

### THE END OF TYRKEY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

- ☒ Turkey finally elected the 11 president of the country. Former Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, has been elected Tuesday afternoon (Aug 28) on a third round of voting with 339 votes which is 63 more than the simple majority needed. His opponent in the final round was Sabathattin Cakmakoglu from MHP. Gul's campaign has been burdened with tensions between the Islamist-rooted ruling AK (Justice and Development Party) party and the army on the question of his alleged Islamist agenda. Turkish military chief, Yasar Buyukanit, in a recent statement said that: "the nation has been watching the behaviour of the separatists who can't embrace Turkey's unitary nature, and centers of evil that systematically try to corrode the secular nature of the Turkish republic". Nevertheless, next President still claims he is a moderate politician and promised that he would not change the country's secular tradition. [euobserver.com 28/08/07]

### NO SUCCESS IN FIRST ROUND OF KOSOVO TALKS

- ☒ Belgrade and Pristina did not achieve progress in the first round of recently started direct talks on Kosovo status. The first meeting took place in Vienna and it was announced that the talks will continue in New York in September. Both, representatives from Kosovo and Belgrade, as well as international envoys accepted the direct talks concept and confirmed that there were no talks of partitioning Kosovo. During the talks, the Serbian side, led by Minister for Kosovo, Slobodan Samardzic and Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic exposed two principles on which Serbia insists: negotiations need to take place directly between Serbia and Kosovo Albanian officials, and the only topic should be Kosovo's future status. On the other hand, at a press conference in Pristina the ethnic Kosovo Albanian leaders reminded that their demand for independence is non-negotiable and restated that neither independence of Kosovo, nor Kosovo's territory are negotiable. Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu also said that Albanian side will come forward with a written document in which they intend to support the position on independence and the basis for any kind of negotiations is the Ahtisaari plan. While Serbia claimed that no official deadlines for the new

negotiations have been set, Kosovo insists on staying within proposed time frame of 140 days. [B92 31/08/07]

### EU TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENTS TOWARDS BALKAN COUNTRIES

- ☒ Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dimitrij Rupel announced the top priorities for Slovenia during its EU presidency. On the meeting with high EU representatives he emphasized the country determination to press for "particular dates and arrangements for accessions for Balkan countries" since that is an obligation the EU has towards these countries. According to Slovenian news agency STA, Minister Rupel will meet high officials of Austrian diplomacy and will discuss the challenges for this after the official takeover (Slovenia will assume the presidency in the first half of the 2008) of the EU presidency. Slovenia will be the first new member to hold the rotating presidency of the European Union and is seriously preparing for this role. The priority of the country will be realization of the Lisbon strategy, integration of the western Balkan region into the EU, energy and climate change, and dialogue among various cultures and societies. [Makfax 03/09/07; Slovenia Times 03/08/07]