

Serbia

Last update:	7 August 2023
Population:	6,844,078 (World Bank 2021)
Prime minister:	Ana Brnabić
President:	Aleksandar Vučić
Governmental type:	Republic
Ruling coalition:	Cabinet of Ana Brnabić III
Last election:	April 3, 2022 (presidential and parliamentary elections)
Next election:	2024 (local elections)
Sister parties:	Democratic Party, (DS), Social Democratic Party (SDS)

The transformation of Serbia since the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s has been very dynamic, to say the least. From a dictatorship heavily involved in the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo bombed by NATO, via a peaceful revolution and democratization, towards a semi-authoritarian regime that has opened the EU accession negotiations in January 2014. In April 2017, outgoing Prime Minister Alexander Vučić (Serbian Progressive Party, SNS) was elected President. Under his rule, Serbia has experienced democratic backsliding into authoritarianism or autocracy. Vučić and his SNS party have entrenched political executive powers, limited freedom of expression, harass free, independent journalism and hamper independent election monitoring. As a consequence, many people took to the streets in Belgrade to protest against, what they saw as authoritarian rule in Serbia.

On June 21, 2020, Vučić' SNS party took a landslide win at the parliamentary polls as the complete opposition boycotted the elections - protesting the dysfunctional Serbian political landscape. This gave Vučić extensive powers in Parliament. Since then, his rule is characterized by illiberal tendencies and the juggling of foreign power influences, mainly from the EU and Russia. In the end of 2021, many Serbians took to the streets to protest against lithium mining in the country by foreign companies - this had caused extensive pollution, a big problem in Serbia.

In January 2022, Vučić organized a constitutional referendum that eyed a change in the Serbian judiciary to bring it in line with EU guidelines. Sixty percent voted in favour of Vučić' changes. Opposition parties were critical of the referendum, as Vučić remains very powerful over the judicial and executive powers in Serbia.

On April 3, 2022, general elections were held in Serbia. The general elections were deemed crucial amid geopolitical turbulence and the re-organization of the political opposition, that boycotted parliamentary elections earlier in 2020. The Russian invasion of Ukraine became crucial in the elections, hampering the opposition's chances, that hoped to profit from the 2021 environmental protests. As expected, incumbent President Aleksandar Vučić easily won a second term, giving him another five years in office. His Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) also did well – it won a majority of parliament with its loyal ally the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS).

On 23 April 2023, elections took place in northern Kosovo in four municipalities. It recorded the lowest turnout ever in the country's history at just 3.47%. Pro-Serbian political parties had boycotted these local elections. Despite this alarmingly low turnout, the government in Pristina decided to move along with the results. As the newly sworn in mayors attempted to enter their offices – ethnically Serb protestors clashed with police escorting the mayors. Five policemen were injured as a result. Attempts by the US and several EU countries to de-escalate would prove to be futile, as a large-scale clash with police and the NATO-led peacekeeping force KFOR occurred on 29 May. In July 2023, Kosovo's government announced that it will reduce by one-quarter the number of special police deployed around administrative buildings in the ethnic Serb-majority north and organise fresh mayoral elections in four northern municipalities as part of measures to de-escalate simmering tensions with neighbouring Serbia.

Political Situation

Serbian transformation

Hopes were high after the citizens and social movement Otpor (Resistance) toppled the Milošević regime in 2000 without a single bullet being fired. A pro-European Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) coalition took over power and one of the main parties within that coalition, the centre-left Democratic Party (DS) – remained in power for the most time until 2012. On the one hand, the rule of law, freedom of the press and European integration got a tremendous boost with the downfall of the dictatorship. On the other hand, the country did not manage to develop its economy sufficiently and give hope to the young people who are leaving, while the ruling elite did not manage to change the political culture. In addition, the relations with Kosovo continued to be a political burden. Milošević's former nationalist political partners used this disappointment to wrap themselves in a European flag and win parliamentary and presidential elections since 2012. Current President Vučić served as minister of information during the Milošević's regime.

Current Political Situation

Before the 2022 elections, Serbia was under the rule of President Vučić and the ruling coalition "For our Children", in which Vučić' SNS co-operates with various parties, the biggest being the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). Opposition parties have increasingly faded to the background after a number of early elections, including the 2020 elections that opposition parties boycotted. As a consequence, For our Children won by a landslide.

During the covid-19 pandemic in the summer of 2020, various anti-government protests erupted in Serbia. Not only were people protesting against the measures, but also over election fraud allegations and wider concerns over the state of democracy. The protests were first met by violent police response, but they continued even after the government announced a repeal of the announced COVID-measures. After several weeks the protests died down, but political unrest remains.

Environmental protestors took to the streets on 27 November 2021 to protest against a new mining project and two new laws which they say will give extensive rights to foreign mining companies. Serbia's government has offered mineral resources to foreign companies such as the Australian-British Rio Tinto that wish to exploit lithium in the country. Pollution is already a major issue in Serbia, with the state being one of the most polluted countries in Europe.

On January 16, 2022, Serbian voters approved constitutional changes that the government said were part of a reform process. Nearly 60% of people who cast ballots voted in favour of the amendments that focus on the election of judges and prosecutors, while nearly 40% were against. The constitutional changes are related to the selection of judges and prosecutors. The changes were proposed by the government of Serbia in order to ensure "greater independence, efficiency and responsibility of the judiciary, greater independence and responsibility of the public prosecutor's office, better protection of citizens' rights and strengthening the rule of law".

The independence of the judiciary is a requirement for EU integration, one which has long impeded the process. Opposition parties and independent experts have argued that the referendum was organized in a "generally non-democratic atmosphere", too hastily and too soon before April 2022 general elections. Other critics claim that political influence is still possible because of the way the members of the High Judiciary Council and High Council of Prosecutors are chosen.

