the calls for dialogue during a meeting with Kosovo assembly members.

Kosovo-Serbia Negotiations Put Prime Minister Mustafa Under Public Pressure

The next round of EU-led negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia has taken place. However, due to a prior statement from Prime Minister Mustafa it was uncertain until the last minute whether he would attend the meetings in Brussels. Mustafa stated, that as a form of solidarity with citizens who cannot travel freely without visas in Europe, he would not travel abroad until Kosovars would receive a positive visa recommendation. Eventually, after receiving the invitation from Ms. Federica Mogherini, the prime minister decided to attend, even though this was considered as a breach of his public promise by political opponents and parts of civil society.

The round of negotiations in January was more of a recap on reached agreements and an assessment of the progress made with special em-

Dear readers,

as a new year begins, the challenges still remain the same as last year. To overcome political crisis, it is vital to make full use of political dialogue, both internal as well as external. Our offices will keep on trying to modestly contribute to this process.

We would like to thank you for your positive feedback so far and will keep on developing our newsletters. Enjoy our colourful feature for this month and look forward to next month's guest corner.

Kind regards,

Johannes D. Rey
& Team

Edited by Matthias
Meyer

JANUARY 2016
www.kas.de/kosovo

phasis on further steps to establishing the Association of Municipalities with Serb-majority. Parts of the agreement were “contested” in a verdict of Kosovar Constitutional Court, which regards some of its principles not to be in compliance with several articles of the constitution. After the meeting in Brussels, Prime Minister Mustafa noted that further drafting of the statute of the association will be done respecting the Courts' recommendations. Political parties have expressed their commitment to carry on the negotiations in other relevant areas, such as those pertaining to air and railway connections between Kosovo and Serbia.

AND WE SAY...

Regarding Political Impasse and International Mediation

The political climate in Kosovo is aggravating. Political impasse and the blockage of the Assembly's work accompanied by street protests have all been features of political life for the past five months. This situation can only be improved through political dialogue and the application of rational solutions. The latest protests were accompanied by violence, committed by a mass of citizens who seem to find violence an adequate means to solve problems. The parties involved must withdraw from their initial positions as soon as possible to make way for dialogue and compromise.

The ongoing rounds of negotiations related to the agreements that have triggered this deadlock provide a chance for a revision of the contested issues. Opposition parties should be involved in the further drafting process so that it can be concluded according to democratic standards and in compliance with the Constitution. International mediation for facilitating the dialogue could be a good option to overcome this crisis.

Regarding Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue and the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities

The dialogue on normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia must continue. Both sides must maintain the willingness to reach important agreements, which will eventually lead to the normalisation of relations and pave the way towards EU-integration. However, any reached agreements need to respect general international principles as well as the Constitution of Kosovo. In no way should they be obstacles to a proper functioning of Kosovo.

The verdict of the Constitutional Court, that some items of the agreements on the Association of Serb-majority Municipalities are not fully in

JANUARY 2016
www.kas.de/kosovo

line with several articles of the Constitution and international documents on local governance, must be fully integrated into the final draft of the statute. This would ensure maintaining constitutionality and the functioning of the country, in line with the agreement reached in Brussels.

KAS NEWS CORNER

The KAS Office in Prishtina hosted **Mr. Rainer Wieland**, Deputy President of the European Parliament. During numerous meetings and visits with local politicians, representatives of the German-Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, and various businessmen Mr. Wieland had the opportunity to discuss possibilities for establishing agriculture cooperatives in Kosovo as an opportunity for rural economic development. The KAS is committed to encouraging the establishment of agriculture cooperatives and we are pleased to having received Mr. Wieland's support on this issue.



Mr. Jens Paulus with the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr. Isa Mustafa, and MP Teuta Sahatqija

Mr. Hans-Joachim Fuchtel, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, visited Kosovo with a delegation from many German institutions including **Mr. Jens Paulus**, Head of the KAS Department for Europe and North America. In a meeting with the official KAS representative for Kosovo and Macedonia,



JANUARY 2016
www.kas.de/kosovo

Mr. Johannes Rey, the delegation was informed about the work of the foundation and the projects in Kosovo for 2016. During his visit, Mr. Paulus had the chance to be present at the commemorative academy for the 10th anniversary of Ibrahim Rugova, first president of Kosovo and founder of the LDK. After the visit to the academy, he briefly discussed the cooperation between the KAS and the LDK with **Mr. Isa Mustafa**, Prime Minister and chairman of the LDK, as well as other high-ranking politicians.