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**THE INTEGRATION OF KOSOVO'S POLITICAL PARTIES IN
INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS:
AN EXPLANATION OF THE DELAY**

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INTRODUCTION

The following research on the efforts for entrance and participation of Kosovo's political parties in international organizations of political parties, and particularly in European ones, provides evidence that this participation and integration are at a very low level. In fact, LDK (the Democratic League of Kosovo) is the only party that is a member of the EPP (European People's Parties), and the other four parties discussed¹ are at the early stages of the application for entrance in such organizations. This low participation and integration are caused by vagueness regarding the ideological orientation of Kosovo's political parties. And this vagueness can, in turn, be explained by a number of historical factors that were specific for Kosovo's development. These specific factors, which were decisive for the emergence and the development of Kosovo's political parties, make Kosovo's experience distinctive from experiences of other countries that came out from the former Communist bloc.

The first part of this work will provide a short description of the particularities of Kosovo's experience in the development of its multi-party political scene, which particularities have influenced the emergence of the actual condition. Then, we will look at the actual condition, and we will do that by focusing, first, on the sections of the statutes and programs of Kosovo's political parties that are related to their ideological commitments, and which express their attitudes towards their entrance in international organizations of political parties. This will, then, be appended with a brief analysis of the interviews that we have conducted on these issues with a number of high representatives of these parties. In the penultimate section we will present and discuss the major difficulties of Kosovo's political parties regarding their ideological commitments and their attitudes towards the entrance in international and European organizations of political parties. And at the end we will provide several recommendations.

¹ The parties discussed are LDK, PDK, AAK, VETËVENDOSJE!, and NISMA. We have discussed here only those political parties that have parliamentary groups. If we discussed other parties, then the first Kosovar party to enter into an international organization of political parties was the Liberal Party of Kosovo, which, from 1990's is an observer at the Liberal International, and is also a member of the the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party.

1. The Particular Features of the Historical Experience of ideological articulation in Kosovo

The particular features of the historical development of ideological articulation in Kosovo will be given for two periods: the first one, before the year 1989, and the second, after 1989.

1. Before 1989 – The experiences of a large number of countries that belonged to the former Communist bloc, in the decades before the year 1989² when this bloc collapsed, included the existence of a single Communist party holding the political power, and of an oppositionary social movement, which was awaiting for a moment convenient for its political articulation. By being anti-communist, these social movements were anti-leftist, and this was reflected in the ideologies of the parties that emerged from them beginning from the end of the 1980's. This, in turn, exerted its own influence on the emergence and developments of the multiparty political scenes of those countries.

In contrast to this, Kosovo had its League of the Communists of Kosovo (a part of the League of the Communists of former-Yugoslavia) which held the political power, and the social opposition was organized in prohibited and secret groups, which were in large part inspired by the PPSH – the Enver Hoxha's People's Party of Albania – that is, by a Communist ideology of a stalinist type. In other words, as a consequence of a specific path for liberation of Kosovo, its political position/social opposition relationship was not the one between the Left in power and the Right in society, but between two Lefts, the first being the Yugoslav one, which was in power, and the second being the Albanian one, which was prohibited and in prisons.

After the demonstrations of 1981, the Communist movement of the stalinist type increased its influence very fast, becoming the only opposition by the mid-1980's. However, the coming of Milosevic in power, and the threat that thus emerged before Kosovo, as well as the forebodings that the great events occurring in Central Europe enticed among Kosovo Albanians, put forward a necessity for their ideological realignment. This realignment had to enable them, not only to adjust with the major European currents, but, also, to articulate an anti-leftist ideology with which to confront Milosevic.³

As a consequence, the violent changes of Kosovo's Constitution in 1989 enabled a rapid dissolution, within a very short time-span, of the League of the Communists of Kosovo (the Yugoslav Left), the total discreditation of the Marxist-Leninist groups (the Left inspired by the Communist regime of Albania), which were abandoned by a large number of their tacit supporters, as well as the emergence, within the political scene of Kosovo, of the LDK, which had a completely different ideological commitment from the one that previously dominated in Kosovo. Thus, the idea for abandonment of Communism in Kosovo was belated when compared with all the other countries of the former Communist bloc, but once after this idea

² Beginning from, at least, the events of the year 1968.

³ Milosevic was treated as a national enemy, and this had to be reinforced with his ideological rejection as well, and his ideology was the Communist one.

emerged, this abandonment was accomplished faster, and it was more complete than in those other countries. In those other countries, after losing their power, the Communist parties remained in opposition, and in Kosovo, both of the above mentioned types of Communism disappeared altogether.