Ahead of the important April 3, 2022 general elections, Russia invaded Ukraine. Serbia also has a peculiar position regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It did join an UN resolution that condemned the invasion - causing a rebuke from Moscow – but did not join EU sanctions. Many Serb voters dislike Western institutions and are pro-Russian, as NATO allies bombed and sanctioned Belgrade in the 1990s. Russia also supports Serbia's claims over Kosovo. Throughout March, mass protests were organized in Belgrade that supported Russia. Vučić is in a balancing act between national and international demands – as Serbia also wants to join the EU. A government source indicated that Vučić is more likely to meet EU demands after the elections: "We just need time," said a government source. "We need a few more weeks to finish the campaign...then it will be much easier to do whatever needs to be done."

The position of Serbia vis-à-vis Russia was an important boost for Vučić' popularity, who could position himself as the strongman, trustworthy candidate against opposition candidate Zdravko Ponoš. In the April 3 general elections, Vučić and his SNS party won big. For more on the previous elections see the 'elections' page.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties

With nationalists back in power since 2012, rule of law and democracy regressed. Institutions are weak, not independent, and distrusted by the citizens. As a consequence, citizens' main way to participate in political life is by voting at elections. At the same time, the turn-out at the elections is low: 56% at the 2016 elections and less than 50% in 2020. While civil society is putting effort to improve the quality of

democracy, the government is reluctant to engage in a dialogue with (civil) society, framing internationally financed civil society as 'foreign agents'. Investment in active citizenship and knowledge about the political system is lacking while these are important tools to enhance democracy. Media freedom-wise Serbia is moving in the "Macedonia direction": total control of the public broadcaster and all other major media by the government. Editors and managers from (formerly) independent media outlets are being fired, or decide to quit their job, some being afraid of verbal and physical attacks on them and their family. In addition, there is no transparency in media ownership.

Human Rights and Gender Equality

Despite laws and policies promoting gender equality in Serbia, women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, and domestic violence prevails. Serbia has the highest rate of domestic violence in Europe, with half of women in Serbia suffering under it. Furthermore, gender discrimination and structural barriers lead to a gender pay gap and a lower labour force participation for women than men.

Apart from gender inequality, discrimination persists against minorities. LGBTQ+ individuals are officially protected under the law, though attacks and threats of LGBTQ+ individuals remain an issue, while investigations are often slow and prosecutions rare. The Roma ethnic group also suffers discrimination in Serbia, though efforts are being made, and they have officially been recognized as a national minority, on the basis of which they enjoy the rights to protection of their identity. Nevertheless, public stereotypes remain, leading to discrimination against the Roma community.

International Politics

After years of strained relations between Serb and Albanian inhabitants in Serbia, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. This declaration has been recognized by a number of major EU countries as well as the US, but not by Serbia itself. As a result, tensions between Kosovo and Serbia remain, though there have been efforts to bring peace to the area. In 2013, Belgrade and Pristina signed a historic deal, mediated by Brussels, normalizing relations, opening their way towards EU integration and granting Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo broad powers in education, health care and spatial planning. The implementation of the deal on the ground remains a major challenge. The agreement had positive effects for Serbia and Kosovo concerning the EU integration. Serbia opened the accession negotiations, while Kosovo signed its first agreement with the EU that led to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

As a result of the breakthrough with Kosovo, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia entered into force in September 2013. Three months later the Council adopted the negotiating framework, wherefore Serbia could hold the first Intergovernmental Conference on 21 January 2014. This date marks the formal start of the accession negotiations. In line with the new EU strategy, chapters 23 (rule of law) and 24 (fundamental rights) were two of the first to be opened. The government, however, did not use this opportunity to propagate the reforms related to these chapters as the action plan was adopted quietly in the parliament, with MP's obtaining the action plan one hour before the vote. Although the perspective of European integration had a big impact on the transformation of Serbian politics, and society to a certain extent, it lacked a long-term sustainable approach. Moreover, the ruling elite misused European integration to legitimize all their actions; this "we-have-to-do-this-because-the-EU-saysso" attitude resulted in slow transformation during which the political elite acted like it was not in the interest of Serbia to engage in the European integration-related reforms. The long-term prospect of EU membership is not enough for the political elites in the region to reform. This is also shown by the fact that Serbia is not aligning her foreign affairs policy to the EU's policies.

Furthermore, the government is successfully creating an image of the strong historical, brotherly and spiritual relations between Serbia and Russia. Although the debate about the relations with Russia is blown out of proportions, the 'love' for Russia – after Belarus Serbia scores the best when it comes to the popularity of Russia – offers the nationalist political elite an escape card when recognition of Kosovo will be demanded as a prerequisite for EU membership. Not only are the ties with Russia being strengthened, but also those with China. The two countries have found common ground through China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and through China's support to Serbia throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. To conclude: Serbia has turned away from its sole EU perspective, and is currently balancing West, Russia, and China. Prior to the parliamentary elections in 2020 President Vučić explicitly indicated that Serbia will continue to balance its ties between the power blocks. In 2022, as Russia invaded neighbouring Ukraine, this balancing approach has come under heavy pressure as European states sanction Russia. Serbia has been pressured to join sanctions and condemnations, but is reluctant to do so. It is expected that the juggling of various geo-political actors will be tested severely in the upcoming months.

Another important instrument in the EU accession process is the Berlin Process. Although it rightfully aims to enhance regional integration and cooperation, it lacks ownership (top-down process), is not transparent and only six EU member states are directly involved. This problem was not solved when the European Commission presented its new enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans in 2018, followed by a new assessment in 2021. Although it raised the prospect of 2025 as the possible accession date of Serbia to the Union, it effectively underlined the necessary steps it must take before the country can become a member. Therefore, many political analysts and journalist are sceptical about the EU integration: as long as Serbia is cooperating on Kosovo, engages in regional cooperation and acts as a

stable and reliable actor to the EU, it will get EU's carte blanche on internal politics. Consequently, the quality of democracy has decreased: there is less free press, a weakened rule of law and an increasingly authoritarian regime.

