



**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
GOVERNMENT**

**OFFICE FOR KOSOVO AND METOHIJA
and
OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF AFFAIRS
IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION WITH THE PROVISIONAL
INSTITUTIONS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT IN PRIŠTINA**

**THE BELGRADE AND PRIŠTINA DIALOGUE
PROGRESS REPORT
(Covering the period from June 15, 2020 to December 31, 2020)**

February 15, 2021

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Introduction

Previous reporting period saw the resumption of the Dialogue, which finally took place after the longest lasting break in negotiations since their launch in 2011. The sole reason for this prolonged standstill was Priština's illegal introduction of customs duties on goods coming from central Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been in effect in various forms since November 21, 2018. On April 2, 2020, these measures were only formally lifted by the government of Albin Kurti, while being in fact exacerbated through the introduction of measures of "gradual application of reciprocity". The general objective was not only to prevent the placement of Serbian goods, but also to setback any attempts to renew the Dialogue.

The illegal and restrictive measures imposed on trading by Priština were formally and factually abolished only by the government of Avdulah Hoti on June 6, 2020, which opened the way to resume the Dialogue. This happened shortly afterwards, primarily due to the initiative of France and Germany as leading EU member states, but also with the additional "boost" by the United States, which got engaged as an external actor seeking to relax relations and restore trust between the two sides.

Although Dialogue was resumed in July 2020, the initial momentum and enthusiasm about the expected rapid progress on substantive issues evaporated soon afterwards, almost during the early restarting stages of the process. To some extent, this limiting effect was a consequence of the facilitator's intent to change the hitherto negotiating methodology. The EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Priština Dialogue Miroslav Lajčak repeatedly sought to formally establish the principle that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed", which *de facto* meant that all unresolved and contentious issues should be set aside to ensure that the Dialogue succeeds. According to this principle, all contentious issues would be subsequently resolved within the broader framework of a possible so-called Comprehensive Agreement – that would also address all other issues so far not encompassed by the Dialogue.

However, given that Belgrade, unlike Priština, already honored all its obligations arising from the agreements hitherto concluded, it should come as no surprise that the Serbian side withheld its consent to this methodology, and instead continued to insist on the need to strictly comply with and follow through on all agreements already concluded within the Dialogue. Being the party that fulfilled absolutely all its obligations, and yet was denied from achieving all its interests guaranteed under the hitherto agreements, Belgrade took the position of complete political, legal and moral integrity, maintaining that any change of negotiation rules in the running course of the process - and especially one so exclusively detrimental to the party that fulfilled all obligations – is absolutely and entirely unprincipled, illegitimate, and even unethical.

As for the dynamics of talks in the renewed Dialogue, it was satisfactory in terms of sheer frequency, especially taking into account the number of preparatory meetings held on the subject matter of the different views about the negotiating methodology. Accordingly, starting from the first high-level meeting held on 16 July 2020, formally marking the start of resumption of the Dialogue, a total of 11 sessions of talks were held. During all these preparatory meetings, Serbia persisted on making the setting up of the Community of Serbian Municipalities (CSM) a top

priority on the agenda, but sadly never received a positive response from either the facilitator or the other side.

Instead, the facilitator tried to resolve the issue of the CSM by regurgitating it within a broader topic of “the rights of non-majority communities” which were to include new concessions to be made by both sides, and also additional rights for the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. According to such logic, Belgrade would be expected to assume new obligations (which, like all the previous ones, Belgrade would consistently fulfill) while the other side would again promise they would comply with their share of the new, and old, obligations. This simply was not a realistic expectation in a situation where the other side kept openly and publicly refusing to follow through on its obligations, undertaken over the course of eight years, and did so with impunity, suffering no consequences from either the EU, as a facilitator and guarantor of the agreed, or from any other entity. All this makes it very clear why Belgrade could not accept the suggested framework of negotiations which only rehashed the matter of the CSM, and instead continued to insist on following through on the obligations undertaken under the previously reached agreements, especially those concerning the CSM, as a natural precondition for possibly “raising” negotiations to a higher level of talks where relations between Belgrade and Priština would be regulated in a comprehensive way.

Despite that, the facilitator continued to ignore the fact that, since 2013, the Dialogue has been vegetated in a prolonged state of crisis precisely because of the tip-toeing around Priština’s refusal to fulfill its obligations regarding the CSM. This principled objection aside, the Serbian side appreciates the fact that during this reporting period, the EU facilitators finally accepted our long-standing request to include in the Dialogue the highly important issues of the missing persons, the internally displaced persons, economic cooperation, as well as property and financial claims.

The issues of the missing, internally displaced persons and economic cooperation were raised first. Several rounds of talks were held at the high and technical (expert) level during July and August, where opinions and views were exchanged regarding the key elements of the final solutions of these issues. This intensive activity finally resulted in harmonized (but not finally agreed) documents concerning cooperation between these two sides regarding these three topics.

Regarding the issue of **the missing persons**, the parties agreed to resolve it by allowing unimpeded access to the suspected locations of graves with the mortal remains of the missing; next, through joint cooperation with the relevant international entities on identifying mortal remains; and by providing access to relevant archives and records that could shed light on the fate of the missing. The key problem of this harmonized document is the extremely general definition of the relevant archives as “access to available domestic and international documentation”, given that such phrasing automatically includes the archives of the Republic of Serbia as an international legal entity, but not also Priština, as a territory held under temporary international administration. Therefore, this document does not include the archive of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) - which Priština claims does not exist – which is unacceptable to Belgrade. Also, the document does not lay down the setting up and start date of operation of the Joint Implementation Commission, which is why the Serbian side does not believe that the agreed document can truly resolve the issue of the missing, notably, given the dynamics of its implementation. Therefore, we

shall continue to insist that the following essential elements be included in the final solution: 1) specific determination of who can access what archives under which conditions and how, 2) determining effective operational and professional competencies and obligations for the bodies tasked with implementation, and 3) setting clear and binding deadlines for the beginning and completion of the implementation of the agreed.

As for the **internally displaced persons and refugees**, the Serbian side is not fully satisfied with this harmonized document either, given that it distributes responsibility to the “parties” instead of focusing it on Priština that is solely responsible for the fate of IDPs, and as such, has plain and clear obligations. The main part of the document contains principles that are overall formulated so as to prevent practical operationalization of the Action Plan, compiled especially for this purpose. Viewed from this angle, the EU’s approach is virtually identical to the approach Priština has been practicing over the past 20 years, using a vague theoretical basis for solving this very complex hands-on problem by means of recalling the universal guidelines that call on IDPs to return freely, while an indefinite entity would in an indefinite manner sort out everything to ensure that they are protected and logistically supported in every way in order to achieve sustainable return and normal life.

The Serbian side repeatedly stated that it did not believe in the success of such an approach – whose underlying principles are not and cannot be disputed – since it entirely overlooked the practical side of the problem of the IDP return. For example, this approach turns a blind eye to the crucial fact that the actions of the PISG in Priština institutions, as well as their failure to act, are the key reason for the absence of return, given that they themselves generate and/or tolerate physical and legal violence habitually exercised against returnees in Kosovo and Metohija and their property. Returnees are very often detained under the pretext of alleged war crimes and are effectively prevented from creating conditions for economic sustainability once they return. Due to that, Kosovo and Metohija still remains the territory with the smallest number of returnees in the world.

Recalling all the above, minimum requirements stated by the Serbian side are that any solution to this issue must be based on concrete and relevant international legal documents proscribed by the UN Security Council, the EU, Council of Europe, etc., as well as be operationalized through appropriate and detailed provincial law on return. Accordingly, Belgrade compiled a detailed and exhaustive proposal and presented it to the EU. It includes clear specifications of the mechanisms that must be guaranteed under the mentioned piece of legislation to be passed by the PISG in Priština. As a minimum, Serbia requests that the right to return of IDPs and all their descendants be permanently guaranteed, and that they be allowed complete freedom to choose whether they wish to return to the places from which they were expelled, or to other locations in Kosovo and Metohija. Serbia also requests: setting up a special mechanism within the police and judicial structures of the PISG in Priština, directly tasked with protecting the security and rights of the returnees (special legal protection, maximum penalties for offences and crimes committed against IDPs, etc.); specific and standing funds allocated from the PISG in Priština budget for the social and economic self-sustainability of returnees to the Province; and ensuring facilitated access of IDPs to all administrative and social services.

Regarding **economic cooperation**, the parties agreed to achieve as intensive mutual cooperation as possible in order to improve the standard of living of people. In general, it was agreed that any arrangement on economic cooperation should incorporate all agreements reached in the framework of the Dialogue, especially those related to free movement of people, goods, services and capital.¹ Cooperation between the two sides should be expanded to include key infrastructure and investment projects, simplifying electronic payment, and ensuring smooth incorporation and functioning of companies set up by one party within the competence of the other, in accordance with the applicable regulations. The key problem in economic cooperation is that the Standing Committee, which is envisaged as a mechanism tasked with implementing the agreement, does not have clearly defined tasks, obligations and competences, the dynamics and modus of operation, nor any set deadlines for implementing the agreed. Hence, the EU proposal can be boiled down to a mere agreement between the two sides to discuss economic cooperation within the Standing Committee once an agreement has been concluded on this issue.

After looking into these three issues, two new topics were broached at the high-level meeting held in early September – those of **financial claims and property**. Talks held from September to December 2020 showed that positions held by the sides converged in certain aspects, but significant differences still remain. Given that property is a so-called primary issue, contained within almost every other topic on the negotiation agenda, it would first be necessary to harmonize the broadest guidelines for resolving these matters.

By contrast, talks on following through on the agreements governing formation of the Community of Serbian Municipalities (CSM) have not yet been started owing to Priština's open and public refusal to participate. Accordingly, the Serbian side insisted on arguing that any failure to resolve this issue would delay implementation of the hitherto reached agreements, and also that the other party's credibility in negotiations can only be restored with completing the matter of the CSM being established. Only then can any new agreements be concluded.

As for implementing the agreements concluded in the Dialogue which already have a stable implementation dynamics and are de facto independent from the negotiation process, it is important to note that the two sides have continued to implement agreements concerning **freedom of movement and IBM**, more or less successfully, working within the context of a COVID-19 pandemic which acted as a kind of physical obstacle to the Dialogue.

A positive shift that took place during this reporting period was registered while implementing the IBM Agreement on the Common Crossing Point (CCP) Merdare, which is under the jurisdiction of the Priština side. After two years, the officials of the Serbian side operating at CCP Merdare moved from the old containers into the new administrative facility, after which UNOPS completed the remaining works on this crossing point. Regarding the implementation of the IBM agreement, there was even some progress in harmonizing veterinary certificates for pet food, and certificates for the delivery of domestic cattle for breeding and/or fattening.

¹ These are agreements in the field of freedom of movement, IBM, mutual recognition of diplomas, cadastre, customs and customs stamp.

However, the key problem plaguing implementation of the remaining agreements persists: all remaining outstanding obligations are Priština's. During this reporting period as well, Priština continued to either openly reject its obligations or only declaratively accept them, while continuing to create setbacks in every possible way. Glaring illustrations of this are the Agreement on Justice, where Priština refuses to comply with its obligation to set up a panel with the majority of Serbian judges in the so-called Special Department of the Court of Appeals in Priština, and the Bridge Agreement, still pending full implementation, with Priština refusing to pass a regulation and formalize administrative delineation of a rural cadastral municipality between Mitrovica North and South, which Priština's institutions already put to practice over three years ago, acting in line with its own provisions.

Aware of all the above, Serbian side invested significant efforts acting towards international entities and public during this reporting period, constantly bringing their attention to and exposing the concrete actions taken by Priština for the purpose of undermining credibility and sustainability of negotiations. Belgrade readily responded to each of Priština's numerous violations of agreements in the fields of energy, diplomas, cadastre, freedom of movement, police, civil protection, the main bridge in Kosovska Mitrovica, official visits and all other areas, perpetrated by Priština as a manner of obstructing the agreed.

It is a quite a separate issue that the systemic problems plaguing the Dialogue were transposed on the provincial political scene as gross anti-Serbian provocations, employed exclusively for "internal" purposes by the Priština officials. The magnitude of these provocations grew exponentially during this reporting period, owing to a pronounced political instability and preparations for the now already bygone provincial elections. Among these, particularly disconcerting are the acts of violating the special protection zone around the Visoki Dečani Monastery, numerous physical attacks on Serbs, especially on the returnees in Metohija and elsewhere, as well as circulating the "information" that the Serbian side is both violating agreements and negotiating with Priština on recognizing its false "statehood".

