

Kosovo: the choice of the president has been agreed

The two government coalition parties, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR), and the largest opposition grouping, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) have agreed under US pressure on the choice of the new president. Those parties voted in parliament on 7 April for Atifete Jahjaga, who was previously deputy chief of the Kosovo police. This brings an end to the political crisis related to the invalidation of the election of the government coalition's previous candidate, Behgjet Pacolli.

The Constitutional Court this February found the process of Pacolli's election unconstitutional due to the lack of a quorum. The opposition parties, manifesting their objection against his candidacy, decided to boycott the parliamentary session during which he was elected. The court's verdict put at risk the government's stability, because Pacolli's party, AKR, had joined the coalition on condition that he was elected president and was demanding his re-election. The polarisation of the political scene and a sharp dispute between the opposition and the government parties also prevented the choice of a common candidate who would not be linked only to one party, and the opposition parties threatened to boycott and prevent the election of a new president again.

Finally, after very strong pressure from the US ambassador in Prishtina, Christopher Dell, AKR, PDK and LDK agreed to the candidacy of Atifete Jahjagi on condition that she would be the head of state only until the presidential election procedure was changed. According to those arrangements, Jahjaga's influence on the political situation in Kosovo is likely to be small. <MarSz>