** United Nations Office in Belgrade**

**Daily Media Highlights**

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**LOCAL PRESS**

**Vulin: A crime unpunished is always repeated (*Tanjug*)**

Outgoing Serbian Minister without Portfolio in charge of Kosovo and Metohija Aleksandar **Vulin** said on Monday that the world should know that a crime that goes unpunished is always repeated. At an academy held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the pogrom against Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, Vulin said that Serbs today are speaking of this horrific crime since the world decided to keep silent about it for all these years. “Those who were not punished can be recognized in the streets of European and world cities. Had there been justice, we would keep quiet, but we send a warning,” Vulin said. He said that the Pristina authorities today banned his entry into Kosovo to attend a memorial service in Pristina out of fear that he would remind the world of the crimes that were committed, whose perpetrators are protected by silence. “I call upon the wide world, to which we surrendered Kosovo, to respect Resolution 1244. Behave towards us the way you would like others to behave towards you. Ten years ago, 51,000 people torched homes, killed people in Kosovo, and no one was punished for this,” Vulin said. He said that this is not about legal obstacles but about political obstacles, which always appear anew when perpetrators of crimes against Serbs should be punished. “This is why it is important to observe such days all the more loudly, so the world might understand that we will not forget. Here is an opportunity for the world to restore justice, at least partially, by accelerating the investigation into the ‘Yellow House’ and everything else that befell the Serbs in connection with trafficking in human organs,” Vulin said. He said that the Serbian Cabinet will do everything to preserve that which was saved in Kosovo and will not allow the Serbian cultural, historical and religious heritage to be portrayed as someone else’s.

**International community to punish perpetrators (*RTS*)**

At an academy held on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the pogrom against Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija at the National Theatre in Belgrade, outgoing Serbian Prime Minister Ivica **Dacic** emphasized that the perpetrators of the crimes committed against Serbs in Kosovo had not been punished yet, that Serb property had not been restored, nor have Serbs been enabled to return. I wish something like that never to happen again and Serbia to apply a wise policy to protect the safety and interests of Kosovo Serbs, said Dacic, adding that, considering the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia needs a realistic policy. He thanked all the Serbs who remained in Kosovo even after their leaders had fled.

Addressing the audience, Serbian Patriarch **Irinej** underlined that in all the talks on Kosovo and Metohija Serbia should set the return of Serbs there as the most important demand. He emphasized that 240,000 Serbs had been expelled from Kosovo. If some ruthless forces make us remain without Kosovo and Metohija, we will always have the example of the Jewish people, who waited for Jerusalem for two thousand years and finally brought it back, said Irinej.

**Dacic: Proof of government commitment to fight against crime (*RTS*)**

Outgoing Prime Minister Ivica **Dacic** stated that the arrest of drug boss Darko Saric constitutes another proof of the government’s commitment to the fight against organized crime, adding that it would contribute to strengthening of credibility and reputation of the Serbian security and justice system. The government welcomes and is very satisfied with the detention of Darko Saric, and it wants to commend all bodies which invested efforts to this end, Dacic said opening the extraordinary session of the Serbian government. Dacic expressed the belief that the fact that Saric has been brought to justice would contribute to closing the proceedings against his criminal ring and added that it constitutes another proof that the government’s commitment to the regional and international cooperation is producing results.

**How did Kosovo vote (*Danas*)**

According to the preliminary results, the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) won in northern Kosovo 48.41 percent of the votes, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) won 19.21 percent, the coalition around the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) won 11.97 percent and the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), New Democratic Party (NDS) and Dveri won more than five percent of the votes, which are counted in Raska. The Head of the OSCE in Kosovo Jean-Claude **Schlumberger** says the voting for the Serbian parliamentary elections passed “in line with the rules” and that 34.42 percent of 107.958 voters took part in them. “Nearly 20 percent of the votes received by the DSS in northern Kosovo is not a bad result, if one takes into account that the SNS conducted a fierce campaign, spent huge amounts of money for buying votes, had the support of the SLS and SDP and other political groups, and that the Serbian Government introduced six months ago provisional measures in four Serb municipalities in the north,” DSS official Marko **Jaksic** tells ***Danas***. “There were no election manipulations. The SNS in coalition with the Movement of Socialists has major stronghold here. The DSS was strong while it had heads of municipalities. The people support massively the SNS as they see in it a guarantor that Kosovo and Metohija will remain in Serbia,” Leposavic Mayor and SNS member Dragan **Jablanovic** tells ***Danas***.

