

- Serbian Constitution Poll, Day Two

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BELGRADE, PRISHTINA, NOVI SAD -- CeSID's latest turnout figures: 32.7 percent.

Center for Free Elections and Democracy says that 32.7 percent of eligible voters have cast their ballots by 2 p.m.

CeSID director Zoran Lukić says 1.5 million people must take it to the polling stations by 8 p.m. in order for the constitutional referendum to succeed, assuming that those who vote will support the proposal. He said that on the first day of the vote an average of 1.35 percent of the electorate voted each hour, while today that number stands at 2.15 percent.

CeSID program director Marko Blagojević says that the organizations' observers have not so far recorded any significant irregularities. He added that the referendum's success at this point seems uncertain.

During the first day of Serbia's constitutional referendum the turnout was 17.81 percent of eligible voters. The data published by the State Electoral Commission (RIK) varies slightly in relation to CeSID turnout figure which stands at 17.5 percent.

Kosovo yesterday recorded the highest turnout with 35.6 percent, while the lowest number of eligible citizens decided to vote in Vojvodina, only 14.8 percent. 20.8 percent of Belgraders voted in the first day of the constitutional referendum.

CeSID monitors will guard the ballot boxes until the polling stations close this evening.

The State Electoral Committee (RIK) announced earlier that 6,639,385 citizens are eligible to vote. In order for the constitution to be adopted, half of those registered plus one must vote in favor.

8,385 polling stations opened at 7 a.m. this morning, and will close at 8 p.m. The referendum is monitored by 68 foreign observers.

Koštunica again calls on citizens to vote

Serbian prime minister Vojislav Koštunica has today once more called on citizens to vote in the ongoing constitutional referendum. He is reported to have called on all the citizens who care about Serbia to vote in favor of the new constitution. The prime minister also said that the consequences of the referendum's failure would be far reaching.

Nikoli pleads

Deputy Serbian Radical Party (SRS) leader Tomislav Nikolić has pleaded with all his party's members and voters and all other citizens to go to the polls this afternoon, adding that the referendum's failure would be disastrous for Serbia.

"Albanian separatists and their political mentors would welcome the referendum's failure", Nikolić was quoted.

Reactions to the first day of voting

The government's media office chief Srđan Đurić says yesterday's turnout was "not bad since, ahead of the second day of the referendum, 18 percent of voters have already voted".

"We are certain Serbia will take the matters into her own hands in the second day and that the citizens will display patriotism, voting from the early morning hours for the good of their country, in favor of the new constitution", Đurić said.

Serbian prime minister's advisor Vladeta Janković and the Democratic Party (DS) political council chairman Dragoljub Mićunović told B92 it was difficult to estimate how yesterday's turnout might affect the final result of the vote.

Jankovi believes the failure of the referendum would have negative consequences on domestic politics and Serbia's international reputation.

"The fact is our position vis-à-vis Kosovo would be far more serious and difficult, and should an unfavorable solution for Kosovo occur shortly, and we are left without a constitution, we will have plenty to blame ourselves for", Jankovi says.

Dragoljub Miunovi believes that the first day turnout has to do with mentality – if there are two days available to fulfill an obligation, Miunovi says, then people will likely opt to do it on the second day.

"It's a bit tricky, we really have nothing to compare this situation with. We always used to have one-day voting, and on the afternoon of that day the turnout was clear. Now we have an unknown factor, we don't know how many people postponed their participation for the next day", Miunovi says.