

HELSINKI COMMITTEE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS IN SERBIA



SERB COMMUNITY IN KOSOVO

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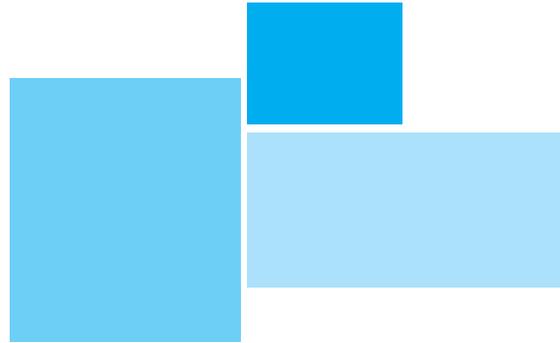
**Serb Community
in Kosovo**

June, 2012

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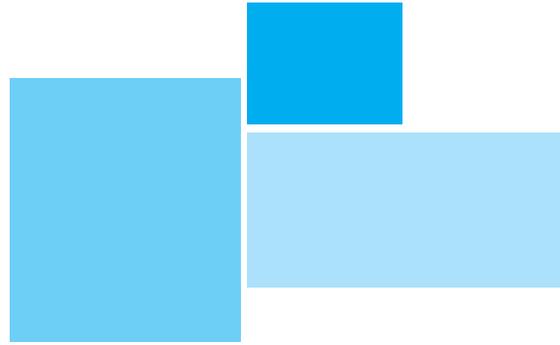
About this research

In the period January – June 2012 a team of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia conducted a research on initial effects of the Ahtisaari plan on the situation of the Serb community in Kosovo. In the course of one-day visits to the municipalities of Ranillug/Ranilug, Partesh/Parteš, Kllokot/Klokot, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Graçanicë/Gračanica and Shtërpce/Štrpce the team interviewed municipal officials and civil society representatives. It also interviewed citizens in Rahovec/Orahovac and Gorazhdec/Goraždevac where Serbs are not in the majority.

The research was also conducted in North Mitrovica in late June 2012 – at the time the municipal administration formed under the Ahtisaari plan became operational despite the strong pressure from Serb parallel structures.

Conclusions and recommendations that make part of this research derive from actual findings and other independent sources of information. Excerpts from interviews or summarized interviews with municipal officials and civil society activists in the municipalities formed under the Ahtisaari plan and in solidly Serb populated communities are presented in a separate chapter.

This research was realized with the assistance from the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society.



Conclusions and recommendations – municipalities formed under the Ahtisaari plan

Socioeconomic development

The newly formed and solidly Serb populated municipalities south of the Ibër/Ibar River have made considerable progress – in infrastructure and overall quality of citizens’ everyday life. These are the municipalities that have accepted the Ahtisaari plan and integrated into Kosovo society. On the other hand, the absence of a clear-cut strategy for socioeconomic development is a major challenge they have to cope with. Such strategy preconditions fresh investment that secures jobs and opens prospects not only to citizens of these municipalities but also to everyone in Kosovo as a whole.

Major infrastructural projects have been realized in newly formed municipalities – in Klllokot/Klokot, Partesh/Parteš and Ranillug/Ranilug in the first place. First infrastructural investment in the villages making up these municipalities in the past 40-50 years has been made in construction of roads, sewage and water supply systems. Modern medical centers have been either reconstructed or build in almost all municipalities. Buildings to house municipal administrations have been erected or are about to be in most of them.

Sales of agricultural products at local markets, as well as their export, are the biggest problems for citizens of rural areas.

Cooperation between municipalities should be guided by economic rather than ethnic criteria. Densely populated Serb municipalities should seek economic partners throughout Kosovo municipalities regardless of their ethnic structure.

Ethnically mixed municipalities call for special attention. Development of their infrastructure lags behind the infrastructure of the newly formed municipalities.

The young in the municipalities included in this research are the most vulnerable group of population: they are affected the most by bleak economy prospects. The great majority of young people are unemployed. A survey of their actual needs would be most welcome for future developmental projects.

Social life

Kosovo Serbs' freedom of movement has improved considerably. On the other hand, despite the progress made in Serb community's integration into Kosovo society little has been accomplished at social and cultural level – in daily communication between citizens from two ethnic communities. No doubt that enhanced mutual communication would greatly contribute to feeling of security among citizens.

Actually, young people from the two ethnic communities do not communicate at all. Programs for strengthening social interaction among different ethnic groups call for by far more commitment and patient work. Civil society organizations from Serbia and Kosovo could be most valuable in this regard. Otherwise, ethnic communities will continue to isolate themselves.

Local administration and implementation of the Ahtisaari plan and legislation deriving from it

Judicial reform and establishment of municipal courts is the Achilles' heel of the decentralization process. This is what the great majority of interviewed municipal officials and civil society activists complained of in Serb municipalities. Legal proceedings, particularly in the cases of property settlement, are protracted and as such adversely affect all citizens regardless of their ethnic origin.

Most municipalities lack human resources with proper education. This is manifest in the police commander cadre – many of them do not meet the criteria for the office they occupy. Inadequate education should be taken into consideration in the appointment of high police officials so as to find compromise solutions that are in the best interest of citizens.

Women in high administrative posts in Serb municipalities are few. No woman in the region south of the Ibër/Ibar River has been elected a mayor. (The first and only woman mayor of Serb origin is Adrijana Hodzic in North Mitrovica.) Situation of women and gender equality should be improved the more so since in the past twelve years women have been by far more open to cooperation between two ethnic communities than men.

Though the use of mother tongue is constitutionally guaranteed, the interviewed Serbs often complain of inadequate implementation of this provision.

Education

Many of the interviewed Kosovo Serbs complained of bad quality of elementary and secondary education. Some teachers are not qualified for their jobs, while overcrowding plagues secondary schools (a single building often houses several secondary and elementary schools). Apart from providing better education, school authorities in charge of curricula should pay more attention to the actual needs of local communities.

The media

Channel II in Serbian of the RTV Kosovo should start broadcasting as soon as possible. As things stand now, citizens of Serb origin lack information about activities of Kosovo institutions and major developments in Kosovo. Belgrade-seated media cannot provide this information. Given that the Serb community bears a grudge about legality of the Channel II and seriously doubts its objectivity, Kosovo authorities should make sure that it operates transparently and strengthen mechanisms against misuse of the public broadcasting service.

When it comes to the print media, Kosovo Serbs are informed in their mother tongue solely by Belgrade-seated dailies and magazines – and only when and if these are available to them. In some of the municipalities covered by this research people have much difficulty to get their copies of daily papers.

The situation is better when it comes to the broadcast media considering that almost every municipality has a radio – or even a TV station – of its own.

All these local media should keep citizens better posted about implementation of Kosovo legislation and the existing mechanisms for the exercise of ethnic rights because Kosovo Serbs south of the Ibër/Ibar are rather worried now that Kosovo expects the end of supervised independence: they are anxious about future implementation of the laws regulating the position of the Serb community.

Civil sector

There is an urgent need for development of civil society programs to include as many as possible young people. In almost all municipalities the interviewed citizens said young people from different ethnic communities should get together and communicate. On the other hand, parents often obstruct such programs, especially those who pass over negative stereotypes about other ethnic communities, Albanian in the first place, to their children. The international community should provide more support to youth programs and various educational outreaches that assist young people in overcoming ethnically based bias and integrating into the society.

Actually, well-designed youth programs precondition a multiethnic and multicultural society in Kosovo based on modern values.

This is closely connected with development of cultural institutions that are rather neglected at present. Young people have nowhere to spend their free time except in coffee shops. None of the municipalities encompassed by the research has a movie theater, while cultural centers are either ruined or closed down. Non-existing recreation grounds for elementary and secondary school students are among the most pressing problem.

Serb Orthodox Church

Some circles in the Serb Orthodox Church – the institution with biggest influence on Kosovo Serbs – hold moderate stands and manifest readiness for compromise solutions to unsettled issues. A part of the clergy stand up against labeling certain Serbs “traitors” and other “patriots,” and oppose the idea about Kosovo partition.

Construction of factories, roads and recreation areas in the vicinity of Serb monasteries and churches the status of which is regulated under the Law on Protection Zones calls for some compromise solutions.

Parallel municipalities

Parallel municipal administrations are usually there just to assist citizens to obtain documents issued in Serbia such as birth or death certificates, and receive salaries, pensions and welfare checks from Serbia's budget. This is about a large number of fictive employees, ex-workers of Serbian institutions and companies. Depriving them of these benefits could easily spur social tension. A solution to the problem should be found in a compromise that would make their income transparent and taxable.

Besides, some of public servants Serbia pays for their fictive work could apply for real jobs in the public service in Kosovo.

European integration

Integration into EU is in the best interest of all citizens of Kosovo without exception. The process of Kosovo's accession to EU implies guarantees for the respect of human rights and freedoms, and the respect for minority rights, which is of major importance to the Serb community. Anarchy in North Kosovo is one of the biggest stumbling blocs in the way of Kosovo's road toward to EU but of Serbia's as well.

Visa liberalization for Kosovo would strongly encourage Kosovo Serbs to acknowledge Kosovo documents, passports and ID cards.

The Kosovo government should see full implementation of minority legislation, implementation of the Ahtisaari plan and visibly improved situation of minority communities as its ticket to European integration.

Attitude towards Kosovo North

The fact that the great majority of Serbs south of the Ibër/Ibar welcome the establishment of new administration in North Mitrovica is a most encouraging signal to the moderates in the North who are after normalization. Serbs south of the Ibër/Ibar look forward to appeasement and the rule of law in North Mitrovica, the venue of their main university and medical centers.



Conclusions and recommendations – Kosovo North

Organized crime is the main stumbling bloc in the way of normalization in the North and its integration into Kosovo's judicial system. The fact that its "economy" is mostly based on illegal trade and has North Mitrovica for stronghold became evident during "log revolution" that broke out in summer 2011. Social and political power of local politicians and their partners in Belgrade – but in Prishtina as well – rests on the hookup with organized crime. Official Belgrade and Prishtina must work on uprooting these partnerships.

Establishment of the rule of law in North Kosovo is crucial for regional stabilization.

Implementation of the existing mechanisms that guarantee the Serb community the safeguard of its identity and development is the only alternative to parallel institutions. Prishtina's and Belgrade's strong and clear-cut support for the administrative office in North Mitrovica, headed by Adrijana Hodzic, is highly important for normalization in this region of Kosovo.

Courts of law should be established as soon as possible to secure the rule of law.

The police in North Kosovo seem just to keep records of crimes and hardly ever investigate them. This is so mostly because of the political situation in and about North Kosovo. The police should start functioning properly and enforcing law in North Kosovo as soon as possible.

Moderates among Serbs in Kosovo that are constantly threatened and even assaulted by radical groups must be protected at all costs.

The Kosovo government should come up with an economic plan for North Kosovo in consultation with Serb moderates eager to contribute to the development of their community. This particularly refers to the administrative office for North Kosovo. Such a plan would help lessen the present tensions.

Serb citizens in North Kosovo are anxious, with good reason, about staying without any income in the event of abolishment of parallel institutions. In this context, alternative solutions must be clearly explained to them. New jobs in a new public sector are among these possible solutions. The government of Serbia may continue to provide financial assistance only if it is transparent and taxable.

Institutions which are beyond Prishtina's control such as the University and the Clinical Center in North Mitrovica may be easily incorporated in the legal sphere and still keep a high degree of autonomy.

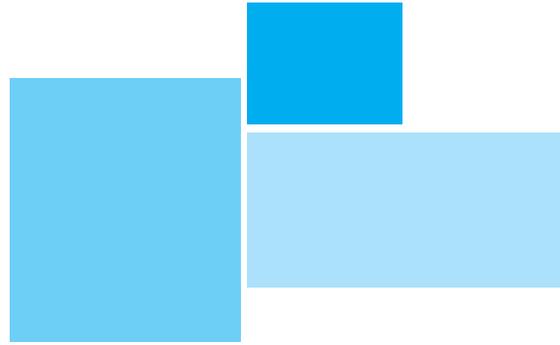
Findings of independent surveys show that citizens in North Kosovo are poorly informed about the legislation concerning the Serb community. The great majority of them stick to stereotypes about the present situation in Kosovo, its prospects and their Albanian countrymen.

The end of official Belgrade's policy that prioritizes territories in neighboring countries and manipulates parallel institutions in Kosovo would be in the best interests of citizens of Serbia and Kosovo alike. Not once has official Belgrade sacrificed Serbs from out of Serbia for political purposes in the past two decades. In making their decisions citizens in the North should always bear in mind this practice of Belgrade's regardless of which parties are in power in Serbia.

Instead of financing administration of parallel structures and paying salaries to workers of imaginary enterprises, the Serbian government should better assist the implementation of projects for small and medium-size enterprise in North Kosovo and thus harness citizens' entrepreneurship. This would considerably contribute to regional stabilization in the long run.

Arrests of citizens of Serb origin should not be misused for political purpose – and every case should be treated *per se*. Real criminals and their supporters should not be allowed to hide behind the skirts of innocent people taken into custody.

History has showed that divided cities and towns do not benefit citizens of either side. In this context, it is necessary to support programs that bring together people from both sides of the bridge across Ibër/Ibar, especially the young ones.



Overall context and changes in Serbia

In September 2012 the International Civilian Office for Kosovo (ICO) closes down to mark the end of the supervised independence. From then on Kosovo institutions will be held by far more accountable than at present. Review of the Kosovo government's answers to the EU questionnaire for the SAA feasibility study begun in June 2012. For the first time in the past 30 years several agreements have been reached in the context of Serb-Albanian relations. Though, in the presence of an international mediator these agreements have been reached through direct negotiations between Belgrade and Prishtina¹.

