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## **KOSOVO SERBS ABANDON PLAN TO FORM 'ASSOCIATION' UNILATERALLY**

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Gazeta Express (19 April 2018)

Srpska List representatives held a meeting on Thursday with the Managerial Team on drafting the statute of the Association, which was established by the Government of Kosovo. During the meeting Srpska List representative, Igor Simic, said that they are open to discuss any solution when it comes to creation of the Association, as foreseen by the Agreement reached between Kosovo and Serbia during the EU-facilitated dialogue in Brussels. Many have expected that we today to act as Serbs usually act – heart before brain, said Simic, adding that this time they will decide wisely in order to prevent anybody blaming Serbs for taking unilateral decisions. When we waiting for five years, we can wait for additional three and a half months, said Simic, citing Serbian president Aleksandar Vucic who on Wednesday in Belgrade made the same remarks. Simic said that Managerial Team tasked to draft the statute of the Association will work based on the Brussels Agreement.

Kosovo authorities have established the Managerial Team as the first step on implementing the original Agreement reached in 2013 between Kosovo and Serbia in Brussels and pledged that the Association will be in compliance with Kosovo laws and without executive powers. Serbs are hoping the Association of the ten Serb-run municipalities in Kosovo will have extended authorities. The principles of the deal on Association agreed during EU-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia dialogue in Brussels in August 2015 stipulate that Kosovo Serbs should have full oversight over economic development, education, healthcare, urban and rural planning, with budgetary contributions coming directly from Serbia. In exchange, the municipalities would agree to full integration into Kosovo.

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