On the contrary, throughout the course of this renewed Dialogue, the Serbian side consistently pushed for strict complying with everything agreed in the negotiation process. This is not only because Belgrade is a reliable, credible and predictable partner, but also because we believe that the agreements made in the Dialogue are the strongest safeguard of protecting Serbs in the Province and preserving state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The main body of the report, in keeping with the already established practice, provides a detailed overview of the state of affairs in the topics encompassed by the Dialogue, segmented in the three categories of issues. The first group are the issues and processes resulting from the political segment of the Dialogue, and pertaining to the First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, and the related documents. The second group are issues stemming from the so-called technical agreements reached with the EU facilitation. The third group are issues stemming from the arrangements made with a view to addressing and overcoming other matters, by no means less significant, which objectively hinder further normalization of relations.

A) Socio-political situation in Kosovo and Metohija

Socio-political situation in Kosovo and Metohija was extremely unstable during this reporting period, and the instability finally led to another snap elections which were held on February 14, 2021.

After the almost landslide victory of Self-Determination Movement, these elections definitely entrenched the movement and its leader Albin Kurti as the absolute and indisputably strongest political force in the Province. The beginning of the “era of Self-Determination” had already been clearly noticeable during the short spell of the first government led by Albin Kurti. During this period, from January to June 2020, Kurti distinctly profiled himself to the majority of Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija, as the only social force capable and willing to decriminalize politics and tackle the systemic corruption.

The strongest impulse towards the definitive supremacy of Self-Determination was unwittingly and paradoxically generated by the politics pursued by the LDK’s Isa Mustafa, Kurti’s erstwhile coalition partner, who sought at all costs to curb the growing popularity of Kurti’s policy. In the 2020 elections, the LDK won only a vote less than Kurti’s Self-Determination, and both parties garnered the bulk of their electoral legitimacy by advocating principled politics and promising a sharp departure from the DPK, ABK, NISMA, etc. The latter parties, groups and movements alternated in power ever since the first provincial post-war elections, and had all sprung from under the wing of the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK). Most citizens in Kosovo and Metohija view them as responsible for the absurdly high levels of corruption and criminalization of the society. Also, both parties nominally advocated continuation of Haradinaj’s politics of confrontation with Belgrade and the policy of conditioning and blocking of the Dialogue and its resumption.

The elections held during this reporting period definitively completed the work of dismantling the political and party system that had taken a strong hold in Kosovo and Metohija shortly after the end of the 1999 aggression against the Republic of Serbia. The old system in Kosovo and Metohija suffered another irreversible blow after the indictments had been raised against the highest and most influential politicians in the Province – all former KLA leaders. This process took place in parallel to, and was directly linked with, the escalating socio-economic frustration and animosity felt among the people towards the “established” political parties, all of which substantially reduced its potential for interethnic conflict.

Despite all this and the fact that, during this electoral campaign, the matters of Dialogue and relations between Belgrade and Priština remained on the periphery of the political battle, it still appears that the position held on these issues would end up shaping the destiny of Kurti’s government. Although vast majority of Albanians undeniably delegated Kurti the mandate to improve their socio-economic position and deal with the systemic corruption and organized crime, another primary reason was the halo of principledness surrounding the Self-Determination – built and acquired around their clear position on making no compromise in negotiations with Belgrade.

Although the almost landslide victory of the Self-Determination finally put an end to the chronic political instability in Kosovo and Metohija, it is unlikely that the coming period would bring about stabilization of the political and social conditions. Not only will previous holders of political power deploy institutional and non-institutional resistance against Kurti's intention to further debilitate them and thus definitely dispatch them to the realm of political margins, such developments are further corroborated by the fact that Kurti's camp lacks the majority required to elect the PISG President. This issue is high on the agenda of all political entities in Priština, and Kurti will certainly endeavor to prevent emergence of a power center that could harm him in either short or long term. Despite his pre-election coalition with the current PISG in Priština Acting President, former senior LDK official who had left the LDK precisely because of the party's policy towards the Self-Determination - and although Kurti kept calling her "madam president" during the campaign and after the election, her election still requires a qualified majority which does not leave enough space to ensure completion of their probable agreement. On top of all, the ABK leader and former PISG Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj also publically expressed his interest in the position, and it is safe to assume that he did not do so before being assured, at least informally, of a solid "internal and external" support in that direction.

Consequently, it is the Self-Determination and its allies who will wield decisive influence on the entire socio-political environment in the Province in the long run, and determine the "timing" and rules of the game. Although the power of Self-Determination itself should guarantee that there will be no elections in the near future, this scenario cannot be completely ruled out given Kurti's interest in electing the provincial president, and the extremely unpredictable "Dialogue factor". In any case, it is to be expected that the new PISG Government, led by Kurti, will try to strip the hither manner of pursuing politics of all legitimacy, and will pay more attention to consolidating social cohesion. In such circumstances, the opposition's chances of wobbling the new government will be minimal and largely linked to any possibly of blaming Kurti for his "betrayal" in relation to Belgrade. It is also indicative that, over the last few months, while offeringd himself to Self-Determination as a potential president and authority figure, the ABK leader, Haradinaj's statements and provocations, aimed at Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs, "targeted" Self-Determination as by far the most dismissive among the Priština actors. Noticeably, Haradinaj unnecessarily issued an ultimatum to Serbia on several occasions, to recognize the false statehood of the so-called Kosovo within the next few years, threatening with Greater Albania should that fail to happen.

B) Security situation in Kosovo and Metohija

The security situation in Kosovo and Metohija during this reporting period continued to feature all attributes of instability, generated by a prolonged political turbulence dominating the Albanian political bloc in Kosovo and Metohija. The security situation further eroded compared to the previous reporting period, as the escalating political narratives of "traitors" and "patriots" were used in inter-Albanian confrontations, which became particularly striking against the background of indictments being raised and high-risk arrests being made of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veselji, and other former leaders of the terrorist KLA on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 1990s conflict.

By creating an environment where leading political actors use the discourse of “betrayal” and “patriotism”, the Priština establishment went so far as to openly endanger the health of people amidst the pandemic. Priština did their best to make it impossible and/or difficult to supply the Serbian health care institutions with vital medical devices and supplies – including the critical supplies of industrial oxygen used to combat the gravest cases of COVID 19. Although these actions go beyond political and human reasoning, not a single official among the leading Albanian Priština parties stood up against such actions undertaken by the PISG in Priština.

The same framework of interpretation can be used on Priština’s determination to prevent Serbian health care and other bodies and institutions from distributing anti-COVID 19 vaccines in Kosovo and Metohija, and thus save as many lives of people in the Province as possible. Instead of doing everything to help this purely humanitarian effort of the Serbian side, Priština's political actors were united in creating a perception of that being a matter of protecting the so-called “sovereignty” of the false so-called state of Kosovo.

The most overtly negative impact on the security situation on the ground continues to be further development and consolidating the resources and functions of the so-called Kosovo Security Force (KSF). The very existence of such a paramilitary formation on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija is contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the UN Security Council Resolution 1244, the UNMIK Provisional Constitutional Framework for Kosovo, and the Kumanovo Military Technical Agreement. This, coupled with the fact that back in 2018 Priština passed an illegal decision on transforming these forces into the so-called “Armed Forces of Kosovo” but failed to receive full support on it from its traditional allies, led to Priština especially stepping up its attempts to ensure “international subjectivization” for their armed forces during this reporting period. Thus, on December 31, 2020, the PISG in Priština Government passed a decision to deploy the so-called KSF on an international mission within the Iowa National Guard of the US Armed Forces. According to publicly available information, it is expected that by March 2021, the KSF forces will be dispatched to the first “peace mission”, most likely involving the logistics and maintenance units. Despite the fact that Priština is happy with non-combat units, the fact remains that their participation in peacekeeping missions will increase the level of threat that the KSF poses in Kosovo and Metohija – both in terms of experience of its members, their contacts, and certain international subjectivity to be gained by taking part within such a framework.

The threat of radical Islamic extremism declined to some extent, owing to a significant reduction in social interactions due to pandemic, testifying once again that the direct contact is the ultimate “verifier” of all other methods of spreading this dangerous and extreme ideology. Still, the already noticeable economic ramifications of the pandemic will almost certainly bolster the long-standing and robust trend of expansion of radical Islamist ideas, in the mid-run. This is a logical result of the deteriorating socio-economic circumstances in the Province, but also of the reduced distant travelling, which is expected to be long-term. Such circumstances could very easily lead to more intense operation of the radical Islamist extremists within their immediate physical-geographical environment - as opposed to the concept of “religious warring” in remote regions.

Seeing the security situation of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija against such background, the reasons for the intensified pressure and violence against them become clear. A long-standing

negative trend of projecting all intra-Albanian problems and reflecting it as social and institutional aggression exercised against the Serbs, their property, and the symbols and institutions of their religious and national affiliation, is all too familiar. This fact is sadly corroborated by a total of over 50 ethnically motivated assaults executed against Serbs from June 15 to December 31, 2020², none of which were processed and resolved. The following is a selection of such incidents:

June:

- On June 22, in the village of Donje Korminjane, municipality of Kosovska Kamenica, a Serb from the village of Ajnovce, municipality of Kosovska Kamenica, was stabbed in the chest. The injured person was transported to the hospital in Vranje, where he received medical treatment, and was then released to return home.
- In the night between June 22 and 23, in the village of Veliko Kruševo, municipality of Klina, in the yard of a house of a Serb, an auxiliary facility was broken into and an electric grain mill, an artificial fertilizer spreader and a multitude of tools were stolen. The case was reported to the Kosovo Police (KP) in Klina who compiled a field report of the incident.

July:

- On July 29, in the village of Parlovo, Novo Brdo municipality, the Orthodox Church Holy Emperor Constantine and Empress Jelena was broken into. The premises were scoured and the church icon and the money were stolen. KP officers from Gjilan compiled a field report of the incident.
- On July 4, at night, in the predominantly Serbian village of Prilužje, municipality Vučitrn, was stolen a motor cultivator with a milling machine, owned by a person of Serbian nationality. The incident was reported to the KP who compiled a field report of the incident.
- On July 26, in Klina, the graffiti “KILLER”, written in English, was sprayed on the wall of the fence of a house owned by a Serb, in his absence. The incident was reported to KP in Klina, who compiled a field report of the incident.

August:

- On August 4, four shots were fired from a vehicle moving along a local road in the village of Vidanje, municipality of Klina, in the immediate vicinity of the house of a Serb. The owner and his wife were at home at the time. There were no injuries or material damage. KP members were notified. They compiled a field report of the incident and found three 7.62 mm caliber shell casings.
- On August 20, near Brezovica, municipality of Štrpce, on the main Uroševac - Štrpce - Prizren road, several young Albanians, who were staying at the weekend-resort settlement of Tršenja in Brezovica, tried to take down the flag of Republic of Serbia from the mast located near the “Passenger” monument. The mentioned monument was erected in memory of the victims perished in the Second World War. Residents of the municipality of Štrpce reported the event to the Kosovo Police, who arrived to the scene and prevented said persons in their intention. However, these persons were not detained, only interviewed and warned.
- On August 22, in Sredska, Prizren municipality, the stone slabs and metal on the roof of the church Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God were damaged by shots fired from hunting

² According to official data available to the Office for Kosovo and Metohija.

weapons. In addition, a metal cross was pulled out of the wall and symbolically turned upside down above the altar. The parishioners reported this to the KP officers who compiled a field report of the incident.

September:

- On September 5, at the CCP Rudnica administrative crossing, a passenger vehicle was halted with 10 players, 3 coaches and the secretary of Football Club “Mačva” from Bogatić, travelling to a scheduled football match with FC “Trepča” from Žitkovac, in the Municipality of Zvečan. The team were not allowed entry into the AP of Kosovo and Metohija, and the explanation they received was that the PISG in Priština did not allow Serbian clubs to participate in any competitions in the Province.
- In the night between September 14 and 15, the church “The Shroud of the Most Holy Mother of God” in Babin Most, Obilić municipality was broken into. Unidentified persons damaged the bars on the window on the eastern wall of the church and broke into the church. The priest reported the incident to the Kosovo police.
- On September 29, in the village of Plemetina, Obilić municipality, persons of Albanian nationality tried to kidnap a Serbian child - a pupil of the 3rd grade of primary school - who was returning home from school. According to the boy's mother, two people tried to drag him into the car, but the boy managed to break away and escape to a nearby yard. The case was reported to the Kosovo Police in Obilić, who conducted an on-site investigation.