On the other hand, the outcome of Serbia's parliamentary and presidential elections that weakened the pro-European option is the biggest challenge to further development of regional cooperation that preconditions further movement towards EU². Though not openly opposing EU, Socialist Party of Serbia /SPS/ and Serb Progressive Party /SNS/ that are about to form the government together with United Regions of Serbia /URS/ are not exactly convincing about the country's EU integration. Policies of both parties in 1990s were anti-European and both played a crucial role in ex-Yugoslavia's disintegration. This is the main reason why one should be suspicious about their resoluteness to pursue neighborly relations and finally acknowledge the new reality and borders in the region.

1 Negotiations were intensified and produced more concrete results in December 2011 – March 2012, at the time when Serbia was under strong pressure to demonstrate readiness for EU candidacy. In other words, the dialogue continued thanks to the pressure from the international community and the fact that the Democratic Party badly needed EU candidacy in the election campaign.

2 Socialist Party of Serbia won twice as many votes than in the past elections /15% of the electorate/. Tomislav Nikolic, leader of the conservative and populist Serb Progressive Party was elected the President of the Republic.

Over the election campaign their leaders, Ivica Dačić and Tomislav Nikolić³, not even touched on the policies of Socialist Party of Serbia and Serb Radical Party in 1990s. Ivica Dačić won the election by radicalizing the Kosovo policy and was the first politician to go public with the partition scenario. The two parties are under strong influence of conservative forces in Serbia proper but also in Russia that is in fact against Serbia's EU integration, let alone membership of NATO. Last but not least, the two parties' personnel combinatory will seriously shake Serbia's administration.

Socialist Party of Serbia has notably radicalized its stand about Kosovo in the past 18 months⁴. Its leader Ivica Dačić actually tailors the new government and does it by invoking the policy for Kosovo. He first conditioned the participation of Liberal Democratic Party in the government by its changed Kosovo policy and then strongly opposed opening of respective commissioned offices in Belgrade and Prishtina. He wanted Democratic Party /DS/ and SNS to also stand up against these offices: he claimed he would not form a coalition with any of the two should they give their consent. In the spring of 2011 Dačić was the first official to publicly come up with the partition scenario for Kosovo. He himself and his party are not authors of the plan – the entire Serb elite, including parts of DS, have been insisting on it ever since 1990s but behind the closed door to avoid international repercussion⁵.

Today's reality in Kosovo, Serbs divided to those in the North and those living south of the Ibër/Ibar River and the anarchy in North Kosovo are all the consequences of the policy of partition and waiting for right time to have it realized. Constant tensions between Serbs and Albanian are now growing into a frozen conflict with all the threats it entails.

3 In 1990s President Nikolic was a vice-president of the extremely nationalistic Serb Radical Party deploying its own para-military troops throughout the battlefields of ex-Yugoslavia and known for its chauvinism and xenophobia.

4 Ivica Dacic, the police minister during the election campaign, was all for the arrests Kosovo Albanians who came to Serbia and Albanians from South Serbia. When human rights defenders protested against the arrest of two Kosovo Albanian citizens, Minister Dacic explained Serbia was reciprocating the arrests of Serb policemen in Kosovo. One of the two arrested citizens was Hasan Abazi, taken into custody for espionage on the basis of the arrest warrant issued back in 1999 – the arrest warrant dating back to the era of Slobodan Milosevic when such warrants were politically motivated. After October 5, 2000, about 2,000 Kosovo Albanians were released from prisons in Serbia. On the eve of the elections, the police arrested five Albanians in Bujanovac suspected of war crimes. They were released two days later as it turned out that they had been granted pardon in 2001 under the agreement on settlement of the crisis in South Serbia. Nevertheless these arrests fueled the feelings of insecurity among citizens of Albanian origin in the region.

5 See more about the idea of partition of Kosovo in last year and a half in Annual Helsinki Committee report for 2011: „Obstruction of the road to Europe“ web page www.helsinki.org.rs.

Despite Belgrade's obstruction and manipulation of Kosovo Serbs, the situation of the Serb community has considerably improved in the past ten-odd years. Today, twelve years after the end of the conflict, the Serb community is guaranteed more rights than any other minority community in the region. It is the Ahtisaari plan (the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement), incorporated in the Constitution of Kosovo, that has been providing a frame for the exercise of these rights since late 2008⁶. The plan invests more authority in the Kosovo Serb community than any other agreement on minority rights in the region⁷.

Kosovo Serbs hold power in the municipalities of Ranillug/Ranilug, Kllokot/Klokot, Partesh/Parteš, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Shttrpcë/Štrpce – which totals 20 percent of local self-governments in Kosovo. The mayor of the Novobërdë/Novo Brdo municipality is an Albanian, though Serb representatives are in the majority in the municipal assembly. Serb representatives also have a constitutionally guaranteed number of MP seats in the Parliament.

In addition, minority communities in Kosovo exercise their rights under the Law on Local Self-government. However, the law itself is inadequately implemented to the detriment of all municipalities regardless of their ethnic composition.

There are some hints that the Democratic Party's has changed its policy for North Kosovo. Boris Tadić, ex-president of Serbia and the party leader, strongly opposed Kosovo Serbs in March 2012 by saying they should withdraw from barricades. Though meant to clear the path to Serbia's EU candidacy, his statement helped lessen tensions, at least for the time being. The situation in North Kosovo actually testified that the official Belgrade was a hostage to parallel structures it had itself set up and maintained for over a decade. Dismantling of these structures – closely tied with organized crime – will not be an easy task: they are not expected to give up, just like that, the profit they make from illegal trade, smuggling and corruption.

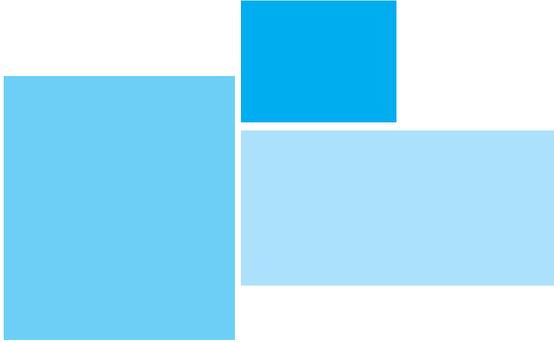
The message Borko Stefanović, head of Serbia's negotiating team, put across to Tomislav Nikolić shortly after his presidential inauguration, indicates the above-mentioned change of DS policy. The message was actually put across to Kosovo Serbs.

6 Blic <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/71784/Euleks-pocao-da-sprovodi-plan-Martija-Ahtisarija>

7 Blic <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/71784/Euleks-pocao-da-sprovodi-plan-Martija-Ahtisarija>.

In an interview with the Radio Free Europe, Stefanović pointed out that it was necessary to take into account the new reality in and about Kosovo and impossible to have the situation before 1999 or even 1996 restored. *“Those believing that this is a process in which we could reach agreements we could have reached till 1999 reason badly: UNMIK has transferred all authority to the Kosovo government at the time of Vojislav Kostunica’s premiership. That was the time of Kosovo’s independence declaration (...) Unfortunately, some Serbs in Kosovo still believe everything could be restored as it was in 1996 or 1997. Instead to trying to do something good, some /Serb/ leaders in North Kosovo are raising the alarm on daily basis, calling upon people to gather just to listen to Marko Jaksić rambling for umpteenth time. They turn a blind eye to totally destroyed institutions, infrastructure and public utilities in North Kosovo. While absolutely nothing functions over there, some individuals are getting richer and richer, own three or four apartments in Belgrade and Kraljevo, but still apply to municipal structures for welfare. Well, this is what North Kosovo looks like today, a picture these gentlemen are hiding from general public. Moreover, they argue that any agreement with Prishtina is unacceptable. Of course it is unacceptable for them, eager to safeguard benefits from crime at all costs. They want to preserve this anarchy that suits them perfectly, while citizens are those who suffer the most. It is high time to reveal their doings and plans to citizens so that they realize what’s going on.”*⁸

8 Radio Free Europe: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/stefanovic-nema-vracanja-u-devedesete/24610567.html>



Belgrade-Prishtina Agreements

Over the period of one year (March 2011 – March 2012) Belgrade and Prishtina reached seven agreements (on regional representation, custom stamps, cadastral records, civil registry books, freedom of movement, university diplomas and integrated border crossing control). Not only progress in Belgrade-Prishtina relations but also in everyday life of citizens depends on full implementation of these agreements.

However, most agreements available at the website of the Serbian government do not detail the deadline for beginning of implementation. On the other hand, the Kosovo side claims that these deadlines had been set. (This is what HC representatives learned from members of the Kosovo negotiating team.).

On July 14 Kosovo was given the guidelines for visa liberalization⁹. Visa liberalization for Kosovo would strongly encourage Kosovo Serbs to apply for Kosovo passports. Given that Kosovo is the only country in the region still waiting for visa liberalization, its citizens, Serbs included, have to apply for passports of other countries to facilitate their travel to EU member-states. Full implementation of the agreement on civil registry books is among preconditions for Kosovo's access to Schengen zone.

The agreement on car plates should have been fully implemented by June 15, 2012¹⁰ - all citizens of Kosovo were supposed to replace their vehicle license plates till that date. Unlike Kosovo Serbs south of the Ibër/Ibar River, those in the North mostly refused to replace their car plates. In response, the Kosovo police began treating their vehicles as unregistered. Kosovo Police

9 EurAktiv <http://www.euraktiv.rs/srbija-i-eu/4238-kosovo-dobilo-uputstva-za-viznu-liberalizaciju.html>.

10 RTS <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/Politika/1118946/Rampa+za+stare+tablice+15.+juna%3F.html>

Minister Bajram Rexhepi decided to postpone the deadline for replacement of driving licenses issued by the Serbian Ministry of the Interior till September 1, 2012¹¹.

What affects all citizens without exception; including Albanians from South Serbia (Preshevo-Preševo Valley) having to cross borders on daily basis is the vehicle insurance tax. A two-week charge per vehicle is 60-70 Euro – an amount the great majority of citizens simply cannot afford. An agreement on green card system, which would make it easier for vehicles to move freely in EU member-states, may help overcome this problem. According to the Helsinki Committee's sources, the Serbian side opposes such compromise.

For his part, Kosovo Police Minister Bajram Rexhepi said Serbia had insisted on this possibility. The vehicle insurance tax affects Kosovo Serbs the most bearing in mind their business ties with Serbia and frequent travel. (The tax also affects Albanians from the South Serbia, who work in Kosovo.)

Car owners with RKS /Kosovo/ license plates may replace them on the border crossing with Serbia with temporary /Serbian/ plates for which they have to set aside 3,000 dinars (about 30 Euro) per day. According to Serbian Police Minister Ivica Dačić, this measure “confirms Kosovo status neutrality.” In addition, these owners are charged 400 dinars (about 4 Euro) per day for vehicle insurance.

The agreement on the freedom of movement has been implemented since late December 2011. It makes it possible for citizens of Kosovo to enter Serbia with their ID cards issued in Kosovo¹².

What cast a shadow over the implementation of the agreement on the freedom of movement were arrests of Kosovo citizens of Albanian origin on the grounds of indictments Serbia issued against them back in 1990s. Hasan Abazi, today's president of the Independent Metal Workers of Kosovo, accused of espionage in 1999 was among the arrested. To put it mildly, indictments of 1999 are problematic – they were issued by Milosevic's police and solely for political reasons. After the October 2000 change of the regime some 2,000 Albanian political prisoners in Serbia were amnestied.

11 Ibid.

12 On December 22, 2011 the Serbian government adopted a decree on the implementation of the agreement on the freedom of movement. The decree provides that citizens of Kosovo can freely move throughout Central Serbia with their ID cards issued by provisional administration of Kosovo and that they shall be given documents testifying their entrance/exit at administrative border crossings. Radio Free Europe, December 23, 2011. .

Under an agreement reached in Brussels Serbian authorities were supposed to hand over copies of civil registry books to make it easier for Kosovo citizens to obtain ID cards, passports, etc. Some municipalities in Serbia have not begun yet working on civil registry books moved from Kosovo to Serbia. Employees of the Kragujevac Administrative Department storing civil registry books from Peja/Peć, Istog/Istok and Klinë/Klina since 2000 told the Radio Free Europe they were waiting for instructions from the Ministry for Local Self-government¹³.

Serbian governmental officials argue that it is impossible to give instructions to all towns and municipalities in Serbia simultaneously – instructions will be, therefore, issued successively. Milivoje Mihajlović, spokesman of the outgoing government, denied that the Ministry of Local Self-government had opposed the governmental decision, promising its implementation¹⁴.

Though the transfer of copies cadastral records from Serbia to Kosovo had been agreed back in September 2011, it was only in January 2012 that Serbian authorities took its implementation into consideration. The Office of the Head of Serbian Negotiating Team Borko Stefanović told SETimes web portal that implementation of the agreement made it possible for Belgrade, for the first time since 1999, to have a say in property proceedings in Kosovo.”This agreement enables Serbia to actively participate in settlement of disputable cases related to property rights and secures better prospects to citizens of Serbia when it comes to restitution,” released the office¹⁵. In the past ten years some citizens of Kosovo had to go to Serbia to obtain originals of their documents and pay dear for these services without any guarantee that the documents issued to them were proper. Director of Kosovo Cadastral Agency Murat Meha pinpoints that lots sold under the counter or registered in writing only stand for yet another problem. Return of cadastral records would make it possible for citizens to claim restitution they couldn’t have claimed without original documents, he said¹⁶.

Belgrade and Prishtina reached the agreement on the Kosovo customs stamps in September 2011. The agreement provides that the stamps will bear the words “Kosovo Customs” without any additional symbols of Kosovo’s state-

13 Ibid..

14 Radio Free Europe, December 23, 2011.

15 <http://www.naslovi.net/2011-09-28/rts/prelazi-van-dnevnog-reda/2839592>.

16 <http://www.naslovi.net/2011-09-28/rts/prelazi-van-dnevnog-reda/2839592>.

hood and that Kosovo authorities will be in charge of customs control¹⁷. The agreement actually lifted a trade embargo. (In July 2011 Kosovo imposed an embargo on goods from Serbia. Serbia's embargo on goods from Kosovo had been in force for long.)

