
HAHN LEAVES SKOPJE: THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE FORMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

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22.03.2017

Balkan.eu (22 March 2017)

The EU Enlargement Commissioner was in Skopje yesterday to meet with political leaders in an attempt to find a solution for the crisis. Hahn met the leaders of all parliamentary parties, but he cancelled the meeting with president George Ivanov, as the latter refused, by saying that instead of him, Hahn should meet the representatives of the people who have been protesting in the past three weeks for the creation of the new government.

After leaving Skopje, a joint statement was released by MEPs Ivo Vajgl, Eduard Kukan and Knut Fleckenstein. Hahn's visit in Skopje was also accompanied by protests.

Political parties after the meetings with Hahn

Antonio Milososki of VMRO-DPMNE, said after the meeting with Hahn that this party told the EU official that there were two ways of solving the political crisis.

The first one is for Zoran Zaev to form the government, but to give up on the platform of Albanian parties. The second solution is to hold early general elections along with local government elections, Milososki said.

The leader of SDSM, Zaev, said that the messages of the EU senior officials are clear and that the government should be formed as soon as possible. We expect to be given a mandate from George Ivanov. Macedonia demands a solution as soon as possible. Both Gruevski and Ivanov know this, Zaev said.

The leader of BDI (Democratic Union for Integration), Ali Ahmeti said that political dialogue should lead to a solution for the establishment of institutions, in order to put an end to the crisis.

This crisis must be solved through political means and it must not turn into an ethnic crisis. We must all invest in constituting institutions, Ahmeti said. Meanwhile, Hahn also met with other leaders of Albanian parliamentary parties.

Hahn's meetings accompanied with protests

While EU commissioner Hahn was holding meetings with the leaders of political parties, a protest was held by For a United Macedonia movement. Protesters said that the European Union must not use double standards, but that it should condemn the platform of Albanian parties. During the day, protesters demanded to meet with commissioner Hahn, but this meeting was rejected.

The joint statement issued by the MEPs

We met today with the representatives of the parliamentary parties. We reiterated very clearly that all leaders of the country, including the President, must now respect the outcome of the recent elections. In a democracy, everyone must acknowledge parliamentary majorities.

We therefore encourage the President to reconsider his position urgently. There is no time to lose. We now expect all political leaders and institutions to let the democratic process run its course – in the interest of the countrys citizens. The delays of the past months are already damaging the country's economy.

We thus call on a swift formation of a new government committed to implement overdue reforms. The parties and the new government are expected to continue implementing all parts of their Przino agreement.

In particular, we urge everyone to refrain from any actions and statements which might fuel inter-ethnic tensions or undermine good neighbourly relations. No one should be tempted to play with fire. We are deeply concerned about tensions and hate speech. The freedom of assembly and the freedom of expression are fundamental rights in democratic societies, but they come with responsibilities.

In the same vein, negative rhetoric targeting the international community and civil society organisations is entirely counterproductive. It undermines the countrys standing internationally, and the credibility of those who use it.

In conclusion, we need to see in the very next days serious and responsible statesmanship by the relevant institutions to enable a swift formation of a new and solid coalition. That is the only way to get back onto the EU path – which is what your citizens want and deserve.

By Naser Pajaziti

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