In September of 2020, Serbia and Kosovo agreed, with mediation of U.S. President Donald Trump, to work on their economic ties. The accord involved highways and railways to connect the two countries, but political cooperation was not settled.

Fragmentation on the left

When SNS took power in 2012, the Democratic Party (DS) formed the core of the opposition in Serbia. However, since then, the party has fragmented into several different parties as several senior party members left the DS. On 30 January 2014 former President of Serbia Boris Tadić resigned as honorary president of the DS. Tadić said he decided to leave because of disagreements with the direction in which the Democrats were heading under the new leadership. DS was at that moment looking for a potential coalition with the New Party (Nova Stranka) led by Zoran Živković, another former member of the DS. After his resignation Tadić started his own party: the New Democratic Party (NDS), later renamed to Social Democratic Party (SDS). Tadić supporter and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vuk Jeremić, also created his own political party, the People's Party (NS) in 2017, after Tadić left. Mayor of Belgrade and President of the party, Dragan Đilas, also left the party in 2014. Đilas left after the DS lost its power in the Belgrade City Assembly, showing his intent to run his own political platform.

There are currently six parties in Serbia that classify themselves as center-left: the DS and SDS, the newly formed Party of Freedom and Solidarity SSP, the regional League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina LSV, the Social Democratic Party of Serbia SDPS, and the Socialists SPS, previously Slobodan Milosević's party. However, the distinction between left and right common to the Western party system is only partly applicable to these parties, and therefore these six parties vary greatly in clientele, type, and orientation. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated as the SDPS and the SPS are part of the ruling coalition, while the other four parties are part of the opposition.

With the centre-left vote split between multiple parties and groups, the opposition in Serbia has been heavily divided. The 2018 Belgrade Assembly Elections were seen by many as a test for the opposition, to answer the question if it could still function against the might of the SNS. Leading up to the elections the centre-left couldn't unite. The Đilas platform in the city was supported by the Movement of Free Citizens of former presidential candidate Saša Janković. Another former DS member, Aleksandar Šapić, ran his own campaign. The division resulted in a sweeping victory for the SNS in the local elections, receiving 45% of the vote. The DS didn't even make it to the threshold of 5%, probably because Đilas and Sapic won 19% and 9% respectively. On a local and national level the Social Democratic opposition, what used to be the DS, is now divided among multiple former DS members and their spin-off parties.

In the lead-up to the April 2022 general elections, social democratic parties remained fragmented in Serbia. The Democratic Party (DS), led by Zoran Lutovac, is joined by the Party of Freedom and Justice (SSP) of Dragan Đilas in the large United Serbia (US) banner - with which they tried to challenge Vučić's SNS. US also contains various other (minority) parties, the People's Party (NS) and the Movement of Free Citizens (PSG) being the largest. However, in total, six Serbian parties classify themselves as center-left, relevant to the FES: the Democratic Party DS, the Social Democratic Party SDS, which split from the DS, the newly formed Party of Freedom and Solidarity SSP, the regional League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina LSV, the Social Democratic Party of Serbia SDPS, and the Socialists SPS, formerly the party of Slobodan Milosević. The last two belong to the ruling coalition. These parties differ greatly in type, orientation, size and clientele. The opposition parties from the social-democratic spectrum have no short-term prospects for power because of their fragmentation and lack of profile.

Tensions in Northern Kosovo

In November 2022, tensions in Kosovo intensified by collective resignations of Serbs in public positions. In December 2022, Kosovo authorities postponed local elections that were due to take place on 18 December 2022 in four municipalities with a predominantly Serb community until 23 April 2023. It was a frantic attempt by Kosovo to defuse tensions with ethnic Serbs in the north of the country.

On 23 April, elections took place in northern Kosovo in four municipalities. It recorded the lowest turnout ever in the country's history at just 3.47%. Pro-Serbian political parties had boycotted these local elections, resulting in the incredibly low turnout. The voting districts are largely inhabited by Kosovar Serbs. Serbian List, the largest party of Serbs in Kosovo announced the boycott of the elections, and Serbian institutions made numerous calls for Kosovar Serbs to do the same. They stated: "We call on Serbs in the north of Kosovo to remain calm

on April 23, and not be deceived by the provocations of the Albin Kurti regime, whose sole purpose is to drive the Serbs out of northern Kosovo by holding these elections”.

Despite this alarmingly low turnout, the government in Pristina decided to move along with the results. Vetëvendosje won in North Mitrovica and Leposavic, while the opposition Democratic Party of Kosovo achieved victory in Zvečan and Zubin Potok. Protests from pro-Serbian political leaders began with the swearing-in of Erden Atiq – the designated mayor of North Mitrovica – with the pro-Serbian leaders branding it an “invasion of the north.” The remaining three mayors were sworn in on 25 May.

One day later – as the newly sworn in mayors attempted to enter their offices – it became clear that the ethnically Serb population would not simply leave it at that: protestors clashed with police escorting the mayors. Five policemen were injured as a result. Attempts by the US and several EU countries to de-escalate would prove to be futile, as a large-scale clash with police and the NATO-led peacekeeping force KFOR occurred on 29 May. No less than 25 KFOR-soldiers and 50 protestors were wounded during these riots. Journalists were reportedly attacked as well by the protestors. Some masked protestors were even seen spray-painting the letter “Z” – a symbol of support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine – on buildings and vehicles.

In July 2023, Kosovo’s government announced that it will reduce by one-quarter the number of special police deployed around administrative buildings in the ethnic Serb-majority north and organise fresh mayoral elections in four northern municipalities as part of measures to deescalate simmering tensions with neighbouring Serbia.

Elections

On April 3, 2022, general elections were held in Serbia. The general elections were deemed crucial amid geopolitical turbulence and the re-organization of the political opposition, that boycotted parliamentary elections earlier in 2020. As expected, incumbent President Aleksandar Vučić won a second term, giving him another five years in office. His Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) also did well – it won a majority of parliament with its loyal ally the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). Voter turnout was over 57%, comparatively high by Serbian standards.