**Ashton congratulates Serbia on successful elections (*Tanjug*)**I congratulate the people of Serbia on the elections, the EU High Representative Catherine **Ashton** told a news conference after a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council. Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar **Vucic** has evidently achieved excellent results, Ashton noted, announcing that she would visit Serbia soon. She underlined that Vucic had so far proven to be an important part of the dialogue on the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, voicing hope that the dialogue would be continued as soon as possible.

**REGIONAL PRESS**

**Ashton: B&H leaders should show commitment (*Fena*)**

A meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee was held in Brussels yesterday where the EU High Representative Catherine **Ashton** informed the foreign ministers about the talks and the current situation in B&H. She pointed out that they were trying to find ways in Sarajevo how to help the country to head forward economically and politically and achieve progress. “This is a country that really needs its leaders to show commitment to head forward. During the visit to B&H, I heard that around sixty percent of young people are unemployed, about the difficult situation in the civil society and reasons why people feel the need to protest,” said Ashton.

**Serbia respects B&H territorial integrity (*Radio Sarajevo*)**

The leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar **Vucic** has said that Serbia respects the territorial integrity of B&H and is prepared to hold joint meetings of the two countries’ governments. Serbia has special relations with the Republika Srpska (RS), but it has never threatened of referred negatively to B&H’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, Vucic said at a briefing for foreign media held at the SNS headquarters. “I think that B&H did not have a more reliable partner than Serbia’s previous government, and we intend to continue and advance that relationship,” Vucic, who will probably become Serbia’s next prime minister, stated. He thinks the same about all the surrounding countries, adding that he will meet the RS President Milorad **Dodik** in a few days, and that he is willing to visit Sarajevo. He expects an invitation from Sarajevo and believes the central topic of the meetings there should be any unresolved economic issues, because he would like Serbia and B&H to tackle other markets together. He does not think Serbia will see a Ukrainian or any other scenario, adding that he does not wish such things to happen anywhere, ***Radio Sarajevo*** reports.

**INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

**Ultranationalist-Turned-Liberal Is Expected to Lead Serbia (*New York Times*, by Dan Bilefsky, 17 March 2014)**

Aleksandar Vucic, the man expected to be Serbia’s next prime minister, is a former ultranationalist who recast himself as a pro-Western liberal and is determined to shepherd the poor Balkan country toward the European Union.

After what analysts said was a landslide victory in Sunday’s parliamentary elections, Mr. Vucic is all but assured of becoming Serbia’s next prime minister. With 99 percent of the vote counted, Serbia’s election commission said Monday that Mr. Vucic’s center-right Progressive Party had won 48 percent, with 13.5 percent for its current coalition partner, the Socialist Party, which came in second.

Mr. Vucic, 44, once a close ally of the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, has attained wide popularity as the country’s first deputy prime minister by waging a battle against corruption and lawlessness, and advocating strong ties with Europe and the United States.

More than two decades after politicians across the Balkans stoked a virulent nationalism that boiled over into war, countries from Bosnia to Serbia to Kosovo have abandoned the nationalism of the past and are jockeying to integrate with Europe.

At a time when the struggling interim government in Ukraine has vowed to pursue closer ties with Europe in the face of intransigence from Russia, Serbia is seen as a strong example of the European Union’s “soft power,” its ability to push a country to make difficult economic and political changes in return for the prospect of joining the world’s largest trading bloc. In pursuit of membership in the union, Serbia arrested the Bosnian-Serb war crimes suspect Ratko Mladic in 2011, and handed him over to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. More recently, it signed a landmark power-sharing agreement with Kosovo, which defied Belgrade by declaring independence from Serbia in 2008.

“I promise I will fight for Serbia and for the Serbian people,” Mr. Vucic told jubilant supporters on Sunday, according to B92, an independent Serbian broadcaster. “My goal is not to be rich. My only goal is for Serbs to live better.”