October:

- On October 7, unidentified persons tried to kidnap a fifth grade pupil of the Serbian primary school in the village of Babin Most, Obilić municipality. The attack took place near the Orthodox church. Two people got out of a vehicle, with two more remaining inside, and pulled the girl by her backpack. The backpack tore off, and the girl managed to flee into the nearby yard. The perpetrators then grabbed the backpack and walked away from the scene. The young girl suffered a shock and received medical assistance at the Health Center in Priluzhje.
- On October 3, two people secretly approached a group of seven Serb children who were standing near the school in the village of Donja Brnjica, Priština municipality. As one of the two rehearsed his gun, the children ran away, and the attacker went after them firing one shot. Both attackers escaped in an unknown direction. No one was injured. The event was recorded by security cameras. The case was reported to the Kosovo police, who carried out an on-site investigation, and found a bullet casing. After the attack on the Serbian children, there was a spontaneous gathering of the villagers fearing for their security. The KP stated that three investigators were engaged to investigate the incident. Expedient solution and some information on the perpetrators had been promised by the end of that week. In addition to the request for urgent identification of the perpetrators, the villagers also made the following requests: that the KFOR members increase their presence and engagement around school during the school year, especially in the evening; that the Kosovo Police have international police officers; that the assault be qualified as an attempted murder; that a KP officer be present in the school bus travelling runs on the route Donja Brnjica-Gracanica; and to work toward a greater cooperation with the locals.
- In the night between October 18 and 19, the “Putniče” monument located in Rakanovac, on the main Uroševac-Štrpce-Prizren road, near the town of Brezovica, municipality of Štrpce, was targeted again. Unidentified perpetrators removed the flag of the Republic of Serbia from

the mast standing next to the monument, tore it and left it next to the monument. The mast was bent.

November:

- On November 15, a billboard was erected at the entrance to the settlement of Kišnica in Gračanica, featuring the UCK (Kosovo Liberation Army) emblem and a slogan "*Liria ka emer*" ("Freedom has a name").
- On November 17, in the settlement of Kišnica in Gračanica, a group of young men of Albanian nationality from Kišnica, attacked a Serb in front of his house, pelting stones and glass bottles and shouting "UCK". The person was not injured. The incident was reported to the Kosovo Police of the PS Gračanica, who went to the scene and carried out an investigation.
- On November 18, as the above billboard was removed in the settlement of Kišnica in Gračanica, a group of young Albanian men and children from Kišnica verbally attacked a Serbian woman who was speaking to the media in Albanian and English, showing her their middle finger. The event was reported to the officers of KP Gračanica, who compiled a field report of the incident.
- On November 20, in Gračanica, municipality of Priština, unidentified Albanians hurled a Molotov cocktail at the monument of Miloš Obilić, near the Gračanica Monastery, and tried to take down the flag of Republic Serbia from the mast standing next to the monument but were prevented from doing so by the locals who were nearby.
- On November 25, in the village of Drenovac, municipality of Klina, several Albanian youths pelted stones at a Serbian returnee. The victim was in his yard when these persons passed by, insulting him and pelting stones. The incident was reported to the Kosovo police in Klina.

December:

- On December 22, in the village of Binac, municipality of Vitina (an ethnically mixed village), about 10 young Albanians pelted stones at the elementary school "Mladen Marković". This is a school outpost in the village of Binac, attended by about 10 Serbian pupils. There is also a primary school building attended by Albanian pupils but it was not the target of the attack. Windows and the front door of the school were broken in the stoning, and a significant material damage was incurred. The incident was reported to the KP who carried out an on-site investigation.
- On December 24, in the village of Mogila, municipality of Vitina (an ethnically mixed village), Albanian persons set fire on the auxiliary facilities owned by a Serb. There was no one in those facilities at the time. The fire brigade localized the fire. Significant material damage was caused.

C) Obligations arising from the First Agreement

1. Community of Serbian Municipalities

During this reporting period, still no progress was made on implementing the agreements governing the establishment of the Community of Serbian Municipalities (CSM), despite the fact that this is the central matter of the First Agreement governing Normalization of Relations, that over **2,800 days** have passed since the agreement was concluded, and that the Community is vital to the survival of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija. Priština not only failed to comply with its commitments, but its political actors continued to openly practice disabling the establishment of the CSM and linking this matter to various daily political affairs - in stark contrast to the obligations Priština assumed under the agreements governing this matter.

Although Belgrade repeatedly requested that the EU facilitators act decisively and ensure rapid setting up of the CSM, to date not even a single meeting between the respective CSM implementation committees of the parties was organized, as envisaged in the Implementation Plan, allowing for the CSM Draft Statute to be presented.³ For reference, back on August 9, 2018, Management Team for the Establishment of the CSM (MT)⁴ compiled the Draft Statute, and officially notified the EU facilitators thereof. Due to the failure to convene a meeting of the implementation committees, no conditions have been created to have a follow-up thematic session of the high level Dialogue and present the Draft Statute there.

Still, some hope that a breakthrough in this area could yet take place appeared after the high-level meeting held within the Dialogue on 7 September 2020. There it was agreed that the resumed Dialogue would focus on establishing the CSM, i.e. that a special meeting would be organized at which the MT would present the Draft CSM Statute to the parties. Sadly, that did not happen. Priština again rejected any discussion of the topic and continued to publicly refuse to comply with this and a multitude of other their obligations arising from the Dialogue.

Despite such developments, the MT continued their work in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Scope and Mandate of the Management Team for the Establishment of the CSM, seeking to ensure all the necessary preconditions for successful formation of the CSM. Serbian side formally initiated the procedure of replacing two members of the MT and, in keeping with the already established practice, submitted its list of proposed candidates to the EU facilitators. After that, Priština elected two new members of the MT from this list: Danijela Vujičić (who was also appointed the MT Coordinator) and Jelena Belović.⁵

³ The MT compiled the Draft CSM Statute in full accordance with the agreements reached. To that purpose, members of the MT held a series of meetings with relevant representatives of administrative structures from Kosovo and Metohija. Accordingly, meetings were held with mayors and presidents of Serbian majority municipal assemblies, representatives of Serbs in the PISG in Pristina (Minister of Local Government Administration and Minister for Communities and Returns), local lawyers, deans and experts from the University of Pristina. with temporary headquarters in Kosovska Mitrovica (UPKM), professionals in the field of law, economy, health, social protection, education, culture, sports, spatial planning, cadastre services, representatives of the OSCE Mission to Pristina, as well as other relevant institutions from Kosovo and Metohija.

⁴ The MT started working in early April 2018, when it received mandate from the EU.

⁵ The remaining two members of the Management Team are Igor Kalamar and Dejan Radojković, who were appointed in 2013.

Mindful of the overall situation and the blockade that Priština enforces on this issue, Belgrade will continue to insist with the EU facilitators, as a priority, that a meeting be organized as soon as possible, at which the MT will present the Draft CSM Statute to the two-party implementation committees, and afterwards to the high level Dialogue. Despite the unacceptable, almost eight-year long procrastination with setting up the CSM, Belgrade does not intend to abandon the requirement that Priština consistently fulfill all its obligations from the First Agreement and all other agreements that plainly and precisely govern this issue.

Since Priština publicly alleges that it is unable to set up the CSM in line with the undertaken obligations because its normative framework prevents this, Belgrade will continue to insist that the EU and Priština promptly find a solution to adjust the provincial legal framework. This request is fully in line with the agreement concluded in the Dialogue, and constitutes an unequivocal obligation of Priština prescribed by Point 1 of the Implementation Plan, which was harmonized and formulated exclusively so that the CSM can be fully incorporated into the PISG in Priština legal system - as provided in the provisions of the First Agreement, the Scope and Mandate of the Management Team, the Implementation Plan and the General Principles. Any action contrary to the texts of these agreements is and will remain absolutely unacceptable for the Serbian side, just as any revision of the harmonized provisions of the General Principles is unacceptable and legally irrelevant – regardless of whether Priština tries to do so through the decisions of its so-called the Constitutional Court of Kosovo or any other entity.

The Serbian side holds that following through on the agreement on the CSM is, by its nature, of premium and critical importance for making any further progress in the entire negotiation process. In fact, it is undeniable that the success in implementing this central issue greatly determines the feasibility of resolving a multitude of other issues that are clearly laid down in the agreements hitherto concluded within the Dialogue. Also, the formation of the CSM is necessary in order to enable a legally valid and coherent formulation and implementation of any possible agreements that have either been recently broached, or are yet to be opened in the future, such as the issues of property, economic development, education, urban and rural planning, etc. Accordingly, during this reporting period, Belgrade continued to avail itself of every opportunity to emphasize to the EU facilitators and other relevant international entities the outstanding importance of establishing the CSM. A special accent was placed on pointing out the practical impossibility of trying to “move on” in the negotiations before this issue, formally settled under the agreements signed almost eight years ago, was actually resolved.

2. Police

No significant changes occurred during the reporting period in implementing the Police Agreement. Sadly, Priština continued to violate Point 7 of the First Agreement, which prescribes the obligation to integrate all former members of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia. The Priština side has not fulfilled the obligation to integrate the remaining 72 former members of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia (34 firefighters, 15 members of the Food and Accommodation Directorate, as well as 23 police officers who allegedly failed security checks).

Priština does not dispute the obligation to integrate 34 former firefighters, and yet has not taken any concrete steps on this issue. By contrast, it openly and formally refuses to integrate 23 former police officers, as well as 15 members of the Food Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of Serbia. Despite Belgrade's repeated demands for the EU facilitator to provide insight into the reasons why these police officers allegedly failed their security checks, the Serbian side has not received this information to date. As for integrating 15 members of the Food and Accommodation Directorate, Priština refuses their integration claiming that the PISG job systematization contains no job descriptions that would enable employment of these persons. Although this claim of Priština might be fundamentally true, Point 7 of the First Agreement does not specify the obligation to integrate only those former members of the MoI of the Republic of Serbia whose jobs have an equivalent in the systematization of provincial police forces, but quite the opposite – it applies to all former staff of the MoI of the Republic of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija.

Also, the reporting period did not bring any changes concerning Priština's violation of Point 9 of the First Agreement, stipulating that a special police directorate will be in charge of police affairs on the territory of four Serbian majority municipalities in the north of Kosovo and Metohija, and that it would be headed by a Kosmet Serb. Pursuant to this point of the First Agreement, the commander of the KP Regional Directorate North (RDN) is to be appointed by the provincial Ministry of Interior, but the PISG Minister is to choose from a list of candidates submitted by the mayors of four majority Serbian municipalities in the north of Kosovo and Metohija on behalf of the CSM. Remembering this, it becomes clear that Priština has been operationally preventing implementation of Point 9 by refusing to set up the CSM. As a result of Priština's chronic violation of the agreements on the CSM and the police, the person heading the RDN still holds the status of the acting commander.

Priština also violates Point 9 of the Agreement by engaging its special police units in periodic incursions, or making threats with incursions, into the north of Kosovo and Metohija - without first informing the RDN Commander. By such Priština's actions, the RDN is de facto placed in a subordinate position in relation to the rest of the regional KP commanders, despite the fact that point 9 of the First Agreement distinctly stipulates that the RDN will cooperate with other regional KP commanders and thus be on an equal footing within the KP. As it is, the RDN Commander is prevented from exercising his full competence within the KP command structure, i.e. he is precluded from exercising the right guaranteed by the Agreement to be exclusively competent for operational management of police affairs in the north of Kosovo and Metohija. In practice, this means that only the RDN Commander has the right to request engagement of additional police units from other KP directorates, in accordance with his assessment of the policing needs in the territory under his responsibility, when and if necessary.

The next manner of violating Point 9 of the Agreement is Priština's failure to observe the principle that ethnic composition of the police in the north must reflect ethnic structure of population of the area. Thus, although Serbs make up over 95% of the population of this part of the Province, Priština is constantly deploying police units in the north of Kosovo and Metohija, which operate outside the RDN chain of command and are almost exclusively composed of Albanians who do not even live in this part of the Province.

Priština also regularly violates the Agreement by announcing and imposing unilateral human resources decisions – i.e. making decisions on replacements and appointments within the RDN, without first consulting the competent regional commander. Although this practice has become less frequent in the past period, it is still extremely harmful given the small size of the RDN command structure. This is evidenced by the fact that in the past few years, Priština removed three people from managerial positions and made four new appointments to the relatively small RDN command structure, without consulting the regional commander.

It is obvious that Priština is continuously resorting to all the above-described actions in order to weaken the position of the RDN within the KP structure by directly undermining the autonomy of RDN's operation. However, it is beyond doubt that the ultimate objective behind Priština's repeated and various violations of the Police Agreement is in fact formal abolition of the RDN. Therefore, during this reporting period, the Serbian side used every opportunity to point out to the EU facilitators that such blatant and often provocative violation of the Agreement directly violates the security of people in the north of the province, and indirectly in other parts of Kosovo and Metohija as well, and even in the entire region.

3. Judiciary

During this reporting period, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly slowed down the work of judicial institutions in Kosovo and Metohija, and as a result, only the necessary and urgent court actions were taken. Still, the Serbian side continued to actively work on resolving current outstanding problems in the field of justice, although the integration of judges, prosecutors and members of the administrative staff into the provincial judicial structures was completed on October 24, 2017.

