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## **KOSOVO SEEKS 'CONSENSUS' FOR FRESH SERBIA TALKS**

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In an open letter published on Monday, the speaker of the Assembly of Kosovo, Kadri Veseli, has presented his own consensual platform for the EU-led talks with Serbia in Brussels, following the proposal of the government for a "state platform" on the talks.

Veseli called on all parties in Kosovo to unite behind a political consensus on five major issues facing Kosovo: dialogue with Serbia; the establishment of an Association of Serb-majority municipalities; the establishment of a Kosovo Army; an agenda on European integration, and election reform.

Unification of stands and having a common state platform on this would be a guarantee of better completion of the dialogue process with Serbia, the letter sent to the parties reads.

To achieve such a goal, it is necessary to establish a joint team led by the President of Kosovo, including the political and institutional leaders, as well as key personalities from civil society, it added.

The state platform currently proposed by the government also reads that the Assembly confirms that the President and the Kosovo delegation, which will be established in coordination with the whole political spectrum..., are authorised to conduct negotiations to achieve an internationally legally binding agreement.

This legally binding agreement should then be the framework through which mutual recognition between Kosovo and Serbia should happen.

The state platform proposed by the government needs now to be voted on in parliament.

However, consensus on this is far from certain. The opposition Vetevendosje party, which opposes the way Kosovo has dealt so far with the dialogue with Serbia, said it sees Veseli's initiative as damaging to Kosovo and as a favour to President Hashim Thaci.

The letter intends to invent a unity team for a controversial president like Thaci. This is wrong and damaging for Kosovo, Vetevendosje spokesperson Tinka Kurti told BIRN on Monday.

Kurti added that Vetevendosje is clear is not giving any such priority to dialogue with Serbia, or to Serbia's demands about the Association of Serb- majority municipalities.

On Thursday, Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti insisted that the dialogue could not be continued in a meaningful way without assessing its achievements between 2011 and 2017.

He also added that a national consensus could be only formed through parliament approving the teams mandate, and with the final deals approval in a referendum.

A Democratic League of Kosovo, LDK, MP, Vjosa Osmani, told BIRN that the platform proposed by the government was a mistake because, according to her, the Assembly does not have any mechanism to overview the Presidents work.

The platform reads that the President is obliged to report to Assembly on a regular basis about the process of the dialogue.

But, according to Osmani, I dont think that it will be voted on. The opposition should be well organised now \* and there is no reason for us to help the government escape from responsibility, leaving such a crucial issue in the hands of a person who never reports to MPs, Osmani said, referring to Thaci.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-high-officials-with-consensual-platforms--04-23-2018>

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