



SERBIA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WATCH

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Ilic Drops Out, Pavkovic Submits Candidacy

Election campaigns picked up momentum over the past week.

Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) candidate Vojislav Kostunica began his campaign with stops around the country and has also traveled to Johannesburg and New York to attend United Nations events. The Yugoslav President has recently attracted criticism for alleged comments that call into question the status of relations with Republika Srpska.

Velimir Ilic, leader of New Serbia (NS) and mayor of Cacak, dropped out of the race in support of Kostunica's candidacy. Former Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Panic, also decided to endorse Kostunica despite collecting the 10,000 signatures necessary for his own candidacy.

If Kostunica were to win the Serbian Presidency he would need to resign the Federal Presidency which would be assumed by the Srdja Bozovic, Speaker of the Federal Chamber of Republics and a member of Montenegro's Socialist People's Party (SPS).

Can the Serbian President call for early parliamentary elections?

An often-asked question is, "what are the constitutional mechanisms for calling early parliamentary elections?" Kostunica has stated support for early parliamentary elections. However, if he were to win the presidency, he would have limited powers in pushing for early elections. According to article 89 of the Serbian Constitution: "At the proposal of the Government containing justified grounds, the President of the Republic may decide that the National Assembly be dissolved."

The Labus campaign has continued to tour throughout Serbia with a message of economic reform. On several occasions, the Deputy Yugoslav Prime Minister has challenged Kostunica to debate him on any topic, but Kostunica declined saying that he would debate the opponent in the second round, not the first.

Presidential Elections 2002

On September 29, voters throughout Serbia will go to the polls to elect a president. This election will replace Milan Milutinovic, elected in 1997 and since indicted by the Hague War crimes Tribunal (ICTY) for his alleged involvement in war crimes in Kosovo. This presidential election marks the first time that Serbian citizens will be able to choose between two or more democratic options for the president.

NDI representatives in Belgrade are maintaining contact with candidates and activists trained in NDI's Political Party Program, and with the Institute's civic partner, the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID), as it conducts a non-partisan election monitoring initiative. This second NDI electoral update provides a list of presidential candidates according to the Republic Election Commission (RIK), a brief look at the campaigns, and electoral issues. Throughout September, NDI will provide regular updates leading up to election day.

Television station B-92 has offered to host debates before the election. Labus has also called on opposing candidates to present their campaign platforms in advance of the election day so voters can make informed choices.

Simultaneously, the Serbian Republic government has launched a new campaign entitled "Proud of Serbia" to tout the achievements of the government, reportedly to combat the negative criticism throughout the campaign.

Recent polling shows Labus and Kostunica with sufficient support to advance to a second round. Vojislav Seselj holds surprising support from the electorate, hovering around 10% support of the electorate, likely due to the endorsement of the former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

THE REPUBLIC ELECTION COMMISSION (RIK)

The RIK has made rulings in the past week on issues related to candidate registration deadlines and the status of the presidential election voters list.

The RIK has ruled that voting will happen in 292 polling stations in Kosovo in mostly ethnic Serb areas such as Pec, Kosovska Mitrovica, and Prizren but that voting would not be restricted to Serbs alone. In December 2000, there were 6,500,831 eligible voters in Serbia, excluding Kosovo. The RIK announced on September 15 that 6,555,405 voters were registered in Serbia, but did not say how many of those were residents of Kosovo. This would mean that at least 3,277,704 voters would have to turn out on election day (in the first and second rounds) to attain the 50% requirement. The UN Mission in Kosovo denied requests from Serbian authorities to furnish the voter list of Albanian voters in the province and will not allow candidates for the Presidency to campaign in Kosovo.

Former Yugoslav Army Chief of Staff Nebojsa Pavkovic surprisingly made a bid for the presidency, but failed to submit the required 10,000 signatures needed for registration. The

RIK granted Pavkovic a 48-hour extension to collect the signatures and has today, on September 16, finally ruled to reject his candidacy and has instructed Pavkovic to take the matter to the Serbia Supreme Court.

Key Dates in Election Timetable	
July 29	Official campaign period began.
September 9	Prospective candidates must submit signatures to the Republic Election Commission (RIK) and declare intention to run.
September 14	RIK announces the full slate of candidates.
September 15	The Official Gazette publishes the electoral rolls. Total number of voters should be announced by the RIK.
September 26	The final electoral roll is announced.
September 29	Election Day
October 13	Second round of election (if necessary).
December 1	Re-run of first round if less than 50% turnout (if necessary).

Schedule of program presentations by declared candidates on Radio Television Serbia (listed alphabetically)	
Vuk Draskovic, Leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO)	September 22
Branislav Ivkovic, Socialists – Back to Base	September 17
Vojislav Kostunica, President of Yugoslavia, Leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS)	September 18
Miroljub Labus, Deputy Prime Minister of Yugoslavia and a Prominent Member of G17 Plus	September 19
Tomislav Lalosevic, Group of Citizens	September 20
Vuk Obradovic, Leader of Socialdemocracy	September 26
Borislav Pelevic, Leader of the Serbian Unity Party (SSJ) and Serbian MP	September 25
Dragan Radenovic, Association of Free Citizens	September 23
Vojislav Seselj, Leader of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), MP in the Serbian Parliament	September 24
Velimir “Bata” Zivojinovic, Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)	September 21

NDI IN SERBIA

With funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), NDI has supported democratization efforts in Serbia since 1997. NDI/Serbia works in the areas of governance, parliamentary development, non-partisan election monitoring, and political party building to bolster the institutions and practices that allow democracy to flourish. In preparation for these elections, NDI has provided training for democratically oriented political parties throughout Serbia. NDI continues to work with elected officials at various levels of government and in political parties, as well as with civic groups and special constituencies such as women and youth, to assist them in furthering the reform process.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government. In Central and Eastern Europe, NDI conducts programs in Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. For more information on NDI's Serbia programs, please contact Paul Rowland or Damian Murphy at NDI's Belgrade office at +381 11 361 2942 or Edmund Rhoads at NDI's Washington office at 202-728-5500.