Though the two parties reached an agreement on mutual recognition of university diplomas, Serbia has been stalling its implementation. The two parties had agreed to ask the European University Association to certify diplomas, issued by universities from each of the two countries. In January 2012 Edita Tahiri, head of Kosovo negotiating team, announced the procedure for diplomas issued in Kosovo would begin that month. According to her, the agreement would enable recognition of diplomas issued by Kosovo universities, including the University of North Mitrovica¹⁸. Stalled implementation of the agreement mostly affects students from South Serbia having graduated from Kosovo universities.

The diplomatically complex and key deal between the two parties – the one on regional representation – was reached in the eight round of negotiations and on the eve of EU's decision on Serbia application for EU candidacy (Serbia obtained the candidacy on March 1, while the agreement was reached on February 24¹⁹).

However, the agreement was thwarted soon – either Kosovo delegations (for not being properly presented) or Serbia's (for Kosovo's presentation with a footnote) walked out on several regional meetings. Namely, Serbia insisted on the text of the footnote, while the Kosovo team and EU facilitator Robert Cooper took that a footnote next to the name of Kosovo was enough.

The only agreement that has not been implemented so far is the one on integrated borders management /IBM/ that deals with the crossings between Serbia and Kosovo. Bearing in mind its significance for Kosovo, the Kosovo side insisted on its signing. However, it has never been signed by both parties. (On earlier occasions, rather than putting their signatures on the agreements

17 Belgrade-Prishtina talks came to a standstill in July 2011 due to opposing stands on customs stamps. Then Prishtina deployed special units at administrative crossings Jarinje and Brnjak. In response, local Serbs took possession of these two border crossing stations and erected barricades.

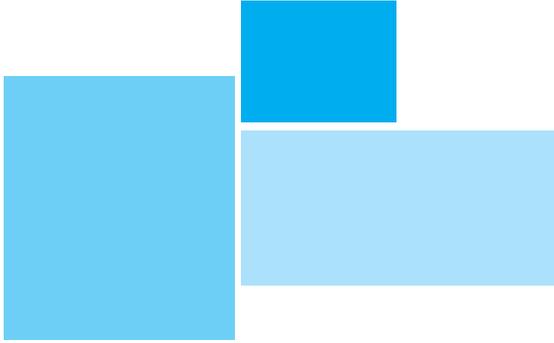
18 www.danas.rs/danasrs/drustvo/konacnu_rec_daje_evropska_asocijacija_univerziteta_.55.html?news_id=231698.

19 The agreement provides that the word "Republic" will not appear next to the name Kosovo in international forums. Instead, a footnote will refer to Security Council Resolution 1244 — which did not mention the independence of Kosovo — and a ruling by the International Court of Justice saying that Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 was legal.

reached the two parties pledged their word to respect them.) The agreement says that EULEX will be present “in accordance with its mandate” and that IBM concept will be “gradually implemented as soon as practically possible.” Further, it details that joint, integrated, single and secure posts at all common crossing points will be make up “the common zone of integrated border crossings” at which officials from both parties will conduct respective control, and that no state symbols will be placed at these crossing points. The Head of Kosovo Negotiating Team Edita Tahiri explained that both states would have their own customs and border control services at border crossings under their jurisdiction.²⁰

Though some progress has been made in the domain of telecommunications, the issues of telecommunications and electric power supply remained open. At this specific point of time, continuation of talks depends on implementation of the agreements that have been already reached.

²⁰ Radio Slobodna Evropa, 3. decembar 2011.



Serb Municipalities and Ethnically Mixed Municipalities in Kosovo

FACT-FINDING MISSIONS BY THE HELSINKI COMMITTEE'S TEAM

This chapter is based on interviews rather than on the Committee's stands on the issues discussed.

Municipality of Kllokot/Klokot

Decentralization

Serbs make up the majority population in the municipality (75% of total population are Serbs, and 25% Albanians). Until 2009 the municipality was incorporated in the Viti/Vitina municipality. By joining local self-government in Viti/Vitina as early as in 2007 Serbs secured a safer life for them. In 2009 the Serb communities' office in Viti/Vitina – located in Vërbovc/Vrbovac till 2008 – was transformed into a preparatory team for the establishment of a new municipality. Local elections were called in November 2009 and the municipality was constituted in 2010. A high percentage of local youth participated in the first local elections for the newly formed municipality of Kllokot/Klokot.

The municipal assembly has 15 deputies: 10 come from Serb Liberal Party /SLS/ and 5 from Democratic Alliance of Kosovo. The two parties rule

in coalition and are not challenged by any opposition whatsoever. The assembly has two committees – political-financial committee and the committee for communities dealing with healthcare, social and educational issues. Public debates are organized at three-month intervals to discuss questions of common interest. The Kosovo government subsidizes the municipality with one million Euro per year. The subsidy is proportionate to the overall population of 5,050 persons. About 60 percent of the municipal budget goes to salaries for public servants, 200,000 Euro are invested in construction and 120,000 cover administrative expenses.

While waiting for a building to house it – which is supposed to be erected by June 2012 – the municipal administration is accommodated in a rental. According to a plan, all streets should be coated with asphalt by the end of 2012.

Though Belgrade appealed to Kosovo Serbs to boycott the Kosovo census, about 70 percent of citizens in the municipality participated in it. No ethnically motivated incidents have been registered since 2008.

Mayor Sasa Mirkovic commends decentralization by the Ahtisaari plan. He underlines, however, that competences are not adequately transferred from central to local level. There still is no basic court in Klllokot/Klokot as envisaged by Kosovo legislation. According to the Ahtisaari plan, judges of a basic court should be elected proportionally to the community's ethnic structure. For the time being, the basic courts in Viti/Vitina – where not a single judge is of Serb origin – has jurisdiction over Klllokot/Klokot.

Speaking of the Law on Decentralization, the municipal administration complains of inadequate transfer of competence in the domains of public utilities and land management. A local fire station needs to be set up in the municipality, say people in the administration.

It is still too early to close down the International Civilian Office, argues Mayor Mirkovic.

The Klllokot/Klokot municipality smoothly cooperates with the Viti/Vitina municipality. It does not communicate with Belgrade institutions; say Deputy Major Marko Svilanović and Vice-President for Communities Refik Halimi. Local Serbs have been under the pressure from Belgrade to refrain from participating in the establishment of a new municipality. They have been threatened with no more donations. They have also been under the pressure from the Albanian side, says Refik Halimi. He even had a bomb thrown on his

car. Relations with the Belgrade-supported parallel municipality in Viti/Vitina are correct.

Economy

Sixty percent of the planned infrastructural projects have been realized by March 2012. The government of Kosovo had donated one million Euro for these projects. International organizations such as USAID and Logos (Switzerland) participated with some 300,000 Euro. The municipality earns some 100,000 Euro per year from taxes on property and administrative taxes. Over the period of two years 16 million Euro have been invested in the municipality (including private investment), says Mayor Mirković, including the spa resort “Nëna Naile” presently under construction. A branch of the Belgrade-seated Commercial Bank is located in the village of Shillovë/Šilovo.

The biggest industry in the municipality, agriculture, copes with sales at other markets. Kosovo market is overwhelmed with agricultural products, say people of the municipal administration, while exports to Serbia are hampered by customs and complex administrative procedure implying certificates on the origin of exported goods among other things. All this contributed to a drop in economic activity. Until 2008 the Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija of the Republic of Serbia has imported agricultural products, say Svilanović and Halimi. Many farmers have not been paid for their products since 2008 when the imports stopped.

Apart from working in the fields, 90 percent of the population is formally unemployed. Besides, the Kosovo Privatization Agency had sold out 95 percent of public property shortly before the municipality was formed. So a bottled water plant and the “Nëna Naile” spa resort have been privatized. Presently these two companies employ about 200 people. Fifty-six people make the staff of the municipal administration: 70 percent are Serbs and 30 percent Albanians.

Unemployment is the biggest problem of the municipality, say Halimi and Svilanović. Young people are emigrating. The municipality plans to apply to the Kosovo government to subsidize public works so as to at least partially solve the problem of unemployment.

Healthcare

There are two outpatient facilities in the municipality – in Klllokot/Klokot and in Vërbovc/Vrbovec. Seven medical officers are on the payroll of the Klllokot/Klokot municipality, each earning about 300 Euro monthly. They have been recruited at an open competition at municipal level. Another 15 medical officers receive their salaries, between 400 and 500 Euro, from the government of Serbia. No medical officer is of Albanian origin.

Education

All Serb teachers are paid both by the government of Kosovo and the government of Serbia. There is one Serb-Albanian school – named „Gjon Sereqe/Marko Rajković“ – in the village of Mogillë/Mogila. Serb and Albanian students go to the same school but have different curricula, while the education system hardly encourages interaction. Serb and Albanian students play together during breaks, mostly sport games, but cannot communicate as they do not speak one another's language.

Local self-government has no funds to subsidize education and healthcare, says the Mayor. It pays salaries to 12 out of 18 teachers and provides teaching aids and furnishings to the school. All teachers are appointed by Belgrade.

The media

Citizens are kept posted by two local media outlets – Radio Klllokot/Klokot in the Serbian language and a Serbian-language channel of TV Plus broadcast from the village of Shillovë/Šilovo, the Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality.

Nebojša Vesić, journalist for the Radio Klllokot/Klokot, says that the station airs 4-6 hours of the program it produces. The station also broadcasts programs of the Voice of America and the Radio Free Europe. It is in the membership of KOSMA media network. He and his colleagues have good cooperation with Kosovo institutions and officials, says Vesić.

Dailies and magazines from Serbia are not available in Klllokot/Klokot. Instead, citizens use internet, mostly websites of Blic daily, Mondo and Radio of Kosovo and Metohija, he explains.

Belgrade-Prishtina agreements

The agreements Belgrade and Prishtina have reached in Brussels are not implemented in the municipality, says the Mayor.

Cadastral records relevant to the municipality are stored in Krusevac / Serbia/. Under the relevant agreement, the municipality should have obtained copies of these records. The same refers to civil registry books that are kept in Vranje.

Municipality of Partesh/Parteš

Decentralization

Partesh/Parteš is an ethnically homogeneous community with 5,000 inhabitants. Its institutions were formed on August 19, 2010. Fifteen deputies make the local self-government. The same as in Klllokot/Klokot, the municipal administration is housed in a rented building. A new one is under construction in the village of Pasjani.

According to Mayor of Parteš Nenad Cvetković, all competences have been transferred from the Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality. There are several local institutions: a police station, an outpatient facility, a building to house a hospital (that is still being furnished and equipped), three elementary and three secondary schools (a gymnasium and secondary medical and agricultural schools). A basic court has not been established yet – the municipality is under the jurisdiction of the court in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Kosovo governmental officials often attend the meetings of the municipal assembly. The hall for meetings has state-of-the-art equipment, including a broadcast system available to Kosovo ministers and officials.

The Kosovo government subsidizes the municipal budget with one million Euro and gives yet another million for capital investment: the hospital (in need of extra 2 million for equipment), regulation of river basins, street lightening and reconstruction of some roads. A sports hall has been built in a local school.

The municipality managed to reduce public utility tax to 2.90 Euro. Besides, it distributes construction material to citizens free of charge. Many

households do not have bathrooms. Citizens can apply for Kosovo passport with the municipal administration and the great majority already has their Kosovo-issued documents.

The municipal administration does not communicate with Belgrade institutions. Though Serb citizens hardly ever communicate with their Albanian countrymen, no ethnically motivated problems or incidents have been registered. On the other hand, neighboring municipalities of Partesh/Parteš and Gjilan/Gnjilane develop partnership projects and apply to donor organizations (e.g. agricultural development projects). Partesh/Parteš and Gjilan/Gnjilane set an example of interethnic cooperation based on shared economic interests.

Economy

Local roads that are in poor condition stand in the way of economic progress. No investment has been made in the municipality over the past 50 years. Bad infrastructure (roads, water supply system and sewage) deter potential investors, says Cvetković.

Agriculture is the main industry. About 60 percent of population is unemployed. This causes social tensions and brain drain. About 50 percent of young people have emigrated mostly to Luxembourg. All in all, 70 percent of population has emigrated abroad so far. The municipal administration has a staff of 60 persons.

Education

The Serbian government has neglected education in the municipality, which, left to its own devices, supports educations inasmuch as it can. Local schools – three elementary and three secondary – use Serbia's curricula.

The media

Broadcast media in the Serbian language are TV Plus from Shiullovi/Šilovo and Radio Laser from Pasjan. No print media at all are available to citizens.

Sports and culture

The municipality finances construction of a cultural center. There is a youth center in Partesh/Parteš, whereas its football team competes in the Kosovo Football League.

Parallel institutions under Belgrade's control

The administration of the parallel municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane for the entire area of the Morava Basin in Kosovo is located in the village of Kusce. This parallel institution has the same 300 deputies since 2008 as they did not run in local elections. Representatives of Partesh/Parteš do not cooperate with this parallel municipality, says Cvetković.

Municipality of Graçanicë/Gračanica

Decentralization

Once just a settlement in the outskirts of Prishtina, over the past 12 years the municipality of Graçanicë/Gračanica has grown into a small town. As the whole area has been heavily constructed the two municipalities now touch on each other. The municipality has made the biggest progress in the past two years, says Mayor Bojan Stojanović, adding that today's Graçanicë/Gračanica is one of five most prosperous municipalities in Kosovo that are not indebted.

However, local Serbs fear that a new Kosovo constitution may annul the Ahtisaari plan once the International Civilian Office closes down, he says. He is suspicious about the Kosovo government's promise that all provisions of the Ahtisaari plan would be incorporated into legislation by the end of supervised independence.

Though the transfer of competences to the municipality is almost over, the transfer of competences from central level is still problematic. The Ahtisaari plan territorially reorganizes Kosovo rather than decentralizes it, says Stojanovic, but these two concepts are often confused. According to him, despite the fact that it proclaimed decentralization the Kosovo government is after centralization of public utilities and services, market, forest management, fiscal policy, economic development, urban planning, etc. For instance, firefighting or

customer service is still not available at local level. This is not only the problem challenging Graçanicë/Gračanica and Serb municipalities, but also the entire Kosovo, says Stojanovic.

