SERBIA

VUCIC: ASSASSINATION OF IVANOVIC AN ACT OF TERRORISM, THERE WAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF DIRECT THREATS

BELGRADE, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Jan. 16 that the assassination of Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative leader Oliver Ivanovic in Kosovska Mitrovica was an act of terrorism. Vucic said that a letter had been sent to UNMIK and EULEX with a demand that Serbian state bodies take part in the murder investigation in Kosovo and Metohija. Vucic expressed his personal and the condolences of the Republic of Serbia to Oliver Ivanovic's family. He also said that the Serbian security services had not had any knowledge of the existence of direct threats to Ivanovic. Vucic told a press conference that it was "clear to everyone" whom in Kosovo and the international community Oliver Ivanovic's assassination would suit. "I couldn't say any more about that, I think everyone understood," said Vucic. He added that the "terrorist act" would not go unpunished and that the perpetrator would be caught and punished. The National Security Council previously held a session in the Serbian Presidency building, which Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic called after the assassination of Ivanovic. Besides Vucic, the session was attended by Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, the ministers of interior and defense, Nebojsa Stefanovic and Aleksandar Vulin, State Public Prosecutor Zagorka Dolovac, Security Information Agency Director Bratislav Gasic and police director Vladimir Rebic.

EU STRONGLY CONDEMNS ASSASSINATION OF IVANOVIC, CALLS ON ALL SIDES TO REMAIN CALM

BRUSSELS, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - The EU has strongly condemned the Jan. 16 murder of Oliver Ivanovic, leader of the Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative, in Kosovska Mitrovica, and voices its condolences to his family, EU foreign policy and security spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic has said. "We expect the relevant Kosovo authorities for the rule of law to spare no effort to find the culprits and bring them to justice without delay," she said, adding that EULEX would support the local authorities in accordance with its mandate. The EU "invites all sides to demonstrate calm, to be reserved so that the rule of law and justice can assume their place." The EU official said that a session of the technical dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina announced for Jan. 16 had been canceled.
European Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn condemned on Jan. 16 the murder of Oliver Ivanovic in Kosovska Mitrovica and asked that everyone remain calm. "I strongly condemn the killing of Oliver Ivanovic and extend my condolences to his family and friends. All actors must now remain calm, act responsibly and allow the judicial authorities to investigate thoroughly and bring the perpetrators to justice," Hahn wrote on his Twitter account. Hahn also said that "there is no alternative to the dialogue" between Belgrade and Pristina, which, he added, "must continue as soon as possible."
Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia Sem Fabrizi said at a presentation of Bulgaria's EU presidency in Belgrade on Jan. 16 that "the EU calls on the authorities in Kosovo not to hesitate and to invest all the necessary effort in bringing the perpetrators to justice."

RUSSIA CONDEMNS OLIVER IVANOVIC'S MURDER

MOSCOW, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - On Jan. 16 Russia resolutely condemned the assassination of Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative leader Oliver Ivanovic in Kosovska Mitrovica and said that it expected the international missions in Kosovo to thoroughly investigate the case. "It is with great regret that we learned about the murder (of Ivanovic). We resolutely condemn this cowardly act. We call on all international missions in Kosovo to use their mandates to take exhaustive measures to prevent possible incidents in the region," said the Russian Foreign Ministry's information office. Attempts to settle political scores using such methods is fraught with exacerbation of an atmosphere of terror and recurrence of the interethnic conflict in the region, read the statement. "We hope that corresponding structures will conduct a thorough investigation of what has happened to expose those responsible and duly punish them," the Ministry's office added. The office also sent the deepest condolences to the family and friends of Oliver Ivanovic.

DODIK: ASSASSINATION OF IVANOVIC ATTACK ON STABILITY OF SERBIA, NORTHERN KOSOVO

BANJA LUKA, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik has said that the Jan. 16 assassination of Oliver Ivanovic, leader of the Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative, was "a classic attack on the stability of Serbia and northern Kosovo" and on "the efforts of the Serbian leadership, which has given its immeasurable contribution to the difficult job of building peace and trust among the people in Kosovo." Dodik described Ivanovic's murder in Kosovska Mitrovica as a criminal act that had shocked all citizens of Republika Srpska. "I express full support to the institutions of Serbia in finding those who are behind this murder and their punishment, as well as to the prevention of an obvious attempt at creating chaos in Kosovo and Metohija and an attempt at destabilizing Serbia," read a statement from the RS president's office. Dodik personally and on behalf of the citizens of Republika Srpska expressed condolences to Ivanovic's family.