2. After 1989 – As a consequence of specific internal developments before 1989, in the following period Kosovo again found itself in a particular situation. The transition into the new condition was again distinctive from respective transitions in other countries of the former Communist bloc – from a condition in which the Left existed without any Right in both, political power, and social opposition, Kosovo shifted into a condition in which the Right appeared exactly at the moment when the Left completely disappeared. Instead of shifting from an one-party into a multi-party system, Kosovo, de facto, shifted from an one-party Communist, Left, system, into an one-party Right system. Indeed, the emergence of new political parties after 1989 was possible and was not hindered by anyone, and during this period a number of new political parties emerged. Nevertheless, in internal elections that were being organized during this period in Kosovo, all these other new parties together were not able to collect even 5% of the votes, in a situation when LDK was regularly getting more than 95% of them.⁴ LDK was opposition towards the political power of Serbia and Milosevic. As far as the internal structures of political forces are concerned, there were not yet position-opposition arrangements, given the fact that under the tyranny of the Milosevic's regime, all the Albanians became like one.

An impression might emerge that such a structuring of the political scene is not convenient for advancement of democracy. However, two factors were predominant, which enabled democracy to evolve even in these conditions. Firstly, the creation of the new parties was not only allowed, but, furthermore, it became a norm, and this created within the Kosovar society an inner tolerance for diverse views, even in a situation when all of them were thinking as one. And, secondly, by expelling the Kosovo Albanians from all the political institutions, the Milosevic's regime threw them into the society: thus, the only way that remained to Albanians for political articulation of their demands was civic activism, in which they accomplished extraordinary achievements during the following period.

We have mentioned that in 1989 both Communist currents in Kosovo vanished. Here, the League of the Communists of Kosovo dissolved, and it didn't reappear again, and, in the meantime, the illegal Marxist-Leninist groups disappeared from the political scene, awaiting for a convenient moment for their reappearance. And this moment came quickly. The civic nonviolent movement of LDK suffered a tremendous blow in the Dayton Conference, in which the issue of independence of Kosovo was not considered altogether. Given that the major goal of the nonviolent movement organized by LDK was the independence of Kosovo, the non-

⁴ The internal elections organized in Kosovo were refused by Serbia, and they were mainly ignored by the international community.

inclusion of the Kosovo's issue in the Dayton Conference provided an extraordinary opportunity to the retreated Marxist-Leninist groups to present LDK as a failure. These groups utilized this opportunity, by starting a campaign for ceasing the nonviolent resistance, and for starting a violent one. This led to the first armed clashes with the Serbian Police and the Yugoslav Army in 1997, and to the emergence of KLA (the Kosovo's Liberation Army) within the political-military scene of Kosovo. Among its leaders there was a number of those whose resentment against LDK had the same proportions as their resentment against Serbia. Essentially, the emergence of KLA marked, not only the beginning of the war against Serbia, but, also, the creation of the preconditions for the multi-party political scene in the post-war Kosovo.

As a summary, the major particularities of the Kosovar experience in the creation of its multi-party system are the following ones:

1. The year 1989 did not mark the transition of Kosovo from an one-party into a multi-party system, but the complete obliteration of Communism, and the transition from a Left one-party, Communist system,⁵ into a Right one-party system. The power of LDK from 1989 up to the years 1995-99 was based on the authority it enjoyed within the Kosovar society, and this was not a genuine, institutionalized, political power.

2. The emergence of the KLA in the Kosovar political scene created the preconditions for a genuine multi-party system in the post-war Kosovo. Given that the leadership of KLA was in a large measure leftist, the multi-party system in Kosovo was created by the efforts of the Left to oust from power the Right, and not by the efforts of the Right to oust from power the Left.⁶

3. In spite of the relatively strong ideological commitment of a number of leaders of both these political currents, the state of affairs that was predominant in the years 1995-1999 conditioned the initial political contest to become focused, not on ideological issues, but, rather, on the failure of the other side in its efforts to resolve the national issue. This form of political contest continued even after the war, when the multi-party political scene was already created. Thus, the political argument of the political parties in the post-war Kosovo did not have the form "my ideology is better than yours"; instead, it had the form "you don't deserve to be in power, because your resistance has failed to liberate Kosovo from Serbia." And, in this argument, both sides were quite right: each of them failed to liberate Kosovo from Serbia, and these failures caused the humanitarian catastrophe which impeded the military intervention of NATO that liberated Kosovo from Serbia.

