



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

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

**Speech to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Winter Meeting  
*General Committee on Political Affairs and Security***

**Vienna, 22 February 2007**

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Dear Members of the Parliamentary Assembly, it is a great pleasure and honour to address you today.

Your interest in Kosovo and in the work of the OSCE Mission is very much appreciated. The visit of Parliamentary Assembly President, Göran Lenmarker, to Kosovo last December during his field visit to the Western Balkans was very well received by all communities and seen as a sign of your commitment. I would also like to encourage you as the parliamentary representatives of OSCE to support the eventual settlement of Kosovo's status.

***1. Political update***

Today, I would like to give you a brief update on Kosovo. Where do we stand now with the status and what does it mean for the OSCE's presence?

The process led by President Martti Ahtisaari, the UN Special Envoy on Kosovo, entered, this month, what many expect to be the last stage of the status settlement. In Kosovo, we witnessed constructive comments on the content of the proposal. The "Team of Unity" announced that it was the basis for the future status.

Unfortunately, focus shifted somewhat after a demonstration in Pristina on February 10 organized by a movement called “Vetëvendosja” - or “Self-Determination” - that rejects altogether the negotiations, the government of Kosovo and the international presence. Unfortunately, it turned into a violent confrontation with the police and, tragically, two persons died from injuries. With another protest announced for March 3, we will continue to closely monitor the situation.

As a consequence of this tragic event, both the local government and the United Nations Mission recognized and accepted their political responsibility, leading to the resignations of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the UN Police Commissioner.

This is the reality on the ground at this crucial stage of the process.

## ***II. OSCE engagement***

Regarding our commitment, the OSCE is fully engaged in Kosovo and intends to remain engaged following a status settlement. I want to stress that we would accept any outcome as long as it contributes to stability, a growing democratic society and respect for human rights.

The Mission in Kosovo has from the very outset adopted a neutral and balanced attitude. It gives us a great advantage, and the ability to engage with all communities equally. For instance, we organized a “town hall” meeting on security issues with Kosovo Serb representatives and KFOR the day after Mr. Ahtisaari’s visit. The debate was tense but constructive. Local participants understood two things: we would stand on their side to guarantee such fundamental rights as the freedom of movement, but more importantly also that their participation was needed.

As you can see, confidence building is at the core of our work. Concretely it means that we monitor the situation – for instance, through standards assessments where the Mission plays a leading role for property rights and democratic institutions – but also that we offer extensive capacity building to all communities.

We work with the Parliamentary Assembly, and chair the donor co-ordination forum to support the Assembly. We help build human rights capacities in the Ministries of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). In higher education, we are supporting the reforms at the University of Pristina and we are ready to do the same with the University in Mitrovica.

Our role is also to support independent institutions, be it the new Anti-Corruption Agency or those already established such as the Ombudsperson or the Central Election Commission. Institutions which are currently in the process of being fully handed over to local ownership.

But certainly one of our greatest assets is our field presence in all 30 municipalities where we work daily with the authorities and the people. And it is one of the main reasons why President Ahtisaari's proposal envisages strong OSCE support in monitoring the implementation of the status settlement at the municipal level.

### ***III. The Future of OSCE in Kosovo***

This leads to my last point. What will happen to the OSCE Mission when the Security Council adopts a new resolution on Kosovo? And what if not? These questions have to be asked so we can be prepared.

Should there be a new Security Council resolution based on Ahtisaari's proposal, the OSCE Mission will become a free-standing mission. The focus of our work would be expanded from institution building and capacity building to monitoring the implementation of the status proposal.

This process would help to create the conditions for all communities to live a safe and dignified existence. In that context, the Mission's work will include monitoring the decentralization process, the protection of religious and cultural heritage, and the promotion of minority rights because in all these areas, the Mission has extensive experience and sound expertise.

We would also support two key elements of Kosovo's political transition – the adoption of new constitutional arrangements that will be required independently of the future status and the organization of central and local elections. The OSCE Mission has helped organize elections in Kosovo since 2000; we are now ready to hand over this competence to local authorities. This will be a test the international community namely OACE will closely monitor and one that we as a Mission are committed to support.

The Mission's role does not end or begin with the status proposal. We also have important Rule of Law expertise to offer, which is crucial for democratic developments. OSCE has not only created and trained the Kosovo police, we also work with judges and lawyers, in order to ensure compliance with human and minority rights. If the status proposal is adopted, this would mean close co-operation and co-ordination with the future Rule of Law mission, at present being prepared by the EU.

Besides supporting status implementation, the OSCE Mission could also support further compliance with European standards. Our present activities and projects target the Parliamentary Assembly, political parties, central and local institutions, the University as well as the media. To continue these activities would require that OSCE enter into an agreement with the relevant Kosovo authorities.

Should there be no status settlement in the near future; OSCE's role in Kosovo may become even more important, although it is difficult to predict at this point in time what the international presence in Kosovo may look like in such a scenario.

Therefore, whatever happens in Kosovo and at the Security Council, the OSCE Mission will still have a role to play. I hope for the support of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in our common endeavour – to support peace and stability in Kosovo.

Thank you.