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October 23

Third round concluded, fourth scheduled for November 5 in Vienna

KosovoCompromise Staff

The third round of direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina, held on Monday in Vienna, focused on further enquiries about the proposals of the two sides, as well as on the 14 working points of the Troika aimed at finding possible areas of agreement.

The talks, dubbed as “very hard” by the Belgrade officials, did not bring a breakthrough, but are “a step forward towards compromise”, Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic said at the end of the meeting.

Pristina’s delegation, however, said the two parties remained “far apart”.

The next round of talks is scheduled for November 5, again in Vienna.

The third round started with separate meetings of the Troika with the two delegations, before the mediators facilitated a several hour face-to-face talk between the two sides.

The Troika presented its 14-point document “with a view to identifying areas of agreement that might open a path to a negotiated solution”. The document, made as a compilation of the views of the two sides, did not identify the status of the province.

“The Troika listened to and faithfully recorded the parties’ responses to each of the points”, the mediators said after the meeting.

Pristina said the 14 working points contained many of its proposals, while Belgrade presented its own 14 working points or principles for the talks, insisting the talks should focus on status, not on a post-status relationship.

Jeremic said the talks were now entering a “crucial phase” and that the “tone of the talks was very serious”.

Serbia’s Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic said that Belgrade was particularly insisting on the fact the Troika did not mention the UN SC Resolution 1244 in its document.

“We are satisfied because all the members of the Troika have said that their intention was not to take the process outside the Resolution 1244 and that we will continue discussing on status (...) nice words, however, have to be translated into the document. It is important not to wonder around and discuss some new themes, such as relations between the two sides”, Samardzic said.



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The ethnic Albanian leaders insisted yet again on December 10 as being a deadline after which a decision on Kosovo's independence would be taken.

“December 10 is the deadline. After that, it is time for the decision on the independence of Kosovo and qualitative recognition by the international community”, said delegation member Hashim Thaci, seen as a favorite to win the Kosovo ballot on November 17.

A senior EU official said after the meeting that the talks were making “good progress away from slogans”, but that agreement was still far off.

“We're closer to a non-agreement than to an agreement”, EU mediator Wolfgang Ischinger said ahead of the joint meeting.

He said, however, that he was “not frustrated yet” as none of the two sides had blocked the process.