A plan for regional and urban development based on socioeconomic profile of the municipality has not been developed yet. This is why all the plans and strategies put forth are not feasible. He takes that insufficiently competent people for this job and meager financial resources stand for crucial problems. “How I am supposed to lead Graçanicë/Gračanica when I cannot tell where Kosovo heads for?” he asks.

The implementation of the Ahtisaari plan is additionally burdened by the fact that not a single newly established municipality has a basic court. Many people are afraid, he says, that the seats guaranteed to representatives of the Serb community in the Kosovo parliament would be placed in the category of “reserve seats,” which would reduce the number of Serb MPs.

Economy

Ever since its’ constitution under the Ahtisaari plan Graçanicë/Gračanica has been among the most successful municipalities in Kosovo. Not indebted, it has realized some 150 projects so far, all of which contributed to favorable social atmosphere and encouraged entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the municipality has no funds for a developmental strategy. Besides, it lacks capacity-building programs preconditioning application for IPA funds.

According to local Serbs, one has to pay 2-3 million Euro for one hectare of land in rural areas. Attractiveness of the municipality’s location (for instance, one can reach the municipal building from downtown Prishtina in 10-15 minutes by car) raised the price of real estate and lands. This is why many Serbs simply sold their lands, moved out and bought real estate in Serbia. Hence, the moneys mostly go to Serbia and are only occasionally spent on projects in Graçanicë/Gračanica and its economy.

Kosovo courts are inefficient, says Stojanović. Some 18,000 Serb-Albanian disputes over property are still on their waiting list.

The situation with cadastral records burdens the municipal administration. It is hard to determine whether the copies of cadastral records are valid or not, says Stojanovic.

The law on the use of mother tongue is inadequately implemented, say residents of Gračanice/Gračanica. For instance, the shops run by Albanians have no inscriptions in the Serbian language. Likewise, no inscriptions in the Albanian language are to be seen on public utilities or Serb-owned shops.

Healthcare

There are four medical centers in the territory of the Gračanice/Gračanica municipality. All medical officers are paid from Serbia's budget. The medical center in Gračanice/Gračanica has a staff of 750, the one in Prishtina 800, in Ugljari 400, and in Donja Gusterica 500. The medical center in Gračanice/Gračanica has a state-of-the-art laboratory for all variety of medical tests. At present the center is waiting for additional equipment – an ultrasound device and other apparatuses. The laboratory engages mostly young people who have graduated either from the secondary medical school in Gračanice/Gračanica or the Faculty of Medicine in Mitrovica.

Education

Republic of Serbia subsidizes education in the Serbian language.

The situation of the local school is bad, says school psychologist Miljana Kisić. There is not room enough (so that secondary school students attend classes in the morning, while elementary school students in the afternoon) and, except for a computer lab, labs are poorly equipped. The schools have no room for day care programs. At the end of this school year the school had to cope with the supply of the textbooks on the “wish list” elementary school students needed to get enrolled in secondary schools. In fact, Kosovo customs officials would not allow entry to packages with more than 5-6 books. Parents are now trying to get these packages on their own.

Education system is so bad that children who have finished school are almost illiterate, says Mayor Stojanovic. The system does not motivate them to continue their education. In the situation of high unemployment young people hardly see any prospects for them. In addition, schools in Gračanice/Gračanica are “split off,” as he puts it. The fact that elementary and secondary schools share the same premises in all the 18 schools in Gračanice/Gračanica stands in the way of specialized studies.

The municipality approved opening of the UN Faculty of the Media and

Development with a seat in Graçanicë/Gračanica and plans to construct a building for it. At the beginning interpreters will help students follow the classes that will, later on, be taught in English only.

Sports and culture

Like in all other municipalities young people in Graçanicë/Gračanica mostly spend their free time in coffee shops. The municipality also lacks out-of-school time programs.

Construction of a sports center opened fresh prospects. Some 180 local children are playing tennis there. The local football club scored success while competing in the Serbian league.

Given that there is no theater in the Serbian language south of the Ibër/Ibar River, Graçanicë/Gračanica took upon itself to construct it. St. Vitus festival is being organized each year in the municipality.

Parallel institutions

As many as 6 Belgrade-controlled self-governments operate in the territory of the Graçanicë/Gračanica municipality. These self-governments run 22 fictitious public utilities and are subsidized from Serbia.

Municipality of Pejë/Peć– Gorazhdec/Goraždevac

Decentralization

According to the electoral roll, in municipality of Peja/Peć live around 1,200 Serbs out of which 900 live in Gorazhdec/Goraždevac. About 12 Serb families have returned to the town of Peja/Peć. The Communities Committee functioned within UNMIK till 2002. It has been in the competence of the Pejë/Peć municipality since. The phase of local communities' integration into Kosovo structure is formally over.

Functioning of courts of law is of major importance to citizens. President of the Communities Committee in Gorazhdec/Goraždevac Slobodan Petrovic takes that finalization of property-related lawsuits should be on the

priority list. Property has been manipulated the most in the region of Peja/Peć, he says. The cases reported so far have been neither prosecuted nor tried. Darko Dimitrijević, journalist for the Radio Gorazhdec/Goraždevac, shares his view about inefficient judiciary being the biggest problem of all. The police are also inefficient, he says. Purchase contracts are largely misused, especially in the municipality of Klina. Not a single properly qualified individual applied to the open call for a Serb judge of the Basic Court in Peja/Peć. No one takes any measure against illegal exploitation of forestland. Serb officers work for the local police.

A Serb woman and an Albanian man run the local office of civil registry books and issue birth, statehood, marriage and other certificates to citizens. To get their passports and ID cards citizens have to travel to Peja/Peć where they have to trouble with public servant speaking the Serbian language. This is where local officers lend a helping hand – they accompany people to Peja/Peć to interpret from them.

The security situation has improved considerably. Municipal representatives opposed any participation in the conflicts at barricades in the North in 2011. On the other hand, Milivoj Zdravković of the local elementary school called upon people to go to barricades. A member of the Serb Progressive Party himself, Zdravković joined the actions in the North. Unlike him, the principal of the secondary school strongly advocated against.

Serb presidential elections were held in the municipality in 2012. Boris Tadic won 70 percent of Serb votes in the Peja/Peć municipality.

Economy

The local communities committee is engaged in the issue of refugee return, assists returnees in solving their property-related problems and tries to attract investors.

According to the interviewed citizens, Serbs have been discriminated in the privatization process. Workers were supposed to get twenty percent of sale of public enterprises but were left empty-handed for not having worked “till the last day.” It was only logical that they couldn’t have for safety reasons, including cases of abduction and murder, says Petrović, adding that the municipal administration called on ex-workers to present proofs of discrimination – however, none of them was willing to.

Local infrastructure has made a scanty progress. The local communities committee realized several small-scale projects aimed at agricultural development within individual households. The problem is that nowadays these households can sell their products nowhere.

The unemployment rate is high, especially among the young. Only international organizations, mostly KFOR, offer a small number of vacancies. Serb returnees are mostly elderly people who either live on pensions or work in the Peja/Peć Patriarchy.

Healthcare

The newly constructed medical center engages 12-15 persons, whereas the outpatient facility about 20. The medical staff mostly consists of couples in which both partners used to be unemployed. In emergencies or for more serious health problems citizens have to travel to Peja/Peć where they usually see private medical practitioners.

Kosovo's healthcare is not free of charge. A medical examination in a public medical center is charged 10 Euro. Given that only medical centers in Serb communities do not charge healthcare, patients of Albanian origin often turn to these centers.

Education

A single building houses one elementary and three secondary schools (a gymnasium and schools of engineering and economics).

Children are isolated from the outside world: they never come in touch with their Albanian peers. Moreover, they do not communicate with their Serb peers in other Serb communities. "Nobody seems willing to finance the events that bring schools together, such as sports competitions. Parents also seem reluctant to let their children mix with their Albanian peers," says the physical education instructor of the local school. He had formed a basketball team and now tries to arrange for his players to participate in competitions. Personal endeavors as such precondition coexistence and call for more support from authorities.

Children mostly continue their schooling in Mitrovica.

The media

Radio Gorazhdec/Goraždevac airs morning programs from 8 to 11 am. One hour is set aside for local news. The station's newscast is followed by a show commenting daily press symbolically titled "For you who would gladly read papers but have nowhere to by them." The station is in the membership of KOSMA network and rebroadcasts its newscast, says Darko Dimitrijević, journalist and editor.

Two year ago, the station established a TV production in tandem with NGO Experimental Studio Group. With the support from the government of the Netherlands, the produced programs are distributed to Serb TV networks.

"The pressure on the Serb language and culture is extremely high," says Dimitrijević. For instance, as he puts it, there is not a single inscription in Serbian in Peja/Peć and public servants do not speak Serbian – all of which hampers Serbs' access to services.

Daily papers from Serbia are not available to citizens. However, they have access to satellite TV and internet. English language professors Sasa Petrovic and Darko Milić run the only NGO in the municipality, the above-mentioned Experimental Studio Group.

Sports and culture

Social life is practically non-existent, says Milos Dimitrijević. A cultural center has been closed down. The fact that citizens have to go to Peja/Peć to shop opens prospects to at least minimal some communication with people from other communities.

Parallel institutions

The local communities committee, which is under the jurisdiction of the Peja/Peć municipality, cooperates smoothly with the administration of a parallel municipality headed by Milos Dimitrijević, member of the Democratic Party. The cooperation has been rather problematic while a member of the Democratic Party of Serbia was at the helm of the parallel municipality. Fifty percent of the village actually lives on this parallel administration. They need it for economic rather than political reasons, says Petrovic.

Municipal coordinators had their seats in Belgrade from 1999 to 2007. After local elections in 2008 Gorazhdec/Goraždevac became the seat of the municipality. It is authorized for the entire territory of the Peja/Peć municipality and all returnees recognizing institutions of the Republic of Serbia. Its headquarters are in Kragujevac, Serbia, where citizens have to go to get their passports or ID cards.

Milos Dimitrijević, the “parallel mayor,” says that the municipality distributes welfare to some 300 people. Depending on the sizes of their households those people are getting from 40 to 90 Euro. They are also assisted in the material they need for spring and autumn harvests. People here mostly live on farming.

Civil society organizations

Five activists of the NGO Experimental Studio Group mostly cooperate with Ulof Palme Foundation, Sweden, the Netherlands Embassy to Kosovo and other Kosovo NGOs, including Kosovo Albanians.

Up to now the NGO has organized public debates on the problems challenging the Serb community in Kosovo. It is the only Serb community NGO in the region of Peja/Peć, Istog/Istok and Klina. Presently they have an eye on forming a Serb civil society network in the region, according to its director, Saša Petrović.

The organization’s cooperation with the Kosovo Albanian community could be by far better than it is. Some international organizations have suggested that young Serbs should learn to speak the Albanian language and the other way round. At present Experimental Studio Group prepares a course in the Albanian language. They would gladly work on cultural integration had they funds for it, say the activists. Multiethnic cooperation is obstructed from both sides. A stronger political support might help overcome the mentality of “ethnic lots.”

Numbers of Kosovo officials attended the Experimental Studio Group’s debate on the position of ethnic communities. The Koha Ditore daily carried a story about the debate. Shortly after the “National Army of Albanians” begun distributing threatening leaflets.

Deçani i Lartë/Visoki Deçani Monastery

What troubles the most the Serb Orthodox Church /SPC/ in Kosovo are economic situation and unresolved legal status. “The Church is also deeply concerned with pseudo-historical interpretations, included in Albanian textbooks, which deny Serb identity,” says Father Sava, adding that Belgrade-Prishtina negotiations have not touched on the position of SPC.

Annex V of the Ahtisaari plan regulates the status of SPC in Kosovo. It provides establishment of a commission for its implementation to include representatives of international organizations such as UNESCO, International Civilian office and OSCE. The Annex V has not been enforced so far. The European Office for the Protection of Serb Cultural Heritage, as a compromise, was set up instead.

All solutions of the Ahtisaari plan should be turned into legislation as soon as possible, says Father Sava of the Deçani i Lartë/Visoki Deçani monastery. “The Law on protective zones provides that nothing shall be constructed without permission of the SPC. The Self-Determination Movement (Vetëvendosje in the Albanian language) strongly opposed the laws on Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoça and protection of the ancient Prizren,” he says adding that problems such as illegal construction in the vicinity of Gazimestan or attempted construction of a highway to Montenegro alongside the Deçani i Lartë/Visoki Deçani monastery arose nevertheless. These problems are now being solved under the Law on Protective Zones.

“Rushing for termination of the supervised independence by the end of 2012 is counterproductive. The process of turning the Ahtisaari plan into laws is far from being over,” says Father Sava, explaining that the Kosovo government plans to submit all the laws to the parliament for adoption under summary procedure by September 2012. Preconditions for the end of supervised independence will be assessed in July, he says. According to him, some countries would speed up the process; while others take it should take more time. Twice as many MPs would have to vote amendment of the planned “laws of vital importance.” EU will always condition Kosovo’s integration with full respect for the Ahtisaari plan, he concludes.

All new provisions of the Kosovo legislation adopted under the pressure from the international community by the end of 2012 will be vital to the

Serb community. Father Sava worries that implementation of the Ahtisaari plan will relate to North Kosovo only and that the region south of the Ibër/Ibar River will be neglected in this context. “The problems with borders, customs and barricades are of financial rather than political nature. The North is a gray zone and a safe house for criminals,” says Father Sava.

“The Ahtisaari plan is incorporated in the Kosovo Constitution and guarantees a high level of security to the Serb minority. Most importantly, it envisages the possibility of dual citizenship to Serbs. Thanks to the Ahtisaari plan our cultural heritage has been saved,” comments Farther Sava noting that the plan is specific by “favoring just one community – the Serb.”