The Serbian side continued to insist that Priština ensure continuity and announce vacancies to fill in the job titles of judges, prosecutors, administrative staff and prosecutorial interns, as well as for Serbian lay judges, court experts and bailiffs (the Agreement on Justice specifies the number of posts belonging to Serbs). The same applies to the need to appoint the acting supervisory judges in the court units in Štrpce and Novo Brdo.

In addition, Belgrade insisted on appointing notaries from among the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, given that only one Serbian notary has been appointed so far, although the PISG in Priština conducted job interviews with eight candidates back in August 2019.

During this reporting period, the Serbian side continued to insist that the EU facilitators ensure that Priština address the obvious disproportion between the numbers of Serbian and Albanian support staff in Basic Prosecutor's Office in Mitrovica, caused by Priština's stepped up hiring of Albanians.

At the same time, Belgrade sought to resolve the problem of a lack of integrated Serbian prosecutors in the prosecutorial offices south of the Ibar. This problem appeared when two Serbian prosecutors were transferred from primary prosecutors' offices south of the Ibar into the Mitrovica Basic Prosecutor's Office. Such behavior by Priština is not a good practice since it generates the

air of legal uncertainty among the Serbian population and calls into question the objectivity and professionalism of the Albanian prosecutors acting in court cases involving Serbs as parties.

During the reporting period, the Serbian side continued to insist with the EU facilitators that allocation of cases to prosecutors be carried out in consistent accordance with Article 7 of the Agreement on Justice, i.e. that the integrated Serbian prosecutors be assigned only cases submitted in Serbian language and involving proceedings conducted in the Serbian language.

Meanwhile, despite all Belgrade's attempts to resolve the problem that arose from Priština's refusal to consistently apply Article 10 of the First Agreement, there has been a further deepening of that problem. Priština continued to limit the second-instance jurisdiction of the Mitrovica Appellate Department of the Court of Appeals only to cases coming from the first-instance courts in four Serb-majority municipalities in the north of Kosovo and Metohija.⁶ At the same time, the panel of the Court of Appeals in Priština, composed exclusively of Albanian judges, i.e. judges who are not from the Mitrovica Appellate Department of the Court of Appeals, continued to adjudicate in cases coming from majority Serbian municipalities south of the Ibar. In this way, Priština continues to degrade the special and clearly regulated position of the Mitrovica Appellate Department within the provincial legislative and judicial system.

Priština persisted with the already established malpractice of violating Point 10 of the First Agreement by failing to comply with the provisions stipulating ethnic composition of the panels adjudicating in cases falling under the jurisdiction of the Special Department of the Court of Appeals in Priština. Namely, Priština is yet to comply with the provision of the Agreement that the acting panel in cases from majority Serbian municipalities must be composed of a majority of Serb judges coming from the Mitrovica Appellate Department. Contrary to this provision, the President of the Court of Appeals acted at his own discretion and formed panels with exclusively Albanian judges, or else with only one Serbian judge, arguing that there were not enough Serb judges to form a panel in keeping with point 10 of the Agreement. In order to partially resolve this problem, at the suggestion of the EU and foreign diplomats, the so-called the Kosovo Judicial Council conducted an internal competition for the appointment of judges of the said Special Department and a Serbian judge was appointed. However, the problem arising from the actions of the President of the Court of Appeals, who run contrary to the provisions prescribed by Point 10 of the Agreement, remains.

In addition to resolving the previously highlighted problems, during the reporting period, the Serbian side tried to work out clearly determined decision-making procedures in cases of conflicts between judgments and decisions of Serbian courts that operate outside the so-called Priština legislative framework and the so-called Priština courts. However, Priština is yet to adopt an adequate document on this matter, determining the procedure recognizing and enforcing decisions passed by the Serbian courts on the territory of the Province, in accordance with the Validity Appeal, the document reached in the Dialogue back in July 2013.

In the coming period, Belgrade expects the EU, as a guarantor of the implementation of this Agreement, to ensure that Priština resolves all these problems. Belgrade will not accept unilateral

⁶ Article 10 of the Agreement stipulates that the Department of the Court of Appeals based in Mitrovica is exclusively competent to deal with cases coming from all municipalities with a majority Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija.

actions and will continue to insist that all solutions strictly uphold the provisions contained in the agreements reached in the Dialogue. The reason is obvious and pertains to the fact that the Agreement on Justice can only be fulfilled in its entirety, and only thus can the establishment of an efficient and operational judiciary in Kosovo and Metohija be enabled.

4. Energy industry

Several activities related to the implementation of the Energy Arrangement of 8 September 2013 (Arrangement) and Conclusions of the EU Facilitators on Implementing the Energy Arrangement of 25 August 2015 (Conclusions) took place during this reporting period.

We recall that the Arrangement and Conclusions stipulate that the Serbian transmission system operator (PE Electric Network of Serbia – EMS) support the efforts of the so-called Kosovo Transmission System and Market Operator (KOSTT) to become a separate control area and a member of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E). On their part, Priština undertook the obligation to enable the establishment of two Serbian energy companies in Kosovo and Metohija: the “EPS Trade”, handling electricity trade, and the “Elektrosever”, handling the supply and distribution services (billing, maintenance and physically connecting new consumers).

The Serbian side fulfilled all its obligations arising from the 2015 Arrangement by signing several technical agreements and finally the Connection Agreement (CA)⁷ with KOSTT, which resulted in the KOSTT becoming a separate control area, and in the future also possibly gaining membership status within the ENTSO-E. By contrast, Priština persistently defaulted on its obligations to enable incorporation of two Serbian energy companies in the north of Kosovo and Metohija.

In order to circumvent the obligations stipulated under Article 16.1.b⁸ of the CA, which directly links incorporation, licensing and start of operation of one of the Serbian energy company, “Elektrosever”, with the possibility of KOSTT becoming a separate control area, Priština, bolstered by the strong support from the EU and the Energy Community, initiated various activities since June 2016, which were supposed to exert a kind of pressure to move the matter of resolving the energy industry issues outside the framework of the Dialogue.⁹

The Serbian side managed to repeatedly thwart these attempts. However, in 2019 it became almost certain that the then CA effective within the ENTSO-E would be replaced by a new CA

⁷ The Connection Agreement was signed between the members of ENTSO-E, including EMS on the one hand, and KOSTT on the other side.

⁸ Article 16.1.b stipulates the CA will enter into force when the supply license to “Elektrosever” is issued and the company becomes operational.

⁹ Priština first tried to initiate the procedure of amending Article 16.1.b of the CA, by trying to get a new CA signed, thus making the KOSTT a separate control area, before the Serbian energy company in the north of Kosovo and Metohija was granted the supply license and became operational. That failing, Priština then tried to link the issue of obtaining the status of a separate control area to the commissioning of the Tirana 2-Kosovo B transmission line (400kV) between Kosovo and Metohija and Albania, as well as by causing intentional deviations and making unauthorized withdrawals of electricity from within the Continental Europe power system, which resulted in multimillion damage in euros for EMS and the Republic of Serbia and endangered energy stability of the entire region.

which needed to be harmonized with the so-called SAFA Agreement (Synchronous Area Framework Agreement)¹⁰ – and that the new CA would no longer contain the conditional clause pertaining to the licensing and operation of the Serbian electricity supply company “Elektrosever”.

In line with these changes within ENTSO-E, the new CA entered into force on 29 October 2020, after which KOSTT began functioning as a separate control area on 14 December 2020. Thus, Priština ended up securing all its interests arising from the energy agreements made within the Dialogue, but without fulfilling their share of the obligations undertaken under the same agreements.

As for Priština’s obligation to register and license two Serbian energy companies, the PISG in Priština finally retroactively registered “Elektrosever” on November 7, 2018. Their objective at that point was to ensure changes in the CA signed within the ENTSO-E.¹¹

Under a political arrangement made between the representatives of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija and officials of the then new PISG in Priština Government in early June 2020, Priština was to register and license two Serbian energy companies,¹² and the Serbian side was to file documentation to the Kosovo Business Registration Agency (KBRA) again. Accordingly, on December 17, 2020, the Serbian side filed a request to register company “EPS Trade” and a request to supplement registration of the company “Elektrosever” with distribution as a business activity.

However, the KARB again refused to register the “EPS Trade” and circulated this information in letter dated December 23, 2020. The cited reasons for refusal were that the request for registration was “incomplete”, that the name of the company and the business activity code “are not in accordance with the Brussels Agreement”, that the decision on incorporating the “EPS Trade” is missing, and that the company's statute is not based on the so-called Priština law on business companies. Representatives of the PE EPS filed an appeal against the mentioned decision of KARB. As for the request to supplement the “Elektrosever” registration, also submitted to KARB, the Serbian side is yet to receive a response.

At the same time, on December 28, 2020, director of the “Elektrosever” filed a request to the so-called Priština Energy Regulator (ERO) applying for two licenses - one for the supply, and the other for the distribution services. Regarding the supply license, the ERO informed the director of

¹⁰ The SAFA agreement regulates the operation of the Continental Europe synchronous area. By signing this agreement, EMS remained in charge of managing the entire control area of the Republic of Serbia (including the area of AP Kosovo and Metohija), until the entry into force of CA.

¹¹ The company was registered after an application for registration submitted by the Serbian side on April 26, 2017, to which Pristina responded negatively on May 2, 2017. Specifically, once the Energy Arrangement was reached, the representatives of PE Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS) submitted to the competent provincial institutions the documentation for the registration of the companies “EPS Trgovina” and “Elektrosever” four times, but each time Pristina refused, citing numerous objections of a political nature, such as terminology used in company statutes and registration papers. After the representatives of EPS submitted the documentation for the registration of companies for the fourth time on April 26, 2017, on May 2, 2017, KARB again refused to register two energy companies in the form of a circular letter, stating the same reasons regarding terminology.

¹² Under this agreement, Pristina undertook to establish the energy companies (“Elektrosever” and “EPS Trade”) in the coming period and that these companies, after becoming operational, will be granted licenses to perform wholesale, retail (supply) and distribution in the north of Kosovo and Metohija, which would resolve the disputes in terms of distribution services.

the company “Elektrosever” that they would take the submitted request under consideration and provide their response within the set deadline.¹³ At the same time, the KARB pointed out that the distribution license would not be considered at all, since ERO had already awarded this license for the entire territory of Kosovo and Metohija, on behalf of the PISG in Priština.¹⁴

Mindful of all the above, the Serbian side repeatedly urged the EU facilitators to ensure that all provisions of the Arrangement and Conclusions of the EU facilitators are implemented, primarily those related to the registration, establishment and licensing of the Serbian energy companies, and for those business activities already agreed within the Dialogue. This is a key condition for maintaining the security of electricity supply in the north of Kosovo and Metohija after KOSTT became a separate control area. Belgrade will resolutely continue to insist on it going forward.

5. Telecommunications

Phase one of Belgrade and Priština negotiations in the field of telecommunications ended with the establishment of the company “mts d.o.o”, to which all property was transferred and which was granted licenses for fixed and mobile telephony, and 30 locations for base stations.

Next, as of July 26, 2019, the company “mts d.o.o” put into operation all 30 base stations agreed by the telecoms Arrangement and Conclusions.¹⁵ This completed the process of setting up base stations and at the same time raised the quality of the mobile telecommunications network in Kosovo and Metohija.

Seeking to establish a functional and successful telecommunications company, as well as improve quality of telecommunications services for the customers in Kosovo and Metohija, the “mts d.o.o” continued to work on developing telecommunications infrastructure on the ground, alongside implementing their investment projects.¹⁶

Even though most of the telecoms agreements have been implemented, there are still some outstanding issues that should be resolved in accordance with the Action Plan. These are primarily harmonization of the mobile telephony spectrum and television signal, and normalization of postal services, as well as the issue of entering the accurate and complete data on the ownership of the company “mts d.o.o” in the PISG in Priština cadastre.

In addition, the following important problems, which the Serbian side has repeatedly pointed out to the EU facilitators, have not been resolved during this reporting period:

¹³ The procedure entails that the ERO Commission, after analyzing the application, forwards its assessment to the ERO Board, which makes the final decision on issuing the license. The decision making deadline is 60 days from the day when the application is considered complete. However, until new members of the Board are elected, a final decision on licensing cannot be expected.

¹⁴ In accordance with the Pristina regulations, there can be only one electricity distributor for the entire territory of Kosovo and Metohija, which is contrary to European standards. The mentioned license was issued for 30 years to the company “KEDS”, which belongs to the Turkish Consortium *Limak-Calik*.

¹⁵ After 2G, 3G and 4G base stations were put into operation at the location in the village of Šilovo (south of the Ibar).

