

Leposavić/Leposaviq

September 2009

1. Area and population

Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality is the northernmost municipality in Kosovo, situated in the Ibar/Ibër river valley north of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. The municipality consists of a town and 72 villages with an area of 750 km². Basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water are generally in poor condition. Some renovations were recently made with foreign and Serbian government assistance. Serbia supplies the municipality with electricity. According to the UNHCR and OSCE estimates, Leposavić/Leposaviq has a population of some 18,600. Kosovo Serbs constitute the large majority (18,000), while small numbers of other communities are also present. Approximately 200 Kosovo Albanians live in the three southern villages of Koshtovë/Košutovo, Bistricë e Shalës/Šaljska Bistrica, and Cerajë/Ceranje. There are also 240 Kosovo Bosniaks, Romas, Ashkalis, and Egyptians. In addition, the municipality began receiving displaced persons (DPs) from all over Kosovo as of June 1999 and now hosts 2,500 of them. The majority of Kosovo Serb DPs live in private accommodation and/or with relatives. Others live in collective centres in the town of Leposavić/Leposaviq and settlements of Lešak/Leshak and Sočanica/Sočanice. The municipal leadership has actively participated in the return process of 200 Kosovo Albanians to three Albanian villages where houses have been reconstructed (UNMIK, Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality).

Leposavić/Leposaviq hosts some cultural and educational institutions originally situated in Prishtinë/Priština such as the Institute for Serbian Culture and the Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage.

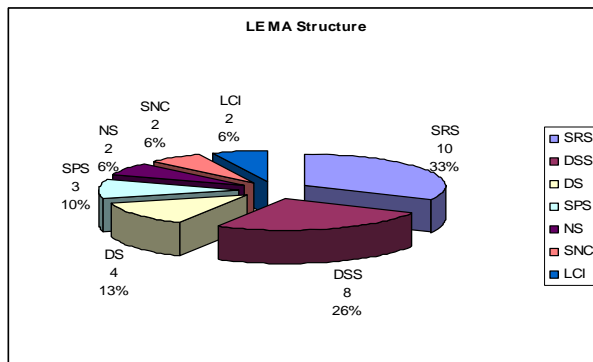
2. Governing structures

• Legislative

Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality functions according to Serbian legislation. 31 members of the municipal assembly were elected in the May 2008 Serbian municipal elections. The SRS won ten seats in that election and became the strongest party in the assembly. But in October 2008 all SRS members of the Leposavić/Leposaviq municipal assembly joined the SNS after its formation. The decision of the parallel Kosovska Mitrovica district court to cancel the mandates of ten SRS assembly members who joined SNS was finally confirmed by the Republic Election Commission of Serbia and mandates were returned to the SRS. A new coalition made of SRS, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), the Serbian National Council (SNC) and the Lešak/Leshak Citizen's Initiative was then formed and took over the municipal leadership. Jovan Miladinović (SRS) became the new municipal president and the deputy municipal president was Goran Lazović (DSS). Goran Miličević (DSS) served as the municipal assembly president, and Slaviša Milentijević (SRS) was the deputy municipal assembly president. No Kosovo Albanian representative was part of the assembly.

On 9 July 2009, the Serbian government decided to disband the municipal assembly and to appoint a provisional body, which will continue to be in charge until new municipal elections will be held. The provisional leadership is composed of the following five members: the President Branko Ninić (DS), Saša Vukašinović (DS), Branko Sekulić (SRS), Stana Ilić (G17+) and Radoš Mihajlović (SPS). There have been no changes made to the municipal departments, commissions and other executive bodies.

The municipal community office (MCO) is managed by Kosovo Albanian and Bosniak staff and works on returns and the provision of services to non-Albanian communities, mainly Kosovo Albanians.



SRS- Serbian Radical Party
DSS-Democratic Party of Serbia
DS-Democratic Party
SPS-Socialist Party of Serbia
SNS-Serbian Progressive Party
NS-New Serbia
SNC-Serbian National Council
LCI-Lešak/Leshak Citizen's Initiative

• Executive

There are 101 employees in the municipal administration working in different departments. The chief of local administration is Prvoslav Maksimović, a lawyer.

• Judicial

The Leposavić/Leposaviq municipal and minor offence courts ceased functioning after 17 February 2008 and no such court now serves the area. Furthermore, the municipality falls under the jurisdiction of the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica district court and district and municipal public prosecutors' offices that were, following the declaration of independence, relocated to Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipal court premises and now function with limited capacities. A parallel Serbian court exists but only in name.

• **Security presence**

The Leposavić/Leposaviq police station has 60 Kosovo police officers (58 Kosovo Serbs and two Kosovo Bosniaks) and one EULEX police officer who has a mentoring, monitoring, and advising function. The Kosovo police regional directorate opened a sub-station in Bistricë/Bistrica village; three Kosovo Albanian officers work there.

3. Political overview

Leposavić/Leposaviq political parties are slightly more moderate compared to other northern municipalities. Currently, 12 Kosovo Serb political parties have branches in Leposavić/Leposaviq. In October 2008, the newly-established SNS established a branch in Leposavić/Leposaviq. This party is the most active in the municipality; it is lobbying for members and preparing for the next local elections. However, even though SRS has ten seats in the local parliament, the real power remains with DSS.

In June 2006, the municipality terminated cooperation with the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and, since then, operates within the institutional framework of Serbia.

4. Economy

Almost all industrial facilities are closed or work at a reduced capacity. The unemployment rate is high and has considerably increased due to the closure of most of the Trepça/Trepča conglomerate facilities. The municipality is rich in natural and human resources, but current political circumstances block its potential. The municipality adopted a 2006-2009 Development Agenda in cooperation with UNOPS and with the support of UNMIK and the Italian government.

5. Public services

• **Health**

The health centre in Leposavić/Leposaviq town provides an array of services including internal medicine, gynaecology, psychiatry, and dental care. The centre employs 30 doctors, 96 nurses, and 37 support staff. It also operates health care units in the villages of Sočanica/Sočanice, Lešak/Leshak, Vračevo/Vraçevë and Belo Brdo/Bellobradë. Furthermore, there is a small health care unit in the Kosovo Albanian village of Bistricë/Bistrica, which is funded and staffed by Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality. However, all health care units lack medical supplies and equipment. (Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality, UNMIK.)

• **Education**

The municipality has four primary schools with 1,581 students and 201 teachers (one of which is located in Bistricë/Bistrica village populated by Kosovo Albanians) and two secondary schools with 566 students and 127 teachers. There are also two faculties, pedagogical and physical, with 302 and 517 students respectively. There is an economics college with 580 students. All are part of the public university in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica which follows the Serbian curricula. The Serbian government pays all the employees working in the education sector after they renounced their Kosovo salaries pursuant to a directive issued by the Serbian government's Coordination Centre for Kosovo (Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality, UNMIK).

6. Map of the region

