

## **Zvečan/Zvečan**

September 2009

### **1. Area and population**

Located in northern Kosovo, Zvečan/Zvečan municipality extends in a narrow corridor from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica to Sandžak in Serbia. It consists of a town and 35 villages with an area of 104 km<sup>2</sup>. In general, the municipality's entire infrastructure needs urgent renovation with the most serious problem being the water supply. The estimated total population is 17,000 with a large Kosovo Serbian majority (approximately 16,000). Some 350 Kosovo Albanians live in the three villages of Boletin/Boljetin, Lipë/Lipa, and Zhazhë/Zaža; small numbers of other communities also reside in the municipality. Zvečan/Zvečan hosts more than 4,000 displaced Kosovo Serbs and 250 displaced persons from Croatia, presenting a significant burden of responsibility on local government. As for returns, 80 Kosovo Albanian families have come back since 2000. The monastery in Sokolica lies close to the above mentioned villages inhabited by Kosovo Albanians and was under KFOR protection from 1999 until 2008, when a static KFOR post was replaced by mobile patrols of the area. The Banjska monastery and Zvečan/Zvečan medieval fortress are on the list of protected cultural heritage sites as well. The municipality hosts the annual International Jazz and Blues Festival in June as well as the Painting Colony symposium and the traditional children's music festival.

### **2. Governing structures**

#### **• Legislative**

The Kosovo Serb electorate in Zvečan/Zvečan boycotted Kosovo's November 2007 general and municipal elections. In December 2007, the SRSG issued Executive Decision 2007/62, extending the mandates of municipal assemblies elected in 2002 municipal elections for a six months period and appointing the municipal assembly president as mayor for a renewable period of six months.

In July 2008, the Kosovo government issued Decision 02/25 based on the SRSG's Executive Decision 2007/62 and extending the mandate of municipal assembly until the next local elections. However, on 11 May 2008 and for the first time since the establishment of UNMIK in 1999, Serbia organized municipal elections in Kosovo. Those elections resulted in the establishment of a new Zvečan/Zvečan municipal assembly and other municipal bodies, in accordance with the Serbian law on local self-governance.

The municipal assembly has 27 members: nine members from the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), eight from the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), four members from the Serbian National Council (SNC), three members of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), two members of G17+, and one member of Democratic Party (DS). The municipal assembly president is Dobrosav Dobrić (SRS), and the deputy president is Ljubomir Radović (SNC).

#### **• Executive and administrative**

The ruling majority in the municipal assembly is a coalition of SRS, DSS, SNC, and SPS. The municipal president (mayor) Dragiša Milović (DSS), deputy municipal president Miodrag Acić (SPS), and the municipal council represent the executive authority. The municipal council has seven members including the municipal president and the deputy municipal president.

The administrative branch includes the municipal administration headed by Dragan Gvoždić and consists of seven departments: general administration, assembly, and common affairs; social affairs; utilities, and housing issues; budget, finance, and tax administration; economy, local development, and environmental protection; legal, property, and inspection issues; and civil protection.

Pursuant to UNMIK Regulations 2000/45 and 2007/30, the municipal community office continues to represent Kosovo Albanian interests in the municipality. It uses funds from the Kosovo consolidated budget. The municipal community officer is the only Kosovo Albanian in the municipal administration.

#### **• Judicial**

Zvečan/Zvečan falls under the jurisdiction of the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica district, municipal and minor offence courts and the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica district and municipal public prosecutors' offices. Following, February 2008 all those judicial entities were relocated to Vushtri/Vučitrn municipal court premises and now function with limited capacities.

#### **• Security presence**

32 Kosovo police officers work at the police station in Zvečan/Zvečan. After the departure of UNMIK Police, three EULEX police officers took over a mentoring, monitoring, and advising function. In 2008, the Kosovo police headquarters opened a sub-station manned by three police officers in Lipë/Lipa village. Danish and Greek KFOR cover the municipality, while a Belgian KFOR liaison monitoring team also operates there.

#### **3. Political overview**

In June 2006 the municipality ceased co-operating with central Kosovo institutions. Following February 2008 and the May 2008 Serbian elections, the municipality only applies Serbian law, with the exception of the municipal community office which receives Kosovo government funding.

All major Serbian political parties have branches in Zvečan/Zvečan. The Democratic League of Dardania (LDD) won the majority of votes in Kosovo Albanians inhabited villages of Boletin/Boljetin, Lipë/Lipa, and Zhazhë/Žaža in the 2007 Kosovo elections.

#### **4. Economy**

The largest employer in Zvečan/Zvečan was the Trepça/Trepča lead and zinc smelting factory. Due to serious environmental pollution, UNMIK and KFOR shut the factory down. The only ongoing operation is alloy production for batteries and battery recycling. Once employing up to 4,000 people, the very low operations of Trepça/Trepča have had a devastating effect on the local economy. Today, only about 500 people work at 60 small private companies and 150 shops.

#### **5. Public services**

##### **• Health**

The health house employs 167 staff and provides basic health services with a special department for occupational medicine and toxicology and the institute for public health. Two small health centres are under construction in Lipë/Lipa and Zhazhë/Žaža villages.

##### **• Education**

The municipality has three primary school attended by Kosovo Serbs and one attended by Kosovo Albanians, one kindergarten and two secondary school attended by Kosovo Serb with a total of 168 employees. There is a vocational school in Doljane/Dolan, which is a part of the network of vocational centres funded by the Kosovo ministry of labour and social welfare. The faculty of arts and music was relocated from Prishtinë/Priština to Zvečan/Zvečan after 1999. Since March 2006, employees of the schools attended by Kosovo Serbs have renounced Kosovo government salaries pursuant to a directive issued by the Serbian Government's Coordination Centre for Kosovo.