



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

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

**To the OSCE Permanent Council**

**Vienna, Austria, 23 June 2006**

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I will reflect in my presentation on recent developments in Kosovo, on our Mission's activities during the reporting period, and on the process of defining the future arrangements of an international civilian presence in Kosovo.

**1. Political Update**

Kosovo is in a process of transition. Negotiations on future status started at the beginning of the year and are expected to lead to a political settlement in the foreseeable future. We cannot predict the exact timeframe when status talks will conclude, but it is obvious that the transition process for Kosovo will last beyond the status settlement itself.

Direct negotiations on decentralization, the protection of religious and cultural heritage, and economic issues have been handled with commendable seriousness and maturity by the political leadership and the people of Kosovo. Let me take this opportunity to once more stress the need for flexibility and compromise by all sides as a prerequisite for the successful conclusion of the negotiations process.

Major changes in the political landscape caused by the death of President Ibrahim Rugova as well as the resignation of Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi took place without an ensuing power vacuum. On the contrary, the new President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sejdiu, the new Government – including the new Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs – under Prime Minister Agim Ceku, and the new President of the Assembly of Kosovo, Kole Berisha, all took office through a smooth process.

Standards implementation returned to the top of the political agenda. The Technical Assessment submitted for the Security Council session on 20 June reflects successful developments. In addition, the Contact Group has recently asked the PISG to implement within a short-term timetable 13 priority points on the Standards. This has now become a top priority for them.

Nevertheless, progress remains hampered by the non-engagement of Kosovo Serbs in the PISG. At the same time a spate of incidents in the past few months, perceived by Serbs to be ethnically motivated – although concrete proof has not been found in most cases – have increased tension within the Kosovo Serb community, particularly in the North. It remains to be seen if local calls by the community and leaders in northern Kosovo suggesting further disengagement from the PISG will lead to further tensions.

The upcoming status talks will undoubtedly open a new, more difficult phase. I would therefore like to stress the responsibility entrusted in the political leadership in Prishtinë/Priština, but also in Belgrade, to send the right messages to people on the ground. All communities in Kosovo need to be reassured that their future will be safeguarded by the outcome of these negotiations, if further tensions are to be contained and stability retained in Kosovo.

## **2. Activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo**

Let me briefly highlight a few of the activities of our Mission which were mentioned in my written report:

Most recently the Mission has played a leading role in consultations with political forces in Kosovo that culminated in the decision of the SRSG to postpone the municipal elections planned for November this year.

Since March 2006, the Mission has been supporting the improvement of human rights compliance in the executive branch of the PISG through a programme providing advisors and technical assistance to the Office of the Prime Minister and most Ministry-based Human Rights Units (HRU).

In addition, the Mission has monitored the court cases of inter-ethnic crimes as a matter of priority, and published in March 2006 its 7th Review of the Criminal Justice System in Kosovo. The state of cases in civil courts, in particular the property disputes between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, was brought to public attention through several monthly reports and the First Review on the Civil Justice System.

In the public safety sector, where the Mission could increase its engagement in the future, we have been assisting in the developing Local Public Safety Committees (LPSC) which aim to bring the Police closer to the communities where it works. The Mission has also supported the establishment of the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo (PIK), which is central to the oversight of the Ministry of Internal Affairs over the Kosovo Police Service (KPS).

Our support to the Assembly of Kosovo, in co-operation with other partners, has been instrumental to further improving its democratic functioning, although progress can also be attributed to the internal structural changes of the Assembly. On 1 June the Assembly adopted almost unanimously a comprehensive set of reforms that foresees among other changes a more regular schedule for the plenary meetings.

In education, the Mission has taken a leading role in the successful implementation of measures to restore lawful governance at the University of Prishtinë/Priština, by directing the process of electing the University's Student Parliament, Faculty boards and finally the Rector. This decisive process is due to be completed by the end of June. It will hopefully create a situation which would allow a structural reform in the University.

Last but not least, the Mission's pro-active monitoring policy in the field, exercised by our 33 Municipal Teams, has shown to be a big success in ensuring early warning and in implementing UNMIK's accountability policy. Our role in information gathering, reporting and seeking solutions to problems at the level closest to the people has been acknowledged by all international actors as a major contribution to the broader needs and goals of the International Community in Kosovo.

### 3. Future arrangements for an international civilian presence

Planning for future arrangements, in which the OSCE is engaged with international partners, so far leads to certain conclusions: a new UN Security Council Resolution may provide the mandate of a future civilian presence. It is expected to be limited and targeted to allow for maximum local ownership, responsibility and accountability. Still, enough resources and power to effectively implement the mandate of the civilian presence will be necessary, including the need for a robust field presence.

In this context, although this Mission is expected to continue functioning during almost all of 2007 on the basis of its existing mandate, these developments point to the fact that in due course, the OSCE Permanent Council might need to adopt a new decision to govern the OSCE's future work in Kosovo.

In the meantime, we have planned our engagement for 2007 on the basis of a number of unknowns, but also in line with discussions on future arrangements as well as related expectations expressed through this process by our international partners. These efforts are based on the principles of:

- **Flexibility**, to enable timely reaction to continuous political developments and challenges;
- **Continuity**, to create a smooth transition to a post-UNMIK OSCE operation in Kosovo; and
- **Transparency**, to enable clear identification of our priorities by representatives of participating States and partner organizations.

We also will follow a **comprehensive approach** that uses all the capacities of OSCE - the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and others - during the transitional period and even more after a status settlement.

The Mission is in particular expected to assume responsibilities for pro-active monitoring and capacity-building for the decentralization process, human rights, the police, the judiciary and overall minority protection mechanisms; support and assistance to democratic institutions, particularly the Assembly and its parliamentary oversight functions; and capacity-building in the public safety and security sector. All of this is reflected in our planning for next year.

To sum up, our Mission will continue to transform through this year and the next. However, the evolution of our role in Kosovo will most likely not translate into fewer responsibilities, and hence less resources that need to be committed to ensure a successful performance of the Mission. In this critical phase for Kosovo and in view of the potential changes that are about to take place with the status settlement the Mission needs all resources to cope with the challenges that lie ahead.

Let me conclude by pointing out that the Mission hopes for the support of the participating states – political support and practical support through the secondment of qualified staff – in its plans to continue its current strong engagement in Kosovo, and in ensuring continuity and expertise in the future international presence.

Thank you.