⁵ As mentioned, there were two Communist currents, the Yugoslav one, and the one inspired by the regime of Albania, but only the League of the Communists of Kosovo was organized institutionally.

⁶ This feature of the Kosovar experience distinguishes Kosovo from all the other former communist countries. In all those other countries, the transition into the multi-party governance came in 1989, when the Left was ousted from power by the Right.

2. The aspects of the Statutes and Programs of Kosovo's parties related to their ideologies and entrance into the European and international organizations of political parties

These initial discussions had an objective to provide some initial explanations that will enable the understanding of the reasons of the belated ideological profilization of the political parties of Kosovo. As we have seen, Kosovo was in a situation in which the transition to democracy and the creation of the multi-party system went in parallel with its liberation, independence, and state-formation. As a result, the issues that had to do with democratic and national objectives used to intrude into one another. And this, among other things, conditioned a situation in which ideological commitments were quite often sacrificed for reasons that were considered to be the major ones. However, it should be stressed that, unfortunately, as the time went by, the sacrifice of ideological objectives, which was initially applied only for the issues considered as the major ones, gradually took the form of a political culture, and it started to be applied even for the issues that were minor.

In continuation, we will focus on the forms in which the ideological aspects, as well as those related to the entrance of Kosovo's major political parties into the European and international organizations of political parties, are presented in their statutes and programs.

Based on the statutes and programs of the political parties that are discussed here, as well as on the emphases made during the interviews conducted with a number of high representatives of these parties,⁷ we can see that their formal ideological profilization is formed and expressed clearly. However, based on the experience of the post-war developments in Kosovo, there is an impression that there is a strong propensity among some from these parties to sacrifice their ideological commitments in order to seize power. The post-war historical experience has witnessed, in several occasions, large ideological realignments among several large parties of Kosovo. Thus, PDK (the Democratic Party of Kosovo), emerged from the war as a center left party, and in the meantime it was transformed into a center right one. On the other hand, the AAK (the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo), entered in the first elections after the war with a complete refusal of ideological commitment, by adopting the elective slogan "Neither Left, nor Right, but forward," and in the meantime became a center right party. Among other parties there were no such obvious shifts, but, we will see that even among some of them there were aspects of governance that were quite problematic as far as ideological commitments are concerned.

Otherwise, three from five discussed parties determine themselves as center right parties (PDK, LDK, and AAK), and the other two as center left parties (VETËVENDOSJE! [SELF-DETERMINATION!] and NISMA [INITIATIVE]). The value-commitments of the center right parties, which were also emphasized in the interviews conducted, are those towards family,

⁷ The representatives interviewed are: Teuta Sahatçija from LDK, Zenun Pajaziti from PDK, Ardian Gjini from AAK, Bojken Abazi from the VETËVENDOSJE! Movement, and Jakup Krasniqi from NISMA.

private property and deregulation of economy, towards the belief in God, an individual, etc. Meanwhile, the values of the center left parties are towards developmental state, public property in the strategic sectors, collective freedom as a precondition of individual liberty, towards the role of fiscal policies in the resolution of the problem of unemployment, etc. In addition, the center left parties emphasize the necessity of the cessation of the rule of Kosovo by the Right parties, a rule that was not interrupted ever since the liberation of Kosovo.

In continuation we will mention some basic facts from the statutes and programs of each from these parties, which are related to the ideologies of these parties, as well as to their attitudes about their entrance in international organizations of political parties.

PDK – In its Statute, the PDK determines itself as a popular party,⁸ which in ideological terms is a center right party, which will enter into other international political associations and organizations, which have similar political and programmatic aims and orientations.⁹ The values mentioned in the Program of the PDK that have to do with its ideological alignment are those of human rights and freedoms that are based on international standards (the rights and freedoms mentioned are the right on information, the right of free expression of the opinion, the freedom of the press and media, the right on conviction and religion, the inviolability of property, the freedom of movement, etc.), of tolerance and inter-ethnic understanding, of the market economy, etc.¹⁰ The Program also emphasizes the commitment towards the integration of Albanians in the region and in Europe, as well as towards the integration of Kosovo in the European institutions.¹¹

LDK – LDK also determines itself in its Statute as a center right party, which cooperates with other political and non-political parties and organizations inside and outside of the country.¹² LDK can cooperate with, and enter into, international political organizations that have similar programmatic aspirations.¹³ As far as the values mentioned in its Program are concerned, LDK is committed towards the value of freedom, family and its protection, the rule of law, etc.¹⁴ Regarding the entrance into international organizations of political parties, the Program of LDK emphasizes that the integration of Kosovo in the EU is vital for citizens and the state of Kosovo,

⁸ The Statute of PDK, Article 1. This is the Statute of the year 2013 of PDK, and this Article states that: “The Democratic Party of Kosovo is a popular party founded upon the traditional and national, values, and the values of the war for liberation and the universal values of civic democracy.” This Article is changed from the the Article 1 of the Statute of the year 2005, to reflect the above mentioned ideological realignment. Otherwise, the Article 1 of the Statute of PDK of 2005 states that: “The Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) is a political party, which is independent and unique, consisting of its members who organize and act with the goal of the fulfilment of its programmatic task.”