¹⁶ A large number of procurements pertaining to the modernization of business and the establishment of modern business processes have been completed recently.

The first is the matter of interconnection between the company “Telekom Srbija” and Priština’s “PTK”,¹⁷ where a big problem is the fact that the prices for providing the call termination¹⁸ services are high for people, since they are calculated as international prices. We underscore that such Priština’s actions are not in line with the spirit of the Action Plan, whose overall objective was to reduce the prices of services.

The second problem is allocation of so-called “IIN code” to Priština, which was never discussed in the Dialogue. Still, Priština sent a request to the ITU, applying for “IIN code” within the area code +383 for the geographical area of Kosovo and Metohija. As the assignment of the “IIN code” requires the consent of Belgrade, and given that no arrangements on it were made within the EU-facilitated Dialogue, the Serbian side holds that Priština must fulfill all obligations from already reached agreements before any possible talks on this topic.

The third problem is Priština's insistence that the PISG in Priština judicial bodies in the north of Kosovo and Metohija must be provided with mobile, fixed telephony and Internet services exclusively through the Priština operator “Vala”, according to the model of providing services to police stations in the north of Kosovo and Metohija. In this way, Priština wants to usher its operator in the north of Kosovo and Metohija (where “mts d.o.o” operates almost exclusively) and make it the exclusive provider of services to provisional institutions across the province. In our communication with EU facilitators, the Serbian side distinctly rejected such a possibility and emphasized that the solution can be found only by means of a consistent implementation of the Action Plan on Telecommunications, i.e. by concluding an agreement on interconnection between operators.

During this reporting period, delays that had occasionally occurred in implementing the Agreement on Reducing Roaming Prices among the Western Balkan Six partners were overcome. The trend of reducing roaming prices continued allowing significant progress to be made in implementation.

Going forward, issues involved in implementing second phase of telecoms negotiations are expected to be resolved. This includes harmonizing spectra for mobile telephony and television signal, normalizing postal services, but also sorting out other problems pointed to EU facilitators by the Serbian side.

6. European integration

During this reporting period, the European Union decided not to open any new chapters in the Republic of Serbia’s accession negotiations, despite Belgrade’s unbroken commitment and high level of resolve demonstrated in the process of normalizing relations with Priština, while also complying with the transitional benchmarks contained in Chapter 35.

¹⁷ Interconnection is a establishing a physical link between both the fixed and mobile telephony operators at the request of the user, during a call.

¹⁸ Termination is a service provided by operators charging per minute of conversation from other operators (fixed and mobile telephony) to establish a call connection with their customers.

So far, the Republic of Serbia has opened 18 out of a total of 35 chapters, with two chapters being temporarily closed. Satisfactory progress has been made so far in meeting the benchmarks within all chapters opened in Serbia's EU accession negotiations.

Going forward, the Republic of Serbia expects the European Commission's response to the negotiating positions presented for the following four chapters: 1) Chapter 2 - Free movement of workers, 2) Chapter 14 - Transport policy, 3) Chapter 21 - Trans-European networks, and 4) Chapter 27 - Environment and climate change. It is reasonable to expect the opening of new chapters in the accession negotiations.

Furthermore, the EU Council approved screening of, and invited the Republic of Serbia to present our negotiating positions on the following chapters: 1) Chapter 10 - Information society and media, and 2) Chapter 28 - Consumer and health protection.

The accession negotiations chapters for which the European Commission submitted screening results and established benchmarks are as follows: a) Chapter 1 - Free movement of goods, b) Chapter 8 - Competition policy, c) Chapter 11 - Agriculture and rural development, d) Chapter 12 - Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, d) Chapter 15 - Energy, f) Chapter 16 - Taxation, e) Chapter 19 - Social policy and employment, h) Chapter 22 - Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments. Screening reports are yet to be adopted for the following chapters: a) Chapter 31 - Foreign, defense and security policy, and b) Chapter 34 - Institutions.

The Republic of Serbia will continue to actively engage in the EU accession negotiations, especially on Chapter 35 - Other Issues, which primarily monitors progress in implementing the agreements concluded in the Dialogue, but also the overall process of normalizing relations between Belgrade and Priština. Formal significance of this chapter is overshadowed by the fact that the existence of this chapter clearly proves that the Dialogue directly and predominantly affects the entire process of Serbia's European integration. This is a grave structural flaw, both in legal and in political terms, given that Priština exploits, with absolute impunity, the fact that its obstructions and unilateral acts de facto impede Serbia's European integration.

D) Obligations stemming from technical agreements

1. Cadastre

After a several-year-long stalemate, the matter of implementing the 2011 Cadastre Agreement was raised again within the renewed Dialogue in the second half of 2020.

The matter of cadastre was since discussed within talks on property, with Priština and the EU continuing to argue that all bodies provided for in the agreement, with the exception of the Tripartite Implementation Group, must function in the so-called Kosovo's legal system. Accordingly, Priština insists that the Cadastre Agreement must be implemented through the so-called Law on the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification of Agency (KPCVA), which was unilaterally drafted, with the EU's help, in 2016, and was then adopted despite stark opposition from Belgrade and the "Srpska Lista", and without any regard for its sharp contradiction with the Agreement on Cadastre itself.

Should this unilateral and agreement-infringing solution be put to practice, the decision making on the property rights of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church would paradoxically be entrusted to the bodies not provided for in the Agreement and not comprising any representatives of Serbs – whose property is being decided on. This would enable full “legalization” of the seized and usurped private property of the Serbs and Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and Metohija, which the Republic of Serbia cannot and will not accept. Although the Serbian side has repeatedly pointed to the EU representatives that this Priština “law” is unacceptable in its entirety, since it runs completely contrary to the agreement, nothing has been done to revoke it.

The EU remained passive even when Naser Shala, the former commander of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), was appointed president of the so-called KPCVA Secretariat in March 2019. Priština proceeded with the appointment, despite the strong protest which came from the “diplomatic missions” in Priština against Shala’s appointment, citing his lack of adequate qualifications to perform said function. After Shala’s appointment as the KPCVA President, heads of the diplomatic missions of Great Britain and the USA in Kosovo and Metohija even withdrew from the so-called KPCVA Board, another clear indicator that this action of Priština was widely recognized as a means of securing personal and political gain against the property rights and interests of the people of Kosovo and Metohija.

Precisely because of situations like that one, the Serbian side has been resolutely demanding since June 2016 that Priština must first annul all acts and decisions arising from the aforementioned so-called law on KPCVA before the Cadastre Agreement can be consistently implemented, along with all legal actions and consequences arising from its implementation. Only after that will it be objectively possible to create appropriate circumstances for the consistent implementation of the Agreement, i.e. explicitly in the manner and in accordance with the provisions stipulated therein.

Therefore, conditions stipulated under the Agreement, compelling the Serbian side to hand over to the EU Special Representative in Priština the scanned original cadastral documentation for the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, have still not been fulfilled. This will be possible only when all three parties reach an agreement that would enable consistent and full implementation of the agreement reached nearly a decade ago.

In order to consistently implement this agreement, Belgrade presented its detailed proposal at the meeting held on September 17, 2020. The proposal outlined the structure and principles for resolving the issue of private property, as well as detailed methodology and manner of operation, establishment and functioning, structure and the seats of all the bodies provided for in the agreement. The Serbian side believes that a responsible approach to resolving these issues, one which ensures adequate participation of Serbs in the operation of the Technical Agency, Tripartite Implementation Group and the Commission, will ultimately enable consistent implementation of the Cadastre Agreement and thus comprehensively address this matter that is of crucial importance for the Serbs and the Republic of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija.

2. Registry books

No progress was made in resolving the problems in implementing the Agreement on Registry Books during the reporting period. Contrary to this Agreement, Priština still refuses to hand over to the competent services of the Municipality of Mitrovica North the registry books (or their copies) for Mitrovica North, which contain personal data of people from the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica. As a result, these persons, mostly Serbs, are unable to obtain personal documents from the competent registry office in the northern part of Mitrovica and are forced to continue to obtain them in the southern part of the city.

Such a situation makes the work difficult for 39 former administrative workers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, who, after their integration, are working on issuing personal documents, which should also include documents from the registry office in four municipalities in the north of Kosovo and Metohija.

Belgrade repeatedly pointed to the EU facilitators that successful implementation of the Agreement cannot be achieved solely by the Serbian side having good will to fulfill its share of obligations. Priština must do the same, must refrain from discriminating against citizens of Mitrovica North, and instead enable them to exercise their rights in the competent registry offices of their municipalities.

3. Customs stamp

The Serbian side fully implements the Agreement on the Customs Stamp. The solutions from this Agreement are used in all documents related to the trade of goods (phytosanitary certificate, veterinary certificates, pharmaceutical certificate, etc.) across the administrative line.

After the measures of so-called “gradual application of reciprocity”, which completely prevented the entry of products from central Serbia into Kosovo and Metohija, were abolished on June 6, 2020, the PISG in Priština (for the first time in three years) used the CEFTA mechanism in early July 2020, to request an explanation from the Serbian side regarding a shipment of ground spicy red pepper, which was not allowed to enter central Serbia from the direction of Kosovo and Metohija through the administrative crossing in Presevo. At the same time, Priština misinformed EU facilitators and US representatives in Kosovo and Metohija that Belgrade violated the agreement on the harmonized phytosanitary certificate. In fact, the certificate that accompanied said shipment was issued for re-export by the Priština Food and Veterinary Agency, and this specific certificate was never agreed between the two sides within the Dialogue.

4. University diplomas

During this reporting period, Priština continued to disregard the provisions of the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas from 2011, and of the Conclusions and Operational Conclusions from 2016.

Specifically, Priština refuses to recognize diplomas issued by accredited universities in the Republic of Serbia, and has not accepted the list of accredited universities operating within the higher education system of the Republic of Serbia. Moreover, the Priština institutions, even eight

years after reaching the Agreement, have not recognized any diplomas earned from the universities accredited in the system of the Republic of Serbia.

This situation is further aggravated by the fact that, due to the expiration of the contract signed between the EU and the NGO SPARK, the EU implementing partner for certification and administration, as well as due to lack of funds, the obligations defined by the Operational Conclusions regarding recognition of pre-university and university diplomas, can no longer be upheld. Thus, implementation of the agreement on the recognition of diplomas is completely blocked at all levels, and can only be resolved within the EU-facilitated Dialogue.

Furthermore, during this reporting period, Priština continued to try to shift the matter of diploma recognition from the Dialogue into the area of regional initiatives, primarily the Regional Cooperation Council. The Serbian side repeatedly protested to EU facilitators about this.

At the same time, Priština continued to come up with ways to obtain membership in GEANT – the international organization bringing together national academic networks and working towards providing support and services in the fields of education and research development – outside an agreement with Belgrade. Although it has not yet been able to obtain the status of a member in this organization, it has been accepted as an associate, despite the strong arguments that the Serbian side distributed to all members of the GEANT General Assembly.

Going forward, the Serbian side will insist that the European Union select implementation partners and provide funds for their work, in order to create technical conditions for the continuation of the process of recognition of diplomas in accordance with the Agreement. Also, Belgrade expects the EU facilitators to exert pressure on Priština to unblock the implementation of all agreements reached within the Dialogue and finally recognize the diplomas of all universities accredited in the education system of the Republic of Serbia.

5. Freedom of movement

The regime of freedom of movement is based on the Agreement on Freedom of Movement from 2011, the Final Operational Conclusions of the Implementation Group on Freedom of Movement of 2011 (“Final Operational Conclusions”), the Agreements on finalizing the implementation of the Agreement on Freedom of Movement of 14 September 2016 (“Arrangements”) and the Conclusions of 19 October 2016, which followed after said agreements.

Accordingly, the regime of freedom of movement is applied across the administrative line at six common crossing points (CCP): CCP Tabalije / Brnjak, CCP Depce / Mučibaba, CCP Mutivode / Mutivode, CCP Merdare / Merdare, CCP Končulj / Bela Zemlja and CCP Rudnica / Jarinje.¹⁹

¹⁹ In addition to the common crossing points, the regime of freedom of movement is applied at six border crossings: Batrovci-Bajakovo and Šid-Tovarnik (towards the Republic of Croatia), Horgoš-Reske and Kelebija-Tompa (towards Hungary), Gradina-Kalotina (towards the Republic of Bulgaria), Preševo-Tabanovce (towards the Republic of North Macedonia), as well as at Nikola Tesla Airport in Belgrade and Constantine the Great Airport in Nis.

Although Belgrade fulfilled its share of the obligations arising from the Agreement and Conclusions by mid-November 2016, implementation of the reached solutions is lagging behind due to Priština's unwillingness to comply with their undertaken obligations within the agreed deadlines. As a result, the application of the "sticker"²⁰ regime and the re-registration of all vehicles to the registration plates issued by the PISG in Priština have been delayed.