Since 1999, he says, more than 150 churches and other religious facilities in Kosovo have been destroyed. For instance, the Deçani i Lartë/Visoki Deçani monastery has been subject to four arm attacks since 1999. For him, the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between SPC and Kosovo Provisional Institutions implying reconstruction of damaged or ruined facilities in March 2004 is among the most successful Serb-Albanian agreements. Seventy percent of these facilities have been reconstructed so far thanks to this document.

Serbia’s Ministry of Religions and Diaspora subsidizes poor priests. They are also financed through individual donations.

According to Father Sava, the Serb population in Kosovo amounts to 90,000-120,000 persons. The humanitarian crisis in Eastern Kosovo is very serious. In Zveçan/Zvečan, Svetlana Stević, wife of the local priest, runs the soup kitchen “Mother Jugović.” The Eparchy has opened five soup kitchens catering for some 2,000 beneficiaries. The problem is, he says, that Serbs do not speak Albanian. Unemployment rate among Albanians reaches 70 percent. In his view, Serbs would emigrate should Serbia end its financial assistance, especially should it stop paying salaries. The number of Serb students has been halved in many schools in Eastern Kosovo, he says.

When it comes to parallel institutions, SPC holds that “we should not classify ourselves as patriots and traitors.”

Peja/Peć Patriarchate

Italian KFOR had protected the Peja/Peć Patriarchate till 2011. At present it is in the charge of Slovenian troops. Twenty-three nuns, several civilians and a priest live in the monastery – all in all, 30 persons. Under a project financed by UNESCO a team of conservators from Belgrade presently works on the monastery.

The international community mediates between the monastery and local authorities no more. Nuns rarely leave it in fear of provocation. They say security is their biggest problem. KFOR troops do not accompany them for more than a year. The police do not respond to their complaints and are biased, say nuns. According to them, Albanians hope to expel them. The monastery's forests are often illegally cut down and its crops stolen.

The monastery had owned about 60 hectares of land till 1999: 30 hectares of arable land and 30 hectares of forests. At present, say the nuns, these lands are either usurped or rubbish-strewn. The forest has been completely cut down.

Despite the fact that the monastery has been proclaimed a protected zone, a bicycle lane has been constructed around it without its consent. The municipality did nothing about the nuns' complaint.

The monastery's monthly electricity bill amounts to 1,000-1,500 Euro. Now that it has been categorized as an institution instead of a household its bills have practically soared. Most financial assistance it gets from Serbia's Ministry of Religions and Diaspora, and the Deçani i Lartë/Visoki Deçani monastery.

An elderly nun complained that SPC has forgotten the monastery. They receive church magazines no longer and no one even gives them a phone call. Only the Karić family has always helped them and called to see how they were doing, says the nun.

Church in Osojanë/Osojan

The Greek Eastern Orthodox Church financed the construction of the church in the village of Osojanë/Osojan. The church houses a church choir and provides religious instruction to some 20 children from Vidanje and another 50 from Osojanë/Osojan. This is a fine example of a church motivating young people to develop their talents such as singing. The church is self-sustaining. Before 1999 the school in Osojanë/Osojane had been attended by some 900 students.

Priest Milos Vukić is concerned with the situation of the Deviç monastery – a nunnery in the Skenderaj/Srbica municipality no longer protected by KFOR but by the Kosovo police.

Municipality of Istog/Istok- Osojanë/Osojane

Decentralization

About 3,000 Serbs live in the Istog/Istok municipality that has the biggest percentage of returnees in the entire Kosovo. Another 400 returnee families are presently on the waiting list for financial resources. Under the Ahtisaari plan a minority/Serb community should have the population of at least 5,000 to have a new municipality established for its area. Citizens are looking forward to meet that quota so as to separate Osojanë/Osojane from the municipality of Istog/Istok. Before 1999 the Istog/Istok municipality's population totaled 66,000 out of which 8,700 were Serbs. Crkolez is the only village from which no one has emigrated. Construction of houses for returnees in all other villages is on the priority list of the local Communities Committee. About 90 percent of local Serbs have Kosovo ID cards and passports.

Theft is the biggest problem facing returnees, says Vesna Maliković, head of the Osojanë/Osojane Communities Committee. Tractors and livestock are mostly stolen from them as they are usually farmers. Apart from living in fear they are left without means of livelihood. Lands owned by Serbs make up about 70 percent of the territory of the municipality. This is why many Serbs returned against all odds. The police and the local court are inefficient and blame one another for it. Police officers are incompetent, inadequately trained and equipped. In addition, they fear a backfire by the Albanian community, says Maliković. The number of returnees is growing in the Klina municipality as well: ten houses for them have been built in the village of Drenoc/Drenovac and another ten are planned. About 100 families used to live in the village of Dërsnik/Dršnik. Today, there are hardly 10 and the youngest person among them had turned 55. According to priest Milos Vukić, Serbs and Catholic Albanians live in harmony in the village of Dolac, the Klina municipality.

Parallel institutions

V“Should the Republic of Serbia close down its institutions in Kosovo numbers of Serbs would emigrate,” says Vesna Maliković. According to her, Kosovo Serbs actually live on subsidies from Serbia. International Organization for Migration /IOM/ has assisted refugees very much but the government of Serbia most of all – it buys their wood, seed, manure, machinery, etc. and provides

equipment for their schools and medical centers. Villagers usually sell their products in Mitrovica, she says.

The media

Dailies from Serbia are not available to residents of Serb villages in the Istog/Istok municipality. Internet connection is bad but charged dear. They have Radio Bravo airing in their mother tongue. Social and cultural life is practically non-existent.

Education

There are one elementary and one secondary school with total 90 students. The school building has been renovated. The school has a basketball terrain.

Healthcare

The medical center in Osojanë/Osojane provides primary health care. Its staff is composed of a cardiologist, midwives, general practitioners and nurses. It is short of medicaments and medical supplies.

Economy

With a view to creating job opportunities for the unemployed young, the local communities committee had developed a project of daily care and gerontological services for the elderly. Unfortunately, the Kosovo government and other potential donors turned it down.

Electricity supply is problematic because of the old grid system. Recently Osojanë/Osojane has been connected to water supply. Pension checks average 45 Euro. No matter how small, this sum is the first money some widows have ever “earned” on their own and could spend at their will. These pensions contributed to their emancipation and resistance to the predominant patriarchal social system.

Osojanë/Osojane has an agricultural commune and a building to house a cultural center, which has been closed down. There are no public services of any kind, including street lightening and garbage service.

Municipality of Shtërcë/Štrpce

Decentralization

According to the municipal administration the biggest progress in the past two-three years has been made in the domain of infrastructure, unlike the process of decentralization that has not progressed at such rate. The international community has invested most authority on the central government in Prishtina, they comment. For them, the Kosovo government is unstable and as such hinders the development of a municipality in which Serbs are in the majority.

Sladjan Ilić, adviser to the Mayor, says Serb municipal representatives cooperate well with their Albanian counterparts. As for the municipality's ethnic structure, Serbs make up 70 percent of the population, and Albanians 30 percent. Only four villages in the municipality are ethnically mixed.

Albanians are in the majority in the municipal assembly (10 Albanian deputies and 9 Serb) because a certain number of local Serbs boycotted local elections. The Mayor, invested with executive power (unlike in Serbia) is of Serb origin. Implementation of the Law on Local Self-government is mostly hindered by the fact that a basic court has not been established yet. Therefore, citizens are turning to the branch of the Ferizaj/Uroševac court in which all judges are Albanians. "Kosovo courts network should be reorganized," says Ilić.

Certain institutions do not pay due respect for the right to the use of mother tongue. Correspondence with some ministries has to be in the Albanian language only.

Commander of the local police is a Serb though the Mayor has not been consulted about his appointment. Regardless of the faulty procedure related to the commander the municipal administration is satisfied with his performance.

All Serb residents of Shtërcë/Štrpce possess Kosovo ID cards and passports. They have all taken Kosovo car plates. There are no problems whatsoever when it comes to the freedom of movement or interethnic relations. All that troubles citizens are insurance taxes to be paid at the border crossing with Serbia.

Kosovo parliamentary and presidential elections were conducted in an atmosphere of peace and tolerance. During his premiership Vojislav Kostunica,

leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia, divided Kosovo Serbs, says Ilic adding that before Kostunica's era Serbia had recognized Serbs participating in Kosovo institutions.

Serbs have not emigrated from the municipality, which, on the other hand, accommodated internally displaced persons.

Healthcare

The Kosovo government financed construction of a hospital to provide secondary healthcare. The hospital should be fully constructed by the end of 2012. At present, local doctors work in an outpatient facility subsidized by the Serbian government. "Transfer" of these doctors to the new hospital will be problematic given that the Republic of Serbia does not allow dual employment. Not a single medical doctor in the municipality is unemployed. The municipality has a secondary medical school.

The local medical center is short of funds, medicaments and medical supplies. "Supply of medicaments is hampered by the fact that all such imports need to be licensed by the Ministry of Healthcare of Kosovo," says Dr. Dragana Mrdjinac.

Ambulances in the center's possession are old, some having been purchased 25 years ago. Every day there is a need for emergency transportation to Belgrade or Niš. Patients are transported to Mitrovica for dialysis.

A local surgeon is available on call round the clock, while the emergency ward is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. An outpatient facility in the village of Drajkovac recruits Serb and Albanian medical officers. People have to pay medical examinations from their own pocket because the facility is subsidized from the budget of Kosovo.

The Public Health Institute in Mitrovica caters epidemics. It takes an hour and a half drive from Shttrpcë/Štrpce to Mitrovica and 40 minutes to Gračanica/Gračanica.

The medical center is faced with the problem of transport of vaccines for newborns. Packages of vaccines supplied by the Torlak Institute in Belgrade and the Pasteur Institute in Paris have been confiscated and stored at the border crossing point in Mitrovica. The entire delivery became of no avail once the expiration date of these vaccines could no longer be controlled. The medical center had intervened with the OSCE Mission but in vain. Anyway, shelf life

of these vaccines is four days only under ideal conditions.

Medical equipment is outdated. An ultrasound device is broken down. All apparatuses are more than 20 years old.

Shtrpcë/Štrpce has the highest birthrate of all Serb populated municipalities. People are getting married very young and each couple has at least three children.

Education

Education system is in disorder. Teachers would like to get their salaries from the Kosovo government but without having to sign contracts with Kosovo institutions. Formerly they used to sign such contracts with UNMIK but at present they have to deal with Prishtina. Just a few of them have signed these contracts. Salaries for teachers in Serbian schools average 60,000 dinars (less than 600 Euro) and for those working in Albanian schools 190 Euro. The Kosovo government recognizes Serbia's curricula.

Every village in the municipality has either a school or a branch school. One building in Shtrpcë/Štrpce accommodates an elementary and a secondary school.

Teachers in Kosovo have a 14-16 hour standard work week, which is by far less than the work time for teachers in Serbia. Accordingly, the local school employs 90 teachers. About 90 percent of teaching staff are final year students at their respective faculties. The number of students is 560, which is twice as much as 12 years ago. They may choose between courses in economics, law, catering, medicine, machine engineering, informatics and electrical engineering, as well as attend gymnasium classes. About 1,500 students have graduated in the past 12 years.

No vacancies are available to the young. "Economy and production have stalled," says Živče Sarkočević, deputy principal.

Parallel institutions

The assembly of the "Serbian" municipality is convened in the same hall as that of the "Kosovo" municipality. Its deputies were elected back on May 11, 2008 and their terms of office have expired since. The municipality itself is housed in the building of the local agricultural commune.

The municipality has a social care center, civil registry service and archives. Civil registry book and cadastral records are stored in Krusevac. Copies of these documents have not been certified yet according to the agreement reached in Belgrade-Prishtina talks.

More than 1,300 residents of Shtërcë/Štrpce live on Serbian salaries and another 1,245 receive minimal paychecks from the same source. The “Serbian” municipality has a staff of 188. Their livelihood will be problematic if Serbia abolishes parallel institutions.

Economy

In the past 2-3 years the Kosovo government has invested some 6 million Euro in the municipality of Shtërcë/Štrpce, says Ilic. It has the population of 13,000-14,000. The unemployment rate amounts to 50 percent and is even higher when it comes to young people.

The European Commission has financed a master plan for a sky resort at Mt. Brezovica. The plan was presented in February 2012. As of September 2012 the municipality will start looking for a foreign investor. The entire mountain is in its ownership. The INEX Company that owns the existing, devastated sky center is a Belgrade-seated shareholding company the status of which has not been defined in the privatization process. The fact that UNSC Resolution 1244 annulled the right to management of public property additionally complicates the issue of ownership over the sky center, says Sladjan Ilić. The old center is 60 kilometers away from the Suva Reka – Drač/Durrës highway and the access road to it is in poor condition. Its earning from tourism is scanty at present.

The livestock resource has been almost destroyed and no one seems to be interested in husbandry any more. At present there are only 1,000 sheep in the municipality out of 30,000 that used to be once. Serbia’s Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija and the municipality have developed a program for mulberry growth in partnership with the municipality of Arilje, Serbia. The Institute for Fruit Growing from Čacak controls rigorously the quality of fresh fruit. The number of people interested in growing raspberries exceeded available funds. At present as much as 500 tons of raspberries are harvested at 30 hectares under bushes. There are two privately-owned refrigerator trucks used for exports in which entrepreneurs from Serbia act as agents. Raspberries are sold at Italian and German market. Apart from fruit growing citizens live on petty trade –

mostly buying and selling foodstuff produced by Albanians from neighboring areas – and on growing medicinal herb gardens.

The Sharr/Šar Mountain National Park makes up a considerable part of municipal territory. The Serb parallel municipality governs one-third of the park and its Kosovo counterpart two-thirds. The section controlled by the later is named Sharr/Šar Park.

The “Kosovo” municipality collects taxes from enterprises that pay them as down payments. An enterprise from Serbia runs municipal utilities.

