
ALBANIA OPPOSITION MPS PRESSED OVER JUDICIAL REFORM

-

15.07.2016

15.07.2016

BalkanInsight

Ahead of the vote on June 21, EU and US diplomats have been seeking to convince MPs from the opposition Democratic Party to back the proposed legislation aimed at reducing corrosive political influence on the judiciary.

The European Union foreign affairs department's deputy secretary-general Helga Schmid visited Tirana on Thursday in a bid to get Democratic Party MPs support.

Schmid said that the reform would play a crucial role in consolidating the rule of law in Albania, especially in terms of the fight against corruption and organized crime.

She also said it would help to create a more transparent environment for business and investors and emphasised that it was crucial to Albanias progress towards EU accession. □

"It is now the individual responsibility of every member of the Albanian parliament to seize this historic opportunity and vote for the reform," she said.

The Democratic Party objects to the idea of US and EU officials taking an active role in vetting judicial appointments, arguing that it compromises Albanias sovereignty.

It rejected a US-EU compromise proposal for the screening and selection of judicial officials as part of planned justice reforms.

The compromise proposal was delivered by US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, who also visited Tirana this week as diplomatic pressure on Albania escalated.

While the US proposal gives the international experts the right to block candidates considered inappropriate for the job, the Democratic Party wants internationals to have an observers role in the candidate process for judges or prosecutors.

Monica Macovei, a member of European Parliament and chairperson of the delegation to the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, said she hoped that the stalemate over the reform might be resolved soon.

"We are just talking about few votes missing before July 21 when the government has to take the law to parliament," Macovei told Deutsche Welle.

A constitutional majority of 94 out of 140 MPs votes is necessary to pass the reform.

Fatjona Mejdini BIRN Tirana

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eu-and-us-in-albania-don-t-give-up-on-judicial-reform-07-14-2016#sthash.OzI3CIYh.dpuf>

Kaynak/Source: