



KOSOVO

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EU to work towards “coordinated declaration” of independence

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The EU will “work hard” to reach an agreement on a “coordinated” rather than “unilateral” declaration of independence of Kosovo, Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn said ahead of Monday’s meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

The ministers are discussing the next steps in the Kosovo process after the Troika report, which is being presented to them by EU envoy Wolfgang Ischinger.

Speaking upon arrival at the meeting, Asselborn said he expected the process of “coordinated declaration” to be over in February, after the expected end of Serbian presidential elections.

“Until then, until early February, we will remain in the process with the Kosovars, with the international community and with the Serbs, because we have to offer the Serbs something very concrete”, the Luxembourg foreign minister said.

“We do not want a declaration of independence, that would be a catastrophe (...) there would be reactions on one or the other side”, he said, adding that decisions would be taken after February 3, the date of the expected end of presidential elections.

“What is needed is a coordinated declaration which would eliminate all negative aspects”, Asselborn said.

The presidential elections in Serbia – which will likely see a showdown between current Serbian president Boris Tadic and the leader of the opposition Serb Radical Party, Tomislav Nikolic – have not yet been scheduled, but media reports have suggested the two rounds of voting should be expected for January 20 and February 3.

Asselborn added that “everything has already been said at the level of NATO and the UN Security Council” and that there was no possible agreement, which meant a return to the basis – the Ahtisaari plan.

He added that the only country having problems with such EU policy was Cyprus.

Meanwhile, Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt said the EU had achieved “virtual unity” on Kosovo, adding that “only one country” was opposed to the upcoming moves.