



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

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

**Permanent Council
Vienna, 1st March 2007**

The following are the speech delivered by the Head of Mission to the OSCE Permanent Council.

Dear Ambassadors

- Kosovo has remained focused on the future status process since my last presentation to you in June 2006. The Kosovo Negotiating Team has acted with unity and has maintained a high level of engagement in the process. It is well understood in Pristina that constructive engagement, continuous standards implementation and unity are essential for any development in Kosovo.
- The decision of the Special Envoy to wait for the Serbian parliamentary elections before presenting his proposal to the sides was met with mature reactions in Pristina- despite the widely supported position that delays should be avoided.
- The proposal, once shared by the Special Envoy, was well-received by both the political leaders and the public in Pristina, though some concerns were voiced on elements of the package. Ongoing consultations currently here in Vienna provide an opportunity to discuss issues of concern with both sides.
- However, certain radical elements within the Albanian community, such as the Vetëvendosje ("Self-Determination") movement, have rejected the proposal in an active campaign against the package and the International Communities presence in Kosovo. The violence resulting from its protest in Pristina on 10 February, with two people killed, as well as the bomb explosion damaging three UNMIK vehicles on 19 February - for which an unknown faction of the dissolved Kosovo Liberation Army claimed responsibility- could be a cause for concern. Another demonstration is planned for the 3rd of March.
- These incidents mentioned were followed by an explosion in an OSCE parking compound on 26 February. Indications so far are that OSCE was not the target of the attack. I would however like to express hope that no more incidents will occur.
- On its part, the Kosovo Serb community has largely rejected the Ahtisaari proposal for perceived attributes of a state for Kosovo, through declarations and peaceful demonstrations. The content of the proposal and in particular the level of decentralization have not yet been officially commented on by Kosovo Serb leaders. At the same time, the engagement of the community in and with the Provisional institutions has remained limited, especially in Northern Kosovo.

- Against this background, the Unity Team has increased efforts to reach out to all communities, to explain their political choices and benefits the status package could bring to all communities. Such efforts - should intensify in the sensitive period of the following weeks and months.
- Apart from the reactions to the status proposal, the security situation remains relatively calm, with the exception of a small number of incidents.
- The Kosovo Government has survived internal political challenges, such as the LDK party split following the parties internal elections, and the departure of the party leader Ramush Haradinaj of the AAK – the other main coalition partner-to the Hague on March 26. At the same time, the Government maintained focus on Standards implementation, achieving most of the 13 Contact Group's priorities, and started preparing for a transition to a post-1244 scenario.

OSCE activities

- While the OSCE has remained neutral to the status process, the Mission has worked intensively in supporting the standards implementation process on the ground that would be conducive to a successful settlement.
- In particular (and just to mention a few highlights): The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been using its extensive field presence with Municipal teams working in all 30 existing Municipalities and three pilot Municipal units focussing on results-oriented proactive monitoring. The Mission's activities during the reporting period included, monitoring and capacity building exercises on:
 - anti-trafficking,
 - minority employment,
 - housing and property rights,
 - ensuring equal access to education,
 - political impartiality in the civil service,
 - financial management.
- In addition, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo has assisted local authorities in preparing lessons learned from the creation and functioning of the Pilot Municipal Units, lessons that can be used in the future decentralization process.
- In the Security sector, the handover of Kosovo Centre for Public Safety Education and Development (KCPSED) to Provisional Institutions of Self-Governance (PISG) is about to be finalised. The continued capacity building of KCPSED is almost complete. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo has also completed the monitoring of the Professional Standards Unit of the Kosovo Police Service and continues to support the Police Inspectorate.
- Regarding elections, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo has worked with the Central Elections Commission, and the Transition Working Group on Elections, on reaching consensus on the main principles of Kosovo's future electoral legislation and on the technical preparation of elections.

- The Mission will soon begin preparing its programme outline for 2008 and will suggest to continue with most of its activities.
- However, a main challenge facing the Mission is its transformation, should there be a status settlement. As I have reiterated many times, our work is not status driven, but we still have to pay attention to the political dynamics of the Ahtisaari process, and plan our activities accordingly.
- The Special Envoy, during his presentation to the Permanent Council last week, made the point that the OSCE should continue to play a strong role in Kosovo in the future. His proposal mentions the OSCE in three Annexes, and envisages that OSCE maintain a mission in Kosovo, assisting, in general the further democratic development, and in particular the work of the future International Civilian Representative in monitoring the implementation of the status settlement. In that sense, special attention is given to the OSCE field presence, which would remain the only comprehensive international civilian presence on the ground.
- Should the status settlement proposal be accepted, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo would be requested to monitor its implementation particularly in the areas of decentralization, protection of community rights and protection of Serbian religious and cultural heritage in Kosovo. I can not emphasize more the importance of such an engagement, and the trust that our organization and our Mission has been given by the Special Envoy, as well as other international actors.
- To that effect we are exploring possibilities for our future co-operation and co-ordination with all actors in Kosovo, first and foremost the EU, UN, NATO and local authorities, to avoid any duplication of efforts and use both funds and human resources in the most efficient and expedient manner.
- This is a crucial juncture for Kosovo, and we need to live up to our commitments. It is very important that the OSCE Mission remains as strong as it is now, and even be ready for more assistance, should the situation on the ground renders it necessary. Any plans on downsizing at this moment would only send a wrong political signal on OSCE's dedication to help create a sustainable and functional multiethnic democracy in Kosovo.

In the end, let me thank you for all your support given to our mission so far. I am looking forward to all comments you might have, as well as suggestions and advise that could help us improve our work. Thank you very much.