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Serbia expects talks to run past December 10

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The Serbian Minister for Slobodan Samardzic said he expects the Kosovo status talks to extend past December 10, when the Contact Group's Troika is to submit its report to the U.N. Secretary General.

"I expect the July events to repeat, when the U.N. Security Council decided to hold a new stage of negotiations. Deeply divided on Kosovo, despite getting these 120 days, Europe has not moved from the starting point. And if no legal grounds are found for engagement, the EU will not enter Kosovo," Samardzic said.

He went on to say that after this phase of Troika-mediated talks, the Contact Group, the U.S., Russia, and the EU would have to assess the situation and draw new conclusions. The minister pointed out that a decision to proclaim independence would bring the region into a period of "heavy uncertainty".

"Serbia must be fully prepared to react on several levels. We are acting as if a solution will be found, but we also must be ready to react adequately to its potential imposing, both against those who would choose that option and in the field, in Kosovo, where the consequences of such an imposed outcome would be extremely unfavorable," he said.

Samardzic also said that the influential EU members "are not indifferent" to the possibility of a unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence and to the position in which Serbia would be if someone decided to acknowledge that act.

Based on his contacts with British, French, German, and Italian diplomats, Samardzic says they too are worried by the prospect of self-proclaimed independence.

"They can tell we are not bluffing. That we are facing a big problem, that this is not even a matter of choice. If your population is in jeopardy, you will have to look for a way to preserve it, save it, feed it, shelter it. If a part of your territory is being taken away from you, your must think about how to position yourself against those making such moves," Samardzic said.

He announced that at the coming meeting in Brussels on November 20 Belgrade would unveil more innovations. "We will always find a way to show them that our proposal is serious. And the Albanian side will most certainly continue to simulate negotiations, as it has been doing so far," Samardzic stressed.