⁹ The Statute of PDK, Article 8. It should be stressed that the designation of the PDK as a peoples party has most probably to do with the aim of PDK to become a member of the organization of People’s Party of Europe.

¹⁰ Taken from the Program of PDK.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The Statute of LDK, Articles 2 and 3.

¹³ The Statute of LDK, Article 15.

¹⁴ The Program of LDK.

“and is convinced that ‘the Europeanization’ of Kosovo should be preceded by ‘the Europeanization’ of political parties, institutions and of Kosovar society.”¹⁵

AAK – The basic formal ideological commitments of the AAK are determined in its Programmatic Platform, which states that “AAK is a center right party,”¹⁶ and, a little bit latter: “As a center right party we create and promote the freedom of the individual, the freedom of initiative, the freedom of expression, of conviction and competition in all the fields of life. We are convinced that we will have a free society, a developed state, and stable democracy, only with a free individual.”¹⁷ This Platform also determines the commitment of AAK to be part of the European Peoples Party.¹⁸ The other values mentioned in this platform are those of tradition, human rights, private property and its protection, of the free-market economy, family, inter-religious tolerance, etc.¹⁹

VETËVENDOSJE! – The commitment of the VETËVENDOSJE! movement towards the centre left is a declared one, and it is not determined formally in its Statute and Program. The Statute asserts the possibility for political cooperation with national and international organizations, such as trade unions, organizations of students, political and non-governmental ones, etc. This cooperation can be established in four different ways: through agreements on cooperation on particular issues, through entrance in national and international networks and organizations, through mergers, and through pre-elective and governmental coalitions.²⁰ The major value-commitments mentioned are those towards human rights, minority rights, freedom of press, religious rights, gender equality, etc.²¹ Also, there is the commitment towards the law, as the Program states that “No one in Kosovo can be above the law. ... No citizen and no community can be released from the obligation to respect the law”²²

NISMA – NISMA is a new center left party which has not organized yet the initial meeting of its General Council which would approve the final forms of its Statute and Program. Consequently, it functions based on the initial form of its Program.²³ This Program doesn’t say anything explicitly about the ideology or the ambitions for entrance of NISMA in international organizations, but the leftist determination is given indirectly. Thus, for instance, this Program emphasizes that the accomplishments of the European Union are the result of the market

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ The Programmatic Platform of AAK.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* It is interesting that the Programmatic Platform of the AAK presents the only program of any Kosovar center-right party that focuses explicitly and in a more detailed manner into the competition as a distinctive and important ‘Right’ value.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The Statute of the VETËVENDOSJE! Movement, *Bashkë në organizim, bashkë në veprim*, Article 11, Paragraph 1.

²¹ The Program of the VETËVENDOSJE! Movement, *Zhvillim dhe shtetndërtim: Bashkë është e mundshme*, the point 18, pg. 11.

²² *Ibid.*, The point 21, pg. 12.

²³ It has only 4 pages.

economy, but, also, of the guaranteeing of social rights. Therefore, “for building Kosovo on these principles, NISMA is engaged to base our economy in the genuine market structures, while simultaneously taking into the consideration the social and humanitarian dimensions ...”²⁴

3. The Major Issues Related to the Entrance of Kosovo’s Political Parties into the European Organizations of Political Parties – Inner-party perspectives

The actual condition in Kosovo regarding the entrance of the Kosovar political parties in the European and international organizations of political parties is that LDK is the only party in Kosovo that is a member in such an organization – it is a member of the EPP, the European Peoples Party. The other parties, in spite of their statutory and programmatic designations, as well as their commitments, are not members of such organizations. Some from these parties have expressed their will, some have had contacts, and some have applied for entrance in such organizations, but none have succeeded so far in this aim. In continuation we will give some brief explanations of this condition, as mentioned in the interviews conducted with several high representatives of these parties.