BULGARIAN PM CONDEMNS ASSASSINATION OF OLIVER IVANOVIC

BELGRADE, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov on Jan. 16 condemned the assassination of the leader of the Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative, Oliver Ivanovic, saying that all violence was contrary to the civilizational values and European choice of the Western Balkan states. The prime minister of Bulgaria, currently holding the EU rotating presidency, said that Ivanovic's murder must not jeopardize the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. He also said that he expected the political elites and all citizens to show maturity and restraint. "The rule of law should not be compromised, and I believe that those who are responsible for this crime will be punished. I am convinced that there is no alternative to the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and it should not be hampered by such acts," Borisov said in a statement and offered his deepest condolences to the family and friends of Oliver Ivanovic.
The prime ministers of Serbia and Bulgaria, Ana Brnabic and Boyko Borisov, talked on Jan. 16 about the assassination of Ivanovic and concurred that such violence must not be tolerated and that it endangered the stability of the entire Western Balkan region, the Serbian government stated. Brnabic informed Borisov about the measures the authorities had taken concerning the crime in Kosovska Mitrovica.

UNMIK CHIEF SAYS SHOCKED BY IVANOVIC'S MURDER

PRISTINA, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - The special representative of the U.N. secretary general for Kosovo and head of UNMIK, Zahir Tanin, has released a statement saying he is shocked by the murder of Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative leader Oliver Ivanovic close to his party offices in northern Kosovska Mitrovica, and that he strongly condemns the act. He added that he believed that the investigating authorities would work swiftly and efficiently. I believe that all of the international agencies on the ground are ready to support the authorities in any way that would help achieve the speedy arrest of the persons responsible for this crime, Tanin was quoted as saying by UNMIK. Tanin voiced his deepest condolences to Ivanovic's family and friends "in my own name and that of the entire U.N. family."

EULEX CONDEMNS IVANOVIC'S MURDER, CALLS FOR SWIFT ACTION TO FIND CULPRIT

PRISTINA, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - The EULEX mission in Kosovo strongly condemns "the act of criminal terror" that ended Oliver Ivanovic's life on Jan. 16 and called on the authorities to take swift and efficient action to find the culprit. Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative leader Oliver Ivanovic died in a hospital in northern Kosovska Mitrovica after an unknown person fired several shots at him from a handgun. "The EULEX mission calls on the authorities to conduct a swift and efficient investigation that will lead to the arrest of the perpetrator of this terrible crime. The mission is ready to offer the corresponding assistance in accordance with its mandate," a statement said. Mission chief Alexandra Papadopoulou gave her organization's and personal condolences to Ivanovic's family and friends and called on everyone "with any information that could lead to the arrest of those responsible for Ivanovic's death to contact the relevant authorities." She also called on "all members of the community to stay calm and dignified at this difficult time."

SERBIA - MONTENEGRO

DACIC, VUJANOVIC: RELATIONS BETWEEN SERBIA, MONTENEGRO AT HIGH LEVEL

BELGRADE, 16 January 2018 (Beta) - Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic and Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic discussed on Jan. 16 bilateral topics of mutual interest and said that relations between the two countries were at a high level. Vujanovic and Dacic, the latter being on an official visit to Montenegro, voiced Belgrade's and Podgorica's readiness to enhance bilateral relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said. The collocutors said that there was a wide space to further increase cooperation in the economic realm, especially in realizing joint projects in the transportation and energy infrastructure sectors, and through the Berlin Process, as well as through cooperation with China and other investors, the statement said. The Montenegrin president condemned the Jan. 16 murder of the leader of the Freedom, Democracy, Justice civic initiative leader Oliver Ivanovic and expressed his condolences, adding that he expected the perpetrators of what he described as "a criminal act" to be found and punished, the statement added. Dacic also talked with Prime Minister Dusko Markovic, Foreign Minister Srdjan Darmanovic and Parliament Speaker Ivan Brajovic.