An additional problem in that sense was generated by the decision of the PISG in Priština from September 17, 2020, which annulled the Administrative Instruction on Vehicle Registration with Status-Neutral KS License Plates from 2018. Pursuant said instruction, a notification was circulated that it was no longer possible to register vehicles to the neutral KS plates and that, accordingly, owners of such vehicles must replace their existing plates with the "RKS" ones when extending registration. This Priština act violated Point 5 of the September 2016 Agreement, which extended that the validity of "KS" plates for a period of five years, after which the two sides are to look into this issue again, with the EU facilitation.

After Belgrade's energetic protest, the EU informed the parties that all KS license plates would be valid until September 2021. However, to date, Priština never actually revoked the disputed decision. Therefore, the EU is expected to organize a meeting before September 2021 within the framework of the Dialogue, with this matter on the agenda.

During the reporting period, no intensified measures and bans were in effect at the administrative crossings against the spread of COVID-19. As a result, the Serbian side resumed the regular procedures for the control of vehicles, persons and luggage.

By contrast, during this period, Priština changed the scope of measures to restrict the movement of residents in Kosovo and Metohija on several occasions, both in terms of the time period during which movement is allowed, and in terms of the categories of persons to whom these measures apply. Owing to the worsening of the epidemiological situation, the most recent measures were introduced on December 23, 2020, dictating that persons holding residence outside Kosovo and Metohija must present a negative PCR test, not older than 72 hours, when entering the territory of the Province. At the same time, persons over 65 are allowed to go out only in the periods between 6-10 am and 4-7 pm. The new measures envisage that all municipalities in Kosovo and Metohija be divided into three groups, based on the risk of spreading the infection (municipalities with low, medium and high risk). In high-risk municipalities, the so-called red zones, comprising the municipalities of Priština, Podujevo, Mitrovica South, Mitrovica North, Obilić, Kosovo Polje, Zvečan and Zubin Potok, introduced a curfew from 8 pm to 5 am.

Aside from the measures introduced to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, Priština continued to apply unilateral measures that jeopardize the implementation of the Agreement on Freedom of Movement, relating to: ban on the use of ID cards issued by the police directorates MoI of the Republic of Serbia relocated from Kosovo and Metohija; ban on crossing border crossings with North Macedonia and Montenegro to persons holding passports issued by the Coordination

²⁰ The sticker regime entails that the relevant parts of the license plates (status symbols) on the vehicles of both sides, will be covered with two white stickers when crossing the administrative line, thus replacing the previous practice of issuing the "PROBA" license plates, which Belgrade used to apply to vehicles with "RKS" license plates crossing the administrative line.

Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia; a request for additional personal data when announcing visits by IDPs and pilgrims wishing to come to Kosovo and Metohija, which is not set out in any agreement; as well as special check-ups and measures exercised at the CCP against Belgrade officials and other persons coming from central Serbia.

Therefore, the Serbian side has repeatedly pointed out to the EU facilitators that implementation of all the above-mentioned measures of Priština is a gross violation of the Agreement on Freedom of Movement, and that unilateral handling of issues of importance to both parties is unacceptable.

As to the abuse of the right to freedom of movement, a total of 725 persons from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija were registered, who were prevented from attempting to cross the administrative line illegally during this reporting period. In October 2020 a criminal group organizing illegal exits of Albanians from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija into the territory of the European Union was arrested.

Bearing in mind the degree of complications for the daily life and work of citizens, the Serbian side believes that in the coming period the mentioned problems caused by Priština's unilateral actions will be solved, and that the Agreement on Freedom of Movement would be consistently implemented.

6. Integrated management of common crossing points (IBM)

The Republic of Serbia fully observes the agreed Conclusions on IBM and Technical Protocol on *IBM* Implementation.

Operation of all six common crossing points (CCPs) is successfully underway, and Belgrade is taking all necessary measures as to ensure functionality of all crossing points and increase operability of the services available.

Although the measures of “gradual implementation of reciprocity” were abolished on June 6, 2020, after which was resumed the Dialogue between Belgrade and Priština, no meeting of the *IBM* Implementation Group²¹ has been organized yet, nor any meetings at the central, regional and local levels²². Regardless of this, the Belgrade side is working on resolving technical issues occurring at the CCPs under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia, in order to provide adequate conditions for the work of all officers at the crossings. Below is a selection of the key developments regarding the functioning of CCPs during the previous period:

- **Introduction of new procedures at CCPs due to *COVID-19* pandemic.** In the previous period, new procedures continued to be applied at the CCPs to ensure better functionality and facilitated flow of people and goods across the administrative line amidst the *COVID-19* pandemic²³.

²¹ The last meeting of the *IBM* Implementation Group was held on March 12, 2018.

²² Meetings at the central, regional and local level ceased on April 16, 2018.

²³ At the beginning of the *COVID-19* pandemic, special health procedures for the protection of officers were introduced at all six CCPs, and are still being applied. Also, a more relaxed procedure for the passage of trucks across CCPs has been put through, as well as for the movement of health workers, patients, medical supplies, protective equipment, medicines and basic life supplies, which is applied as needed.

- **The harmonized phytosanitary certificate** is functioning without any problems after the abolition of “measures of gradual application of reciprocity”. Issues that have not yet been resolved are the import of vine planting material from Central Serbia and the registration and distribution of plant protection products that are being produced in Central Serbia and distributed to Kosovo and Metohija.
- **The harmonized veterinary certificates** are functioning without issues. In the previous period, two new groups of certificates have been harmonized: the certificate for canned pet food, harmonized on August 27, 2020, and the certificate for the supply of domestic cattle for breeding and/or fattening, harmonized on October 5, 2020. There is still no progress when it comes to harmonizing the certificate for milk and dairy products, and the certificate for meat (pork and poultry) and meat products.
- **The harmonized pharmaceutical certificate** has been functioning smoothly at the common crossing points where commercial traffic takes place.
- **The SEED Technical Group**, mediated by EULEX, remains inactive, although the Belgrade-Priština Dialogue has been renewed.
- **Work on the establishment of new and the reconstruction of existing crossing points** placed under Belgrade jurisdiction, has been suspended until Priština has complied with the provisions of the First Agreement. However, as a gesture of good will within the renewed Dialogue, at the beginning of October 2020, Belgrade approved the officers of the Serbian side to move from the old containers into the new administrative facility at CCP Merdare²⁴. The United Nations Office for Project Services (*UNOPS*) continued with the remaining necessary works on the part of the crossing point where the Belgrade officers are working²⁵, and completed them on December 24.
- **CCP Merdare remains within in the system of the so-called “Green Corridors”**, set up within the European Union with an aim to facilitate faster and more efficient resolution of basic human needs in terms of ensuring supply of primary goods, i.e. food and medical supplies during the *COVID-19* pandemic. It became functional on April 14 for the Western Balkan partners²⁶.

7. Regional representation

During the reporting period, Belgrade remained committed to the progress in all forms of regional cooperation and networking in Western Balkans. In that sense, the Republic of Serbia,

²⁴ CCP Merdare has been expanded and reconstructed by *UNOPS*, with funding provided by EU (*IPA* Priština).

²⁵ These works primarily included completing expansion and reconstruction of two traffic lanes at the exit from Central Serbia to Kosovo and Metohija, access lanes to the parking lot, and building a control cabin for cargo vehicle inspection.

²⁶ In support of the activities of the Transport Community and *CEFTA*, the Serbian Government adopted a multitude of decisions aimed at facilitating the free movement of goods across the administrative line (especially food and other primary goods related to sanitary material and other products).

being a dependable party in the Dialogue, continued to fully uphold the provisions of the Agreement on Regional Representation and Cooperation reached in 2012.

Keeping in mind that during the reporting period special epidemiological measures were in force in almost all countries in the region and in Europe, most meetings of international and regional organizations and initiatives were held online, as video conferences. Therefore, the representatives of Belgrade and Priština participated in numerous initiatives and organizations, such as the meetings within the Berlin Process, the Western Balkans Summit, the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP), the Regional Initiative for Migration, Asylum and Refugees (MARRI), the Western Balkans Fund (WBF), as well as activities of the US-Adriatic Charter Partnership Commission (A5), and in the working bodies of the World Customs Organization.

On the other hand, PISG in Priština continued with lobbying and applying for membership in various international organizations and professional associations. After becoming a member of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) in October 2019, they applied for the membership in the European Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (EUROSAI) in February 2020. The application was considered and accepted in principle at the meeting of the EUROSAI Steering Committee of that organization on November 12, 2020, with the obligation for EUROSAI to change the Statute so that Priština's admission could be formally confirmed in April 2021.

During this reporting period, Priština also sought to participate in the work of OSCE through regional formats and various other ones, and was even supported by some OSCE member states which, despite the status-neutral attitude of this organization towards the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, have expressed their political views by inviting PISG in Priština representatives to work meetings attended by the Head of the OSCE of Mission in Kosovo and Metohija (OMIK).

Despite said issues, Belgrade will remain committed to improving relations in the region in the upcoming period, in order to preserve regional stability and advocate strict adherence to reached agreements and further normalization of relations.

8. Official visits and liaison officers

During this reporting period, Priština continued to violate the Agreement on Official Visits by senselessly refusing visits by officials of the Republic of Serbia to Kosovo and Metohija²⁷, or else selectively approving their visits, and resorting to negative rhetoric which dominated the Priština officials' public appearances, all of which violates the spirit of the Agreement and the overall normalization process.

Such behavior was exhibited during the entire second half of 2020, and culminated in November 2020 with a uncontrolled reaction and incendiary statements and press releases being issued by the so-called Minister of Foreign Affairs of PISG, who was not allowed to visit the Kiževak site near Raška, where mortal remains of persons believed to be Albanians were found. According to the long-established practice of the ICRC-chaired Working Group on the Missing, visits to such locations are allowed only to its members, and only with a court order. After that,

²⁷ Thus, two visits by the Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development, Mladen Šarčević, to the University of Priština with its temporary headquarters in Kosovska Mitrovica, were denied, although they were announced in a timely manner and in accordance with the Agreement.

the so-called Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Priština issued a press release in which all visits by Serbian officials to Kosovo and Metohija were categorized “provocative and banned” until the Republic of Serbia apologizes for the alleged genocide committed against the Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija.

Due to the above, not one visit by Serbian officials to Kosovo and Metohija took place until the very end of 2020. Only after the protest by Serbian side with the EU representatives and the letter by the EUSR for Belgrade-Priština Dialogue sent in December 2020 to the so-called Prime Minister of PISG in Priština, in which Mr. Lajčak appealed for consistent implementation of the Freedom of Movement Agreement and the Official Visits Agreement, did one visit by the Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Petar Petković, take place.

However, for some Serbian officials, such as the minister of internal affairs and defense minister, a permanent ban on entry into Kosovo and Metohija is still in force, despite the fact that since April 2016, the Serbian side has been bringing attention of the EU facilitators to the fact that this constitutes a gross violation of the agreement, and requesting its unconditional abolition.

On the other hand, competent Serbian authorities strictly upheld all provisions of the Agreement when it comes to the visits by Priština officials to Central Serbia, and during this reporting period, two visits by Priština representatives to Preševo and Bujanovac were successfully realized.

As for the Conclusions of the Chair on Liaison Arrangements, it functioned without major problems during this reporting period. We especially emphasize that the engagement of LOs in the past period greatly motivated the cooperation between Belgrade and Priština in suppressing of the *COVID-19* pandemic and securing adequate medical care for patients in Kosovo and Metohija. Despite that, it should be pointed out that even in current crisis conditions, Priština politicized issues that are exclusively of humanitarian and health nature, by preventing the supply of medical oxygen to health care institutions of the Republic of Serbia in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija and threatening to jeopardize their ability to provide adequate help to all people in the Province.

E) Other topics

1. Collection of customs duties

The Republic of Serbia fulfills all undertaken obligations and collects all duties in accordance with the Customs Agreement.

On the other hand, by definitively abolishing illegal customs barriers - through the abolition of the last introduced measures of "gradual application of reciprocity" - PISG in Priština enabled the Customs Agreement to be applied again from the middle of 2020²⁸. In that context, Serbian goods can once again enter Kosovo and Metohija from Central Serbia in unhindered manner, thus allowing resumed collection of revenue from customs, excise and VAT.

In the reporting period, Priština continued to determine the customs value of goods at CCP Rudnica/Jarinje and CCP Brnjak/Tabalije centrally and only in daylight. At the last meeting of the

²⁸ These measures have completely blocked the entry of Serbian goods into Kosovo and Metohija, which made it impossible to collect duties in accordance with the Customs Agreement.

