



The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been entrusted with the lead role in matters relating to institution- and democracy-building, rule of law, and human rights in the region. The Mission forms a distinct component of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and is responsible for, among other things, training police, judicial and civil administrators; furthering the development of a civil society; supporting media development; organizing and supervising elections; and, monitoring, protecting and promoting human rights.



ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Mission in Kosovo

Supporting Democracy in Kosovo

Introduction

Institution building means supporting the development of democratic structures which represent and work on behalf of society. The OSCE, the institution-building pillar of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, has been working with the three main "institutions" of society – government, political life, public life – to build up their capacity to operate in an open, transparent and publicly accountable way.

Following the Kosovo Assembly election in November 2001, the OSCE focused its work on both capacity building and institutional interaction, which is crucial to improving the representation of peoples' needs in political processes and at all levels of governance. Special attention is taken to include marginalized groups, such as women and smaller communities, to promote their participation in society's institutions.

OSCE has produced a series of profiles containing information on the political parties, NGOs and civil administration structures operating in the municipalities. They are available on the OSCE website at www.osce.org/kosovo/

Institutions of Government

The establishment of democratic institutions in Kosovo is at an early stage. After two successful elections in 2000 and 2001, democratically oriented structures at the municipal and central still need to take root. The OSCE's capacity building support focuses on advice and assistance on passing democratic 'best practices' to government officials at all levels to further the concept of good governance in day-to-day work

Assembly Support Initiative

Specialised training programmes have and will enable institutions to develop themselves, which is critical to democratic and responsible self-governance. In 2001, the focus was on the newly elected municipal assemblies while the emphasis now is on the Kosovo Assembly, its members and responsibilities.

In response to the many challenges facing the Kosovo Assembly, a multi-agency support programme, the Assembly Support Initiative (ASI), was designed to encourage more effective parliamentary work by focusing on developing an effective and representative legislature. The aim is to provide support in the establishment of provisional structures of self-government emphasizing transparency, ethical conduct, and democratic governance.

The comprehensive training programme will enable institutions of self-government to play a constructive role in political and public life. ASI assists assembly members to develop skills and experience in the roles in areas such as: principles of parliamentarism; transparency, ethics and legislative review; budget preparation; media training; committee work; Assembly to municipality linkage; constituency service; and rights and interests of communities. Parliamentary experts and practitioners are invited to participate in training and seminars to share the experiences and expertise.

Institute for Civil Administration

Civil servants play an important role in the development of efficient and democratic structures in Kosovo. The Institute for Civil Administration (ICA) was set up by the OSCE in February 2000 with the long-term goal of fostering a professional and independent public

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sector based on the rule of law, customer-oriented service and efficient management.

The priority need last year was to provide municipal officials - Municipal Assembly presidents and Chief Executive Officers, and as others in administration - training on their roles and responsibilities within the structures of governance. Such capacity building work aims to improve the relationship between municipal bodies in the administrative and decision-making processes, including the need for long-term municipal planning.

The work of the ICA will be gradually be transferred in to the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA), to both strengthen the functions of government and promote local self-responsibility.

Institutions of Political Life

The existence of a broad spectrum of political parties operating in a healthy political climate is crucial in any democracy. The OSCE aims to develop viable, skilled and independent democratic parties that are able to promote themselves. Strengthened organisational capacity depends on the commitment of political parties to modernise their campaigning and governmental practices, their structures and standards, as well as policy formulation

Political Party and Gender programmes

In 2002, the focus is on the actual substance of the policies that parties will have to face and develop, including the awareness to concerns of people, of the voters, as such input can be an important tool in future electoral success. Training programmes are run to build the capacity of political parties to enhance their functioning in a democratic society.

The OSCE will also continue to host Political Party Consultative Forums (PPCF), a mechanism through which political parties can engage in dialogue with each other and the international community.

Women too play a crucial role in all aspects of society and, through their full participation and empowerment, can actively contribute to enduring solutions in Kosovo's transition to a democratic society. To date, the OSCE has worked to foster women's participation in all sectors of society, to strengthen their contribution as decision-makers in both the political and public life. Special emphasis is placed on empowering women presently in government and skills training for future candidates.

Civic education and participation

An element of a vibrant democracy is hearing, and acting upon, the voice of the electorate. A number of projects are being run by the OSCE that support the development of democratic structures through "institutional interaction", encouraging citizens to advocate their legitimate concerns and holding elected official accountable for their action.

The Responsible Governance and Civic Participation (ReGoCiP) programme offers practical training to municipal institutions - assembly members, the civil administration and civil society - on the responsibility of the government to the public, and the active participation of non-governmental actors to influence

the response of government to daily concerns. The OSCE's Civil Society Academy aims to develop skilled NGOs, enabling them to engage and interact with the public and decision-makers in policy formulation and its implementation. "Your Municipality - Your Rights" is a programme that emphasises citizens' awareness and participation in municipal and central governance structures.

Institutions of Public Life

Civil society plays an important and influential role in voicing citizens' interests and concerns before government. The OSCE is helping to build up the capacity of NGOs and civic groups to participate in the democratic process. Particular attention is paid to how civil society can work effectively as critical and supportive partners to the institutions of government in Kosovo. Their voices aim promote democracy and good governance, in areas such as public policy making and its implementation, through a process of dialogue and interaction with other institutions.

Non-Governmental Organisations

The OSCE has worked with the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) to bring the NGO community together to identify ways to enhance the voice of citizens and civil society organisations. The intention is to build their capacity to play an increasingly active role in the development of a democratic and pluralistic society. Advice is also being given to civil society actors on the possibilities to establish an advisory board for NGOs as a means to develop effective relations with governing structures.

A network among NGOs and OSCE civil society centres in the region is also a priority for cross community and cross regional developments in civil society activities. This leads to greater dialogue and interaction that will help enhance the NGO community's role to further the development of good governance in southeast Europe.

Smaller and Special Interest Communities

The OSCE continues to place great emphasis on raising awareness of the concerns of Kosovo's smaller communities. Confidence and security building measures, aimed at increasing the participation of smaller communities in society, have been and are being put into place.

OSCE has established a number of Community Centres (CC) in smaller communities to create and support conditions for increased citizen involvement in the decision-making process. Centres serve as an information intersection that connects with the larger developments within a community. They are also a place for training and to assist community-based initiatives and help nurture the conditions for democratic developments.

Special efforts are also being made to improve representation amongst Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities so that they can voice their concerns more effectively. Traditionally kept out of the mainstream political and social structures, these communities are dispersed throughout Kosovo and remain particularly vulnerable.