Three camps can be distinguished:

1. The government camp defended its absolute majority (54.3%, 153 out of 250 seats)

Led by the “progressive party” SNS (42.9%, 121 seats), by Aleksandar Vučić and his coalition partner the “Socialist Party” SPS (11.4%, 32 seats) of former Foreign Minister and current Speaker of Parliament Ivica Dacic, the government camp was able to defend their majority. Aleksandar Vučić has developed the SNS into a power machine that is unparalleled in Europe. With more than 700,000 members, it has almost 10% of the population in its ranks. Relative to the total population, that is ten times as many as the SPD and CDU together in Germany. The Socialists were formerly led by Slobodan Milosevic - today Ivica Dacic would like to bring them closer to the social democratic party family. Ivica Dacic took advantage of the traditionally close ties to Moscow during the election campaign. In all likelihood, the Socialists will also form the next government together with the SNS, along with smaller minority parties.

2. The pro-European, democratic opposition camp is back again (18%, 50 out of 250 seats)

At the last elections in 2020, the pro-European, democratic forces decided to boycott the elections. In doing so, they cut themselves off from state funding, all parliamentary and local mandates, and access to information in parliamentary committees. This further thinned their presence in the media, which was already difficult in Serbia’s largely ruling party-controlled media system. They were able to partially overcome their fragmentation and their internal quarrels and competed mainly on three lists: The “Alliance for the Victory of Serbia” from the Democratic Party (DS), the social democratic sister party in Serbia, together with the Freedom and Justice Party of former Belgrade mayor Dragan Djilas and other forces won 13.4% of votes and 38 seats. Second, the green movement “Moramo” (“we must”) did well. Combining the forces of ecological protest movements and city activists, it won 4.6% of the vote and 12 seats. Another list that could be assigned to this bloc, namely groups around the internationally recognized former DS chairman and former President Boris Tadic, did not make it into parliament (1.7% of the votes).

3. The nationalists benefit from their commitment to Putin (13.2%, 35 out of 250 seats)

In the dispute over Kosovo, Russia is considered Serbia's protecting power. Russia sided with Serbia in 1999 and today continues to prevent Kosovo from becoming an independent member of the United Nations. The mythical connection between Serbia and Russia in orthodox Christianity turns the two countries into brother peoples, the Russian influence was popularized in Serbia, and its economic importance is often exaggerated. Thus, in the beginning of Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, people even demonstrated in Belgrade for Putin and for the war. In the elections, the nationalist parties were therefore able to benefit from a clear rejection of Serbian sanctions against Russia. These include the "NADA" (Hope) alliance of national conservative and royalist forces (15 seats), the "Oath Keepers" SSZ (10 seats) and the clerical-nationalist "Dveri" party of right-wing populist Bosko Obradovic (10 seats).

No real game changers for a surprise at the polls

For a change of power through elections in Serbia, a game changer was missing in these elections. **The economic and social situation were not decisive.** In a regional comparison, Serbia came through the covid-19 crisis well. Low wages and state subsidies have attracted foreign investors, including many German companies. Today, Serbia can build on the industrial successes of Yugoslavia better than its neighboring countries in the Balkans. Serbia is also strong in agriculture and the food industry, which have been least affected by the corona pandemic. But the economic successes are distributed very unequally and primarily benefit a small group that is closely linked to those in power. However, displeasure about this did not mobilize the masses in these elections. Aleksandar Vucic was able to score points in the election campaign with the promise of further industrial settlements.

Environmental protests had recently led to surprisingly large demonstrations across the country, and the government even had to withdraw agreements with the British-Australian company "Rio Tinto" for the exploitation of lithium deposits in the west of the country. However, none of the actors, not even the green "Moramo" movement, succeeded in exploiting this protest energy for the elections. **Environmentalism remains a niche issue in Serbian politics** and can only ignite scandalously in isolated cases, there is not (yet) a broad climate protection movement like in Western Europe, it is not anchored in the broader population. But with 12 seats, "Moramo" is the first green force to be taken into parliament.

And finally, **the Ukraine war** broke out at the beginning of the hot phase of the election campaign. Following the example of nonaligned Yugoslavia, Serbia is pursuing the foreign policy strategy of positioning itself independently between the EU, the USA, Russia and China. However, given Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, a middle position between the EU and Russia is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve. Although the Serbian government participated in the UN resolution against Russia at the beginning of March, Serbia still does not support the sanctions. In the dispute over Kosovo, Russia is considered Serbia's protecting power. With "Peace. Stability. Vucic", President Vucic had found a slogan that covers up the contradictions that are emerging in foreign policy and recommends him as the patron saint of the Serbs in difficult times. The democratic opposition had little to oppose; they do not use the issue as a confrontation and are very reluctant to call for a clear disengagement from Moscow. The nationalist parties to the right of Vucic benefited the most, performing much better than expected with a clear commitment to Putin.

The sluggish EU accession process is anything but a game changer, more of a sedative. While the early parliamentary elections were called in 2016 on the grounds that the government – of Aleksandar Vucic mind you! – need a fresh mandate in order to create all the prerequisites for Serbia's rapid accession to the EU over the next four years, four years later the topic played almost no role in the 2020 election campaign. The marginal progress, which is meticulously measured by the EU Commission, is not noticeable on site. There is clearly a lack of political will on the part of the Serbian government and President Aleksandar Vucic to press ahead with the EU accession process and to take painful reform steps, particularly in the areas of the rule of law and the fight against corruption. Worse still, the foundations of the accession process, democracy, human rights and a market economy, are rapidly deteriorating. While the governing coalition has largely neglected this issue, the pro-European opposition in Serbia has failed – or even attempted – to rekindle the flames of EU enthusiasm. The reasons for this certainly also lie in the declining appeal of the EU and its hesitant willingness to accept new members.

