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THE LAST “TROIKA” ROUND

KosovoCompromise Staff

The last and possibly decisive Troika-mediated round of talks between the Belgrade and Pristina delegations on the future status of Kosovo will be held over the next three days in the Baden spa near Vienna, before the Contact Group’s mediating trio submits its report to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Dec. 10.

Both delegations will be represented at top level, with Belgrade led by Serbian President Boris Tadic and Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, and Pristina headed by Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu and outgoing Prime Minister Agim Ceku.

Intensive talks will be held in several rounds. The troika will have separate meetings with the delegations, and Belgrade and Pristina teams will also meet directly.

Amid sceptical expectations from international observers and media on the outcome of the talks, the Belgrade team has proposed several “autonomy models” for Kosovo, which include elements successfully applied in Hong Kong or Finnish Aland Islands.

Pristina has systematically turned down all such proposals, cranking up its independence-or-nothing rhetoric ahead of Dec. 10, after which it plans to proclaim independence unilaterally.

Such a position is the result of the U.S. public promise to acknowledge Kosovo’s independence should the two sides fail to reach an agreement by Dec. 10. Russia and Serbia have strongly dismissed Kosovo’s potential independence.

The EU for the time being lacks a clearly defined opinion on the matter, with countries such as Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, Romania, and Spain objecting independence and many more feeling reluctant to act without the approval of the UN Security Council, where Russia has right of veto. In the absence of any sign of common European policy, the EU ministers have recently warned the Albanians not to make a unilateral declaration of independence.

Serbian Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic said before the talks that the round in Baden will determine “whether we will continue to resolve this dispute in a civilized manner, or we will enter a stage of bigger conflicts.”

“When it comes to the first solution, Serbia is 100 percent active and interested, whereas in case of the second solution, of course we must be fully prepared,” Samardzic said.



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Samardzic added that the Serbian side in Baden would continue to make proposals and insist that the Troika keeps the status issue as the main topic, remains loyal to its mandate and presents a clear and appropriate report to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.