



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

Kosovo

Last update:	12 April 2017
Population:	1,797,151 million (2015 World Bank est.)
Prime minister:	Isa Mustafa
President:	Hashim Thaci
Governemental type:	Republic
Ruling coalition:	Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)
Last election:	8 June 2014 (parliamentary elections)
Next election:	2018 (parliamentary elections)
Sister parties:	None

On 17 February 2008, the Republic of Kosovo unilaterally called out its independence. The formerly autonomous province of Serbia consists of around 92% ethnic Albanians and has several minorities, mainly Serbs. Kosovo's independence has been recognized by roughly half of UN members, Serbia opposes Kosovo's independence. Five EU member states do not recognize its independence, thus hampering an EU position on the status of Kosovo. Over the past years the country has been struggling with its official status, its relation with Serbia and integration with the EU. Tensions and incidents remain in Kosovo, especially in the north, where the ethnic Serb majority does not recognize the authority and presence of the government in Pristina. On 19 April 2013, the EU brokered "First agreement of principles governing the normalisation of relations" was signed by Pristina and Belgrade and on 25 August 2015, another important agreement was reached between the two sides that is a "landmark achievement in the normalization process." So far the 2013 agreement has been lacking implementation, and overshadows other political issues such as the rule of law.

Political Situation

Kosovo is a multi-party parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Kosovo is the head of government, and the President of Kosovo is the head of state. Until 2012 the EU deployed, in cooperation with the International Steering Group for Kosovo, a special International Civilian Representative in Kosovo who had the "ability to annul decisions or laws adopted by Kosovo authorities and sanction and remove public officials whose actions he/she determines to be inconsistent" with the Ahtisaari Plan. Since 2012 Kosovo has been responsible for overseeing its own governance.

The Kosovo Assembly, which was constituted as part of the UNMIK regulations on the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, consists of 120 seats of which a maximum of 100 are distributed proportionally among the political parties based on the amount of votes. Twenty additional seats are reserved for non-Albanian communities, of whom the Serbs can claim 10. Kosovo is a single electoral district. The Assembly elects the country's President for a five-year term. However, after the 2011 election of Behgjet Pacolli as president was ruled unconstitutional, he was replaced by outsider Atifete Jahjaga. The Assembly decided to reform the electoral code to allow for the President to be elected by popular vote. As of April 2016, Hashim Thaçi, has been appointed President of the country. Meanwhile relations between Serbia and Kosovo have somewhat improved through a 25 August 2015 agreement on the normalisation of their relations.

The agreement included deals on energy, telecommunications, the bridge that divides the town of Mitrovica into a Serbian and Albanian part and the Association of Serbian Municipalities (ASM). The ASM will be "a legal entity defined by a statute and will promote the interests of the Kosovo Serb community in its relations with the Kosovo central authorities." According to the plan, 10 municipalities with a Serbian majority will have their own assembly with an elected president, and with their own flag, but will be subject to Kosovo law. The agreement led to tensions in the parliament of Kosovo as the opposition party: Vetevendosje MPs threw eggs at PM Isa Mustafa, and later used tear gas in parliament to express their anger. Vetevendosje has succeeded in mobilising the young urban vote, winning the local elections in Pristina and gaining 14% of the voters at the 2014 general elections. At the same time, they are the only political party of relevance that has made a serious work of developing (social) policies. They also organized protests in the street against the Belgrade-Pristina agreement, leading to confrontations between protesters and the police. On

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

August 3rd 2015, parliament amended the constitution to allow the creation of a special EU backed court to examine war crimes allegedly committed by ethnic Albanian guerrillas during the 1998-1999 war. Since then the European Council approved a 1 year budget in June 2016. The Kosovo specialist chambers also adopted its Rules of Procedure and Evidence, which means that the court could be judicially operational from May 2017 onward.

EU brokered agreements between Kosovo and Serbia

As a consequence of the ongoing tensions the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina was put on hold by the Serbian government, but since Serbia became an EU candidate state in 2013, more EU pressure on Serbia has led to progress. The EU facilitated a High-Level Dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which resulted in the historic "First agreement of principles governing the normalisation of relations" (Brussels agreement) reached on April 19, 2013. It was agreed, among others, to deconstruct Serbian parallel (security) structures in north Kosovo by establishing one Kosovo Police force that would operate on the whole territory of Kosovo. In addition, an Association of Serb Municipalities (ZSO) – municipalities with a Serb majority – will be established as an authority in areas of economic development, education, health and urban and rural planning. On 25 August 2015 another important agreement was reached between the two sides that EU Foreign Affairs and Security chief, Fedrica Mogherini called a "landmark achievements in the normalisation process." Kosovo and Serbia signed deals on energy, telecommunications, the bridge that divides the town of Mitrovica into a Serbian and Albanian part and Association of Serbian Municipalities (ASM). The deal envisages that the ASM will be drafted within four months, further stating that "it will be a legal entity defined by a statute and will promote the interests of the Kosovo Serb community in its relations with the Kosovo central authorities." According to the plan, 10 municipalities with a Serbian majority will have their own assembly with an elected president, and with their own flag, but will be subject to Kosovo law. The agreement has, so far, caused polarization in the political scene. Political debates are highly dominated by the negotiations with Belgrade while social issues and rule of law are ignored. Moreover, the agreement has lacked implementation.

EU - Kosovo relations

Kosovo has expressed a desire to join the EU and welcomed a feasibility study in 2012 to look at the possibilities for joining, but their ties with Serbia and the divide in the EU on accepting Kosovo's independence continuously raise concerns. As unanimity among EU member states is demanded for the establishment of contractual relations with a country and not all member states recognize its independence, Kosovo is the only Balkan country without contractual relations with the EU. Citizens of Kosovo are the last people in the region that still need a visa to enter the EU. In 2015 the Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS), a Kosovo think-tank, found that it was difficult for Kosovo to reach the requirements of the European Commission because of "much higher benchmarks" than those imposed on other West Balkan states and the fact that the roadmap that Kosovo received is "open to amendments by the European Commission". While the European Commission (EC) has aimed to give the region a real EU perspective through a Stabilization and Association Process, developments in the relation with Kosovo have remained problematic. The EU is still divided on accepting Kosovo's independence; five EU member states have not recognized its independence.

Tensions in north Kosovo

In July 2011 tensions increased after Kosovo special police forces tried to take control of the two border crossings in Serb-dominated northern Kosovo (north of the river Ibar). Prime Minister at that time Thaci decided to send in the police after EULEX failed to impose Kosovo's government ban on import of Serbian goods and to establish Republic of Kosovo customs at the border. This was done without the consultation of either Serbia or KFOR/EULEX. One Kosovo police officer got killed and the police retreated from the border crossing after which local Serbs burned down the crossing and KFOR troops took over control of the border. Serbs from the north of Kosovo decided to set up barricades on the main roads and constructed alternative gravel roads.

Though tensions between the two sides eased somewhat after the intervention of KFOR forces, they continued to remain high amid concern from the EU, who criticised Kosovo for the unilateral provocation. Throughout 2012 the security situation in the north remains problematic, the Kosovo government is not able to exercise control in the north. By investing money they tried to involve the Serb citizens in the Kosovo institutions. However, this has not resulted in increased willingness of Serbs in north Kosovo to accept the Kosovo institutions and, with that, an independent Kosovo. An unofficial referendum in February showed 99% of Serbs in northern Kosovo reject the writ of the Kosovo's institutions. In April hundreds of ethnic Albanians, especially from the north of Kosovo, demonstrated against the ineffectiveness of the institutions and international bodies to put a stop to the violence.

Social Democracy in Kosovo

In Kosovo, social democracy has always been overshadowed by the nationalist struggle for autonomy and later for independence.

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

In the recent years, a few social democratic political parties have emerged, such as Kosovo Social Democratic Party, Reformist Party ORA, and New Spirit (FER). However, due to the political situation, these parties do not have much popular support and have merged with stronger political parties which focus more on territorial integrity and independence of Kosovo. Politics in Kosovo is often more about personalities than policy, with ideology for the most part reserved to the national question, while social policy is mostly developed without serious political debate. Nowadays Vetevendosje is considered as the best alternative on the left and the only party that is trying to develop and implement social democratic policies. At the same time international partners are not eager to engage in cooperation with Vetevendosje because of their behaviour in and outside the parliament and nationalistic views; they keep open the option of Kosovo joining Albania.

Serbs in Kosovo

About 8 percent of the population of Kosovo is Serbian. The Serb population of Kosovo is concentrated in the northern area. Serbs generally live in enclaves that are separated from the Albanian territories by roadblocks and/or bridges. Especially the divided town of Mitrovica experiences tensions, causing temporarily closure of the bridge between the Southern Albanian dominated area and the Northern Serb dominated area. About 18 percent of the Kosovo Serbs live north of the river Ibar in North Mitrovica. The place has a strong symbolic meaning to Serbs, as it is the only Serbian urban centre in Kosovo with a university and hospital. In March 2004 interethnic violence, leaving 20 dead, further harmed the relation between Serbs and Kosovars. The outburst of violence became a point of reference for the vulnerability of the relations between the ethnic groups. At least 800 mainly Serbian homes and at least 17 Serbian religious buildings were destroyed or damaged. The call for independence in 2008 also led to riots in the north of Kosovo. Kosovo Serbs consider the declaration of independence by Pristina illegal, and a breach of international law.

During the past years, the Serbs in Serbia as well as in Kosovo have harshly criticised the failure of UNMIK and KFOR to protect the Serb population in Kosovo. Especially the removal of control posts has been a reason for fear. Personal security and freedom are the dominant concerns for the Serbian community in Kosovo. Improving the situation of the Serbian communities was one of the main points on the agenda during the status negotiations, and remains an important topic that is held under close scrutiny by the international community. The Serb community is mostly concentrated in the north of Kosovo, but there are also several enclaves in the centre and south of Kosovo with a Serb majority. Because the Serbs in these enclaves are more isolated from Serbia and therefore have more connections with the ethnic Albanians they show more willingness to integrate, whilst many problems and reluctance to accept Kosovo authorities remain.

EULEX

With Kosovo's call for independence in 2008 UNMIK ended and a new European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) took over. EULEX aims at assisting and supporting the Kosovo authorities in the rule of law area, specifically in the police, judiciary and customs areas. EULEX is a technical mission which monitors, mentors and advises whilst retaining a number of limited executive powers. The EULEX mission has been hindered in its functioning by the fact that only 23 out of 28 EU member states have recognized Kosovo as independent, leading to internal division. The mission is therefore often criticized for being inefficient in establishing a fully functioning rule of law. In 2014 corruption allegations were made after EULEX prosecutor Maria Bamieh was quoted in a Kosovar newspaper, saying that the EULEX's internal investigation failed to have key suspects questioned and they were still allowed to work on sensitive cases. Among others, she accused former judge, Francesco Florit, of taking a 300,000 Euro bribe. In 2015 a report reviewing EULEX Kosovo mandate implementation with a focus on the handling of the corruption allegations was published, that found no evidence of corruption. The EU has stated to stay committed to its leading role in Kosovo and considers the establishment of the rule of law the top priority. The latest EU report on the performance of EULEX concluded that the mission should be either reformed or withdrawn.

Independence

In an extraordinary parliamentary session in Pristina on 17 February 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia. Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci read the declaration of independence, which stated that Kosovo is dedicated to peace and stability in the region, and is looking for a good relationship with its neighbours. The declaration furthermore states that Kosovo is created along the lines of the UN plan drawn up by special representative Martti Ahtisaari, and calls for Kosovo's supervised independence by an international presence. Serbia was, and remains, strongly opposed against an independent Kosovo. According to the Serbian government a solution for Kosovo must be found to which both Belgrade and Pristina agree upon. As of 20 October 2015, 111 UN states have recognised the independence of Kosovo and it has become a member country of the IMF and World Bank. 23 out of 28 EU member states recognise the independence; Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia and Romania have not done so, mainly due to issues with minorities and separatist movements in their own respective countries.

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

UNMIK

The executive rule of Kosovo has, until its call for independence in 2008, been under guidance of the United Nations, though officially being part of Serbia. Kosovo was administered by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG). The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 placed Kosovo under transitional UN administration pending a determination of Kosovo's future status. This Resolution entrusted UNMIK with sweeping powers to govern Kosovo, but also directed UNMIK to establish interim institutions of self-governance. Since 2001 UNMIK gradually transferred governing power to the local institutions.

UNMIK initially brought together four pillars under UN leadership: Humanitarian Affairs under the responsibility of the UNHCR, Civil Administration of the UN, Democratization and Institution-building of the OSCE, and Economic Reconstruction, Recovery and Development of the European Union (EU). With the emergency stage over, pillar I (Humanitarian Affairs), was phased out at the end of June 2000. In May 2001 a new pillar I was created to be responsible for Police and Justice under the UN. To establish and maintain security in Kosovo NATO-led international forces with a UN mandate were deployed (KFOR).

Kosovo war

Tensions between the Serbian and Albanian communities in Kosovo simmered throughout the 20th century and occasionally erupted into major violence, particularly during the First Balkan War, World War I, and World War II. The Socialist government of Josip Tito systematically repressed nationalist manifestations throughout Yugoslavia, seeking to ensure that no republic or nationality gained dominance over the others. After the death of Tito nationalist feelings became dominant again, especially among ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo, leading to an increasingly poisonous atmosphere between Albanians and Serbs.

Tensions further increased when the autonomy that was given to Kosovo in the 80's was revoked under the rule of Slobodan Milošević. In 1991 an unofficial referendum was held in Kosovo on the creation of an independent republic, 98% voted in favour with a 90% turnout. The denial of the independence of Kosovo by the Serb government led to an increase in violence between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Serb authorities and finally to a situation of war in 1997. The international community demanded that the Serbs would end their offensives against the KLA whilst attempting to convince the KLA to drop their bid for independence. Moreover, attempts were made to persuade Milošević to permit NATO peacekeeping troops to enter Kosovo.

The failure of peace negotiations led to a NATO decision in 1999 to end the conflict with military means. Within ten weeks, NATO aircrafts flew over 38,000 combat missions with the following aim: "Serbs out, peacekeepers in, refugees back". On June 3, 1999, Milošević accepted the terms of an international peace plan to end the fighting, with the Serbian parliament adopting the proposal amid contentious debate with delegates coming close to fistfights at some points. According to the Kosovo Memory Book, based on the study of an NGO from both Kosovo and Serbia, around 13,000 people were killed during the conflict.

Parliamentary Elections

The latest parliamentary elections in Kosovo took place on 8 June 2014, due to an early dissolution of parliament on 7 May. Ethnic Serb lawmakers, who are in a minority, refused to vote on a new national army. Normally, elections would take place half a year later. Ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) got the most votes: 30;72%. Despite this fact, three opposition parties announced a plan to topple a PDK government. The turnout was 43.2%. The CEC argued they had little time to prepare for the elections. During the day, 27.733 election observers were present, as well as 100 prosecutors, to "prevent a repeat of the fraud which also marred the last elections, BBC reporter Guy de Launey noted.

These elections were the most democratic and freest ones since Kosovo's independence. Nevertheless, they have been followed by a political and institutional deadlock. Indeed, while outgoing Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's PDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo) received the greatest share of votes, the customary practice would have been for him to find allies in order to form a coalition within the 15 following days. Nevertheless, three other parties - the Liberal Democratic Party (LDK), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and the newly formed Initiative for Kosovo ("Nisma") - organized themselves into a coalition, without the PDK. In order to have enough seats to form a majority, these parties needed a fourth ally, the Vetevendosje movement, which asked for the end of EU-led talks with Serbia as a condition. The majority formation has since then been blocked, as Vetevendosje denounces the ever-escalating pressure of Belgrade on Kosovo.

We are supported by



President Atifete Jahjaga has used the Kosovo Constitutional Court twice in order to determine who would be designated Prime Minister.

Party	% of votes	Seats
Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)	30.38	37
Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)	25.24	30
Self-Determination	13.59	16
Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)	9.54	11
New Kosovo Alliance (AKR)	4.67	0
Independent Liberal party (SLS)	14.35	8

December 2010 Parliamentary elections

On 12 December 2010 Kosovo held its first assembly elections since its unilateral declaration of independence in 2008. The early elections were sparked by the collapse of the government in October after the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) decided to quit the ruling coalition. LDK's relations with the PDK of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, had worsened since LDK leader Fatmir Sejdiu resigned his position as President in September of 2010 following a court decision that he could not be both President and party leader.