PDK, as a center right party, has applied for membership in the EPP, and it has had contacts regarding this issue, but it has not achieved the formal membership yet.²⁵ Except for the recognition of Kosovo, and the advancement of PDK itself, the objective mentioned for this entrance is the possibility to influence the decisions of the member states of the EU. For the utility of entrance, for both, Kosovo and PDK, there is a growing awareness among the members and supporters of PDK, and this increased awareness is linked to the consciousness on the necessity for the inclusion of Kosovo into the European integrative processes.²⁶ The major problem in this path has had to do with a difficult and slow ideological profilization of the Kosovo’s political parties, and with the inclusion of the essential factors that influence this profilization, such as education, social issues, health, etc.

As far as the earlier ideological shift of the PDK is concerned, namely, its transition from the center left into the center right position, the major influence on this was the fact that a large number of Kosovo’s citizens have identified the left with Milosevic’s Serbia, which has compromised the Left in their eyes, and this was, consequently, a major impediment to political profilization of the political parties of Kosovo.²⁷ On the other hand, when the PDK took the governance of Kosovo in 2007, it was clear to its governing structures that they should engage actively in some policies that are Right-wing in their nature, such as, for instance, the

²⁴ The initial Program of NISMA.

²⁵ An interview with Zenun Pajazitin, high official at PDK.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

advancement of the privatization process.²⁸ Yet another factor mentioned was the fact that the Left political parties in Serbia, which are members of European and international organizations, have a large influence in those organizations, and they have used it to impede the entrance of the Left parties from Kosovo in them. At any rate, it seems that recently there are tendencies of the accelerated profilization, and this is linked with dissociation from the past, as well as with the increased opening towards the foreign processes.²⁹

As mentioned, the only political party in Kosovo which got a membership in European organizations of political parties is LDK. It has the status of an observer in the EPP, the European Peoples Party, acquired on October 2012, in the Bucharest Meeting of the EPP.³⁰ LDK underscores the need for representation, not only in the EPP, but in the biggest possible number of organizations, and it stresses its cooperation with Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation, Robert Schumann Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), etc.³¹ The benefit from this membership is large, and not only for the LDK as a party: this membership enables the coordination among parties, their cooperation, the cooperation of their youth organizations, the possibility for influencing the policies of the states whose parties are members, etc. As a result, LDK underscores the influence it has had in the European Parliament, as well as the one during the adaptation of the points of the German Bundestag on Serbia.³² The inclusion of the citizenship and of the youth in trainings, the stipends for party academies, and the further activities with similar parties and organizations, were mentioned as examples of concrete benefits.³³ Thus, for instance, there were advancements in the cooperation of youth, and the youth of LDK is part of the IES³⁴ and of other different students' organizations. LDK stresses the need for increased representation in as many organizations possible, by adding that the representation in one organization only is a handicap, rather than a benefit for Kosovo.³⁵

AAK is not a member of international and European organizations of political parties. Its orientation is towards the peoples parties, concretely, towards EPP. AAK has already had negotiations with KAS.³⁶ It has not applied yet for entrance in EPP, but it was stressed that there is an increasing consciousness among the membership on the interest and the utility of such an entrance. The aimed benefit of such an entrance has to do, not only with integrating processes, but also with further internal democratization. In addition, the entrance in these organizations will create the conditions for the final accomplishment of the profilization of

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ An interview with Teuta Sahatçija, high official at LDK.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ IES – Illuminating Engineering Society.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ An interview with Ardian Gjini, high official at AAK.

political parties in Kosovo.³⁷ The utilization of such an entrance of AAK in the future will be made, before all, for the necessary expertise from similar European parties, and for the further advancement of the Kosovo's issue.³⁸

Neither the VETËVENDOSJE! Movement is a member of international organizations of political parties, and one from the major reasons provided for this is in the efforts of different international factors to impede its entrance in such organizations.³⁹ The aimed organizations that were mentioned are the Socialist International and the Progressive Alliance, and it was stated that there was progress: if earlier they didn't meet us, the comment went with a dose of cynicism, now they do.⁴⁰ There were also efforts to establish cooperation with particular parties, such as Labor Party in the UK, Swedish and Norwegian Social-Democrats, as well as the French left parties. An idea for Balkans Social-democracy was also mentioned and highlighted.⁴¹

The aimed benefit to be acquired from potential membership in such international structures, as well as from the above mentioned cooperation, is the advancement of the Kosovo's issue, then, in the possibilities for the exchange of experiences, in the participation in different conferences, in the increased media space, for both, the VETËVENDOSJE! Movement, and for Kosovo, in clearing out the etiquettes that have been attributed to VETËVENDOSJE!, etc. The forthcoming application for the membership in the Socialist International that will be made together with the Socialist Party of Albania was also mentioned.⁴²

NISMA is a new party that has not organized yet its first congress in which the decisions will be made on communications with other left parties, but it certainly aims to have such communications.⁴³ Such a communication with the Left-wing parties and party organizations is extremely important, having in mind the impact that the Left-wing parties have in Europe. Above all, such a communication and cooperation will enable the presence of the voice of Kosovo in the European Parliament.⁴⁴ Citizens are clearly for European integration of Kosovar political parties as well, but this requires the existence of certain values that are quite difficult to be achieved in Kosovo. Among these values, the most important are the democratic functioning of political parties, as well as the rule of law and the independence of the judicial. It is necessary, not so much to talk about integrations, as to adopt their standards.⁴⁵ NISMA mentions as well the damage that the Left of Kosovo has suffered by the SPS of Serbia, and it is

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ An interview with Bojken Abazi, high official at the VETËVENDOSJE! Movement.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.* Otherwise, the actual Primeminister of Albania, Edi Rama, is one from numerous Vicepresidents of the Socialist International.

⁴³ An interview with Jakup Krasniqi, the President of NISMA.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

added that a large portion of Kosovo's population did not achieve to distinguish between socialism and nationalism.⁴⁶

4. On the reasons of the delay of the entrance of Kosovo's political parties in the European and international structures and associations of political parties

Up to now, we have discussed several historical aspects of the ideological developments in Kosovo during the period before the war, the manner in which the ideological commitments of Kosovo's political parties, as well as their attitudes towards the entrance in the European and international organizations of political parties, are determined in their statutes and programs, and their actual and past efforts for entrance in such organizations and associations. Thus we have recognized the major facts that are necessary for understanding the actual condition and problems with which the Kosovar parties are confronted regarding their integration in the European and international party organizations, as well as the considerable delay in their entrance in these organizations.

The major problems identified by KIPRED that have caused the delay in the entrance of Kosovar political parties in the European and international organizations and associations of political parties are two.

1. The first problem is in the delayed ideological profilization of the political parties of Kosovo.

2. The second problem is the delay of Kosovar political parties in understanding the importance of, and the utility from, the membership in such organizations and associations.

In continuation, we will discuss several from the major factors that have had the major influences on the emergence of these two problems, for getting an impression on the further steps to be undertaken in order to overcome them.

A. As mentioned in the first section, the ideological alignments within the Kosovar political scene were developing for a very long time in parallel with Kosovo's efforts for achieving liberation and independence from Serbia, and, afterwards, with its efforts for state-building. This had created a situation in which the ideological commitments were quite often sacrificed for the sake of other objectives that were being considered as major ones. Simply, the priorities of liberation, independence, and state-building have very often pushed aside the ideological issues. This has had a strong influence in the creation of a political culture in which the ideology, instead of being considered as an objective in itself, was considered as a means for achieving other objectives. It is this that accounts for the fact that in the year 1989, when the Communism was falling all over the Central and Eastern Europe, in Kosovo it didn't fall, but,

⁴⁶*Ibid.* SPS – the Socialist Party of Serbia, former party of Milosevic.

simply, disappeared altogether. Given the contempt created against Communism all over the place, as well as the fact that Serbia was lead by Milosevic who emerged from the Left-wing League of Communists, the people of Kosovo undertook impromptu the rapid and complete shift towards the Right, which, among other things, enabled them to represent the national enemy as an ideological enemy as well, and, furthermore, as an ideological enemy committed towards the wrong ideology.

The exclusion of the ideology from the internal Kosovar political issues was quite comprehensible and sensible in a condition when the ideology was being sacrificed for the sake of the liberation, independence and state formation. However, these ideological concessions for the sake of major national and state issues, as the time passed, started to become increasingly concessions for the sake of some other, minor objectives, where, the most important one was to seize and remain in power. Thus, the ideological commitments of Kosovar political parties – statutory, programmatic, normative, etc. – tumble when the issue comes to seizing or remaining in power. In order to illustrate the lack of ideological consistency of the Kosovar political parties, we will provide two indicative examples.

