



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

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

General Assembly of the Kosovo Media Institute

Prishtinë / Priština, 29 May 2007

Dear media representatives, dear donors, ladies and gentlemen,

Many see media as the guardians of democracy or as the fourth force besides the legislative, the executive and judiciary in a democratic system. Independent, critical and constructive media can also in Kosovo play an important role. That however requires that you have well educated and professional journalists.

It is therefore a particular pleasure for me to welcome you to the General Assembly to the Kosovo Media Institute (KMI). The Institute will fill a professional educational gap and will soon start offering classes and seminars to working journalists, editors and media professionals. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo had the pleasure of supporting the establishment of the Kosovo Media Institute from the very beginning.

We followed this project from the planning phases, through the implementation period up to this inauguration. All in all, this took a relatively short period of two and a half years, when the idea was first conceived. This has been a period during which all of us made an effort to build common platforms and overcome obstacles.

It has also been a period in which all of you worked very hard and very constructively to make this media institution possible.

I would like to thank you wholeheartedly for all your efforts and for having an increasing commitment to the purpose and aims of this unique institute in Kosovo.

KMI is 'unique' for a number of reasons. It is the only mid-career training centre in Kosovo for working journalists and media professionals. The Kosovo Media Institute is, more importantly, an inclusive institution, catering to Kosovo journalists of all communities, and one acknowledging the specifics of life of the different ethnicities in Kosovo.

It is also unique because KMI is owned and run by the Kosovo media themselves. The media industry – all of you sitting here today – will be responsible for developing the Institute's policy and defining training needs for its media workers. This is because it is you who know best where the shortcomings are, what areas of reporting and production have to be improved and what trainings and seminars are needed. In the last seven years, it has been mostly the international community offering and initiating editorial and media training. This is now going to change.

By supporting KMI being established, we would like to build up and enhance local ownership of media capacity building. Local ownership – including financial commitment by the members – is indispensable for the successful functioning of strong, professional and independent media. This is one of the best ways to actually improve the quality of journalism in Kosovo

The success and the role of the Kosovo Media Institute will therefore depend on you. You, as members of the General Assembly, as well as members of the Board elected today, will shape and define the policies and responsibilities of the KMI. A strong media institute will in return enhance media professionalism in Kosovo.

Your pro-active participation in the Institute's strategy and the acceptance of KMI's courses and seminars by your journalists will directly translate into higher quality and competitiveness in the region. Only mutual co-operation between KMI and you and efforts on both sides will make this possible. A one-way approach, on the other hand, will inevitably fail.

This meeting today marks a crucial step in the formation of the KMI as a media institution. You are participants of the first General Assembly of the KMI and have the duty to elect a new KMI Board according to the KMI's Statute. The Board of the KMI is the decision making body of the institute and as such responsible for its policies and mid-term strategies.

I hope that the election today will lead to the formation of a representative, balanced, very active, recognized and responsible Board. I wish you and the Kosovo Media Institute a most successful start for its undertaking. Whenever wished and needed, the OSCE will continue offering advice to the KMI, particularly in the first phase of its operations, and helping embed the institute in local and regional structures. Your commitment to opening and welcoming all media in your venture and regional co-operation are the crucial success factors of the KMI.

Thank you again very much for having committed to these aims and purpose of this mid-career training centre. I wish you all a good and fruitful co-operation. Thank you.