Party	% of votes	Seats
Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)	32.11	34
Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)	24.69	27
Self-Determination	12.69	14
Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)	11.04	12
New Kosovo Alliance (AKR)	7.29	8
Independent Liberal party (SLS)	14.35	8

The remaining seventeen seats were distributed among minority and fringe parties.
Turnout: 47%

PM Thaçi congratulated his supporters adding the "win" was a civic referendum on "the good governance of PDK" and its vision for the future. Referring to forming a coalition Thaçi said: "We should avoid divisions, we should work together". Both the PDK and the LDK say they back the reforms needed for eventual EU and NATO integration of Kosovo. "Today Kosovo votes for a European future, for a European Kosovo, for integration into the EU and the UN [...]", Thaçi said after voting. Fighting corruption and the unemployment rate of nearly 50% have been the main issues for voters during the election campaign.

The EU welcomed the first elections ever held in Kosovo as an independent republic. The EU's Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton and Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle congratulated the Kosovar people and authorities for "the calm and orderly manner" in which the ballot was held." The participation of the Kosovo people of all communities is very welcome. An extensive monitoring mission, including 5,000 civil society representatives, a delegation of EU parliamentarians and other international officials, was on the ground to study the vote.

Albin Kurti of "Self-determination" (Vetevendosje) was the newcomer in Kosovo's politics. With his movement he advocates Kosovo's unification with Albania and opposes any talks with Serbia.

Irregularities

There have been several reports of irregularities, mainly consisting of multiple votes by the same person, family voting, and exerting pressure on monitors and members of election commissions (CEC). The most flagrant irregularities are believed to have happened

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

in the municipalities of Skenderaj/Srbica and Drenas/Gillogovac where the CEC reported a turnout of 94% and 86% respectively. Parties and NGO observers noticed that such a high turnout was not possible in any municipality since one-fifth of Kosovar voters registered on the electoral lists live outside the country. In a statement on 13 December MEPs wrote: "Serious allegations of fraud in two municipalities have been brought to the attention of the delegation. "The delegation encourages the political parties to follow proper legal procedures". The turnout in the rest of Kosovo was 45%. According to European observers the turnout was "alarmingly low."

A re-run was held in 21 polling stations on 9 January 2011.

Serbian minority

Ahead of the election the government in Belgrade called on the 120,000-strong ethnic Serbian minority in Kosovo to boycott the vote, protesting against Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Because of the expected Serb boycott the election commission had set up mobile polling stations in the north. Turnout in the majority Serb areas of the north was around 1%. Police confirmed several incidents and two Serbs being arrested. Turnout among Serbs living in enclaves in central Kosovo was higher than in previous elections. Because of the more isolated position the Serbs living in the enclaves show more willingness to accept the Kosovo institutions.

Government coalition

A coalition was formed between the PDK, the AKR, the SLS, and several minor parties. In total, the coalition holds 65 of the 120 assembly seats. The PDK delivered the Prime Minister, Hashim Thaçi and AKR's leader Behgjet Pacolli's was elected president by the Assembly. However, a court ruled his election unconstitutional since he was still leader of the AKR and the constitution forbids the president to hold multiple political offices. Pacolli stepped down and the non-partisan deputy director of the Kosovo police Atifete Jahjaga was elected President. Jahjaga, the first female, first non-partisan and youngest President of Kosovo was new to the political scene and seen as a consensual candidate. The election led to an Assembly decision to have the future president elected by popular vote under a new electoral code.

(Social) Democratic Parties

Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)

Party Leader: Hashim Thaçi

Number of seats: 34

<http://www.pdk-49.com/>

The PDK was formed by prominent members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), among them the current party leader and prime minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, and the current president of the assembly - former spokesperson of UCK - Jakup Krasniqi. The party stated it wants to adopt a social democratic ideology and contacts with social democratic foundations exist. But although PDK originally had socialist tendencies, its political tendencies have shifted to centre-right over the years.

Like many parties in former communist countries PDK wrestles with the bad image of left wing parties. Also it is obvious the party has to come to grips with their image of being a party of former guerrillas. Nowadays, the party is tolerant and accommodating towards local Serbs, offering them Serbian as an official language, special municipalities, special positions in institutions, right of veto for laws that deal with minority rights etc. Besides full independence for Kosovo, top priorities in the view of the party leadership are the fight against youth unemployment and corruption.

