

The president of Kosovo resigns

Fatmir Sejdiu stepped down from his office as president of Kosovo on 27 September after the Constitutional Court had ruled that he could not simultaneously hold the functions of the head of state and party leader. The president's resignation is likely to intensify the rivalry between various factions inside his party. This may destabilise the government coalition, which would adversely affect the preparations for talks between Kosovo and Serbia, which the international community is insisting on.

The Constitutional Court ruled on 24 September that Fatmir Sejdiu had seriously breached the *incompatibilitas* principle by holding the functions of the president of Kosovo and the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) at the same time. Sejdiu stepped down as head of state three days later. The president, whose functions are mostly ceremonial, is elected by a majority of 2/3 of votes in a parliament consisting of 120 MPs.

According to the coalition agreement between LDK and the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) led by Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, the candidate for president is to be put forward by LDK.

Fatmir Sejdiu by holding to the position of the leader of LDK wants to keep control of the party before the parliamentary elections next year. However, the need to select a candidate for president may intensify the internal conflict in LDK over the evaluation of the coalition's co-operation which accompanies the election of a new leadership of the party. LDK may leave the coalition as a result of changes inside the party, thus entailing the need to hold early parliamentary elections. <MarSz>