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## **BOSNIAK PARTY HOLDS KEY FOR MONTENEGRO'S NEXT GOVT**

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Balkan Insight

The ruling party of Milo Djukanovic has reportedly agreed to cede the Bosniak Party three high-ranking cabinet positions in exchange for its support, ending several weeks of wrangling over the formation of a new government.

The agreement is expected to be officially confirmed on Wednesday after the Bosniak Party emerged as a kingmaker following the election on October 16 and won three seats in Montenegros 81-seat parliament.

Although it only won a small number of seats the party found itself in a powerful negotiating position when the ruling Democratic Party of Socialist, DPS, took a slim victory of 36 seats, leaving it unable to command a majority on its own.

In return for supporting the government the Bosniak Party has secured the positions of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, and a Deputy Parliamentary Speaker position, local media reported.

While Djukanovic has formally resigned as prime minister - following seven terms in office as well as a stint in the post of president - the new cabinet will be headed by a close ally of his; the former intelligence chief, Dusko Markovic, who will take the role of prime minister.

Negotiations between the two parties appeared to stuck last week with the DPS reluctant to cede such important positions.

However, with the threat of some senior officials from the Bosniak Party about potential collaboration with opposition groups looming large a deal appears to have finally been struck.

With the support of all minority MPs □ Bosniaks, Albanians and Croats □ the DPS can now count on forming a coalition government that holds at least 42 seats in parliament, giving it a slim but certain majority.

However, not all members of the Bosniak Party are happy with the deal. On Tuesday, Orhan Sahmanovic, former mayor of Plav and a senior figure in the Bosniak Party leadership, told local media the decision to strike a deal with the DPS was illegitimate and that consultations with party members had been insufficient.

"That firstly should be decided by the Main Board of the party," Sahmanovic said, adding that Bosniaks should have also negotiated with the opposition.

On October 18, Montenegros four opposition groups – the Pro-Russian Democratic Front, the Civic Coalition Key, the Democrats and the Social Democratic Party – had urged ethnic minority representatives to join their ranks and form a new interim government that would hold snap elections.

We will ask the [ethnic] Albanian, Croatian and the Bosniak parties to support a minority government, which would be temporary, perhaps for a year or two, and tasked with organising fair and free elections, the opposition said.

However, with that offer now rejected by all three ethnic parties the DPS looks set to continue its unrivalled control of government since Montenegro claimed independence in 2006.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosniak-party-holds-key-for-montenegro-s-next-govt-11-22-2016-1>

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