PDK draws its support especially from poor rural, Albanian dominated areas that suffered extremely from violence during the war. For example in the Drenica Valley, in which also a lot of UCK fighters were living, PDK gained 80% of the votes in the first three elections.

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

Both in the 2007 and in the 2010 parliamentary elections the PDK came out as the biggest party.

Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK)

Party Leader: Isa Mustafa

Number of seats: 27

<http://www.ldk-ks.eu/historiku/ldk/>

The LDK was formed in 1989 by a group of intellectuals headed by Ibrahim Rugova and grew out to one of the main political parties of Kosovo. The immediate goal was to establish an independent Kosovo. The party won the 2001 and 2004 elections and has headed the governments to come out of these elections. In the 2007 elections, the party came in second after the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and joined a coalition with the PDK. However, after the 2010 elections in which the party became second after the PDK again, the LDK choose to head the opposition.

The leader of the party, Ibrahim Rugova was Kosovo's president from 2002 to 2006, until he died of lung cancer. Rugova embodied for the Kosovars the struggle for independence and was much respected internationally for his moderate position and peaceful methods of resistance. The parliament elected Fatmir Sejdiu, who had been on the presidency of the LDK since it's foundation in 1991, as the new president. After the fall of the government in November 2010, Isa Mustafa won internal elections to become the new party leader.

LDK has a liberal orientation favouring a free market economy and privatisation or public-private partnerships. Other priorities are European integration, education (in one's native language), authentic development of culture, fair social policy, accessible healthcare, and guaranteeing minority rights.

In 1991 the party organised a referendum on self-determination of Kosovo in which more than 90% of the Kosovar Albanians voted for independence. The independence declaration was only accepted by Albania. Afterwards Rugova formed an underground government in Kosovo, which was not recognised by Serbia. A number of LDK members have been killed over the past years, which are suspected to be politically motivated assassinations.

Other Parties

Self-determination

Party Leader: Albin Kurti

Number of seats: 14

<http://www.vetevendosje.org/>

Self-determination (Vetevendosje) is the third party in the Kosovo, having won 14 seats in the Kosovar Assembly in the December 2010 elections, the first time it participated in elections. The movement was well known even before its formal establishment in 2005, especially for their graffiti slogans all around Kosovo, such as UNMIK Jashtë (UNMIK Out), and Jo Negociata, Vetëvendosje! (No Negotiation, Self Determination). The movement is known for its opposition towards UNMIK and international supervision in general. It stated that "UNMIK is an anti-thesis to self-determination."

The party enjoys wide appeal amongst the youth, mainly due to its anti-establishment and anti-corruption message. Before it entered the political arena, the party organised street-protests which often turned violent.

Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)

Party Leader: Ramush Haradinaj

Number of seats: 12

<http://www.aak-ks.com/>

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

Like the PDK, former Albanian militants who fought against the Belgrade regime lead the AAK. The leader of the party, Ramush Haradinaj, is a former UCK commander. Originally the AAK was founded for the 2000 municipal elections as a coalition of five nationalist parties. By 2001 two of the parties had withdrawn from the coalition. The parties that withdrew were the more conservative and nationalist members. For the 2002 municipal elections, the remaining parties registered as an independent party under the same name.

AAK has been in government from 2001 until 2007 and has delivered a prime minister for the second governing period from 2004 on. Party leader Haradinaj took up this job, but handed it over to Kosumi as he was indicted for war crimes. In 2006 Kosumi resigned and LDK man and former guerrilla commander Agim Ceku was nominated to form a new government.

The AAK is now known as a more moderate, pro-European party in the centre of the political spectrum, which is in favour of ethnic co-operation. Economic priorities set by the party are the creation of new jobs, promotion of small and medium sized business, infrastructure, and privatisation. Support comes mainly from the Dukagjini region in southwest Kosovo. International and local political observers credit the party with solid organisation and clear, effective and largely democratic internal procedures. In addition, women and youth are well represented in the party, which fits the party's priority to promote youth and a bigger role for women in society.

New Kosovo Alliance (AKR)

Party Leader: Bahgjet Pacoli

Number of seats: 8

<http://www.akr-ks.eu/>

The Alliance for a New Kosovo (AKR) was founded in March 2007 by Bahgjet Pacoli, a successful businessman and owner of general contracting and engineering company Mabetex. Pacoli is also the main financier of the AKR. The 2007 elections were the first in which the AKR competed, winning 12.3% of the votes, or 13 seats in the assembly. In the 2010 elections the party won 7.3% of the votes, or 8 of the 120 seats. Pacoli was elected President by the assembly on 22 February 2011, but stepped down amidst controversy over the legality of his appointment 4 April 2011. Ideologically, the party is liberal-oriented.

Independent Liberal Party (SLS)

Party Leader: Slobodan Petrović

Number of seats: 8

<http://www.sls-ks.org/>

The SLS is the biggest Serbian party in Kosovo winning, besides two seats in the main race, six of the ten seats reserved for Serbs in the 2010 elections. After the elections, the SLS entered into the governing coalition with Thaci. The party campaigns as a liberal, pro-European party. It is headed by Slobodan Petrović, who is also one of five Deputy Prime Ministers of Kosovo and minister for local self-governance.

Biographies

Isa Mustafa

Prime Minister

Isa Mustafa was born in 1951 near Pristina to Albanian parents. He studied economics at the University of Pristina, receiving a Master's degree. After working at the university for some years, he got into politics in the 1980s. Between 1984 and 1988 he served as the head of the municipal council of Pristina. In the 1990s, during the war, Mustafa served as Minister of Economics and Finances in the government of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosova. Because a warrant for his arrest was issued in Yugoslavia, he moved to Western Europe. After the war he returned to Kosovo, and in 2006 he returned to politics as adviser of president Fatmir Sejdiu. In 2007 he returned to the municipal council of Pristina and was elected mayor, and he was re-elected in 2009. In 2010 he beat Sejdiu in the party leadership elections of the Democratic League of Kosovo. In 2013 he ran again for the position of

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

mayor of Pristina, but lost this re-election. In 2014 he became the prime minister of Kosovo after the parliamentary elections, in a coalition with the Democratic Party of Kosovo. Because of the deal he reached with Serbia about the normalisation of their relations, Mustafa is disliked by some opposition parties. To express their anger they threw paint at his car and eggs at his head during a parliamentary session. Mustafa is married and has three children.

Hashim Thaci

President

Hashim Thaci's rise to prominence in Kosovar politics started during the war against Serbia, when he became the political leader of the Kosovar Liberation Army (UCK). After the war, he headed the PDK party, but the party came in second in the first two elections. In 2007, the PDK, led by Thaci, managed to secure the first position, and thus Thaci became Prime Minister of Kosovo. One of the promises with which Thaci had campaigned was that he would declare Kosovo independent, and he did so on 17 February 2008. The PDK won early elections in 2010, and Thaci remained as Prime Minister.

A 2010 report by the European Council implicated Thaci in an organ theft scheme during the war in the 1990s. The report, widely known as the Martyr report, states that over 300 organs were harvested from Serbian prisoners of war and sold on the international black market in order to raise money for the war effort. The accusations were never conclusively proven.

More recently, prosecutor Clint Williamson issued a report declaring that "senior officials of the former Kosovo Liberation Army" were suspected of crimes against humanity. Thaci may be one of them, although his name was not mentioned. Since 2014 he is Kosovo's Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister.

Source

News and analysis

- [B92BETA News Agency](#)[Civitas Research](#)
- [Balkan Insight](#)
- [European Stability Initiative](#)
- [Freedom house](#)
- [Institute for war and peace reporting](#)
- [International Crisis Group](#)
- [Kosovoreport](#)
- [Radio Free Europe – Radio Liberty](#)[South Eastern Europe Times](#)
- [Transitions Online](#)
- [UNIFEM](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [NY Times](#)
- [BBC](#)

Information on Kosovar political parties

- [Publication Fred Cocozzelli, New School University](#)
- [OSCE](#)
- [Europe Research Group](#)

Elections

- [CeSID](#)
- [Election World.org](#)
- [OSCE/ODIHR](#)

International organisations and institutions in Kosovo

We are supported by



European Forum

for Democracy and Solidarity

- [EU in Kosovo](#)
- [KFOR](#)
- [OSCE mission in Kosovo](#)
- [UNMIK](#)
- [UNDP Kosovo](#)
- [Government](#)
- [Assembly](#)

We are supported by