

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

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

***Elections in Kosovo:
Solutions for the two most persistent issues, dispute settlement and voter lists***

Prishtinë/Priština, 26 September 2006

The following are opening remarks given at a conference organized by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) and the Council for the Defence of Human Rights of Freedoms (CDHRF).

As an integral part of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the OSCE is responsible for democratization and institution building. Within that framework, elections have always been one of the top priorities for our Mission, as fair and free elections play a crucial role to the establishment of democracy.

Our main goal has been to ensure that local election institutions are empowered with the capacity to organize elections independently. The most important part of that process has been the transfer of know-how. I hope we successfully managed this task and that the numerous training sessions and advice we have offered made it possible for the Kosovo authorities to conduct future elections in accordance with international standards.

It is vital to have the local capacity for conducting a fair and democratic election process. Elected authorities can only truly be "of the people, by the people, and for the people" when proper procedures are followed in administering the way people choose their leaders. The topics discussed today – the preparation of the voters' list as well as the establishment of effective dispute resolution mechanisms – are crucial to the fulfillment of that goal.

In 2004, the Central Election Commission and Kosovo's authorities generally demonstrated a strong ability for independent action, by co-ordinating the work of the Municipal Election Commissions, establishing polling station committees, certifying political entities participating in the elections, running a voter information campaign, accrediting observers and distributing election materials. I hope that in future elections, likely to be conducted next year, Kosovo authorities will have full capacity to be in charge of the whole electoral process, with continuous assistance and support of the OSCE and the rest of the International Community.

Let me underline my hope that Kosovo will have great successes on the way to political transparency and in achieving modern democratic election standards. Finally, I trust that future elections will show that the OSCE role and mission, in building the capacity and transferring elections-related knowledge, are accomplished.