

**Presentation by Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, OSCE Secretary General
at the Informal Group of Friends Meeting
on Co-operation between International Organisations
Active on the Ground in Kosovo
(Brussels, 18 July 2008)**

The OSCE has been active in Kosovo since 1999 as a pillar of UNMIK helping to establish and consolidate local institutions, as well as in promoting democratization, the rule of law, and human and minority rights in Kosovo. It has organized elections, built of over 7,000-strong multi-ethnic police force, supported the work of the Assembly and contributed to the establishment of key institutions.

This has been done primarily through a grassroots work in practically all municipalities by 33 Municipal Teams and made OSCE an interlocutor trusted by all communities. In the months to come, the OSCE Mission will continue to be in a unique situation as the “eyes and ears” for the international community at large, when it comes to the functioning of local institutions through its targeted reports based on the Mission’s extensive field structure throughout Kosovo. This monitoring is shared with the relevant international organizations in Kosovo through a continuous flow of information.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me now focus on the future.

The OSCE will remain committed to Kosovo. We have a consensus for that among the participating States despite the fact that OSCE participating States significantly differ in their attitudes towards Kosovo. The Organization’s job in Kosovo is not yet completed and the OSCE Mission should continue its engagement in the interest of all communities in Kosovo. Earlier this week the authorities in Pristina also welcomed the continuous activity of the OSCE.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo constitutes the largest field operation in the Organization’s history. We have approximately 800 staff on the ground and a budget of 30 million Euro. Currently the work of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is focussed on two main lines of activity: monitoring and assistance.

In terms of monitoring, the focus of our activities will remain on:

- the implementation of communities rights, in particular in such fields like access to education, use of languages, effective participation, security and freedom of movement, return and reintegration of displaced persons and integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, with a view of identifying and addressing violations and making recommendations to central and local level Kosovo institutions on how to improve the functioning of institutional mechanisms to enforce these rights;
- monitoring, reporting and advising on the conduct of the Kosovo Police Service in the field of protection of human rights;
- monitoring the Kosovo justice system for violations of domestic law and international human rights standards;
- implementing a strategic approach to property issues by Kosovo institutions, both at central and local level;

- monitoring and advising the Kosovo anti-trafficking structures on compliance with domestic laws and international human rights standards.

In addition to monitoring, the Organization will, within the limits of its status neutral approach, continue its assistance in the field of capacity and institution-building. We made this point equally at last week's Kosovo Donors' Conference.

Some examples of this assistance include:

- supporting the Central Assembly to improve the effectiveness, accountability and oversight of democratic institutions;
- advising and supporting the Central Elections Commission and its Secretariat in an effort to ensure a proper handover of all competencies to Kosovo's institutions;
- reforming local governance to ensure compliance with the European Charter of Local Self Governance;
- working with civil society in its watch-dog function as a forum for active public participation in good governance and general oversight;
- assisting tertiary level institutions in their efforts to realize the European higher-education reform agenda as articulated in the Bologna Declaration;
- supporting the independence of media institutions (for instance the Independent Media Commission and the Press Council) and media by advocating freedom of media and supporting institutions in combating undue political pressure and other abuses of the media;
- and, last but not least, safeguarding and institutionalizing human rights in order to provide sustainable and accountable governing institutions in Kosovo that adequately serve the public.

I would also like to highlight our important role in developing the Public Safety agencies in Kosovo - Police, Customs, Corrections and Department of Emergency Management (fire and rescue services). The focus of the Kosovo Centre for Public Safety Education and Development (KCPSED) will continue to be on advanced and specialized training as well as management and leadership development. We remain committed to strengthening the work of the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo. On the local level, the Mission will be working on building greater trust and co-operation between authorities and the public, especially with a view to improving local participation in solving community issues and concerns. Our priority in terms of cooperation is therefore with the people of Kosovo.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me now turn to the forthcoming UN SG's proposals for reconfiguration of the UN presence in Kosovo.

We are looking forward to the outcome of the UNMIK reconfiguration which, as far as we understand, will result in the downsizing of its presence, especially in the field. We believe this would result in increased tasks to be assumed by the OSCE Mission as part of the UNMIK structure. We are ready for such new challenges, having in particular in mind that the OSCE is well known for its flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and we intend to work closely with SRSB Lamberto Zannier. Against this background, we are convinced that the Mission will remain a stabilization factor in Kosovo ensuring continuity of the international presence.

The UN umbrella and UN SC Resolution 1244 provide a solid legal basis for a continued presence of the OSCE in Kosovo. In addition, the UN Secretary-General in his recent report has given a clear signal that the UN relies on the OSCE Mission to continue its important role

on the ground, through the promotion of human rights, rule of law and democratic institutions, which are fundamental for a sustainable Kosovo. The Mission will remain part of UNMIK and it will, therefore, continue to work with all its related bodies. Moreover, UNMIK's approach towards any forthcoming problems will serve as guidance for the Mission.

Let me now share some ideas about our co-operation with other international actors present in Kosovo.

With regard to NATO which is also operating under UN SC Resolution 1244, the Mission plans to continue its well-established co-operation and fruitful exchange of information with KFOR, especially at the local level.

At the same time, the different positions of OSCE participating States require from the OSCE Mission a status-neutral approach, which have an impact on our relationship with the ICO and the EULEX. Establishing a formal relationship would be very difficult. However, we have been open for an informal co-operation and information sharing with our partners, especially of all reports produced by the Mission and its grass root presence in the field. Today, I can inform you that this informal cooperation between OSCE staff and their colleagues from the ICO and EULEX in the field is successfully taking place. We do expect this cooperation to take into account our existing activities with all communities and avoid any unnecessary duplication leading to confusion and waste. This requires ex ante cooperation. The Mission will also continue to co-operate with the Kosovo authorities as done so far, without however, entering into activities which might be perceived as legitimizing the declaration of independence by the Kosovo Assembly this being well understood and accepted by the Kosovo authorities.

Despite our different memberships and mandates, the international organizations and States represented here today pursue a common long-term objective: building a stable and democratic Kosovo. Thus, we shall ensure that our individual contributions towards this goal draw on each other's strengths and expertise. In so doing we require clear understanding and guidance from the States present here which provide them with mandates and resources.