Implementation Group held in Brussels on March 20, 2018, the Serbian side requested for the customs clearance of goods at mentioned crossings to take place until 20:00 (not only in daylight), for goods that do not require a large number of names, i.e. do not require additional phytosanitary or veterinary inspections. This requirement is in full compliance with the Technical Protocol on the Implementation of the *IBM* Conclusions, which defines that the Customs Service operates 24/7. However, the required change in the work of the Priština customs service has not yet taken place, although almost three full years have passed since the meeting.

2. Development fund for so-called North of Kosovo

After more than two years, a new meeting of the Fund for the Development of the North of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija ("the Fund") was held on October 23, 2020²⁹.

The meeting was of an exclusively informative character, with the main goal of presenting and meeting new Fund members³⁰. Current members of the Fund are: EU Special Representative in Kosovo and Metohija - Tomáš Szunyog, PISG Minister of Finance in Priština - Hikmete Bajrami, as well as the representative of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija - Vanja Kovačević.

The next, and also the last, meeting in 2020 was held on November 6, 2020, when a large project for the construction of a Cultural Center in the Municipality of North Mitrovica worth EUR 3.5 million was approved and solutions were considered for existing projects with implementation issues.

These are projects that were discussed in previous reports: 1) construction of a drinking water tank in North Mitrovica, 2) reconstruction of Karadjordjeva Street and power supply to the regional landfill Savina Stena in the municipality of Zvečan, 3) construction of the road Kovače-Prevlja, 4) construction of a sports-recreational zone and an indoor pool in the Municipality of Zubin Potok, 5) subsidies for raspberry growing and reconstruction of a primary school in the Municipality of Zubin Potok, 6) composing municipal planning and project documentation for road construction in the Municipality of Leposavić.

Since the above-mentioned PISG in Priština measures practically prevented the trade of products from Central Serbia to Kosovo and Metohija, the Fund did not have an inflow of funds for a long period of time, and currently has a sum of EUR 1.5 million at its disposal³¹.

The Serbian side expects that the next meeting of the Fund will be organized after the end of the election process in Kosovo and Metohija.

3. Vehicle insurance

²⁹ Previous meeting was held on July 31, 2018.

³⁰ The functioning of the Fund is decided by the Steering Committee consisting of three members: a representative of the Serbian side residing in one of the four municipalities in northern Kosovo and Metohija, a representative of the Priština institutions and the EU Special Representative in Kosovo and Metohija.

³¹ In accordance with Point 9 of the Conclusions of the Chairman of the Customs Working Group from 2013, the Fund's funds are collected from customs and excise revenues, as well as VAT revenues collected at Jarinje and Brnjak, which are then transferred to the Fund's account.

The Memorandum of Understanding in the field of vehicle insurance was relatively successfully implemented during the reporting period³².

By appointing analysis correspondents by the so-called Kosovo Insurance Bureau (*KIB*), which deals with the processing of compensation claims in the territory of the province, insurance companies on both sides have established direct cooperation. However, although this cooperation works successfully, visual control of vehicles is still performed on the administrative line, because no system of electronic verification of insurance policies has been established, which would reduce the possibility of vehicle smuggling and provide a higher degree of security when assessing compensation for vehicles.

It should be noted that the main issue in the area of vehicle insurance remains the European Road Accident Report, which was declared invalid by Annex 3, Article 6.

In the upcoming period, the Serbian side expects to establish a system of electronic verification of vehicle insurance policies.

4. Free trade

Free trade between Belgrade and Priština is conducted in accordance with the *CEFTA* Free Trade Agreement. The Customs Stamp Agreement, as well as the Technical Protocol on *IBM* Implementation, within the framework of which the Customs Agreement was reached, are of exceptional importance for this area.

After Priština's illegal measures of "gradual application of reciprocity" were abolished on June 6, 2020, which completely prevented the entry of products from Central Serbia to Kosovo and Metohija, PISG in Priština generally respected the provisions of the *CEFTA* agreement, with some exceptions. This primarily refers to 1) the negative practice of calculating transport costs of block goods (construction blocks measuring 25x19x19 and 25x19x12, as well as 2) fert-mont blocks for mezzanine structures) by applying a higher than real basis for VAT calculating, as well as 3) the decision from 2016 to charge an additional fee of two cents per block for building blocks coming from Central Serbia. Also, Priština's decision from October 19, 2017, which introduced a non-tariff barrier in the form of a special duty on flour originating from Central Serbia in the amount of EUR 40 per ton, is still in force. With these non-tariff barriers, PISG in Priština is significantly increasing the price of Serbian products and reducing their competitiveness on the Kosovo and Metohija market, which is obviously a violation of the provisions of the *CEFTA* agreement.

In this context, we should also point out an issue which arose after the Energy Connection Agreement entered into force on October 29, 2020, and the Priština transmission system operator *KOSTT* began to function as a separate control area on December 14. Namely, after that, there was an interruption of power trade between energy companies from Central Serbia and energy companies from Kosovo and Metohija, which are also not allowed to use the Kosovo electricity network for sale to third partners. At this moment, it is very difficult to find a solution to the problem, because PISG in Priština does not recognize licenses for power trade to companies operating in the system of the Republic of Serbia, nor does it intend to issue licenses for trade,

³² The memorandum was concluded on June 23, 2015 between the Association of Insurers of Serbia (UOS) and the so-called Kosovo Insurance Bureau (KIB), and entered into force on August 12, 2015. The memorandum enables mutual recognition of insurance policies for all vehicles entering Central Serbia from Kosovo and Metohija and vice versa.

supply and distribution of power to two Serbian energy companies “EPS Trgovina” and “Elektrosever” in the Priština system, in accordance with the Arrangements in the field of energy.

Such negative practice, especially in the conditions of the *COVID-19* pandemic, when practically the entire trade of Serbian goods in Kosovo and Metohija is functioning in emergency conditions, indicates that Priština intends to constantly - directly or indirectly - hinder the placement of Serbian goods on the province's market.

Goods that are being mostly sold from Central Serbia to Kosovo and Metohija are food and beverages, chemicals and chemical products, agricultural products and oil derivatives, while goods that are mostly coming to Central Serbia from Kosovo and Metohija are basic metals, recycling, food products and beverages.

5. Bridge and Peace Park in Kosovska Mitrovica

Although all construction works in the main bridge zone on the Ibar River and the pedestrian zone in Kralj Petar Street were completed more than two years ago, and the facilities are technically ready to open, they were not opened during this reporting period either. In order for that to happen, in accordance with the agreements that regulate the issue of the bridge and its surroundings, it is necessary for Priština to previously make the administrative demarcation of the municipalities of North and South Mitrovica in the area of Suvi Do. According to that agreement, the EU and the Serbian side can start harmonizing the date of the simultaneous ceremonial opening of the main bridge and the pedestrian street only after the administrative demarcation has been made.

The issue of demarcation in the area of Suvi Do is formally and legally regulated by the Bridge Agreement from 2015, the Agreement of August 2, 2016, but also Article 3.3. of Priština's so-called Law on Administrative Boundaries of Municipalities, which clearly stipulates that the border between North and South Mitrovica will be drawn through the territory of the cadastral zone of Suvi Do, which in accordance with this law is currently part of the municipality of South Mitrovica.

It is paradoxical that the demarcation of North and South Mitrovica in the area of Suvi Do has actually been done a long time ago, but has not yet been formally and legally implemented due to Priština's refusal to apply the mentioned agreements and its own regulations, and to even discuss this issue in the Dialogue. This demarcation was made by Priština in accordance with the principles insisted on by the Serbian side before the provincial elections in 2017, when it included Serbs from the Serbian part of that village in the electoral register of the Municipality of North Mitrovica, and Albanians from the Albanian part of that village in the electoral register of the Municipality of South Mitrovica, which was repeated in all subsequent election cycles in the Province.

In this regard, Belgrade is constantly pointing out to EU facilitators that it has no real excuse to fulfill its obligations and formalizes in its documents the mentioned administrative demarcation, which is prescribed by the agreements that regulate the construction of the bridge and its surroundings. Hence, Belgrade demands that European facilitators take action against the PISG in Priština, with a clear goal of ensuring that Priština stops obstructing the completion of the implementation of the Bridge Agreement.

The key issue in not resolving this is that it is a fertile ground for manipulation, provocation and intimidation of the Serbian population, which significantly burdens the political and security situation in North Kosovo and Metohija, but also the entire Province. This is especially pronounced

in the particularly security sensitive areas of North Mitrovica: Suvi Do and the main bridge on the Ibar River. In this regard, during this reporting period, there was the continuation of the established practice by political entities of the Albanian corpus to periodically actualize the issue of the “unification of Mitrovica” and/or issue illegal building permits to Albanians to conduct illegal construction in the Municipality of North Mitrovica - especially in the security-sensitive area of Suvo Do.

All the risks of this approach by Priština were reaffirmed by another incident that occurred during the reporting period - the so-called project of fixing up the riverbed of the Ibar River, from the main bridge in K. Mitrovica to the bridge in the village of Suvi Do, which Priština wanted to use to start works on the revitalization of the pedestrian bridge near the mixed neighborhood “Tri solitera”. This plan involved carrying out works without the consent of the Municipality of North Mitrovica, administratively responsible for the area, with the idea of making a small pedestrian bridge into a larger bridge. After active engagement by the Serbian side, an agreement was reached on changing the original architectural permit, so that the Municipality of North Mitrovica, as the only authority, approved only the revitalization of the existing small pedestrian bridge. At the same time, it was agreed that the Serbian side, in turn, would receive a permit from the Municipality of South Mitrovica for the reconstruction of the bridge near “Duda's Karst”, bearing in mind that the access roads are under their administrative jurisdiction.

During this reporting period, the Serbian side continuously pointed out to EU facilitators that the Priština side knowingly and continuously violates the provisions of the Bridge Agreement and directly violates security in the north of Kosovo and Metohija, and beyond. Bearing in mind that the mentioned agreement was reached with the aim of stabilizing the security situation in the particularly sensitive security zones of the main bridge on the Ibar River, as well as in the area of Suvi Do, the Serbian side will continue to insist with EU facilitators on the necessities of full respect of all its provisions and the completion of its consistent implementation as soon as possible.

6. Civil protection

The implementation of the Agreement on the Civil Protection Integration (CP) was not fully completed even during this reporting period, as Priština continues to refuse to fulfill its commitments.

Namely, despite the long-standing insistence of the Serbian side that EU facilitators should ensure that Priština eliminates existing problems, pays back salaries to all integrated members of the former CP and provides them with work facilities, 164 people (out of 483 or 33.95%) still did not receive one or more salaries since the start of integration in 2015. Four persons who did not receive any earnings are in the most difficult position. Also, about 300 integrated persons (almost 65%) do not have secured work facilities in the north of Kosovo and Metohija, which is imperatively indirectly prescribed by Article 2 of the Agreement.

Priština's unacceptable behavior in the previous period continued with blackmailing integrated former members of the CP by terminating their employment contracts if they do not accept to be assigned to jobs south of the Ibar - which ultimately resulted in termination of employment for six people. The practice of intimidating them was especially pronounced in the second half of 2019, but unfortunately continued through 2020, as well.

In order to overcome the described problems, Belgrade repeatedly demanded from the EU facilitator to influence Priština to fulfill the obligations prescribed by the agreement. Unfortunately, so far there has been no progress in resolving these issues.

7. Agreements and dialogue of chambers of commerce

The cooperation between the two chambers is based on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Serbian Chamber of Commerce (SCC) and the Kosovo* Chamber of Commerce (KCC) of July 24, 2013, as well as annexes on arbitration in case of disputes and institutional capacity building.

During the reporting period, progress was made in cooperation between the SCC and the KCC by adopting a Joint Statement on 22 September 2020, expressing mutual support for the improvement of economic and overall relations between the two sides. The statement estimates that the normalization process of relations between the two sides is a basic precondition for improving the economic and social status of all citizens in the region and that it is a precondition for achieving overall economic, social and political development of Western Balkans.

The two chambers also expressed support for the “mini Schengen” regional cooperation initiative, as it represents an important step towards prosperity and the improvement of stability and competitiveness in the entire Western Balkans region. The belief in the positive result of the engagement of the American Development Finance Corporation (“DFC”) in the region was emphasized, and the formation of a joint team for economic cooperation, consisting of business leaders and experts dealing with economic normalization, working in Belgrade and Priština. The primary role of this team is to actively contribute to the process of economic normalization and provide assistance and guidance to all parties involved in the process, i.e. relevant institutions of both parties, the business community, *DFC*, Exim Bank, as well as US and EU institutions. Within the team, sector groups will be formed in which projects from specific sectors will be considered, monitored and developed³³.