Firstly, all the parties that lead the government of Kosovo during the post-war period, today determine themselves as center-right parties. However, today we have in Kosovo a situation in which the average salary in the state and public sector is 441€, and in the private sector it is 228€. ⁴⁷ If the center-right parties that have led the government of Kosovo during the post-war period were genuinely consistent in the position of the center-right ideology, the ratio of average salaries in the state and public sector, on the one hand, and in the private sector, on the other, would have been the inversion of the existing ratio. Thus, as a consequence of the absence of ideological consistency of its political parties, after a decade and a half period of governance by Right-wing parties, Kosovo is in a condition in which the private sector is being treated in a very Left-wing manner.

And, the second example, it is well known that the Right-wing parties are committed towards strengthening of businesses, and towards the reduction of the role of the state in economy. Consequently, the Right-wing parties universally aim at the reduction of state administrations and of the state budgets. Meanwhile, in Kosovo, during a decade and a half long Right-wing governance, the state administration and the state budget were growing constantly, and, quite often, rapidly. In the business community of Kosovo there is a strong impression that the growth of the Kosovar budget is not limited by the needs of governance, but only by the possibilities of the government to take from the businesses, in order to give it to the state. Furthermore, most of Kosovar businessmen are convinced that the members of

⁴⁷ KIPRED Policy Paper No. 1/15, “Kosovo to EU: The Challenge of Irregular Migration,” pg. 7. Cited from: Kosovo Agency of Statistics quoted in Koha Ditore Article “Sektori privat me paga më të ulëta se sektori publik”, 16 November 2014 at <http://koha.net/?id=27&l=33465>. See also the Report “Business Climate in Kosovo – A cross-regional perspective, Riinvest Institute, pg. 29, at http://www.riinvestinstitute.org/publikimet/pdf/Business_Climate_in_Kosovo_1421852590.pdf

Kosovo's consecutive governments are increasing the budget not for applying the social and welfare policies, but only for the fact that larger budget provides them with bigger opportunities to get corrupted.

What might be the reason for such a cruel treatment of Kosovar businesses and private sector by successive right-wing governments of Kosovo, is something on which we might only speculate, and, also, a topic whose treatment will certainly be very beneficial for the future of Kosovo. Nevertheless, it is clear that such large discrepancies between the behavior of Kosovo's political parties, once after they seize the power, and their declared ideologies, undoubtedly present a very serious obstacle for their genuine ideological profilization, which is so necessary for their entrance in the European and international organizations of political parties.

B. Interconnected with these issues, is the extraordinary weak position of the declared Left in Kosovo, which was mentioned above, and which is inherited from the pre-war period. As mentioned, the fall of Communism in the Central and Eastern Europe was accompanied with the temporary disappearance of the Left in Kosovo, which was followed with its partial recovery in the years 1997-1999. However, ever since, this recovery never reached the level to enable any Left party to seize power in Kosovo. Indeed, in 2007 it was PDK that seized power, and at that time it was still determined by its Statute and Program as a center-left party; however, the process of its transformation from a center-left into a center-right party had already started, and in the following elections the PDK was articulated as a center-right party.

As a result, in last elections of the year 2014, the three center-right parties⁴⁸ won an almost absolute majority of the votes, their total being 65.16%.⁴⁹ At the same time, the two center-left parties won together 18.74% of the votes.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Kosovo is actually governed by an alliance of two center-right parties, PDK and LDK, that have won together 55.62% of the votes, and the opposition is an alliance consisting of two center left parties (VETËVENDOSJE! and NISMA) and one center right party (AAK), that have won together 28.22% of the votes. Namely, the Left in opposition, even when together with AAK as a right-wing party, has only a little bit more than the quarter of the votes, and the Right in the government, even without AAK, goes considerably beyond the half of the votes: and, if the AAK was added to it, the Right would have been very near to the absolute majority of two thirds of the votes (as mentioned, they would have had 65.16%). Indeed, there are other voters in Kosovo, who have voted for other parties, and these other parties won 16.1% of the votes. However, most of these are not so much 'ideological parties,' but rather parties of minorities, committed towards the advancement of the conditions of their ethnical groups.⁵¹

⁴⁸ PDK, LDK and AAK.

⁴⁹ PDK won 30.38% of the total number of votes, LDK 25.24% and AAK 9.54%. The results certified by the Central Elective Commission of the general elections for the Kosovo Assembly, pg. 2; see at: http://www.kqz-ks.org/Uploads/Documents/Rezu%20-%20Nivel%20Vendi%20-%20sipas%20subjekteve_peufawqvmc.pdf.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* The VETËVENDOSJE! Movement won 13.59% of the votes, and NISMA 5.15%.

