



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
MISSION IN KOSOVO

**Remarks of Ambassador Werner Wnendt,
Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo,**

On European Political Perspectives

Prishtinë / Priština, 22 June 2007

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation are hosting three discussions aimed at facilitating dialogue between political parties in Kosovo and European party organizations, to raise awareness of the main political theories and actors in Europe as parties in Kosovo more deeply develop their political profiles.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, guests and friends

Good afternoon. I would like to welcome and thank you for your participation in this important event. I would also like to extend special thanks to those who have travelled long and far, from all over Europe to be here today. I am encouraged by the diverse collection of parties present today and their obvious commitment in general to learning more about the main political profiles of the European party landscape.

Kosovo is a relatively new democracy. In the last seven years, there have been four elections. Elections that have been free and fair that, in a real sense, gave people for the first time the choice of who represents them. And for the next elections, with open list, this choice will be even more representative.

Today, Kosovo has 42 registered political parties, as well as many other citizen initiatives who are active at the municipal level. They represent the breadth of Kosovo's many communities. Yet, few parties have a defined political affiliation or programme. For some it might be visible in their names, but their individual profiles are not that well defined. Often, people choose because of who is leading the party rather than what they stand for. It is good to see that many parties have been working to change this and start to affiliate with political parties in Europe

Today's event is the first of three roundtables highlighting the main European political theories – the ideas and principles associated with social democracy, liberal democracy and Christian-democracy-conservatism. I am confident that you here today will benefit from interaction with your colleagues and share the lessons collectively learned.

OSCE believes that Kosovo's parties will benefit from their increased awareness of specific political philosophies and, in turn, help in the development of election

campaigns which provide answers, and even result in continued strong voter turnout during the campaigns ahead of us. Kosovo's political landscape is in a process of growth and it is important that political parties themselves begin to consider carefully their political profiles in addition to their election platforms.

Political parties here have the responsibility towards all communities in Kosovo to support a peaceful, multiethnic and democratic society. A better society can be realized only with better ideas and a developed political agenda. Political programmes should reflect the role of parties in a peaceful transition and they should include ideas and alternatives that are built upon the needs of the electorate.

These roundtables represent first of all a chance for Kosovo parties to better tackle with their own responsibilities, to learn about practices and ideas that will help them to propose better solutions.

We have the opportunity today to listen to the experiences of parties from different countries including the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia and Germany in addition to that of the European perspective thanks to the participation of representatives from the European Socialist Party. Kosovo's political vision, however, must be a product of its own experiences, values and demands. We hope that through discussions like the one today, political parties will develop and expand upon their own distinct vision.

Today's event builds also upon the important principle of European integration, and the OSCE is keen to assist promoting the working relationships between political parties at both the regional and European level.

Last but not least I would like to express my support for the important co-operation and working relationship that has been established with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. As a result of our collective goals and joint initiatives, we strongly believe the political party landscape in Kosovo has made significant progress and do look forward to our continued efforts together.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a successful and productive roundtable and encourage all present to use this opportunity to advance the best interests of your party and those you represent. I look forward to following closely your successes and encourage you to continue working with our organization and its partners for the best interest of Kosovo.