



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Western Balkans – January to June 2025

30 June 2025

20 January 2025

Kosovo: Police action against Serbian parallel administration

According to media reports, the police closed further Serbian administrative centres in 10 municipalities, including 30 Serbian regional offices, on 15.01.25 without a court order and banned the use of the Serbian dinar (cf. BN of 12.08.24 and 02.09.24) even after the Kosovar government had already taken action against self-governing institutions of the Serbian minority (including administrative centres, post offices, banks, tax authorities, etc.) in 2024. The action was directed against institutions in the Albanian-dominated south of the country. According to the government, all parallel institutions in the country have now been closed. Kosovo's authorities justified the measure with the illegality of the Serbian institutions and suspected criminal activities. As part of the EU accession process, Kosovo and Serbia had agreed to dismantle the parallel structures in the long term in return for the Kosovo Serbs having their own association of municipalities. However, this process had come to a standstill. The EU and the Serbian government in Belgrade have criticised Kosovo's latest unilateral action. Representatives of the Kosovo Serbs consider the action to be part of Prime Minister Albin Kurti's election campaign in the run-up to the parliamentary elections to be held on 09.02.25.¹

10 February 2025

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Law against domestic violence

On 05.02.25, the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) unanimously adopted a new law on protection against domestic violence and violence against women. This complies with the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the so-called Istanbul Convention) that was adopted in 2011. The law introduces additional protective measures, including the possibility of electronic surveillance of abusers against whom a court protection order has been issued. It also establishes the obligation of the police to go to the scene of any reported incident of violence immediately upon receipt of the report. Suspects can be held in police custody for 48 hours. Furthermore, the law establishes a 24-hour free SOS hotline covering the entire Federation that will give advice and support to victims of violence while preserving their anonymity. For the law to enter into force, it still needs to be adopted by the second chamber of parliament, the House of Peoples.²

Kosovo: Preliminary results of the parliamentary elections

According to media reports, the incumbent Prime Minister Albin Kurti and his left-wing nationalist party Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) have won the parliamentary elections in Kosovo. According to post-election

surveys and forecasts, the ruling party has become the strongest force, having garnered 40 percent to 42 percent of the vote, but has lost its absolute majority and is likely to be dependent on coalition partners in future. In the election held four years ago, Vetevendosje won 50.3 percent of the vote and thus came to power for the first time. The opposition centre-right parties Democratic Party of Kosovo (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës - PDK) and Democratic League of Kosovo (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës - LDK) received around 21.4 percent and 19.3 percent of the vote, respectively; the national conservative Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës - AAK) received around 7.2 percent of the vote. In the parts of the country that are dominated by the Serbian minority, the Serbian List (Srpska Lista) party supported by Belgrade managed to win all 10 parliamentary seats to which the Serbian community is entitled under Kosovar legislation.³

17 March 2025

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Escalation of the conflict between Republika Srpska and the central state

After the Federal Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina sentenced the President of the Republika Srpska (Serbian Republic (RS)) entity, Milorad Dodik, to one year in prison on 26.02.25 for defying the decisions of the High Representative (HR) (cf. BN of 03.03.25), the Bosnian Public Prosecutor's Office ordered the arrest of Dodik as well as of the Speaker of the RS Parliament, Nenad Stevandić, and the Head of Government, Radovan Visković, on 12.03.25. The two defendants had failed to answer two summonses for questioning. In addition, on 28.02.25, the Republika Srpska Parliament passed laws that deny the judiciary and police of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian central state jurisdiction over the entity. On 13.03.25, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska also adopted a new draft constitution and a draft Law on the Protection of the Constitutional Order of Republika Srpska. Both drafts seek to assert greater autonomy for Republika Srpska, establishing separate institutions, including an army and judiciary, and containing provisions for self-determination and the right to form confederations with other countries. The draft constitution will go for 30 days of public discussion before being sent for a final vote in the assembly.

The draft law, adopted in urgent procedure, stipulates criminal prosecution for 21 offences, including attacks on Republika Srpska's constitutional order, threats to its territorial integrity, sabotage, espionage, and failure to comply with decisions issued by entity authorities. It also criminalises "obstructing the fight against the enemy", "serving in an enemy army", and "aiding the enemy". In view of the escalating political situation, the EU has deployed additional EUFOR peacekeeping troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴

North Macedonia: EU rapporteurs and analysts see judicial independence under threat

Independent political analysts and the EU rapporteur for North Macedonia have expressed concern about increasing interference in the independence of the country's judicial system by Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski's ruling coalition, according to recent media reports. They criticise the parliamentary motions tabled by the ruling party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO DPMNE) in February 2025 to dismiss the Attorney General and six acting judges in the 15-member Judicial Council. However, according to media reports, the motions adopted by the parliamentary majority on 11.03.25 would have no legal effect, as, under the Judicial Council Act, the decision to resign cannot be made without the consent of the judges themselves. The judges in question, whom the government accuses of a lack of political neutrality in office or allegedly having political links with the current opposition parties, have so far refused to resign. According to media reports, the Prime Minister further exacerbated the smouldering dispute on 14.03.25 by announcing that he would support organised street protests against the refusal of the judges in question to resign. The opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) and analysts accuse the government of undermining the independence of the judiciary by forcing a change of judges, thereby jeopardising the separation of powers and the

rule of law in North Macedonia. The urgency of judicial reform, particularly in the area of the appointment and removal of judges and public prosecutors, has long been highlighted by EU legal experts.⁵

19 May 2025

Albania: Results of the parliamentary elections; indications of regularities

According to media reports, the ruling Socialist Party (PS) of prime minister Edi Rama won the elections on 11.05.25 with roughly 52 % of the votes cast. The opposition Democratic Party (PD) of former head of government Sali Berisha received roughly 34 %.

As a result of this outcome, the PS is tipped to take up 82 out of 140 seats in parliament, and thus has a comfortable government majority. International election observers under the leadership of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) criticised that the ruling party benefitted from widespread use of administrative resources during the campaign, thus creating an undue advantage for the incumbent. There are also allegations that pressure had been brought to bear on voters, and on public employees in particular. Even though election day had been generally calm and well organised, according to the OSCE there had however been a frequent lack of adherence to procedural rules, and some procedural and transparency shortcomings in the vote count. Unsuccessful candidate Berisha stated that he would refuse to accept the results.⁶

30 June 2025

Kosovo: Constitutional court sets deadline for the inauguration of a new legislature

It has still not been possible to constitute a new parliament in the wake of the parliamentary elections which were held on 09.02.25 because of a difficult division of power in parliament. The Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party, which emerged from the elections as the strongest power, nominated Albulena Haxhiu, outgoing minister of justice, for the office of parliamentary speaker, but does not have the necessary absolute majority in parliament. The constitutional court consequently ruled on 26.06.25 that the constitution of parliament must take place within 30 days. Art. 66 of the constitution provides that the constitution of parliament should have been completed within 30 days of the official announcement of the election result. In spite of the ruling, no agreement was also reached in the 39th session to inaugurate a new legislature on 29.06.25. Vetevendosje continues to hold on to its nominated candidate, and insists on a secret ballot of the parliamentary speaker. However, opposition parties are against this.⁷

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 - 3 Balkan Insight, Kosovo's Ruling Vetevendosje Party Claims Victory in Parliamentary Elections, last update 10.02.2025; Die Presse: Premier Kurti nach Parlamentswahlen im Kosovo wohl auf Partner angewiesen, last update 10.02.2025; Euronews: Parlamentswahlen im Kosovo: Erste Ergebnisse zeigen Kurtis Partei vorn, last update 10.02.2025.
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