

KosovaLive, 18 February 2005

Interview with the OSCE Ambassador in Albania Pavel Vacek

Conduct of Democratic Elections in Albania also a Contribution to the Region

By Elona Daka

TIRANA (KosovaLive) – The Ambassador of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Pavel Vacek said in an interview with KosovaLive that a democratic conduct of the parliamentary elections in Albania would contribute not only to the country, but to the entire region, as well.

Asked by KosovaLive what would be the OSCE contribution in Albania during 2005, and what the co-operation with the Albanian Government would mainly consist of, Vacek declared: “The Presence in Albania will continue to fulfil its mandate updated in 2003 – from assisting in the property and judicial reform to supporting the police. The top priority, both in terms of our human and financial resources, is the support for electoral reform and the preparations and conduct of 2005 elections.”

Also, Vacek told the Agency his opinion on the current political climate in Tirana. “I feel that the political representation is seriously seized of finalising the electoral legislation and of the preparations for the elections. However, it is desirable that these debates yield a consensus outcome, most importantly in agreeing on redrawing the electoral zones as soon as possible. The OSCE Presence in Albania has contributed to this process by assisting in legislation development and by providing technical support for election preparation,” he said.

Asked what the OSCE would suggest to the Tirana political leadership to do so that the holding of free, fair and democratic elections in spring 2005 is ensured, Vacek suggests “just good political will”. “I would suggest that they demonstrate good political will for resolving the outstanding legal and systemic issues, refrain from politicising the technical preparations, mobilise resources, both financial and technical, for the preparations and the conduct of elections.”

But the OSCE Ambassador does not comment in detail on the work done by the Albanian Government with regard to the negotiations with the European Union. “We do not comment on issues relevant for other Institutions, that goes beyond our remit. However, we do know that OSCE standards, especially in the Human Dimension, represent a clear reference for the European Union in pursuing the stabilisation and association process,” he added.

Also, Vacek answers briefly to the KosovaLive question whether he thinks that the tasks set by Brussels to the official Tirana have been fulfilled, and whether progress has been made. “This is not relevant for the OSCE Presence in Albania,” he said.

Asked what would happen to Albania if the parliamentary elections would not be held in accordance with the parameters, Vacek says: “that would only be a setback for the democracy”. “The OSCE Presence does its best to assist Albania in preparing the elections that would meet the standards as closely as possible. Failure to achieve that would be a great setback for the Albanian democracy.”

Vacek sees the good conduct of the parliamentary elections in Albania closely related to the region. “Successful conduct of democratic elections is a contribution to the regional stability and co-operation,” he concludes.