Rather than the outcome of the election, the new geopolitical situation will change Serbia's future. The war in Ukraine is shifting coordinates across Europe. Balancing between the EU and Russia is becoming increasingly difficult for Vucic, and the closer ties between the member states in the EU can also give new impetus to the EU expansion process. In advocating for pluralism, democracy and human rights, the pro-European, democratic opposition in the Serbian parliament now has elected contacts again, who can point to the decay of democratic institutions and deserve international support.

No changes in the Vucic power system, but first cracks

Nothing fundamental has changed in Aleksandar Vucic's power system as a result of this election night. His "Progress Party" will continue to govern with a clear majority, he was clearly re-elected as president in the first ballot and – even if it was close in the capital – the SNS-led coalition will nominate the new mayor of Belgrade. But the pro-European, democratic opposition is once again a force in the Serbian parliament. Given the current state of Serbian democracy, that alone does not give it sharp teeth. After the democratic setbacks of the Vucic years, parliament is no longer the institution for controlling the executive and the place where the struggle for political compromises

and better solutions is made. But the opposition, in its regained role as a parliamentary force, will be able to point out these abuses and draw international attention to the ongoing process of democratization in Serbia.

Elections in the city of Belgrade

In the local elections in the city of Belgrade, elections were tight. SNS is projected to win 48 of 110 seats, while the largest opposition group - United for Belgrade Victory - takes 26 seats. It remains unclear who will eventually form the city government. It seems most probable that SNS will find a majority with the Socialist (Dacic) and Democratic Party of Serbia (Milos Jovanovic, former Kostunica party). However, as it is highly difficult to achieve a coalition, it is likely that new elections will be organized in Belgrade. Both Vucic as the oppositional bloc has said to approve new elections. Thus for now, while performing better than nationally, the opposition's goal of conquering at least Belgrade was not achieved.

Irregularities and violence during voting

The elections were marked by many irregularities and violence at polling stations. Independent monitoring mission CRTA noted irregularities in 18% of polling stations. CRTA said that ballot stations in Belgrade and Novi Sad did not cooperate with electoral observers. Various observers reported intimidation and vote-buying taking place, and that the voting process was non-transparent.

SNS loyalists physically attacked the President of Movement of Free Citizens (PSG) Pavle Grbović outside the polling station where he voted. Serbian oppositional parties are currently looking to go to court for this plethora of voting irregularities. For longer, non-governmental organizations and political opposition have accused Vučić and his SNS party of corruption, nepotism, violence towards political opposition and ties with organized crime.

Parliamentary Elections

2020 Parliamentary elections

In 2020, parliamentary elections were supposed to be held on the 26th of April 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic it had been postponed to the 21st of June. Keeping their promise, many parties, including the social-democratic parties DS and SDS, and the biggest opposition coalition Alliance for Serbia, decided not to partake because they found the current political atmosphere nondemocratic. This resulted in a low turnout rate, with less than half of the eligible voters casting their ballots. The For Our Children coalition, with the leading Serbian Progressive Party, won more than 60% of the votes, equaling to 188 seats. The runner-up was the alliance between the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), United Serbia (JS) the Communist Party (KP) and the Greens of Serbia (ZS), obtaining 10% of the votes or 32 seats. The Serbian parliament has a total of 250 seats - therefore For Our Children became the ruling coalition. Ana Brnabic remained the country's prime minister.

2022 Parliamentary Elections

On April 3, 2022, parliamentary elections were organized in tandem with presidential elections and local elections in several municipalities. The parliamentary elections came amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine and after a round of large anti-government protests in January 2022. People took the streets at the time to protest against Serbia's use of natural resources and extensive pollution through lithium mining in the country. Aleksandar Vučić's SNS party was the big favorite in the lead-up to elections and managed to win with a wide margin. The organized opposition that rallied behind the 'United for the victory of Serbia' list, could not threaten Vučić, as he has entrenched political institutions and media in the country.

See the full results below:

Parliamentary election results

Party/coalition	Votes	%	Seats
"Together We Can Do Everything" <i>SNS-led coalition</i>	1,593,344	44.31	120
"United for the Victory of Serbia"	503,721	14.01	37

Candidate	Party	Votes %	%
Aleksandar Vučić	Serbian Progressive Party	2,178,422	60.01
Zdravko Ponoš	United for the Victory of Serbia	682,365	18.80
Miloš Jovanović	National Democratic Alternative	221,636	6.11
Boško Obradović	Dveri–POKS	162,445	4.48
Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski	Serbian Party Oathkeepers	157,823	4.35
Biljana Stojković	We Must	119,313	3.29
Branka Stamenković	Sovereignists	75,590	2.08
Miša Vacić	Serbian Right	32,306	0.89
Socialist Party of Serbia <i>with the smaller United Serbia (JS) and Greens of Serbia (ZS)</i>	425,060	11.82	31
National Democratic Alternative	199,124	5.54	15
We Must	172,352	4.79	13
Dveri–POKS	141,738	3.94	10
Serbian Party Oathkeepers	138,260	3.84	10
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (minority party)	59,080	1.64	6
Justice and Reconciliation Party (minority party)	34,434	0.96	3
DSHV–ZZV (minority party)	23,661	0.66	2
Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak (minority party)	20,258	0.56	2

Presidential Elections

On April 3, 2022, Serbians went to the polls for the presidential elections - next to parliamentary elections as well. The popular choice revolved between incumbent President Aleksandar Vučić and the candidate of the united opposition, former general Zdravko Ponoš. As expected, Ponoš was unable to threaten Vučić' presidency, who won with ease. See the results below.

