

Podujevë/Podujevo

September 2009

1. Area and population

Podujevë/Podujevo municipality is located north of Prishtinë/Priština covering an area of 663 km². The municipality consists of a town and 78 villages. Recently, the municipality has begun with capital investments in road and sewage projects. Electricity and water supply are unstable. The total population is estimated at 126,000. The vast majority are Kosovo Albanians (99,6 %) while other communities, Kosovo Roma and Ashkali (some 700), live mostly in Podujevë/Podujevo town. There are eight Kosovo Serbs living near the Merdar/Merdare crossing point.

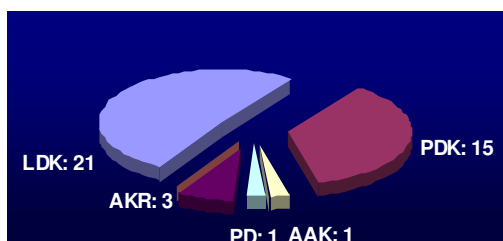
According to the UNHCR, there are currently 3,755 persons displaced from Podujevë/Podujevo municipality living outside of Kosovo. To date, most Kosovo Roma and Ashkali displaced people have returned to the municipality. [Source: Kosovo Ashkali representative]

2. Governing structures

• Legislative

The municipal assembly consist of 41 members elected in the November 2007 municipal elections. The LDK failed for the first time since 2000 to reach the absolute majority in the assembly, and has established a coalition AAK and PD. Nevertheless, one AAK member joined the LDK since, giving the later the absolute majority of seats. Hazir Raqi (LDK) was elected the assembly chairperson. The elected mayor is Mr. Ilaz Pireva (LDK).

Due to continuous disagreements between the LDK and PDK, the assembly was not able to reach the two-third majority necessary to endorse the municipal statute. Thus, the assembly is considered as dysfunctional. The standing committee on policy and finance and the communities committee function since April and August 2008, respectively. The municipal community safety council is also functional since April 2008.



LDK - Democratic League of Kosovo
PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo
AKR - Alliance New Kosovo
AAK - Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
PD - Justice Party

• Executive

As the municipal assembly adopted the new municipal organigram, the number of municipal directorates increased from five to nine in March 2009. So far, the municipality functions with seven directorates, as mayor is yet to appoint directors for the remaining two directorates. The current directorates include: administration and personnel; health and social policy; finance, economy and development; urbanism, cadastre and environmental protection; education; culture, youth, and sport; and inspection. The two additional directorates foreseen in the draft statute and the municipal organigram are the ones of local public services; and of property, cadastre and geodesy. The municipal administration is generally highly politicized, with six out of seven directors and many other civil servants affiliated with the LDK.

• Judiciary

The municipality has a municipal court and minor offences court with Kosovo Albanian judges.

• Security presence

There are 109 Kosovo police (KP) officers (107 Kosovo Albanian and two Kosovo Ashkali). There is also EULEX presence in the police station. Czech KFOR troops cover the area. There have been no major interethnic incidents reported in the last four years.

3. Political overview

LDK is the major political party in the municipality, with many prominent figures of LDK at the central level originating from Podujevë/Podujevo. Nevertheless, LDK power has been declining over from 2000 though the party still holds the majority at the municipal assembly with 21 seats. LDK established a ruling coalition with AAK and PD, which have one seat each. PDK is the main opposition party with 15 seats, while AKR has three. Worth mentioning is also that the AAK caucus leader has joined the LDK, while the only Reformist Party (ORA) representative has joined the PDK. The relationship between the LDK majority and

the mayor on the one hand and PDK on the other are generally very tense, and are further affected by the increase of the number of municipal directorates and the failure to adopt the municipal statute. The two parties were unable to compromise, leaving Podujevë/Podujevo as one of the last municipalities in Kosovo without a statute and which cannot adopt regulations nor receive donations.

4. Economy

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the municipality. In 2005, the two largest factories in the municipality, producing brick and metal parts, were privatized, and the municipality is trying to encourage business development by reducing taxes. Unemployment, however, remains a major problem.

5. Public services

• Health

The town has a main centre for family medicine and additional 14 centres for family medicine and seven health houses with 45 doctors and 140 medical staff. In addition to general services, emergency, dental, and maternity services are also provided. Kosovo Serbs receive medical care either in the centre of family medicine in Orllan/Orlane village or from the Czech KFOR. [Source: directorate of health and social policy, Czech KFOR]

• Education

The municipality has 33 primary schools including a special school for children with disabilities. In addition, there are three secondary schools: gymnasium, technical and economic, and one preparatory school (kindergarten). The total number of faculty staff is 1,382 and the estimated number of students is 24,300. [Source- directorate of education]. The municipality is facing important challenges in education due to the lack of facilities to accommodate all the students, especially in secondary schools. Consequently, up to 50 percent of students are unable to register for secondary school. The directorate of education also has regular problems to hire additional teachers.

6. Map of the region