Mr. Vucic has promised to continue to press for membership in the European Union, overhaul Serbia’s pension system and labor market, tackle its large debt, and improve the quality of life of Serbs, who have faced a weak economy and are becoming impatient as their country languishes on the margins of Europe.

Even in a region where former archnationalists and guerrilla fighters have sought to recast themselves, Mr. Vucic’s transformation from staunch Milosevic ally to ardent proponent of the West is viewed as remarkable. Yet some critics say it is a move born of pragmatism rather than conviction and have warned that Mr. Vucic is determined to centralize power.

Ljiljana Smajlovic, the editor in chief of Politika, a leading Serbian newspaper, said Mr. Vucic’s spectacular rise had caused some concern in Serbia that he could become intoxicated with power and revert to the ways of the past. But she said she believed that his political transformation was credible, and that he would not deviate from a pro-Western path. “His power is for real, and this gives some people pause that the new soft-spoken Vucic will revert to the old ways,” she said by phone from Belgrade.

At the age of 28, Mr. Vucic attained the post of minister of information under Mr. Milosevic, and in the late 1990s he was instrumental in passing a media law — called the “Vucic Decree” — that used punishing fines, among other measures, to silence opponents of the Milosevic government.

Later, he became a leading light in the Serbian Radical Party, an anti-Western, ultranationalist party that celebrated indicted war criminals and was led by the fiery Vojislav Seselj, who turned himself over to the tribunal in The Hague in February 2003 to face war crime charges.

But in 2008, Mr. Vucic abandoned the party and recast himself as a pro-European politician. While he had once railed against Kosovo’s independence from Serbia — which politicians of all stripes in Serbia, including Mr. Vucic, vehemently oppose — he has since taken a more pragmatic stance. He has played a pivotal role in supporting the power-sharing agreement with Kosovo that has helped clear Serbia’s path toward eventually joining the European Union.

A version of this article appears in print on March 18, 2014, on page A9 of the New York edition with the headline: Serbia: Pro-Western Liberal Expected to Become the Next Prime Minister.

**Serbia’s next PM sets reform target (*Reuters*, 17 March 2014)**

BELGRADE — Serbia’s probable next prime minister set a mid-July target to overhaul laws on labour, bankruptcy and privatisation under his reformist agenda after winning a parliamentary majority unseen since the days of strongman Slobodan Milosevic.

Reaffirming his commitment to a new IMF loan deal, Aleksandar Vucic, leader of the centre-right Progressive Party, said yesterday that “as far as I am concerned” 29-year-old Yale graduate Lazar Krstic would remain as finance minister.

The Progressives claimed a resounding victory in a snap vote on Sunday, pledging the kind of root-and-branch economic change that successive governments have ducked since Serbia came out of international isolation with the ouster of Milosevic in 2000.

The margin of triumph rivals those of Milosevic in the war years of the 1990s, handing Vucic a firm mandate to reform the biggest country to emerge from the ashes of socialist federal Yugoslavia as it embarks on talks to join the European Union.

Vucic is expected to bring at least one other party into government, then act to secure a new precautionary loan deal with the International Monetary Fund.

“I expect we will pass key laws, including the labour law, bankruptcy law, privatisation law and the law on building permits by the end of June or mid-July,” Vucic told a briefing for journalists.

Passage of those laws stalled under the previous government, a coalition of the Progressives and the Socialist Party, which finished a distant second on Sunday and may find itself in opposition in Belgrade.

The IMF says a revamping of the bloated public sector and pension system and the sale or closure of loss-making state firms is essential if Serbia is to bring down its budget deficit and cap the public debt.

“We will have to reform some public companies, and that is going to be our biggest problem,” said Vucic. “We have to do it very quickly but I am sure we will manage to do something.”

For decades, governments in Serbia have poured money into staggering state firms to avoid adding to unemployment of more than 20 per cent. The World Bank has conditioned further aid to Serbia on cuts to the subsidies paid to some 153 such companies.

Serbia’s finances are shaky, with a consolidated budget deficit — including municipal spending, subsidies and guarantees — threatening to exceed a planned 7 per cent of national output. Public debt is nearing 70 per cent.

The public sector employs some 800,000 of Serbia’s 7.3 million people. Sixty per cent of state budget revenues are paid out in pensions and public sector wages.

“We can’t keep spending two or three billion euros more than we earn for much longer. That’s not sustainable,” Vucic said.

Despite the threat of resistance from unions, analysts said Vucic would have no excuse for not forging ahead, particularly if the eventual benefits would be felt before the end of his four-year mandate.

“SNS has an absolute majority. The only obstacle would be if they are not ready to implement reforms and we will see whether that’s the case within the first three months of their rule,” Milan Culibrk, editor of the Serbian weekly NIN, said.

Investors would take heart from an IMF deal as an anchor for reform.

But the failure of the previous government, in which Vucic was deputy prime minister, to pursue any meaningful economic reform gave some analysts cause for caution.

“Although a more consolidated government set-up would ease policy-making on painful measures, we take a rather cautious approach before we can examine whether political leaders would not just talk the talk, but also walk the walk,” Austria’s Hypo Alpe Adria bank said in a note. —

**Serbia's election: Vucic's victory (*The Economist*, 17 March 2014)**

SERBIA’S political landscape is not the same any more. On March 16th Aleksandar Vucic, the leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), won an overwhelming electoral victory, shattered the opposition and cleared out several veterans from the Serbian parliament. “We thought it would be good, but didn’t even dare hope it would be as good as this,” said Braca Grubacic, a senior member of SNS.

With nearly all votes counted, Mr Vucic’s SNS and their allies were on 48% of the vote, which would translate into 158 seats in the 250-seat parliament. This means that Mr Vucic does not need to seek any coalition partners to rule as prime minster. Ivica Dacic, the outgoing prime minister and leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia, and his allies, gained a respectable 14% which would translate into 44 seats. As the results came out Mr Dacic said he was happy to have survived a “political tsunami”.

The Democratic Party, and allies, which led Serbia until 2012, barely passed the 5% threshold necessary to get into parliament and will get 19 seats. Their vote was decimated by the recent decision of Boris Tadic, the party’s former leader and Serbia’s former president, to form his own party, which picked up 6% and 18 seats. Parties representing ethnic minorities, which do not need the same number of votes to pass the 5% threshold, have taken 11 seats.

The question now is whether Mr Vucic will choose to rule alone or with coalition partners. Some say that it would be better to include Mr Dacic and Mr Tadic into the government so they fight one another rather than Mr Vucic.

Serbia’s opposition looked tired and without new ideas during the campaign. Mr Vucic came across as the only Serbian leader “ready and able” to take the tough measures needed, according to Mr Grubacic. Mr Vucic spent most of his career in the extreme nationalist Serbian Radical Party, but he now presents himself as an ardent pro-European and moderate right-of-centre leader. He played up his connections with the United Arab Emirates, which provided an important soft loan to the country, and whose leaders (he claims) want to invest in Serbia. In a country prone to sleaze, he ran on an anti-corruption ticket claiming that a vote for anyone but him was a vote to deliver the country back into the hands of crooked tycoons.

Many fear that, with untrammeled power, Mr Vucic will succumb to the temptations of authoritarianism. Yet the majority of Serbs seem to be more worried about their jobs and the rising cost of living than their democracy. Middle-class Belgraders, whose standard of living rose in the years after the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, now say that things have not been so tough for years. Unemployment is at some 26%. GDP growth this year is expected to be 1.3%

A new government should be appointed by May 1st. If Mr Vucic decides not to take any coalition partners beyond giving minor jobs to ethnic-minority party leaders, the new team is likely to be up and running sooner.

**Bosnian Serbs Welcome Vucic’s Election Triumph (*BIRN*, by Elvira M. Jukic, 17 March 2014)**

Serb leaders in Bosnia praised Serbia’s “fair and democratic” parliamentary polls while some analysts said that a Europe-oriented Belgrade government would be good for its neighbour state.

Milorad Dodik, the president of Republika Srpska, the Serb-dominated entity in Bosnia, congratulated Aleksandar Vucic and his Serbian Progressive Party on winning the elections and said he expected good cooperation between Belgrade and Banja Luka to continue.

“It is important that Serbia went through fair and democratic elections that no one is questioning,” Dodik said on Monday.

He said that citizens of Serbia had endorsed the Progressives’ policies for modernizing the country and directing it towards the European Union.

“A new potential and capacity for reforms was gained from that which Serbia chose of its own accord,” he said.

But Mladen Ivanic, the head of the opposition Party of Democratic Progress in Republika Srpska, predicted that Vucic’s victory would be bad for Dodik because of poor relations between the two men’s parties.

The president of Serb Democratic Party in Republika Srpska, Mladen Bosic, argued meanwhile that the result would be good for both Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“I think that it will affect the region positively and this feeling that it was time to abandon false politics will overflow to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska too. Sticking to old cliches, historical injustices and mutual accusations is something which is dragging everyone back to the past, not to the future,” Bosic said.

“I think this was the main message of these elections and that politics in BiH, seen in Milorad Dodik but also in leaders in [Bosniak-Croat] Federation, who base their relations on conflict... will have a similar fate as the parties which stood for such politics in Serbia,” he added.

Mirko Pejanovic, a professor of political science in Sarajevo, said that the European orientation of Vucic's politics would be useful for Bosnia too.

Another political expert, Sacir Filandra, also suggested that the Progressives’ win could be positive for Bosnia in general since Vucic’s party is focused on internal economic issues in Serbia which means that the country would not interfere too much in the politics of other countries.

The Klix news website reported meanwhile that Vucic's aunt and uncle, who live in Cipuljici near the Bosnian town of Bugojno, have expressed happiness about their relative’s triumph.

“We followed the elections yesterday and last night with great nervousness. We are very glad that Aleksandar succeeded and that he won that many votes,” said Andjelka Vucic, the Serbian politician’s aunt.

**Croat Leaders Congratulate Serbian Progressives (*BIRN*, by Boris Pavelic, 18 March 2014)**

Croatian politicians on Monday congratulated the Serbian Progressive Party on its election victory, adding that voters in Serbia had made it clear they had opted for a European future.

"I congratulate those who won such excellent election results," Pusic in Brussels, referring to last weekend's general election in neighbouring Serbia, in which the Serbian Progressive Party won a landslide victory.

"The current politicians in both countries are responsible for the present and the future. Problems from the past exist and we will solve them, not allowing ourselves to become their prisoners," she added.

Croatia and Serbia today have "normal, good neighbourly relations with all the past problems being solved through the respective institutions," the minister continued.

Croatian President Ivo Josipovic also noted events in Serbia on Monday, noting that, "the message of the Serbian elections is that Serbia is staying on the European path."

Tomislav Karamarko, head of the main opposition Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ, said he "wished a lot of success to Serbian citizens and to the Serbian Progressive Party on their European path".

Asked about his recent statement - that Croatia should withdraw unconditional support for Serbia's EU membership, if Serbia continues to claim that Croatia committed genocide against Serbs during the 1990s - Karamarko said it was time for Serbia to admit that "aggression was committed against Croatia, with the intention to include parts of Croatian territory in Serbia and form a Greater Serbia".

If Serbia accepted that, Karamarko said, "it would pass the test and could count on Croatian help on its way to the EU".

**Mladic Demands Acquittal Halfway Through Trial (*BIRN*, 17 March 2014)**

Halfway through his war crimes trial at the Hague Tribunal, former Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic’s defence asked the court to drop all the charges against him.

Defence lawyer Dejan Ivetic asked the trial chamber on Monday to drop all counts of the indictment which charges Mladic with genocide in Srebrenica, the persecution of Bosniaks and Croats throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, which reached the scale of genocide in seven municipalities, of terrorising civilians in Sarajevo and taking UN peacekeepers hostage.

Ivetic said that there was "no evidence" that Mladic had "genocidal intent" to destroy Bosniaks from Srebrenica as an ethnic group, adding that the prosecution had failed to prove that Mladic participated in a joint criminal enterprise which aimed to exterminate and expel the Bosniak population.