(Social) Democratic parties

Democratic Party (DS)

Party Leader: Zoran Lutovac
Number of seats: 9 <http://www.ds.org.rs>

The Democratic Party (DS) was officially founded in 1990 by a group of Serbian intellectuals as a revival of the original Yugoslav Democratic Party. It was the first opposition party to the presidency of Slobodan Milošević during the 1990s. In the 2003 parliamentary elections DS became the third largest party in the Serbian parliament with 37 of 250 seats. The party stayed out of the government, but its role in opposition was an essential one, counter forcing against the dominant extreme nationalist forces of SPS and SRS and providing for necessary majorities on reform proposals. The DS is a firm supporter of Serbia's integration into the European Union and co-operation with

the ICTY. Concerning Kosovo, they stress the importance of the standards before the status. For some time it was unclear in what direction the party would head, but the party has adopted a social democratic orientation, seeking contact with parties of the social democratic family all over Europe and officially confirming it on the party congress.

Former DS leader and Serb President Boris Tadić quit the party in 2014. He was not content with the direction in which the Democrats were heading under the leadership of Dragan Djilas, who was the party leader from 2012 till 2014. In June 2014 Bojan Pajtic, who heads the provincial government in Vojvodina, defeated Djilas by 184 votes and became party leader.

Lutovac was a candidate for the Presidency of the party in the 2016 election, but lost to Dragan Šutanovac. When Šutanovac resigned in 2018, Lutovac was elected as President of the Democratic Party on 2 June 2018. Thus, in 2020 the DP and other opposition parties boycotted the parliamentary elections, which resulted in a Serbian parliament without any opposition. In 2022, the party gained 9 seats in the 'United for the Victory of Serbia' coalition.

Social Democratic Party (SDS)

Party Leader: Boris Tadić
Number of seats: 0 <http://sds-org.rs/>

The SDS was founded by Boris Tadić after he seceded from the Democratic Party in 2014. Tadić's goal was to participate with his new party in the 2014 parliamentary elections, but unfortunately he didn't have the time to register the new party before the election. Instead, Tadić and his supporters made a deal with the Greens of Serbia. As part of this deal, Tadić and his supporters joined the Greens of Serbia, and in February 2014 the name of the party was changed to the "New Democratic Party – Greens". Although Ivan Karić was still officially president of this party, Tadić became its de facto leader. The party participated in the 2014 elections in a coalition with, among others the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina. This coalition won 5.7% of the electoral vote and 18 seats in the National Assembly. Of these, 11 seats were allocated to the "New Democratic Party – Greens": one to the original Greens (Ivan Karić) and 10 to the group around Boris Tadić.

After the 2014 parliamentary election, a divergence emerged in the "New Democratic Party – Greens" between the original Greens and group of members that joined the party with Tadić. On 14 June, Tadić and his supporters seceded from the Greens and formed the "New Democratic Party", while the name of the "New Democratic Party—Greens" was changed back to the "Greens of Serbia".

The party is social democratic, centre left, and it supports accession of Serbia to the European Union. Furthermore, it is a member of the Progressive Alliance. It boycotted the 2020 parliamentary elections, and is therefore not represented in parliament. It did run in 2022 - not in any coalition - and was unsuccessful, failing to gain any seats in parliament. **Other parties**

SNS Coalition

Party Leader: Aleksandar Vučić
Number of seats: 120 delagovore.rs

Aleksandar Vučić – Together We Can Do Everything is a political coalition led by the SNS. Its parliamentary group between 2020 and 2022 was named "For Our Children". The list consists of various right-wing, conservative parties that joined Vučić in earlier coalitions.

SNS party

See SNS below for all information

SDSP

In October 2009 the newly established Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS) was presented to the media. The main aim of the party is Serbia's accession to the European Union, the preservation of territorial integrity of the country, regionalization of Serbia and the reduction of state administration. Furthermore, it is of crucial importance to increase the living standards of the people. The main slogan of SDPS is 'only the people!'

On 12 December 2009 the statutes of the party were adopted by the first Party Congress which welcomed leaders of social democratic parties from the region. Rasim Ljajic was elected as the leader of the party. In the past the first strategic partner of the party was the

Democratic Party, followed by the Socialist Party of Serbia. The party wanted to establish close relations with the S&D Group and other social democratic parties in the region. In 2012 the party joined the SNS led coalition with Ljajic as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Policy. In 2014 the party formed a pre-elections coalition with SNS.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia, Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

It again joined Vucic's campaign in 2022, gaining seven seats in parliament.

PUPS

The Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS) was founded in 2005 by Milan Krkobabić. It first entered parliament in 2007.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia, Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 6 seats.

PSS

The Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS) is a centre-right party, founded in 2004 by Bogoljub Karić.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement, People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 3 seats.

SNP

The Serbian People's Party (SNP) is a right-wing faction founded in 2014.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 2 seats.

SPO

The Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) is a centre-right party, founded in 1990 by Vuk Drašković and Vojislav Šešelj.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement, Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 2 seats.

PS

The Movement of Socialist (PS) is a left-wing part formed in 2012 by Aleksandar Vulin.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists, Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 2 seats.

NSS

The People's Peasant Party (NSS) is a right-wing faction, founded in 1990 by Dragan Veselinov.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 1 seat.

USS

Founded in 2000, the United Peasant Party (USS) formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

The party joined Vucic's "Together We Can Do Everything" and subsequently gained 1 seat.

BS

Better Serbia (BS) is a national-conservative political party. The party did not gain seats in elections until 2022, when it joined as part of the SNS-led coalition "Together We Can Do Everything".

United for the Victory of Serbia (coalition) (UZPS)

Party Leader: Number
of seats: 38
pobeda2022.rs

United for the Victory of Serbia was a major political opposition to the SNS-led coalition towards the April 2022 elections. After the elections, the coalition was dissolved and the below-mentioned parties went into parliament. The coalition was mainly led by SSP, NS, the Democratic Party (DS) and Movement of Free Citizens (PSG). Besides them, the coalition also included minor parties and movements.

NS (12 seats)

The People's Party (NS) is a centre-right. Its leader, Vuk Jeremić says he is pro-EU, but opposes Serbia entering NATO. The party co-operates closely with the PSG.