Sports and culture

Unlike many other Serb populated municipalities, Shtrpcë/Štrpce has a cultural center that functions. Painting colonies and guest theaters are among its regular activities.

Municipality of Rahovec/Orahovac

Decentralization

The local communities committee has a staff of seven as of October 2011. The Serb community in Rahovec/Orahovac is the only urban Serb community in Kosovo. When KFOR arrived to Kosovo Serbs had not a single institution. The school has been housed in the Youth Center and an outpatient facility and a playground were built in 2001. Tensions have grown at the time of Kostunica’s premiership and the position of Kosovo Serbs has worsened, says Slaviša Kolašinac of the Communities Committee.

According to him, out of 4,000 Serb citizens of the town of Rahovec/Orahovac before 1999 only 500 remained. About 500 Serbs live in the nearby town of Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča. There are indications that local Serbs would like to see parallel institutions dissolved, he says. After the “leaflet campaign” messaging Serbs to move to Serbia, people have been living in fear of arson. Not a single Serb lives in the ethnically mixed part of the town – they feel unsafe there and are anxious of being isolated from their countrymen.

Safety of their property concerns citizens the most. Their vineyards are being destroyed and construction materials stolen of their houses. Citizens say the

police do nothing about it. They were living in fear after the physical assault at a monk of the Zoqishtë/Žočište monastery. Ten houses for returnees that have been constructed in Zoqishtë/Žočište are still unoccupied. To build these houses was a wrong decision, says Golub Kujundzić, president of the parallel municipal assembly of Rahovec/Orahovac, adding that the moneys should have better been invested in renovation of some downtown houses. His municipality financed construction of four houses to shelter poor families. The City of Belgrade donated funds for a local kindergarten. “Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Mitrovica eat most of the moneys on the way from Belgrade, so that all we get are peanuts,” says Kujundzic.

Under the Law on Special Protective Zones the Serb-populated village of Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča should get the first degree of decentralization. For their part, Kosovo Albanians are concerned that the Law would curtail some of their constitutionally guaranteed rights, the right to trade in the first place. “Albanians’ dissatisfaction makes Serbs anxious,” say Kolašinac arguing that the Law should never been adopted. “It blocks the Serbs of Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča,” he says “because it conserves it as if it was the Hilandary monastery.”

Before the war people in Rahovec/Orahovac spoke a kind of lingo they called the Rahovec/Orahovac language. It was in fact a dialect of the language of the Prizren-Timok region abundant in Turkish words. This was the language of the urban population regardless of their ethnic origin. So it happened that neither Albanians were speaking Albanian nor Serbs the Serbian language. At present, Serb settlements are at least 70 kilometers away from Rahovec/Orahovac. Like Vukovar in Croatia, Rahovec/Orahovac was Kosovo’s first field of conflict between Serbia’s army and police on the one hand, and KLA troops on the other. The biggest number of people were killed in Rahovec/Orahovac – about 1,000 Albanians and 87 Serbs. Proportionally to their sizes both communities suffered the same losses in human lives. Despite of everything people seem to be after cohabitation.

Economy

Serbs in Rahovec/Orahovac are employed in the administration, healthcare and education system. They duly pay their bills and taxes, and all of them have Kosovo ID cards and passports. Local Serbs see their prospects in integration processes.

The unemployment rate is high. Privatization of many companies failed. For instance, before it was privatized the “Orvin” winery provided jobs to 1,500 workers. Now only 50 have been left. Only five percent of the once 500-hectare vineyard has remained.

The “Serb” municipality has the staff of 56, out of which only 28 actually work for the administration. The rest stay home receiving minimal salaries of 11,000 dinars (about 100 Euro) since 2003. The municipality distributes welfare, pensions and childcare subsidies.

The Association of Winegrowers operates in Rahovec/Orahovac. The Dečani Winery in Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča produces the famous brand of wine. The monastery winery plans to buy grapes or wine from villagers of Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča and so help them sell their products. Rahovec/Orahovac is the second best by the number of sunny days – after the Island of Hvar in Croatia. Its climate is ideal for winegrowing. Vineyards owned by Serbs are usually well-kept despite occasional usurpation.

No public utility in Rahovec/Orahovac engages a worker of Serb origin. Two Serbs work for the post office in Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča, and another four are auxiliary staff of the local court.

Education

The municipality of Rahovec/Orahovac organizes Serb-Albanian excursions to Durrës/Drač and Budva. The municipality encourages integration by having Serb and Albanian children together at the courses in bicycle riding and traffic signals.

Decentralization

Local elections were held on November 15, 2009 and the municipality was constituted on January 5, 2010. All of fifteen municipal deputies are Serbs: eleven had been selected from the list of the Civic Initiative for the Municipality of Ranilug/Ranilug and four from the Serb Kosovo-Metohija Party. This is the only Serb-populated municipality in Kosovo not governed by the Serb Liberal Party holding the majority in the Serb caucus of the Kosovo parliament. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are members of the Serb Renewal Movement.

“The Ahtisaari plan is not fully implemented because of inadequate political will,” says Mayor Gradimir Nikić. The land management is problematic, he says, explaining that in the decentralization process public land has been placed under the jurisdiction of the central government instead of the municipality. “Serbs participating in Kosovo institutions are most responsible for what happened...Serb politicians in Prishtina so much truncate, rename and change all of local Serbs’ suggestions concerning Kosovo legislation that these suggestion no longer make any sense,” he says. According to him Kosovo is more and more centralized rather than decentralized.

The municipality’s population amounts to 6,000 persons – as many as 98.5 percent of the total are Serbs. And yet, Albanians make 20 percent of the total staff of the municipal administration. For instance, the directors of the municipal budget and finances, as well as the head of the municipal supply service are of Albanian origin. The municipality cooperates well with the Kosovo police and perfectly with the municipality of Kamenicë/Kamenica. The two municipalities have signed a memorandum on comprehensive cooperation and mutual assistance.

The municipal building, destroyed in 1999, was renovated in 2001. It has been built on the land owned by the municipality. A new, and more adequate edifice that is under construction should be completed by the end of 2012.

The court competent for the municipality of Ranilug/Ranilug is located in Kamenica. It has not a single judge of Serb origin. “Serb” Kosovo courts function well but are scattered all over Serbia, says Nikić. Judges of Kosovo courts are better paid than their Serb counterparts, which is the only exception when it comes to salaries paid to the employees of Kosovo and Serb institutions, claims Nikić. He expects that people working for Serbian institutions would return to Kosovo, sooner or later.

“They cannot stay forever in Niš, Vranje and other places,” he says.

In his view, the Kosovo government has not developed a plan for integration of North Kosovo. “Institutions in the North should be legalized and operations by ‘four lords and masters’ over there placed in the public eye. They must become accountable and subject to auditing,” says Nikić.

Considering that no one has fled or emigrated from Ranillug/Ranilug, the issue of return is not on the municipal agenda.

The media

Citizens of Ranillug/Ranilug can watch the two channels of Serbia’s public broadcaster, RTS. They can also watch programs on cable TV in the ownership of a local Serb. Newspapers are regularly supplied via Bujanovac, South Serbia. The village of Šilovo has a radio-television station of its own. The municipality had equipped the Radio Plus Ranillug/Ranilug and rented the station to an entrepreneur under the condition that he provided jobs to three people from Ranillug/Ranilug. He fulfilled this condition and at present the station airs program fine. People also have access to the internet as there is ADSL in the territory of the municipality. Serbia’s Telenor company still has its transmitters in Ranillug/Ranilug so that people can use the 063 mobile network. “Old” telephone lines are still there too.

Speaking of the media, municipal representatives say that the biggest problem is that news about developments in Prishtina are not available to citizens in their mother tongue. At present the RTK Channel II in the Serbian language broadcasts a “collage of programs,” including only one daily newscaster, which is hardly enough to keep one posted, they say.

Education

The municipality did not sign a memorandum on school autonomy with Kosovo Ministry of Education in 2010. They turned it down considering that the memorandum “bypasses the municipality” and fully authorizes the Kosovo government, says Nikic, adding that it exemplified centralization.

The municipality has a teaching staff of 68 people on its payroll out of 215 who are on Serbia’s budget. Serbia transfers moneys through the parallel municipality of Kosovska Kamenica. Salaries paid to teachers in Kosovo exceed those of their counterparts in Serbia by 150 percent. At present they receive

monthly salaries of 55,000 dinars (about 500 Euro). The difference was even higher last year – 200 percent.

There are two elementary and two secondary schools, plus one pre-school in the territory of the municipality of Ranillug/Ranilug. Each of 36 Serb-populated villages in Ranillug/Ranilug and Kamenica municipalities has a kindergarten and a child dispensary.

Municipal authorities have recognized the need for Serbs to learn Albanian and the other way round. For more than 20 years now, ever since the beginning of ex-Yugoslavia's disintegration, children had not been taught the language spoken in the community other than theirs. On June 1, 2012, the municipality launched a series of courses in the Albanian language. Knowledge of Albanian, English and PC technology should be educational priorities, say municipal authorities. In 2009 they had organized "excursions of friendship" for Albanian and Serb children. As there is not an Albanian language school in Ranillug/Ranilug the municipality has organized daily transport for Albanian children to the nearest school in the municipality of Kamenica.

At present the municipality negotiates opening of a faculty in Ranillug/Ranilug with Olivera Karić, director of the BK University.

Healthcare

The municipality provides primary healthcare only. Except for a few nurses on the municipality's payroll, other medical staff is paid by the Serbia's Ministry of Healthcare.

The municipality encourages childbearing – each newborn gets 200 Euro. Parents with three or more children get 30 Euro each month. Birthrate is growing.

Parallel institutions

The Ranillug/Ranilug municipality has not cooperated with the parallel one of Kamenica/Kosovska Kamenica but things are changing now. The "Serb" municipality is less and less capable – and authorized – to assist those in need. On the other hand, citizens of Ranillug/Ranilug are aware that the existence of parallel institutions plays into their hands considering that it is through these institutions that they receive salaries and welfare. These means of support mean a lot to population of Ranillug/Ranilug.

Economy

The great majority of the population lives on farming. There is one brickyard owned by an Albanian, engaging Serbs and Albanians alike (fifty-fifty).

Ninety percent of the municipal budget is determined by the territory it occupies and its population. The structure of the budget used to be more advantageous before Ranillug/Ranilug separated from the bigger municipality of Kamenicë/Kamenica. The budget consists of a basic grant, a grant for education and a grant for healthcare. Infrastructure has considerably improved (roads, central heating, water supply system, etc.). The municipality plans to apply with its projects to the Program for Provisional Employment.

Should there be the rule of law in the entire territory of Kosovo, Ranillug/Ranilug would be a really nice place to live in, says Nikić. Construction of a spa center is supposed to begin soon. According to Nikić, investors will commit 48 million Euro.

Civil society organizations

The NGO Center for Social Affirmation of the Young is the only civil society organization in the municipality. Zoran Stanković, president of the organization, says they are allowed to attend the sessions of the Ranillug/Ranilug Municipal Assembly.

The Center was among founders of the municipal 7-member Youth Council. The plan had been to establish it as a municipal agency but, after careful consideration, it was registered as a CSO. It cooperates with the Youth Council of Kosovo emerging to the project supported by Deutschen Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), OSCE and the Kosovo Ministry for the Youth.

Young people are among most vulnerable groups of population in Kosovo. Municipalities and international organizations should join hands to detect their most pressing needs and concerns in local communities and provide inasmuch assistance as possible to the young. As usual, inadequate financial resources are the biggest stumbling block – the Ranillug/Ranilug municipality cannot financially assist the young and the civil society.

Stanković points out good cooperation with the Gračanica/Gračanica-seated Center for Peace and Tolerance, adding that his organization has joined the Kosovo Action-Strategic Network (assembling 90% percent of total “Serb” NGOs).

They do not cooperate with NGOs in Kosovo North. “Serb and Albanian NGOs cooperate only under the pressure from the international community,” he says.

Sports and culture

The Center for Social Affirmation of the Young has initiated an amateur theater named the Serb Amateur Theater of Kosovo Pomoravlje. The theater has a troupe of 30 amateur actors and includes the 180-member Cultural-Artistic Society. The theater and folk-dance troupes do not perform only at municipal ceremonies. The theater group performs three-four plays each year and participates in the Amateur Theater Festival in Serbia, organized regularly in the village of Malo Crnice nearby Pozarevac. The Cultural Center in which they rehearse and play for the audience is in poor condition: it has no bathrooms, toilets, central heating and is totally dilapidated. The municipality has no funds for repairs and renovation. “What we need are more educational outreach programs for the young,” says Stanković.

Municipality of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo

Decentralization

Established back in 1989, the municipality of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo covers the area of 92 square kilometers and Serbs used to make up 70 percent of total population. It is the first municipality in Kosovo in which Serbs and Albanians started to cooperate after 1999. As years went by, more and more Serbs participated in local institutions. In the 2003 elections Serb won the majority of seats in the Municipal Assembly. Under the strong pressure from Belgrade, local Serbs boycotted the elections in 2007. It was Joachim Richer, head of UNMIK at the time, who straightened out the disproportion between the municipality’s ethnic structure and the electoral outcome in 2007. He decided to appoint ethnic Albanian Bairush Imeri the mayor, reappoint 10 Serb deputies (whose mandates have expired) and complete the membership of the Assembly with seven newly elected Albanian representatives, which was in proportion with the electoral outcome.

In 2009 the territory of the municipality was enlarged to cover Serb settlements in neighboring municipalities: nine cadastral zones of the Gjilanë/

Gnjilane municipality (with 90 percent of Serb population) and five cadastral zones of the Kamenica municipality were added to it. At present it spreads on the territory of 204 square kilometers – it has been expanded by 120 percent. The great majority of Serbs also boycotted the 2009 elections. A few that cast ballot voted for Radovan Denić, incumbent deputy mayor. Now the local assembly is composed of 15 deputies – 10 Albanians and 5 Serbs.

