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Interview with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Dimitrios Kypreos
(translation)

We want you to free the MPs' mandates

The OSCE considers the relationship of MPs to citizens on the one, and to political parties on the other hand, to be a crucial issue. The entire international community, the EU and the OSCE are very interested in having MPs' mandates belong to them, and I have an impression that Serbian authorities are very clear on this. We expect to see progress as soon as possible, says the Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Dimitrios Kypreos in an interview with daily Blic referring to the Government's hesitation in doing away with the practice of 'blanko' resignations.

The elections will be repeated on 17 April, but Mufti Muamer Zukorlic announced that he will boycott the elections.

Q: Will the elections be regular in case of a boycott?

"Last September the situation was very tense and there was a threat of unrest. With the assistance of the OSCE the three lists tried to find a solution and there was significant progress. After the legally prescribed deadline passed with the Council not having been formed, the elections have to be repeated. In Serbia, a country that wishes to become an EU member, the law must be respected. All parties have the right to participate in the elections or to abstain. Our position is that the Council should be representative and should include all representatives, in order for them to successfully work in the fields of education, language, culture and national minority media. We expect this from the upcoming elections for BNC.

Q: How would you assess the degree of the freedom of the media considering the frequent threats directed at journalists and the fact that some murders have not yet been solved?

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The OSCE is carefully monitoring the events in this field, and the safety of journalists is the focus of our attention. The Mission, and I personally, follow all cases of threats directed at journalists and we support each journalist being threatened.

Q: How would you assess the fact that the Ministry did not amend PIL although the CC made a decision that some of its provisions are unconstitutional?

At the outset, in the summer of 2009, the OSCE expressed its reservations with regard to the content of the law and the procedure through which it was adopted. The implementation of the law is most important, and that parts of the law which were criticized the most and that were declared unconstitutional by the CC have not yet been implemented. The OSCE encourages that further steps be taken to clear the situation.

Box

Solution for Roma Soon

Q: It is noticeable that intolerance towards the Roma has recently again been on the rise, to what extent are their rights being violated?

We have ongoing contacts with the Roma National Council. Of course, there are problems. However, I have recently noticed an increased interest in society in problems facing Roma. Even your question on whether Roma rights are being violated demonstrates the increased sensitivity in Serbian society towards the Roma. This provides hope that we will soon find a solution for the problems facing the Roma.