SSP (11 seats)

The party of Freedom and Justice (SSP) was founded in 2019 after a merger of the green ecological party and Serbian left. Since its inception, it has played itself as a major opposition party in Serbia. The SSP is orientated towards social democracy and green politics, placing it on the centre-left of the political spectrum. It advocates and supports the accession of Serbia to the European Union, and has presented anti-corruption laws. Like many of the opposition parties, it boycotted the 2020 elections and is therefore currently not represented in parliament.

In 2022, it ran in the 'United for the Victory of Serbia' coalition and gained 11 seats. Subsequently, its leaders Djilas fell out with the rest of the coalition as he spoke with SNS leader Vucic post-election without consulting his election partners.

Democratic Party (DS)

See separate page for DS below

PSG

Movement of Free Citizens (PSG) is a liberal political party led by Pavle Grbović. It is pro-EU and a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. Under the "United for the Victory of Serbia" banner, it took 1 seat at the 2022 parliamentary polls.

PZP

Movement for Reversal (PZP) is Serbian centre-left party led by Janko Veselinović, founded in 2015. Under the "United for the Victory of Serbia" banner, it took 1 seat at the 2022 parliamentary polls.

Fatherland

The People's Movement of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija (Fatherland) is a party led by Slaviša Ristić, founded in 2017. Under the "United for the Victory of Serbia" banner, it took 1 seat at the 2022 parliamentary polls.

SPS-coalition

Party Leader:

Number of seats: 31

Ivica Dačić — Prime Minister of Serbia is a political coalition led by the Socialist Party of Serbia. It took 31 seats in the 2022 elections. Earlier the parties in this coalition were involved the coalition with the SNS of Aleksander Vucic. See all parties involved in this coalition below.

SPS

The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) is a left-wing/centre-left faction founded in 1990.

During the 2020 parliamentary elections, the party formed an alliance with United Serbia (JS), Greens of Serbia (ZS) and the Communist Party (KP). In 2022, the party gained 1 seat at the parliamentary polls as it eyes a new role in the coalition. However, the party is controversial, as it opposes sanctions against Russia amid the Ukraine war and is alleged of holding deep ties to Moscow. It took 22 seats in the April 2022 elections.

JS

United Serbia (JS) is a right-wing party founded in 2004.

During the 2020 parliamentary elections, the party formed an alliance with the Socialist Part of Serbia (SPS), Greens of Serbia (ZS) and the Communist Party (KP). Its leader Palma led the "Serbs for Trump" campaign.

In 2022, the party again formed an alliance with the Socialist Part of Serbia (SPS) and gained 8 seats.

ZS

Greens of Serbia (ZS) is a centre-left party founded in 2007.

During the 2022 parliamentary elections, the party formed an alliance with United Serbia (JS), the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and gained 1 seat.

Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)

Party Leader: Aleksandar Vučić

Number of seats: 95 <http://www.sns.org.rs>

The SNS was formed as a group of breakaway MPs in the parliament from the Serbian Radical Party (SRS). The party was registered on 10 October 2008. The SNS is a center-right, conservative party. Deputy leader at that time, Aleksandar Vučić, said that the new party's goal will be to "fight for a higher standard of living, combat against crime and corruption, and beat the regime of Boris Tadić and Ivica Dačić". Preserving the country's territorial integrity, according to him, will also be one of the SNS goals, while the party will have "a clear opposition stance". Currently the party does not have a opposition stance anymore: in 2012 SNS Tomislav Nikolić became president and in the parliamentary elections of 2016 SNS got almost half of the votes and, due to the electoral system in Serbia, an absolute majority in the parliament (131 out of 250 seats in the National Assembly).

The popularity of the party was reaffirmed during the 2017 presidential elections in which Vučić won. Under the leadership of Vucic relations with Kosovo were normalised, EU accession negotiation kicked off and generally speaking Vucic is perceived as a successful fighter against corruption and organised crime. Not a small part of Serbian electorate believes that when Vucic promises something, it will happen. At the same time the opposition is accusing the SNS increasingly controlling the media and destroying their political opponents through tabloid propaganda by simply calling them criminals or prosecuting them without clear evidence.

The party formed a pre-election alliance with several other factions. Originally created in 2016, as "Let's Get Serbia Moving", it was changed to "For Our Children" in the 2020 parliamentary campaign. The nine parties involved in this coalition are the Serbian Progressive Party, Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbian People's Party (SNP), Movement of Socialists (PS), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Strength of Serbia Movement (PSS), People's Peasant Party (NSS) and United Peasant Party (USS).

In 2022, Vučić' "Together we can do everything" list ran in the elections with various other parties and became largest. Afterwards Vučić is expected to go into coalition talks with its coalition members of the 2020-2022 government.

National Democratic Alternative (NADA)

Party Leader: Miloš Jovanović & Vojislav Mihailović

Number of seats: 15 nadazasrbiju.rs

The National Democratic Alternative (NADA) is a national-conservative political coalition. It opposes same sex civil union, supports the restoration of the monarchy and supports the Bosnian entity Republika Srpska in their bid to secede. They are composed of the Democratic Party of Serbia of Miloš Jovanović (8 seats) and For the Kingdom of Serbia of Vojislav Mihailović (6 seats), and the Bunjevci Citizens of Serbia of Bojana Jelić (1 seat). Together they gained 15 seats in the 2022 parliamentary elections.

Moramo ("We Must")

Party Leader: Nebojša Zelenović, Dobrica Veselinović, Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta & Biljana Stojković

Number of seats: 13 moramo.rs

We Must (Moramo) is a green political coalition of several parties: Do not let Belgrade drown (NDB, 5 seats) of Dobrica Veselinović, Ecological Uprising (EU, 5 seats) of Aleksandar Jovanović, Together for Serbia (ZZS, 3 seats) of Nebojša Zelenović, Solidarity Platform (PS, 0 seats), Assembly of Free Serbia (SSS, 0 seats) of Biljana Stojković.

After the 2021 ecological uprising it decided to participate in the 2022 elections, in which it gained 13 seats. It is left-wing, pro-European, pro-democratic and is aligned to the European Greens.