Cooperation between the two chambers continued within the Western Balkans 6 (WB6) process, through joint activities of the Western Balkans Chamber Investment Forum (Forum). In that sense, the Forum continued to work on the creation of the Regional Economic Zone “Western Balkan 6”, which is foreseen by the multi-year action plan adopted at the Summit in Trieste in July 2017. At the video meeting of the Western Balkans 6 Chamber Investment Forum, held on July 15, with the aim of harmonizing the forum members on the issue of the new Regional Economic Agenda until 2024, it was agreed to strengthen regional cooperation by removing mutual barriers in business and establishing a common market. It was proposed to introduce measures aimed at reducing costs and removing perceived barriers to doing business as soon as possible, so that

³³ These are the following four sectoral groups: 1) Infrastructure Development Group to contribute to infrastructure projects dealing with the continuation of the construction of the Peace Highway, between Niš and Priština, reconstruction and modernization of railways and their connections with ports on the Adriatic Sea, construction and modernization of infrastructure for industrial zones and by providing technologies for projects related to the production of energy from waste, etc., 2) Sustainable Energy Production and Diversification Group, which deals with energy diversification, to support the opening of a power plant using lithium batteries in the region, and the exploration and exploitation of lithium and other valuable ores, 3) Group for the construction of a glass factory in the region, which provides a supplier for the entire region, and the like, 4) Group for the development of agro-tourism, which would explore the possibilities of developing sustainable tourism based on the offer of local natural resources, such as Kopaonik and Brezovica, Rugova Canyon, and the like.

businessmen could feel concrete benefits as soon as possible and mitigate the severe consequences the health crisis had in the business of individual companies and the region as a whole.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of this Forum, held on October 5, 2020 in Tirana, representatives of six chambers of commerce established the Business Council of the Forum, which will have the following competencies:

- on behalf of 400,000 companies, gathered by the Joint Regional Chamber, it will monitor the implementation of all agreements reached in the field, remove obstacles to successful business within the region and cooperation with the European Union;
- inform all Western Balkan partners about obstacles identified on the ground, recommending proposals for measures to be implemented to ensure the free flow of people, goods, services and capital, in order to facilitate business and reduce costs for all entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans, and
- will work to ensure the active participation of the business community in the construction of a common regional market and a single investment destination in the Western Balkans, as well as in the establishment of stronger regional economic relations.

At the Western Balkans Summit, held in Sofia on November 10, 2020, the Action Plan for the Common Regional Market was adopted, proposing to accelerate the construction of the common regional market of the Western Balkans by the newly established Business Council of the Forum.

During the reporting period, Germany gave significant support to the strengthening of regional economic integration and the establishment of a stronger framework for cooperation between the Western Balkans and the EU through the active commitment of its Minister of Economy and Energy Peter Altmaier. Accordingly, in the upcoming period, several events and forums will be organized that should contribute to the geostrategic strengthening of the region's position and its presentation as a unique investment destination. The Western Balkans will have a special opportunity for the arrival of new investments thanks to the optimization of supply chains of German and European companies, which occurred due to the consequences of the *COVID-19* pandemic.

Conclusion

Considering all the complexity of the Belgrade-Priština Dialogue, which was scrutinized in detail in the main body of this report, and coupled with the political implications of the recently concluded elections for the PISG in Priština, it bears arguing that the negotiation process is probably at its most challenging stage, since its launch in 2011. Not only that, for years now, Priština has been systematically refusing to comply with the obligations it undertook in the Dialogue, and is doing its best to setback and sabotage the entire process, the referendum-like character, among the Albanian corps, of the electoral victory of the very political forces that have strongly opposed normalization of relations with Belgrade also points to such a conclusion.

It is worth recalling that current winners of the Kosovo-Metohija elections once violently protested against almost every action which their political rivals (and predecessors) took, at least formally and/or declaratively, towards relaxing relations with Belgrade and the Serbian factor as a whole. With this in mind, it is certainly worrying that the Dialogue can easily relapse back in the

one-and-a-half-year-long phase triggered by a blockade imposed by the PISG in Priština. We recall that, apart from erecting trade barriers, Priština disabled any substantive negotiations for all practical purposes, professionally and technically speaking, by resorting to legal solutions embedded in with their negotiating platform and in term of the composition, competences and manner of operation of their negotiating team.

On the other hand, it is a fact that the renewed Dialogue was hardly very fruitful, and objectively failed to justify high expectations. Still, the fact that the facilitators invested enormous effort, resources and energy to that end, and even managed to secure that important issues that have so far been kept out of the negotiation process due to Priština's refusal to place them on the agenda, cannot be overlooked. Unfortunately, as in any previous period after the First Agreement reached in 2013, the Dialogue continued to stagnate, but not for the failure of negotiating new topics, but because of the failure to comply with the most important, fundamental, point of the First Agreement – Priština's obligation to set up the Community of Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo and Metohija.

The impression is sometimes that the actors involved in the Dialogue seem to be consciously ignoring the fact that the CSM has not been set up for over 2,800 days since the First Agreement was concluded. It is therefore that Belgrade continues to meticulously keep count of these days, thus constantly emphasizing to the EU facilitators and to the international public the amount time that has been unnecessarily lost in searching for 1,000 different ways to setback the Dialogue. At the same time, the only way to make substantial progress keeps being overlooked and sidestepped, and it is the way that has been clearly set out and time-bound by a set of agreements that regulate the formation of CSM. We have a paradoxical situation on our hands, with the Serbian side exhausting its resources to explain over and over again that the success in the Dialogue is structurally impossible without Priština fulfilling all its obligations - instead of all parties making united efforts to follow through on the agreed and unblock the process.

The Serbian side continues to observe with disbelief and regret that the Dialogue continues to encounter one difficult setback after another by Priština. In addition to the repeatedly emphasized failure to comply with the undertaken obligations, Priština also creates operational and technical setbacks, using naked blackmail and ultimatums as their tactic in the Dialogue - which is certainly not acceptable for any interlocutor with honest intentions of participating in serious talks.

We also recall that the fulfillment of all provisions of the agreed agreements is without any doubt an essential, vital need of all people of Kosovo and Metohija and the entire Republic of Serbia. The fact is that the interest of citizens in improving and normalizing their daily lives was the key reason for starting the EU-facilitated Dialogue conducted on the bases of the mandate vested by the relevant UN bodies. Hence, Belgrade continues to perceive this Dialogue as the only legitimate and possible mechanism for resolving problems in relations with Priština, but also as the most appropriate framework for building and strengthening direct cooperation and ensuring benefits for all individuals, as well as the Serbian and Albanian communities as a whole, in the area of Kosovo and Metohija.

Against the background of the clearly articulated choice of the people of Kosovo and Metohija voting in the last elections for the betterment of their socio-economic position, the Serbian side

notes that it is only progress on the road to the EU that can ensure the prosperity of all Kosovo and Metohija residents. But the fastest and the only road to prosperity is precisely the achievement of normalization of relations between Belgrade and Priština through Dialogue. It is therefore that Belgrade sincerely wishes that the PISG in Priština take an objective view at all the numerous benefits of the agreements that have been reached a long time ago, and whose implementation they refuse, absolutely unreasonably, or else, implement them unilaterally and contrary to their letter and spirit.

For example, the status-neutral agreements concluded in the fields of freedom of movement, IBM and free trade indisputably contributed to the improvement of life in Kosovo and Metohija. Provisions of these agreements enabled people to move freely and trade goods with subjects from the area of central Serbia at favorable prices. On the other hand, there is Priština's selective implementation of these agreements, illegal trade blockades, and Priština's irrational attempts to use these agreements to demand recognition of their unilaterally declared independence and the status of the so-called "Kosovo". The PISG in Priština continuously create setbacks and interruptions in the regime of freedom of movement and trade, which causes serious economic damage to the economic entities, and destroys the living standard of the people of Kosovo and Metohija, without any possibility that such their actions could ever lead to their desired political outcome.

Belgrade therefore hopes that the new PISG in Priština Government will understand that it has no enemies among the Serbian side, but only collaborators in solving each other's complex problems, and that it would be willing to use this context to start a more open negotiations with Belgrade within the Dialogue. If for no other reason, than because the Dialogue was truly successful in enabling the democratically elected representatives of two, so conflicted, parties to meet and have the opportunity to openly discuss mutual problems. Although opponents of the Dialogue will inevitably "notice" that, over the past 2,800 days, these talks failed to prevent the numerous crises which flared in Serbian-Albanian relations, and have not led to the formation of the CSM as a mechanism necessary for long-term survival of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, it is indisputable that certain important channels of mutual communications have been built. Thanks to that, the occasional crises were kept within the limits that fall far below the levels they used to reach before the Dialogue was launched, in terms of security.

Taking into account all the above, the Serbian side expects that, regardless of everything, the new Priština government will as soon as possible fulfill in good faith all the obligations that the previous PISG in Priština governments undertook on behalf of that party during the Dialogue. This primarily entails urgent formation of the Community of Serbian Municipalities, as agreed in the First Agreement, the Implementation Plan and the General Principles of August 25, 2015.

Also, the Serbian side expects Priština to desist from creating further setbacks to the Dialogue by attempting to resolve the Dialogue matters unilaterally and outside the Dialogue, using European and regional organizations, initiatives and forums - such as the ENTSO-E, Western Balkans 6, Regional Cooperation Council, South East European Transport Community, etc. Priština should be aware that it will neither realize its interests nor secure them in the long run beyond the Dialogue. Setting back that process can only result in unnecessary and harmful slowing

down along the European path of the entire region, and consequently deterioration of the standard of living of all Kosovo and Metohija residents.

So far, the Serbian side resolutely protested against any such action with the EU facilitator and demanded that the EU, as a guarantor of what was signed and agreed in the Dialogue, and as facilitator, defend the credibility of the negotiation process. Belgrade uses every framework to insist that all solutions involving Priština, which were made outside the framework of the Dialogue, will be considered legally null and void by the Serbian side. If this problem persists, Belgrade will make sure to elucidate all the risks of such actions to the EU facilitators again, along with new legal and political countermeasures that Belgrade would be forced to take in order to protect our interests, but also the integrity of the Dialogue process.

The EU, as a facilitator and guarantor of the hitherto signed, should be acknowledged for still managing to maintain the “flame of Dialogue” and for having fully respected and realistically considered all the key issues already mentioned here in the past period. In this context, the fact that the EU has defined the mandate of its Special Representative for Dialogue, and through the obligation to work with the parties on implementing the previously reached agreements is encouraging - thus correctly recognizing that the implementation of everything previously agreed is key to continuing the Dialogue. Precisely for this reason, as well as because it is obvious that the Dialogue is doomed to stagnation without the implementation of the agreement, the Serbian side calls on the EU to be more actively engaged and demonstrate greater energy towards Priština to ensure that all agreements reached so far are quickly and fully will conduct.

The EU, as a facilitator and guarantor of the agreements signed, should be acknowledged for still managing to sustain the “flame of Dialogue” and also that, over the past period, the facilitators became able to fully respected and realistically considered all the key issues already mentioned here. The fact that the EU determined the mandate of its Special Representative for Dialogue and determined his obligation to work with the parties on implementing previously reached agreements is encouraging since it signals recognizing that the implementation of everything previously agreed is key to continuing the Dialogue. Precisely for this reason, as well as because it is obvious that the Dialogue is doomed to stagnation without the implementation of the hitherto agreements, the Serbian side calls on the EU to be more actively engaged and demonstrate greater energy towards Priština to ensure that all agreements reached so far are quickly and fully will conduct.

Regardless of all the challenges that might encumber the negotiation process going forward, Belgrade, for its part, will continue to pursue a constructive policy towards the problems of Kosovo and Metohija and try to consolidate the existing and build new bridges of cooperation with Priština. However, that these efforts will be fruitless if a climate of mutual trust is not established in which politically motivated trials and absurd verdicts such as the one in the case of Mr. Zoran Đokić, whereby all the postulates of law and justice were violate in the crudest manner, and they are similarly trampled on when it comes to the conditions in which Serbian athletes and journalists are forbidden to perform their work in Kosovo and Metohija.

Mutual trust is necessary in the relations between the Serbian side and facilitators because, paradoxically, it is actually only the Republic of Serbia that pays the price of disturbed relations and the described stalemate in the Dialogue. This is plainly evident by the fact that no new

negotiating chapters in the EU accession negotiations have been opened. The Serbian side believes that this state of affairs overlooks Belgrade's often solitary efforts to preserve the Dialogue. However unjustified such a demonstration of the EU's lack of trust in the Republic of Serbia, it cannot and will not influence Belgrade to give up its interest guaranteed by agreements made. On the contrary, the Serbian side will resolutely continue its consistent and sincere policy of normalizing relations with Priština, as to work on joining the European family of nations that formed the EU. Along this path, it will not renounce the rights secured and guaranteed under the concluded agreements, nor will it give up protecting the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija.