** United Nations Office in Belgrade**

**Daily Media Highlights**

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**LOCAL PRESS**

**Pak: New resolution on Kosovo needed; President to give Vucic mandate to form government (*Beta*)**

Serbian President Tomislav **Nikolic** will give the leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar **Vucic** a mandate to form the new government, a Nikolic’s adviser Stanislava **Pak-Stankovic** told a news conference. She that Nikolic will do so after holding consultations with all electoral lists that have won seats in parliament in the March elections. “We are waiting for the Serbian parliament to convene. After that, the President will first speak with the Vucic, and others, and then propose the format. That will be Aleksandar Vucic,” she said. Pak-Stankovic also spoke about the announced new parliamentary resolution on Kosovo to say that it was needed because of the changed circumstances in Serbia and abroad, adding that it was also needed to provide legitimacy for continued negotiations with Pristina in Brussels. “When he spoke about a new resolution, the president of the Republic, within his constitutional powers, pointed to the new circumstances. What is new is the so-called army of Kosovo, the decision on the land register. The new parliament should declare itself on the judiciary, the adviser was quoted as saying. She added that a broad consensus was needed about the direction of the negotiations with Pristina and what the goal is, and stressed that Serbia’s position to never recognize Kosovo remains unchanged.

**Vulin: No change of policy towards Kosovo (*Tanjug*)**

Outgoing Serbian Minister in charge of Kosovo and Metohija Aleksandar **Vulin** has stated in Gracanica that there will be no change of policy towards Kosovo and Metohija and that the Brussels agreement will be implemented. He voiced at the same time concern over the draft law on general elections in the Kosovo Assembly. He assessed the draft as the violation of the Brussels agreement. The idea that those who do not possess Kosovo documents, but were born in Kosovo and Metohija and expelled from the province, cannot vote at the Kosovo elections, is the continuation of the policy of ethnic cleansing, said Vulin, and reiterated the Serbia will never recognize Kosovo’s independence. On the occasion of the announcements on the formation of the Kosovo army, he pointed out that UNSCR 1244 is very clear on this – there is no armed force in Kosovo and Metohija, except KFOR. “The state of Serbia is very clear and loud; we have requested and request the UN Security Council to present its stand on this. If an army of Kosovo can exist, then the question is whether UNSCR 1244 can exist. Then it is a big question whether international law has any kind of possibility to live,” he said. “Those who created and signed this should just implement it. The Kosovo army is absolutely unacceptable for us; we consider it to be a destabilizing factor in the entire region. Kosovo and Metohija is under UN guarantees, what other defense do they need?” wondered Vulin.

**Kosovo Serbs protest over election law (*RTS*)**

In all ten municipalities with the majority Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija, the employees stopped working for half an hour in protest over the announced passing of the bill on municipal elections in the Kosovo Assembly. The employees in the municipal bodies were joined by the health workers and those working in other institutions, as they disagree with that discriminating act. The Serbian (Srpska) Civic Initiative has confirmed that the Kosovo Serbs are resolutely against the adoption of the aforementioned law, which considerably diminishes their rights and endangers Serbs’ further existence in the province. Therefore, the Serbs demand that the bill be withdrawn from parliamentary procedure and that the consultations on a new act should start. Namely, the draft of the election law in Kosovo deprives the Serbs without the Kosovo documents of the right of vote and also abolished the reserved MP seats in the assembly.

**Chepurin: Russia satisfied with Serbian position on Crimea (*RTS*)**

Russian Ambassador to Serbia Aleksandr **Chepurin** says Serbia’s response to the events in Crimea was proper, and did not harm relations between Belgrade and Moscow. “Serbia sent a message through its leaders that they will not do anything that would spoil relations with Russia. We are satisfied with that,” the Russian diplomat said as he took part in the debate “Kosovo - Crimea, Similarities and Differences,” held in the Media Center. He stressed that Russia cannot be intimidated by sanctions and that Moscow and Belgrade should decide about their interests by themselves. He pointed out that when Crimea declared independence from Ukraine and later jointed Russia, procedures were fully complied with, and the process was conducted in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, while this principle was not respected in the case of Kosovo. “If we are to believe some high-ranking officials, there was also a referendum in Kosovo,” he said, adding that one of the diplomatic rules was to “speak about something if it is in your interest, and keep quiet if it is not.” Chepurin concluded that we live in a world of double standards - something he said was confirmed with the examples of Crimea and Kosovo, but also with many other crises worldwide.

**Wilhelm: Germany with Serbian position on Crimea (*Tanjug*)**

German Ambassador to Serbia Heinz **Wilhelm** has stated that Germany is satisfied with Serbia’s position towards the situation in Crimea and that he personally understands Belgrade’s position. “We are satisfied with Vucic’s statement that the future government will respect the territorial integrity of every country. We have acknowledged that Serbia will not introduce sanctions towards Russia. It is not for me to comment on this, but I can understand that position, because even the EU didn’t introduce sanctions towards Russia,” he told journalists in Belgrade. He stated that Germany would be pleased if the wish of the Serbian Government for Serbia to become a member of the EU by 2020 would turn into reality, but he emphasized that it depends primarily on Serbia. We are happy that Serbia has started the accession talks and the screening process is under way so we hope the first chapters will be opened by summer, Wilhelm said during his lecture to the students of the Singidunum University. He has underlined that Germany sees Serbia as a key country of the region and official Berlin is strongly interested Serbia being a stable member of the Union. The Ambassador has added that the potential amendments to the Serbian Constitution and the passing of a new resolution on Kosovo in the Serbian parliament are the internal matters of Serbia.

**REGIONAL PRESS**

**B&H and Serbia to improve cooperation (*Srna*)**

The RS members of the B&H Presidency Nebojsa **Radmanovic** and Serbian President Tomislav **Nikolic** have assessed at the meeting in Belgrade that relations of the two countries are very important that they should be improved. Radmanovic told journalists following the meeting that B&H and Serbia will try to cooperate more and better in the future. “There are no planned high-level meetings in the following period, unless there are meetings of the RS and Serbian leaderships over the special ties,” he said. Regarding the issue of the Ukrainian crisis, they agreed that small countries in the Balkans should not introduce sanctions towards Russia. He pointed out that not everybody in B&H has the same stand on this issue, and that there is no official stand in B&H on this.

**Priority projects draft receives support in principle (*Srna*)**

Participants of a meeting of the EU-B&H joint task force for implementing projects in B&H financed by the EU gave their support in principle to a draft of priority projects which should be implemented this year. The Republika Ruska (RS) Prime Minister Zeljka **Cvijanovic** told reporters after the meeting in Sarajevo that the priorities were divided into various sectors, and that in the next week or two, a final version of the document will be drafted which will define these priorities. According to her, the priorities are the strengthening of institutions, the fight against corruption, the socio-economic dimension which should get greater representation and the strengthening of the local development. “Both Federal Prime Minister Nermin **Niksic** and I presented proposals on how to view the coming period in the context of the economy and the socio-economic sphere, where the greatest needs of society are. We as Prime Ministers know how much effort is expended in intervening in the economy and how important it is for these companies to get support in order to get back on their feet or improve their operations,” Cvijanovic said. She said that this is a practical approach. “We will see what will be included in the final version, but I think we are on the right path,” Cvijanovic said. She said that the debate concentrated on defining a document on projects for the period 2014-2017, having in mind that the new way of financing IPA 2 is significantly different from the previous arrangement and means drafted sectoral policies. “We do not have a coordination mechanism, so that some things should be overcome in order to get support for these sectors. It is my intention for the Cabinet, all the Ministries, to study the draft of this document, and to give their comments, so that we might arrive at a final version,” Cvijanovic said. According to her, in the next few weeks and all the way to June, activities at harmonizing this document will be conducted. “Today we resumed talks on projects we dealt with at the previous meeting, task forces were formed for the sake of harmonization in order to revive these projects, and we are on the right path to do this for several of them,” Cvijanovic said. The director for the Western Balkans in the European Commission Directorate-General for Enlargement Jean-Eric **Paquet** co-chaired the meeting of the joint EU-B&H task force, and the meeting was attended by Prime Minister Cvijanovic, FB&H Prime Minister Nermin Niksic, the director of the B&H European Integration Directorate Nevenka **Savic** and Brcko District Mayor Anto **Domic**. Even though it was announced that he would co-chair the meeting with Paquet, the Chairman of the B&H Council of Ministers Vjekoslav **Bevanda** did not attend the meeting.

**INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

**To form Kosovo military would arm UCK – Zeman (**[***www.ctk.cz***](http://www.ctk.cz)**, 2 April 2014)**

Belgrade - The idea to build up the independent Kosovo armed forces would mean to again arm the members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) that committed terrorist acts, Czech President Zeman said during his visit to Serbia today.

Some countries do not recognise Kosovo´s independence which this Serbian province declared unilaterally in February 2008.

The commitment to dissolve the UCK was included in the peace treaties after the end of the conflict between Serbs and Albanians, Zeman recalled.

The government in Pristina announced the plan to create an independent miliary in early March. It should consist of 5000 soldiers in active service and 3000 reservists. Serbia disagrees with it.

"With regard for the Kosovo Liberation Army committing a number of terrorist acts during the Yugoslav war, I would rather fear an independent Kosovo army that would be nothing but the armed UCK," Zeman told Czech reporters.

The UCK was fighting for Kosovo´s independence from Serbia in 1998-1999. It was dissolved later after the U.N. Security Council´s resolution 1244 was approved in 1999.

"Let us realise that the UCK´s dissolution was part of the respective peace treaties. And now you would actually restore it," Zeman said.

In reaction to the plan to form the Kosovo military, Serbia demanded that a U.N. Security Council´s meeting be convoked. Belgrade claims that the plan is at variance with the U.N. resolution.

The Koha ditore Kosovo paper has written that the Kosovo military should consist of the existing security forces and be fully operable by 2019.

Author: ÈTK

**Serbian Province in Line for Reduced Powers (*BIRN*, 2 April 2014)**

Serbia's northern autonomous province will no longer have its own 'government' and 'capital', among other changes, according to a draft statute up for discussion.

The government of the Serbian province of Vojvodina and its capital Novi Sad are soon to be transformed into an "executive council" and a "seat of the provincial authority", if a new draft statute for the province is adopted.  
"The northern province of Vojvodina will no longer be in charge of establishing basic policy at the level of the autonomous province of Vojvodina," it reads.  
The province "will no longer be the highest body and carrier of normative power", adds the draft, which a working group unveiled in the provincial assembly on Tuesday.  
The draft document no longer envisions the existence of a Council of National Communities, but a Working Body for National Equality, which will be established in its place by the assembly.  
A session devoted to reviewing the draft statute is due to be held at the end of April or beginning of May.  
Tensions over the future of the province, which is more multi-ethnic than Serbia proper, rose in July 2012, after a Constitutional Court ruling curbed Vojvodina's powers.  
The Court disputed around 20 provisions of the law of the jurisdictions of Vojvodina, including those naming Novi Sad as capital of the province, and entitling Vojvodina to open its own representative office in Brussels.  
The law on Vojvodina was implemented on January 1, 2010. The provincial assembly previously proclaimed its own statute on December 14, 2009.

Serbian nationalists have long complained about what they see as a drive towards separatism in the province.

**Serbian court convicts two for editor's murder in Croatia (*Reuters*, 2 April 2014)**

BELGRADE - Two Serbian men were jailed on Wednesday for the killing of a newspaper editor in neighbouring Croatia in 2008 whose political weekly had worked on exposing crime and corruption in the Balkans.  
The Serbian verdict comes four years after six others were convicted in Croatia in 2010 and given lengthy sentences for involvement in the killing, but even now after both trials, investigators do not know who ordered the hit.  
Zeljko Milovanovic was sentenced to 40 years by the Serbian court for planting explosive that killed Pukanic and another employee of the Nacional paper in downtown Zagreb.  
Milenko Kuzmanovic was given five years for providing logistical support.  
A third member of the group, Sreten Jocic, who prosecutors had said masterminded the murder of Nacional owner Ivo Pukanic, was released on lack of evidence.  
Organised crime flourished in the Balkans during the wars that accompanied communist Yugoslavia's collapse in the 1990s.  
Since then, all ex-Yugoslav republics have set their sights on joining the European Union, alongside members Slovenia and Croatia, and face pressure to tackle organised crime as a condition of integration.  
(Reporting by Ivana Sekularac; Editing by Zoran Radosavljevic and Alison Williams)

**High level of corruption in health care in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Press TV*, by**

**Ivana Setic, 3 April 2014)**

Reports coming out of Bosnia and Herzegovina suggest that corruption is running rife in the healthcare sector. The government is accused of not taking necessary action to stop the practice.

Latest surveys reveal that about two-third of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina believe the country’s health care sector is rampant with corruption.

Similar cases have been reported in police and education departments. Centre for Civil Initiatives recently released a report on the progress of anti-corruption measures taken by the government institution. The study indicates that very little has been done to contain the widespread corruption. Corruption in health care impairs the quality of health services which in turn affect the most vulnerable groups of the society. According to the Centre for Civil Initiatives most of the public health institutions have failed to do enough to tackle the problem. But health care is not the only area infected with corruption. Various studies show a high level of corruption in education. According to a study, one in every four Bosnian students was exposed to some forms of corruption. Corruption has deep roots in the Bosnian society and preventing corruption is a hard and complicated task. Fighting corruption in the health care will be impossible as long as those who manage public health do not change their attitude towards the problem.

**On the Revolts in Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Brooklyn Rail*, by Charles Reeve, 2 April 2014)**

The perspective of yet one more nationalist clash at the gates of Europe, in Ukraine, doesn’t seem to displease the world’s masters and those who write for them. The spreading patriotic fever, from the Maidan to Crimea, has diverted and stifled the few emancipatory aspirations visible in the popular revolt against a system of corrupt thieves. What was predictable and possible has become inevitable, and fearsome.  
Things are going differently, at least until now, with the revolt gripping Bosnia-Herzegovina. This movement began in the first week of February with workers’ demonstrations against the consequences of privatization and an increase in unemployment. These demonstrations took place in Mostar and especially in Tuzla, an industrial city with a long tradition of struggle dating from the “socialist” era. Tuzla was also one of the rare places where the nationalist madness had little following, even in the worst moments of the war of the 1990s.  
One witness to these demonstrations noted that “We see low paid or unpaid workers standing shoulder to shoulder with strikers occupying workplaces whose managers have taken off with the cash-box, lots of unemployed, and a few students waiting for unemployment, joined, of course, and in the front lines, by angry young people.”1 The revolt spread to other cities, finally involving all Bosnia-Herzegovina; there were even a few solidarity demonstrations in Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia. If the Ukrainian scenario seems to satisfy the old bourgeois maxim that every revolt leads to new forms of oppression, the example of Bosnia-Herzegovina shows, to the contrary, that it is the social content of a struggle that limits or enlarges its possibilities.  
For two months now, mobilizations, strikes, occupations, and experiments in self-organization have flourished in this Balkan region.2 This determined and creative movement has essentially constituted an action-based critique of nationalism and the political class in power, while seeking new forms of representation. The reorganization of social life is in fact a necessity, given the long process of destruction of the local economy and the impoverishment of society that neoliberal newspeak calls “the policy of privatization.”  
In Bosnia-Herzegovina, this policy was initiated around 1989, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (it’s worth remembering that the chief economist of the Bank at that time was the same Joseph Stiglitz today recycled as a master thinker of a left in search of a master). Privatizations and restructurings proceeded to devastate hundreds of thousands of proletarians, soon transformed into easy prey to the inter-ethnic butchery of the 1990s. The Dayton Accords of 1995 put a stop to the massacre and sealed the process of dismembering the country into national entities, as easy to govern as to pillage for the different nationalist clans transformed into new ruling classes. All of this took place under the protection of hundreds of international bureaucrats and functionaries and thousands of U.N. representatives, all charged with assuring the honorable business of peace, and well paid to do so. The Bosnian state became a protectorate of Western capitalism, to the point where a discerning observer of the local scene doesn’t hesitate to write that the installation of a “predatory economy was not a collateral damage of the Bosnian war, but its purpose.”3  
Two decades later, the situation is catastrophic: an economy bled dry, demolished, and pillaged by a bankrupt, corrupt state, under the protective and complicit eyes of the Western democracies. In this desolate scenario, ethnic clientelism took the place of the social state and “submission to all existent ethnic segregation became the only strategy to survive.”4 The result: “Those who stayed in Bosnia know the meaning of free markets better than any Western student of economics.”5 It is precisely this concrete, daily understanding that is driving the current revolt.  
At the very moment when a good number of Ukrainians are letting themselves be seduced by the discourse of patriotism and national identity, the movement expanding through Bosnia-Herzegovina is making the rejection of nationalism the center of the struggle. Nineteen years after the end of a war that killed more than 100,000 people, nationalism is being denounced as a tactic justifying the breakdown and pillage of society, of its infrastructure, factories, and other productive forces, for the profit of the new bourgeoisies issued from the bureaucratic mutation of “really existing socialism.” Indeed, the construction of national and ethnic identities contributed greatly to weakening resistance to privatization, delivering the workers, “by way of national reconstructions promising them a better future, to their worst enemies.”6 In other words, privatization is here only the continuation of war by other means.  
In a society that has paid dearly, in spilt blood, for its submission to the deadly values of nationalism, it is remarkable that this social construct has cracked so rapidly. As the author of *Return from Bosnia* notes, everything suggests that “this ‘ethnic’ aspect has lost its dynamism and is exhausting itself, even if it survives as a tissue of scars more or less under the skin, depending on the region.”7 In Bosnia today—and this will be repeated in Ukraine and elsewhere—the nationalist gangs push themselves forward as local capitalist mafias laying hands on different branches of the economy, in compliance with the major Western capitalist business groups.  
Among many others, three examples demonstrate the keen understanding of this matter to be seen in the movement currently spreading over Bosnia-Herzegovina.  
The first dates to March 5, when demonstrators in the eastern zone of Mostar, the so-called Muslim zone, attempted to join up with those of the western part of the city, the so-called Croatian zone. The police stopped them by blocking the bridge connecting the two areas.8 The same bridge that was bombed during the war to cut the city in two was blocked by the police to prevent the unification of struggles. It would be hard to make clearer the connection between war and politics.  
I owe the second example to the text just cited, *Return from Bosnia*, which reports the words of a worker speaking during a mass meeting in Mostar in reaction to “a speech praising the multi-ethnic diversity of the country.” His response: “Fuck your multi-ethnic stories. Before the war no one knew who they were and we were better off.”  
For a third illustration, we have the events, heavy with significance, at the beginning of the revolt, on February 7, at Mostar, the only one of the erupting cities that lies right on the line between Croats and Muslims.9 On that day, demonstrators began by setting government buildings on fire. Then they attacked the headquarters of the nationalist political movements, setting fire to the offices of the H.D.Z. (the Croatian nationalist party) and that of the S.D.A. (the Muslim nationalist party). A nice bonfire!  
After this first phase of anger, the demonstrators opted for ridicule, mocking the local governments, the national government, and politicians in general by organizing “public funerals for the governments,” mass happenings celebrated in the streets.10 Most importantly, they initiated spaces for discussion and debate, and then opened mass meetings, the “plenums.” At the initiative of strikers, students, and a few political activists, the first of these assemblies met at Tuzla on February 11; they spread rapidly throughout other cities and towns.  
The plenums began by taking on the role of collecting, presenting, and discussing the demands addressed to various governmental units. But, despite police repression, the demands rapidly became more radical, while the balance of forces appeared more and more favorable to this movement. Henceforth, plenum members demanded the liberation of arrested demonstrators, the equalization of politicians’ salaries with workers’ wages, the end of the privileges and subsidies of the political caste, and even the firing of corrupt politicians—which is to say, of the near totality of the political class. And indeed, in many localities the politicians resigned, to be replaced by “non-party” officials elected by the plenums. As the representatives chosen by workers on strike complaining about unpaid wages—or fired as a result of privatizations—used the plenums to create a synergy of solidarity and to build a network of struggles, some posed the question of the self-management of enterprises, and attacked the unions linked to the government. The movement thus laid down deep social roots and in early March a federal coordination of plenums was set up. Workers were not alone in these organizations—far from it: the assemblies were characterized by a real mixture of generations and by a strong presence of women, a sign that this was a wave sweeping over the whole society. Everybody agreed on the rejection of nationalism: the banner decorating the meeting room of the Mostar plenum read, “Freedom is our nation.”  
Better yet, the contamination spread and solidarity crossed recently erected frontiers. People demonstrated in Belgrade (Serbia), Zagreb (Croatia), and in Skopje (Macedonia), with slogans unimaginable only yesterday: “The nationalists are the servants of the capitalists,” “Bosnian hooligan, I love you,” “Entrepreneurs = slavers, Workers = slaves,” “Down with nationalism, nepotism, and corruption,” “No war between peoples, no peace between classes. One class, one fight.” At the end of February, 2,000 Serbian veterans demonstrated at Banja Luka (the Serbian zone of Bosnia-Herzegovina) to protest against privatizations and their social consequences. Their representatives recognized the principle of the plenum and sent an elected delegate to the Sarajevo city government—a strong gesture, given the virulence of anti-Bosnian propaganda in the Serbian areas.11  
The vitality of the movement for self-organization, and the rediscovery and practice of direct democracy, constitute the principal strengths of the movement, the sources of its energy and creativity.12 However, direct democracy is not easy; it is a road with many cul-de-sacs and wrong turns. We can only advance haltingly in reconstructing political activity, remembering to be suspicious of politics, and uncontrolled—and therefore uncontrollable—forms of representation, striving to limit the delegation of power as one can. For example, take this passage from a plenum meeting in Sarajevo on February 17. The order of the day:

No one can represent the plenum, but we must choose people who will physically take our complaints/demands to the authorities. Thirteen volunteers stepped forward; we had decided in advance on a delegation of seven so as not to be too many … We thus had to decide who would go, who wouldn’t … The 13 volunteers presented themselves one by one. … They presented themselves very soberly—name, first name, activity, and two or three remarks. Most were unemployed, a few proles with jobs, a few retired, two emigrant workers returned to Bosnia, one from Sweden, the other from France. I remember three women. (Women were numerous in the assembly, and took part more often in the discussions.) Once everyone had spoken, the girl with the microphone called on the ‘citizens’ one by one for the assembly to decide. The first two were booed off the platform, then the others were accepted or rejected following a procedure that was a little random and unsteady, but always very democratic. They were asked: ‘Is this what you want or not?’ with the questions coming in no particular order. Rejections came only after several rounds of questions. Certain people, already known, were applauded and immediately chosen. At the end of this meeting, which lasted a while, one of the ‘chosen’ took the mike from the girl who was running the discussion and said, ‘Listen, … I was chosen, and I don’t want to change the decision about myself, but why not send everyone?’ Applause. The girl took the mike back and put the proposal to a vote. It was thus decided that all the volunteers would be members of the delegation.13

At the start of the movement at least, “real, participatory democracy was constantly invoked.”14 As time passed, ambiguities, weaknesses, and limits appeared. It seems that two currents coexisted, supported each other, and clashed with each other within the movement. The first did not go beyond a critique of political corruption, and had the aim of cleaning up politics and its institutions. From this point of view, the institutions are not the issue—they need only be taken in hand by “good” political leaders. Clearly, this view continued to regard politics as a separate, specialized activity. This attitude took concrete form in a proposal that seemed to carry the plenums, of a “government of experts,” justified by the goal of efficacity. Of course, this path pleased the professional political types; it was also supported by the preexisting political organizations, including the former partisans of the old communist party, as well as by representatives of a new left that was present and active in the plenums.15 Is this a sign that the new strata of the modern middle class, carried along by the movement, are seeking their place in political life, hoping to displace the old nationalist gangs? This cannot be excluded, and indeed is inevitable. But the fact that the professionals of politics advanced under the cover of anonymity shows that the legitimacy of the plenums rests on their spirit of “real, participatory democracy” and on the energy of the autonomous struggles. Political manipulators must be prudent.  
The second current in this movement is probably more of a minority. Burned by past experience, suspicious of manipulation, and pervaded by a lack of belief in politicians, it demands another mode of governing the community’s affairs, giving priority to the principles of direct democracy and insisting on the control of delegated power. Very critical of institutions and the central government, this current tends to be limited by a localism that limits the force of its critique.  
This deep divergence of visions manifests itself not only within the plenums, but extends more or less to the whole of society and even, perhaps, to the strike committees in occupied enterprises on strike.16

**Monitors Prepare for Macedonia's Double Elections (*Balkan Insight*, 3 April 2014)**

More than 3,000 local and foreign monitors are expected to follow this month’s presidential and early general elections in Macedonia.

Local and international organizations seeking to follow the election process will have registered just over 3,000 monitors with the State Electoral Commission by the end of the deadline on Wednesday at midnight.  
The civil association MOST, which provided most local monitors for Macedonia's previous elections, said it plans to deploy 2,240 monitors.  
MOST said that owing to the complexity of the elections and the parallel voting for new head of state and for MPs in two rounds of voting, it has decided to deploy mostly stationary monitors across the country's 3,480 polling stations.  
CIVIL - Center for Freedom, another local NGO that traditionally provides election monitors, says it will dispatch some 50 mobile monitors in the first round of the presidential election on April 13, boosted by some 50 more activists across the country who will help them.  
CIVIL says they are still find raising funds for what they plan to be a larger monitoring force for the second round on April 27.  
Apart from domestic election monitors, the OSCE/ODIHR has launched its own monitoring mission, with 20 long-term observers who will monitor the entire campaign as well as 300 short-term observers who will be present during the vote.  
Several foreign embassies in Skopje said they will also send their own monitors to the field.  
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.  
On April 13, Macedonia will vote for a new President. The second round, pitting the two best ranked candidates against each other, will take place two weeks later, on April 27, alongside the snap general election.  
While the presidential campaign is ongoing, the campaign for the snap general polls will officially start on Saturday.  
For its part, the police recently launched a special training programme for more than 7,000 officers who will be tasked with securing the polling stations.

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