⁵¹ See the results of other parties, *ibid.*

The reason of this weakness of the Left in Kosovo has been mentioned earlier. In the year 1989, the Kosovo Albanians abandoned not only the Communism, but the very idea of the Left, with the purpose of leaving it as a 'hot potato' to Serbia and to Milosevic's regime. The idea of socialism, of social-democracy, etc., was ever since an idea of 'the wrong ideology' that can be embraced only by a state such as Milosevic's Serbia. This difficulty of the Left in Kosovo was summarized very well by one from the high representatives of the left-wing parties, who, in one from the interviews conducted for this research noted: "The Milosevic's SPS has had a tremendous impact on the growth of hate against socialism and social-democracy among a very large number of Kosovo Albanians. Unfortunately, a great number of Kosovo Albanians was not able to distinguish between socialism and nationalism."⁵² We should add here that the population of Kosovo, as a result of its specific historical development, has, from the pointview of the everyday values, quite a propensity to be, if not so much conservative, then, at least, traditional. This was expressed perfectly well by a high representative of one from the right-wing parties, who, in another interview conducted, stated: "Majority of Kosovo's citizens have right-wing values, but they do not perceive them as an indicator that they have right-wing ideology. If you don't touch Kosovo Albanians in family, in property, and in God, you will be in perfect terms with them. These values are the right-wing ones, but people don't see them as the values of the Right, but as normal ones."⁵³

Consequently, ever since the first elections after the war, Kosovo was governed by governments that were coalitions consisting of the right-wing parties, or led by them.⁵⁴ As a result, during all this period, the ideological contest among the right-wing and left-wing parties was, either non-existent, or very mild and oriented towards second-hand issues. And this is yet another feature of the Kosovar political scene that has hindered very seriously the ideological profilization of its political parties. Simply, up to now, it is, more or less, implied, that the right will govern (even if the manner of governance is of the Left-type), and that the Left will be in opposition, or, in the best case, some from the left-wing parties will be invited to participate in the governing alliance. And if it happens that the governance will require, now and then, the left-wing policies, these will be implemented by the right-wing parties that are in power.

⁵² An interview with Jakup Krasniqi, the President of NISMA. Incidentally, there is another very indicative fact: a large number of Kosovo Albanians have reservations towards the Socialist Party of Albania (which is, actually, in power in Albania), not so much for ideological differences, but because they perceive it as a party that, as they think, "doesn't understand properly the national issue."

⁵³ From the interview with Teuta Sahatçija, a high official at LDK.

⁵⁴ Again, in the year 2007 the power was seized by the PDK, which, at that time was still designated as a left-wing party, but which had initiated its transformation into a center-right party.

5. A light at the end of the tunnel?

At any rate, what is the most important thing regarding the entrance of Kosovo's political parties in the European and international organizations of political parties, is the fact stressed in all the interviews conducted, that recently we are witnessing an increasing consciousness on both, the importance of the further ideological profilization, and the importance of the entrance of these parties in such organizations. KIPRED has identified two major factors that have influenced the growth of this consciousness. Firstly, there was the entrance of the LDK into the EPP, where the benefits that the LDK has acquired from this membership created a conviction among all the other parties that they should necessarily enter as well in similar organizations and associations. However, yet another factor, which was even more important for the growth of this consciousness, is the fact that the people of Kosovo are increasingly talking about the perspectives of the entrance of Kosovo into the European Union. Certainly, the majority of Kosovo's citizens are aware that the entrance of Kosovo in the EU will be a long and difficult process, but all of them understand that the only secure future for Kosovo is within the EU. Indeed, the political parties have understood very well this tendency of the Kosovo's people, and this is, after all, a tendency that most of these parties share. Therefore, the memberships of these parties perceive their efforts to enter in the organizations and associations of the European political parties as an important contribution that their parties can provide in the path of Kosovo towards the EU. How successful will be these strengthened tendencies of the Kosovar political parties to enter into the European organizations and associations of political parties, will depend primarily on how genuine will be the commitments that these parties have for achieving this objective.

Recommendations:

The integration of Kosovo's political parties in international organizations of political parties requires ideological profilization, political determination and administrative capacity to pursue this objective. Therefore, the following actions should be undertaken by Kosovo's political parties in order to speed up this process:

1. The ideological profilization, in the programatic and statutory terms, should be adjusted accordingly to the requirements of the respective international political party organizations.
2. The internal capacities for international cooperation should be empowered in terms of personnel and finances, in order to speed up the necessary procedures for membership in the respective international political party organizations.
3. A special attention should be payed to lobbying with members of the respective international political party organizations, in order to get the political support for the membership.