Serbian Party Oathkeepers (SSZ)

Party Leader: Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski

Number of seats: 10 zavetnici.rs

The Serbian Party Oathkeepers (SSZ) is an ultranationalist party and staunchly socially conservative. The Serbian Party Oathkeepers opposes the European Union and NATO, and it supports establishing closer ties with Russia. In 2022, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the party did well and took ten seats at the parliamentary polls.

Dveri (Dveri)

Party Leader: Boško Obradović

Number of seats: 6 dveri.rs

The Serbian Movement Dveri is a far-right political party in Serbia. The founder and current leader of the movement is Boško Obradović. Its ideology is described as fascist, anti-semitist and xenophobic. It opposes EU and NATO integration processes. In the 2022 parliamentary polls, it co-operated with POKS (four seats), taking six seats.

Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia (POKS)

Party Leader: Žika Gojković

Number of seats: 4 poks.rs

The Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia (POKS) is a monarchist and national-conservative political party. In 2021, its leaders have had an argument after which the party split. In February 2022, Žika Gojković is registered as the party leader by Serbia's register towards 2022 elections. In the parliamentary polls, POKS took 4 seats in an alliance with Dveri.

Biographies

Aleksandar Vučić President

Aleksandar Vučić is born on 5 March 1970 in Belgrade. He has been the First Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, from 2012 till 2014. In 1993 his political career started: he joined the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and was elected to the National Assembly. Two years later he became secretary-general of SRS. He ran in the Belgrade mayoral election twice, in 2004 and again in 2008, losing both times to candidates from the Democratic Party (DS).

In March 1998, Vučić was appointed Minister of Information in the government of Mirko Marjanović. Following rising resentment against Milošević, Vučić introduced fines for journalists who criticized the government and banned foreign TV networks. He recalled in 2014 that he was wrong and had changed, stating "I was not ashamed to confess all my political mistakes." In July 2012 Vučić became Minister of Defense, but stepped down after a year due to a cabinet reshuffle. At the same time he was appointed Vučić became the First Deputy Prime Minister. Because his SNS party became the biggest at the 2014 elections, it was high likely he became Prime minister.

Vučić has two children.

Ana Brnabić

Prime Minister

Ana Brnabić has been the Prime Minister of Serbia since 29 June 2017, her appointment is very unique given the fact that she is the first woman to become Prime Minister. On top of that, she also is the first openly gay person to hold office in Serbia. She began her role in the government as Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government of Serbia from 2016 till 2017, after then Prime Minister Vučić became President he put Brnabić forward as his successor, after she was voted in office by parliament with 157 of the 250 votes. Before

being appointed to the government, she worked as director of Continental Wind Serbia, concerned with implementation of investment, worth €300 million, into a windpark in Kovin.

In 2018 she was ranked by Forbes magazine as the 21st most powerful female political leader and 91st most powerful woman in the world. Brnabić describes herself as a pro-European and technocratic prime minister. Opposition leaders and some observers describe her as a mere puppet of Vučić, whose presidency according to the Constitution is largely ceremonial with no significant executive power. Brnabić never denied this, and even said that Vučić should act as a "mentor" of prime minister

Ivica Dačić

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Leader Socialist party of Serbia (SPS) and

Ivica Dačić was born in Prizren, Serbia on 1 January 1966. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Dačić became a member of the Socialist Party of Serbia under Slobodan Milošević. The party went into opposition with the ousting of Milošević in 2000. Since then Dačić has invested in transforming the party. By choosing the pro-European coalition with the DS, he prevented the formation of a right wing radical coalition. Dačić favours younger party officials within his party and is the promoter of the so-called new socialism. Dačić became a member of the Serbian Parliament in 2004 and was a candidate in the presidential elections that year. He came in fifth with 3.6 percent of the votes. In 2006 Dačić was elected leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. The Socialists returned to government in 2008. Dačić has been Prime Minister of Serbia from 2012 till 2014. Before this he served as First Deputy Prime Minister in 2008 till 2012 and was the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Ivica Dačić is married and has two children.

Boris Tadić

Leader Social Democratic Party

Boris Tadić was born 15 January 1958 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade with a degree in social psychology. Tadić was a member of the anti-communist dissident movement in Yugoslavia in the 1980s and was arrested and imprisoned several times by the communist authorities.

Tadić has been a member of the Democratic Party (DS) since 1990, and served as its deputy leader, before he was elected as the party leader in 2004 and re-elected in 2006. In 2000, in the months following the overthrowing of the Milošević regime, he served as Minister of Telecommunications in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. From March 2003 to April 2004 he was the Minister of Defence of Serbia and Montenegro, instituting democratic reforms and transforming the military to be NATO compliant. Boris Tadić served as President of Serbia from 2004 to 2012, which are two terms. In 2012 he resigned to trigger an early election. Following his defeat in the 2012 presidential election and poor party ratings, he stepped down in November 2012 to take the position of the party's Honorary President. After a split with the new leadership in January 2014, Tadić left the Democratic Party and formed his own bloc: the Social Democratic Party, which currently holds 18 seats in parliament. Tadić strongly advocates close ties with the European Union and Serbia's European integration.

Boris Tadić is married and has two children.

Zoran Lutovac

Leader of the Democratic Party

Zoran Lutovac is a former diplomat who currently is the President of the Democratic party. From 2008 till 2013, Lutovac was Ambassador of Serbia to Montenegro. Lutovac graduated from the University of Belgrade Faculty of Political Sciences. After this he became a lecturer at the same faculty and worked at other universities. Lutovac joined the Democratic Party in 1996 and was chairman of the committees for ethnic minorities from 1997 till 2003 and chairman of the committee for human and minority rights from 2004 till 2008. Lutovac was a candidate for the President of the Democratic party at the party election in 2016, but lost to Dragan Šutanovac. After Šutanovac resigned in 2018, Lutovac was elected President of the Democratic Party on 2 June 2018.

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