The majority of police officers are Serbs. A Serb was the police commander till last year. The incumbent commander is an Albanian. A new commander to be appointed soon will probably be a Serb again.

A young Serb from Novobërdë/Novo Brdo joined the Kosovo Security Forces (army). The municipality organized his transport to Ferizaj/Uroševac for drill. “He has never been discriminated by the troops for his ethnic origin,” says Mayor Imeri. Not even in March 2004 had there been ethnically motivated conflicts, he adds.

The municipality has received a 1-million-Euro grant from Kosovo Premier Hashim Thaçi. The grant has been spent on infrastructure. “Such grants were distributed to all newly formed municipalities under the Ahtisaari plan,” says Imeri. Three branch offices have been opened in the villages of Stanisar, Pasjak and Labjan. An Albanian and a Serb run each of the three offices. Once a week they issue birth certificates and other documents to villagers. Thanks to the municipality and these branches about 90 percent of Serb population now have Kosovo ID cards and passports.

As the municipality has no basic court the one authorized for it in Prishtina that has Serb judges as well. The newly added cadastral zones are under the jurisdiction of the “old” courts (in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Kamenica). After the ongoing reform of the court network, the later will be divided into five regions, whereas basic courts will be located in seven major towns. Each basic court will have its branches in municipalities under its jurisdiction. At present Novobërdë/Novo Brdo has an office for cooperation with courts run by two Serbs. However, no one has been turning to it for long: people feel endangered no more.

The municipality has organized polling stations in 33 villages. Villagers will be electing their local councils and chairmen of these councils.

Economy

The municipality had no industry even before the 1999 war. Its population are mostly farmers who sell their products at local green markets. Serbs and Albanian trade in the same green market in the village of Labjan.

The total population amounts to some 10,000 people many of whom are unemployed. Young people are the most vulnerable group among the unemployed.

The municipal administration has organized a free of charge bus traveling the distance between Novobërdë/Novo Brdo and Prishtina three times a day. This is great advantage to citizens working in neighboring municipalities or going on business to Prishtina or Gračanica

Sports and culture

Novobërdë/Novo Brdo has a multiethnic football team. No ethnically motivated incidents have been registered up to now. Football players and their fans, Serbs and Albanians alike, travel together to wherever matches are organized, Prishtina included.

Education

Thanks to assistance of the government of the Great Britain, the municipality has constructed a multiethnic secondary school of economics. The teaching staff had been selected at an open competition but, unfortunately, students have not been interested in applying.

The Kosovo government finances reconstruction of schools of all ethnic communities. It has granted 32,000 Euro for reconstruction of a local Serb school.

Professors and teachers paid from Kosovo budget have to work longer hours than their colleagues teaching by Serbia's curricula. Out of 274 persons working for Serb schools, 139 receive Kosovo salaries. The later come not only from Novobërdë/Novo Brdo but also from the newly added parts of Gjilanë/Gnjilane and Kamenica.

The municipality can afford salaries for 339 persons at the best. Many

doctors and other medical staff of outpatient facilities receive their salaries from Serbia. Rationalization of the domains of education and healthcare is imminent, implying cuts in the number of the employed.

Parallel institutions

Sreten Ivanović chaired the parallel municipal administration of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo till 2008. In May 2008 this parallel administration was relocated to the village of Prekovac. Though the “Kosovo” municipality turns a blind eye to its activities, relations between the two administrations are good: people from “both sides” had been coworkers till 2008. A deputy of the Serb municipality is also a deputy of the Kosovo one, says Mayor Imeri. Imeri and Denić agree that Serb institutions will gradually dissolve on their own.

Belgrade's Attitude towards Kosovo North: Misuse of Citizens

Kosovo North is the neuralgic point of the entire Western Balkans. Having played on the partition scenario for Kosovo the official Belgrade has tried to impose re-composition of the Balkans – of Bosnia in the first place and, unavoidably, Macedonia. Once again its attitude only testified that it was more concerned with territories than Serbs in Kosovo. Having Republika Srpska /RS/ at its priority list, Belgrade uses Kosovo just as an argument that Republika Srpska is also entitled to self-determination. Kosovo's independence declaration was used as a prelude to radicalization in Kosovo and RS alike. In the past four years RS Premier Milorad Dodik managed to annul all the achievements of Bosnia-Herzegovina's integration and question the very existence of the Bosnian state.

Launched back in 1999, Belgrade's status quo policy for Kosovo North collapsed in the autumn of 2011 when the international community made no bones about enough being enough and nodded Kosovo special unit ROSU to take action at the border crossings with Serbia. Nevertheless, certain circles, including the players from Kosovo North and a part of Serbian NGOs in Kosovo still advocate the policy of status quo²¹. Their plan is to postpone the settlement of the status of Kosovo for decades. This is all about the tactics of waiting for the international community to get tired of the Western Balkans and give up to Serbs' plan for re-composition of borders. There are many indications that the partition scenario is unsustainable from the angle of human security, the rule of law and free flow of people and goods. Though the official Belgrade still insists on a special autonomy for Kosovo North, Serbian politicians seem to recognize the reality of a state border with Kosovo.

Citizens of Serbia and Kosovo alike are hostage to the situation in Kosovo North. The Kosovo government is incapable of governing a part of its territory on the one hand. On the other, Serbia's movement towards EU integration has slowed down because of its support to extreme nationalistic Serb leaders in Kosovo North.

Anarchy prevails in Mitrovica North, Leposaviq/Leposavić, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zvečan. Many citizens from these parts told the Helsinki Committee's team

²¹ The Helsinki Committee team's interviews with representatives of the civil sector in Kosovo North.

that they were living in fear. They had been almost duty-bound to go to the barricades at the detriment of their everyday businesses and risking their lives in addition, they said. Moderates among citizens and civil society activists are choked back. Citizens complained of frequent physical assaults (including planted explosives) against anyone daring to openly oppose radical Serb leaders or communicating with international representatives and Kosovo institutions.

Influenced by Belgrade-seated media, citizens in Kosovo North are suspicious about Kosovo institutions. On the other hand, Kosovo police forces are unable to operate in full capacity in this region: the work of police officers mostly boils down to registering crimes and physical assaults. In the autumn of 2011, police officers from Mitrovica told the Helsinki Committee that they were hampered by politics and that their headquarters in Prishtina refrained from deployment of full force to avoid escalation of the conflict.

Some Albanians would like to return to their homes north of the Ibër/Ibar River but could not yet.

What Serbia tacitly wanted was to impose the political solution for Kosovo North on the agenda of the dialogue on technical issues. Its plan failed considering that the international community (EU and US) refused it consensually.

The crisis in Kosovo North testified that links between Belgrade (Democratic Party in the first place) and local Serb leaders weaken under a strong international pressure. So it happened that the Serbian government denied support to local Serb leaders organizing a referendum (February 15-16, 2012) on /non/recognition of Kosovo institutions. For the first time Kosovo Serb refused to listen to Belgrade's dictate. The referendum of 'yes' or 'no' to recognition of Kosovo institutions was held in all the four municipalities: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North, Laposaviq/Leposavić, Zubin Potok and Zveqan/Zvečan though Mayor of Laposaviq/Leposavić, a member of the Democratic Party, had been advocating against it as the only Kosovo Serb leader. Serbian Minister for Kosovo and Metohija Goran Bodganović commented, "This was for the first time ever that Kosovo Serbs refused to hear the government of Serbia²²." He called the referendum "unnecessary," saying it would "hamper the process of negotiations." Using terms such as "dangerous" and "fatal" and calling the referendum "gambling with people's will," Bodganović claimed, "The outcome of the referendum should not politically influence this or any future government." "It is common knowledge that 100 percent of Serbs in Kosovo North oppose Kosovo institutions," he added.

²² Dnevnik, February 13, 2012.

Besides, the Democratic Party government reasoned that any insistence on holding Serbia's local elections in Kosovo North in May 2012 would cost it dear on the road towards European integration. Such reasoning did not imply, however, that the government decided to support parallel institutions no more. Actually it announced an old-new strategy: establishment of provisional municipal councils without elections. Local elections for parallel municipal authorities were held under Serbia's election law despite the fact that Belgrade had not supported them formally. Belgrade did not recognize electoral results in Zubin Potok and Zveqan/Zvečan.

Discrepancy between Serb leaders in Kosovo North and the government in Belgrade, that is the Democratic Party, became evident over the past year. In October 2011 Minister for Kosovo and Metohija Goran Bogdanović accused Serb leaders of telling one thing to the President of the Republic and another to the press. Be it as it may, Belgrade's initial enthusiasm for barricaded roads and border crossing stations, including huge publicity given to them by the media, melted down once the European Commission recommended a candidacy status for Serbia (October 12, 2011). It was visible to naked eye that relations between Kosovo Serb leaders and Borislav Stefanović, Belgrade's negotiator in the talks with Prishtina/Priština, were seriously disturbed. Lawyers engaged by Kosovo Serb leaders pressed charges against Stefanović for a breach of Constitution.

Serb leaders from densely Serb-populated municipalities were at the barricades when the European Council decided to postpone Serbia's EU candidacy.

To manifest that they trusted not Belgrade they organized petitioning for Russia's citizenship. They handed over the petition with over 20,000 signatures to Russian Ambassador in Belgrade Alexander Konuzin²³. Dmitry Rogozin, vice-premier, was the only Russian official to support the petition. Actually, he offered Kosovo Serbs to move to Russia from, as he put it, "Kosovo-Albanian prison." "We have so many abandoned villages and towns, so much territory to be settled in... We can afford shelter to 20,000 people, give them Russian citizenship and include them in our repatriation rather than immigration program," he said²⁴. But then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, himself said that by law Kosovo Serbs were not entitled to be granted Russian citizenship but could count on Russia's support and humanitarian aid instead²⁵.

23 It was the Russian Embassy in Belgrade that launched the initiative to demonstrate that Kosovo Serbs had no confidence in Boris Tadic.

24 Politika, November 17, 2011.

25 Russia's humanitarian aid consisted of tents and camping equipment. .

Independence declaration of the four Serb-populated municipalities was among short-lived plans. Radenko Nedeljković, head of the Kosovo-Mitrovica District advocating “autonomous regions,” said that would be inevitable “should the three-month terror against Serbs continue.”²⁶

Inclined to radical solutions, Ivica Dačić, Serbia’s incumbent premier and vice-premier and the police minister at the time, said he totally supported the Kosovo Serbs refusing to live in independent Kosovo. “Who can deny them that right? Why have they recognized the same rights to Albanians refusing to live in the Republic of Serbia?” he pointed out.²⁷

The manner in which Kosovo Serbs are instrumentalized associates the same manipulator policy in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina – the policy backed by the entire Serb elite except the Liberal Democratic Party /LDP/, some smaller parties and a part of the civil sector. As for Russia, it does not oppose formally Serbia’s membership of EU (NATO is its “red line”) but is strategically concerned with being present in the region.

Governmental officials “in charge of Kosovo” and Serb leaders in the North were taken aback the most by what German Chancellor Angela Merkel said during her visit to Belgrade in August 2011. Officials argued that nothing could possibly replace parallel structures in Kosovo North for they were the only warrant of Serbs’ survival over there. As for Serb leaders such as Marko Jakšić and Milan Ivanović, they called Merkel’s demands unacceptable to Kosovo Serbs in the North and south of the Ibër/Ibar River alike. They announced to stage a peaceful resistance and “political struggle by not only North Kosovo Serbs but also all national forces in Serbia proper” should Serbia yield to the pressure from the West²⁸.

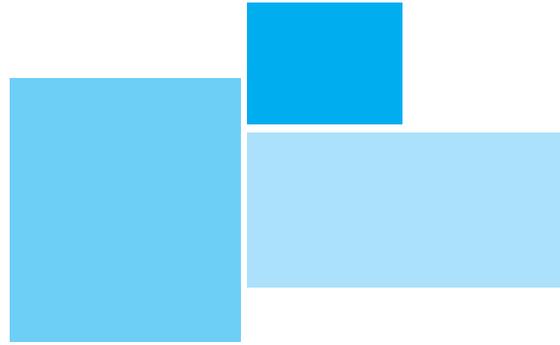
The standpoint of Slobodan Petrović, Kosovo vice-premier, is diametrically opposite to that of Serb leaders in the North. According to him, the state of Serbia should take care of its own priorities, the number one being integration into EU. “I am sure Belgrade authorities would recognize a crucial thing they have to do to continue along this road is to abolish parallel structures in Kosovo North,” says Petrović²⁹.

26 Politika, November 21, 2011.

27 Ibid.

28 Danas, August 24, 2011.

29 Politika, August 24, 2011.



Interviews with Citizens in Kosovo North

In the period January-June 2012 the Helsinki Committee's team interviewed politicians, public servants, journalists, NGO activists and citizens in Kosovo North. These interviews were conducted on a variety of occasions – at round tables, seminars, conferences, etc., and during several fact-finding missions to Mitrovica North³⁰. Some of the interviewed citizens of Mitrovica North and neighboring villages said they doubted they could safely cross the bridge over Ibër/Ibar and travel to the south. To “feel safer” they needed escort and organized transportation. Most of the conferences the team attended were closed to the public by the “Chatham House Rules.” This is why the team's interlocutors will be unnamed in the paragraphs below.

Kosovo North is the only area in Kosovo where the Ahtisaari plan has not been implemented by the summer of 2012 and is strongly opposed to. For this reason the team decided to interview people about the possibility of its implementation in the near future. On the one hand, Serb officials – in Kosovo North and in Belgrade alike – the media and certain civil sector representatives claim that the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan in Kosovo North is out of question. On the other, findings of the team's survey indicate that things stand somewhat differently in real life.

There are indications that municipalities formed under the Ahtisaari plan could replace the parallel institutions in Kosovo North

³⁰ Most interlocutors were visibly anxious about communicating with the team in the territory of Mitrovica North: as they put it, they feared possible reaction by their townfols and radical groups.