He also said that there was no evidence that Mladic ordered the execution of about 7,000 Bosniaks from Srebrenica in July 1995, arguing that there was no proof that Mladic was present at any of the execution sites listed in the indictment, and adding that the military chief was in Belgrade from July 14 to 16 that year.

Mladic’s defence also claimed that he could not be found guilty of the killings of boys and men from Srebrenica at the end of July 1995 in the Trnovo area, because that crime was committed by the members of the Scorpions paramilitary unit, who were under the control of the Serbian state security service.

"There is no evidence that Mladic gave any criminal order to the perpetrators of those crimes," said Ivetic.

Ivetic quoted Mladic's orders for the disarmament and removal from the battlefield of paramilitaries who were not under his command, such as Zeljko Raznatovic Arkan's ‘Tigers’ unit.

He also said that there was no "genocidal intent" because Mladic removed a sentence from the operational directive for action in Srebrenica in the spring of 1995, which ordered Bosnian Serb troops to create intolerable conditions of complete insecurity with no hope for further survival for the Muslim population in the area.

Referring to the charges of genocide in seven other municipalities, the defence referred to the findings of demography expert Ewa Tabeau, who testified during the trial that two per cent of Bosniaks were killed during the war.

Ivetic meanwhile dismissed the allegations that Mladic participated in a joint criminal enterprise aimed at permanently and forcibly removing Bosniaks and Croats.

He said that Mladic opposed the adoption of the Bosnian Serb war aims which included the separation of Serbs from the other two ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and cited the military chief’s stated view that he did not think "that Muslims should be expelled".

"We oppose and object to the charges and prosecution evidence entirely," said Ivetic.

He said that Mladic and his defence "cannot wait" to start presenting its evidence on May 13 and to reveal "all the lies" of the prosecution and its witnesses.

“When he presents the truth, General Mladic will show that he is innocent,” Ivetic said

“He acted honourably defending his country and his people,” the lawyer added.

The prosecution will reply to Mladic’s request for release on Tuesday.

**Serbian state media reports arrest of Balkans' most wanted suspected drug lord (*Associated Press*, 18 March 2014)**

Serbia's state TV says that the man accused of organizing an attempted transfer of about 2.7 tons of cocaine from South America to Europe has been arrested.

State TV says that Darko Saric was arrested Tuesday in a joint action by police in Serbia and Montenegro. The location of his arrest has not been released.

Saric has been on the run since October 2009 when the drug smuggling operation which he allegedly led was disrupted near the Uruguayan coast in an international police action that included U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents.

The Balkan countries are one of the main drug smuggling transit routes toward western Europe.

**Macedonia Ruling Parties Issue Separate Audits (*BIRN*, by Sinisa Jakov Marusic, 18 March 2014)**

As elections approach, Macedonia's two ruling parties have issued separate reports about the work of the government in the past three years.

After Macedonia's main ruling VMRO DPMNE party presented a report this weekend on its achievements in office, its junior partner, the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, says it will issue its own separate report, focusing on its own achievements.

There is nothing wrong with two separate party reports, the DUI said. “Each party simply presents its own achievements in government that were part of its own party platform,” the DUI spokesperson, Bujar Osmani, told Balkan Insight.

He says two reports make sense because, since the government was formed in 2011, “its work plan has been an amalgamation of the platforms of the two winning parties who represent two ethnicities [Albanians and Macedonians]”.

One month before the double early general and presidential elections in April, VMRO DPMNE was the first to present a report on its achievements in government.

In the document of several hundred pages, the party laid claim to a host of reform-oriented economic policies, which it said had attracted important new foreign direct investment.

The opposition Social Democrats “has never had the courage to welcome a single successful project,” party leader and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski complained at the presentation.

In April, Macedonians will choose both a new head of state and 123 MPs in parliament. The general elections are considered the more important of the two, as they will determine who will hold the most powerful post in the country, that of Prime Minister.

This is third early general election in a row since Gruevski became Prime Minister in 2006. Various polls give both VMRO DPMNE and the DUI an edge over their rivals in their respective ethnic blocs.

The opposition Social Democrats slated the Prime Minister for not explaining in his party's report why unemployment and the poverty rate are still so high.

The party also said the report said nothing about the increase in public debt, or about what it called a decline in media freedom and human rights.

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