Namely, there are institutions in Kosovo North not subsidized from Serbia but serving citizens with a view to improving their everyday life and cooperating with the Kosovo government and the international community. Ever since these institutions were established, citizens in Kosovo North, as well as those in Serbia proper, have been almost unaware of their existence let alone activities.

So it happened that few Serbs in North Kosovo (and in Serbia) were informed about the activity of the Municipal Preparatory Team laid down in the Ahtisaari plan. In June 2012 the Preparatory Council was replaced by the Administrative Office of Mitrovica North – actually the municipal administration envisaged by the Ahtisaari Plan.

For the time being the Office has been allocated the annual budget of four million Euro. The budget should be spent on basic services and infrastructural facilities in Mitrovica North, according to the Radio Free Europe newscaster of June 21, 2012.

On June 20, 2012 Adrijana Hodzic was appointed the president of the Office. She used to be the head of the Preparatory Team before. The Administrative Office is in charge of providing services to citizens and coordinating investment in this part of Kosovo – actually its duties are the same as those the Preparatory team have performed for the past two years.

The fact that over 1,000 people applied for 55 vacancies in the Office at an open call testifies that citizens are more and more anxious to lead a normal life and have jobs and the rule of law. Out of 1,000 applicants, 200 candidates were from Mitrovica North. This, besides 90 persons that have applied for joining the Preparatory Team at the time of its formation, is most telling of changes in peoples' attitude. Not long ago, a building was constructed to house the new municipal administration.

Serbia's officials called the opening of the Office a provocation³¹. Local Serb leaders have been sending it threatening messages.

During the June 2012 wave of Serbs at the barricades in Kosovo North, Dejan Radojević³², president of the Democratic Alternative, said, "There is not

31 They have tried to establish this office several times, which is in line with the Ahtisaari plan but means not that Serbs should accept it," the outgoing minister Bogdanovic told the Radio-Television of Serbia. „We have our local self-government over there," he reminded. <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/329218/Imenovanje-sefa-Kancelarije-kosovske-vlade-u-Mitrovici>.

32 <https://www.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Srbija/229964/Branicemo-Severnu-Mitrovicu-zivotima>

a single Serb, except those joining Kosovo institutions long ago, that will not risk his life to defend Serbhood in Kosovo and Metohija.” “Despite our resistance, the so-called Kosovo government continues building the facility for the future municipality of Mitrovica North and thus provoking incidents,” added Radojevic. In addition to declaring a state of emergency, he said, the municipal crisis headquarters warned all Serbs it would take measures against any filling some of 55 vacancies in the Administrative Office.

Despite the treats by local Serb officials supported from Belgrade and despite the barricades and the problems they causes, there were signals that by the end of its mandate the former government (Democratic Party) had attempted to improve the relations with representatives of the Administrative Office (according to the Helsinki Committee’s source). (The fact that one of the candidates for the head of the Administrative Office was a member of a Belgrade-seated party that will join the ruling coalition, also testifies that Belgrade is turning more and more moderate about Kosovo North.)

Serb leaders south of the Ibër/Ibar River support the newly established Mitrovica Administrative Office. According to the Helsinki Committee’s source, some circles in the Serb Orthodox Church, the most important institution to Kosovo Serbs, also support it. Commenting Adrijana Hodzic’s appointment the head of the Office, Rada Trajković, a Serb leader and director of the Graçanicë/Gračanica Medical Center, told the press, “We need to be supportive and accountable when it comes to someone who has been elected. Be it as it may, she is a citizens of Kosovo North and there is no doubt that she will be working towards normalization.”³³

One should bear in mind that over the past two years the Preparatory Team Office has been the only institution in Kosovo North operating by law. It has initiated and implemented several projects Serb leaders in the North ignored - to say the least³⁴. Moreover, people working on these projects have been permanently exposed to pressure and verbal abuse. The official Belgrade has denied it its support. In July 2011, the Preparatory Team appealed to Serbian President Boris Tadić for assistance: they asked him to “restrain local Serb structures from hampering the team’s work”³⁵.

33 Radio Free Europe, June 21, 2012.

34 Apart from constructing a playground, the Preparatory Team has distribued log for heating, developed welfare project, decorated the entire town for the New Year Eve, etc. The Team has also assisted civil society organization in applying to potential donor organizations in Kosovo. It has always been open to citizens’ suggestions for better infrastructure and life in Mitrovica North.

35 Danas, August 29, 2011.

The letter the Team addressed to President Tadić on August 25, 2011 (shortly after the visit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel) testified of the existence of a strong alternative to radical groups in Kosovo North. “We cannot influence much the political future of Mitrovica North but do strongly believe in citizens’ right to elect their governance without being intimidated, subject to pressure and, above all, brutality of politicians who have been greatly profiting from the status quo in Kosovo North...Our 12-member team is composed of Serbs, Albanians and Bosniaks, all sick and tired of the alleged self-government that does nothing but manipulates moneys from both Serb and Albanian budgets to support radical forces using intimidation tactics against any dissent and make people participate in political rallies under threat of losing their jobs, while doing nothing against violence for over one decade...We wish to establish a more just, more democratic and more transparent alternative to the present ruling structures,” says the letter and quotes the outcomes of its activities – a new park, an asphalt road, cultural events, etc³⁶.

The news story carrying excerpts from the letter to President Tadić quotes Radenko Nedeljković, head of the Kosovo-Mitrovica district and DS official, wandering at the Preparatory Team’s complaints. “No one bothers them,” he says and argues, “The problem is that these people have taken money having promised to realize Peter Faith’s plan. And now they look for an alibi because people do not trust them³⁷.” Nedeljković and other leaders from the North referred to the Preparatory Team with the same hostility and using the same discourse in 2010³⁸.

36 Excerpts from the letters published in the daily Danas on August 29, 2011 in a story headlined „Refrain Serb Forces!“

37 Danas, August 29, 2011.

38 When the Preparatory Teams was established local Serb leaders looking up to Belgrade and Belgrade-seated media did all in their power to disqualify team members. Radojko Nedeljkovic, head of the Kosovo-Mitrovica district and DS official, told the Politika daily on February 2, 2010, that people on the team were solely motivated by financial gain. They described them as „Serbs with criminal records, mostly coming from municipalities of Zvečan and Leposavić.“ „They are expendable to the international community. Should they manage to realize what it had planned in tandem with the self-proclaimed Kosovo government, they would be needed no more,“ said Nedeljkovic. President of the Serb National Council Milan Ivanovic called the new administration mercenaries and accused them of „being in the service of Albanian extremists and the West, and committing treason.“ Asked how come that so many Serbs applied for the team supposed to implement the Ahtisaari plan, Oliver Ivanovic, state secretary at the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija, replied that the number had been fabricated to create the impression that Serbs were interested very much in the new institution. „And they are not, because people from other places were selected for the team – and that means only few from Mitrovica North applied,“ he said. He argues that the team members have been attracted by 550-Euro salaries and promises about being in charge of infrastructural projects – which they see as a perfect opportunity for earning more money. „We disregard them, as they have no political power whatsoever. They will not manage to motivate a single person for their work under the condition that people we elected in the local elections are credible figures capable of representing the Serb community and local self-government with dignity,“ he said. Politika, February 16, 2010.

People on the Preparatory Team have had to work real hard to keep citizens posted on the projects they had realized and gain their trust little by little.

The international community has financed the infrastructural projects the Preparatory Team developed on the basis on citizens' suggestions.

Kosovo Serb leaders and the official Belgrade oppose the Ahtisaari plan the most. Findings of the survey the International Civilian Office conducted in Kosovo North at the time of barricades showed that 80 percent of Kosovo Serbs in the region had never set their eyes on the Ahtisaari plan³⁹. They had been informed about it solely by Belgrade-seated media, which only logically fueled their animosity for it⁴⁰. The media in Serbia are usually focused either on barricades or a special status for Kosovo North, practically ignoring the Ahtisaari plan.

Over 9,000 citizens in Kosovo North have obtained Kosovo ID cards, passports, etc. at the Mitrovica Municipal Administrative Office. In November and December 2011, some 400 citizens applied for Kosovo car plates with RKS inscription⁴¹. Kosovo Serb representatives and, quite often civil sector activists in Kosovo North, denying legitimacy of the Kosovo government bypass this information in their interviews with international representatives and the Helsinki Committee. They had been rather angered at the deadline for the change of registration, claiming that people would never accept it and that the decision violated citizens' fundamental human rights.

The strongest opponents of the Ahtisaari plan argue that its implementation would leave numbers of people without income. According to the above-mentioned survey, Serbia finances some 20,000 citizens who are on the payrolls of parallel structures. Some Kosovo Serb sources claim, quotes the survey that the number is by far bigger, amounting to 60,000 persons only in Kosovo North. Considering the present economic crisis, development of a well-thought-out social program for these people could be challenge for Serbia and Kosovo alike in the future. The problem of livelihood plagues not only Kosovo North but also other Serb-populated municipalities.

Construction of barricades in Kosovo North seriously damaged a

39 The survey titled „Guests in Their Own House“ was conducted in the period September 30 – December 31, 2011.

40 This primarily refers to keeping people deluded everything will be „as it used to,“ meaning that Belgrade, as the only warrant of their safety, will take care of their problem. The media additionally fuel citizens' distrust in the state of Kosovo and its institutions. .

41 Findings of the survey „Guest in Their Own House.“ .

number of roads. According to citizens of Mitrovica, barricades have totally impaired the main bridge between north and south sections of the town.

The source of finances for construction of alternative roads and building material for barricades (concrete, lumber, cobblestone, etc.) remains among biggest controversies. Those who have participated in construction refer to volunteers and donors of construction material, controversial businessmen and public companies from Serbia⁴².

The border between Serbia and Kosovo has always been porous. Almost non-existent control over imports and exports made it possible to some people from Kosovo North to accumulate wealth at grey market. Hence, Kosovo and Serbia alike have been deprived of the income deriving from taxes and customs. The well-known Insider show of the B92 TV had raised the question and, announcing a new serial, exemplified the problem with numerous evidences. However, though announced back in the spring of 2012, the serial has not been broadcast so far. According to the latest news it will be on air in September 2012. The reasons why the show has been constantly postponed are speculated from different angles. Serb leaders from Kosovo North, moderates included, oppose its broadcast, whereas some of those in Central Kosovo hold it would be good to disclose money flows in the North and those involved in illegal trade. Certain circles and officials in Belgrade also strongly oppose the broadcast considering their roles in the money flows in Kosovo North.

42 The story run by the Politika daily on October 11, 2011, quotes, „Day in day out, heavy machines build new roads in North Kosovo and Metohija. Kosovo Serb representatives in the North claim that everybody works on road construction – from public servants and private entrepreneurs to ordinary citizens...Mayor of Kosovska Mitrovica Krstimir Panic tells Politika that new roads are being built and old ones repaired...Owners of gas stations distribute fuel free of charge, citizens cut forests for passages on their own free will, while people from neighboring villages prepare food for workers. Local roads and those at the Mokra Gora Mt. leading from Ibarski Kolasin to Novi Pazar or Ribaric, or even further to Montenegro are also under construction in the Zubin Potok municipality. Mayor of Zubin Potok Slavisa Ristic says that it will take time, money and workforce before these roads become functional. 'Everybody participates in road construction,' he says and explains they are using municipal machinery...Major of Leposavic says, 'We are now working on footpaths everyone uses to reach Central Serbia with a view to adapting them for the traffic of all sorts of vehicles.'“

On the other hand, Aleksandar Vucic, high official of Serb Progressive Party, claims that „the state has first engaged a criminal, Branko Miljkovic, and then, when he took away his machinery, gave the job to Veselinovic“ who, he argues, „cooperates with the Serbian regime. According to some sources, Serbia Forests Public Company participates in road construction. Zoran Drobniak, director of Serbia Roads Company, claims that the Kosmet Company takes care of some 115 kilometers of roads in Kosovo. At present this shareholding company in tandem with MBA Company constructs the section between Vracevo and Batnik, as an alternative road to the one between Raska and Novi Pazar. For maintenance of roads and 12 kilometers of this alternative road the Serbia Roads Company has paid 5 million Euro, says Drobniak. Politika, October 11, 2011.

So it turned out that Kosovo was not only about sovereignty but also about profit certain groups and the so-called controversial businessmen from Serbia are making on it. Serbia banned transport of Kosovo goods through its territory long ago, while its goods were freely exported to Kosovo. The Kostunica government annulled VAT on Serbia's exports to Kosovo back in 2005 (the decision on which the then vice-premier and high G17 official, Miroljub Labus, put his signature). It was only in September 2011 and by the end of its term that the government of Mirko Cvetković restored VAT on these goods. According to official information publicized by the Insider trailer (titled "Patriotic Stealing"), goods exports to Kosovo totaled over 2 billion Euro in six and a half years only. In other words, Serbia's daily exports to Kosovo amounted to over 840,000 Euro. Most of these goods, claims the trailer, have been either re-exported from Kosovo by alternative roads or smuggled to Kosovo South. All this cost Serbia's taxpayers 500,000 Euro per day in the period of ten years. In an interview with Politika daily, Vladimir Jovičić, former deputy negotiator in the talks with Prishtina, said, "Zero-rated VAT was the main source of wealth some individuals have accumulated over the past three years."

Lawlessness, non-existent judiciary and limited actions by Kosovo Police Forces and EULEX in Kosovo North opened wide the doors to criminal gangs, including drug dealers.

Serbia's officials often manipulate arrests of Serbs in Kosovo: they accuse the Kosovo police of breach of law and arrest of innocent people. No doubt that there are innocent people among the arrested and Kosovo institutions should take care of injustice done to them. This is why each case should be investigated per se: probably innocent people would not thus be mixed with criminals and misused in the name of human rights.

Anarchy in Kosovo North is a heavy burden on its citizens. This is best exemplified by car plates: citizens are changing their car plates before the eyes of police officers who have tolerated the practice until recently. Some Serbs from Kosovo South go to Mitrovica to buy large quantities of cheaper gasoline but are not only fined on their way back but also have to surrender all the untaxed gasoline they had paid for.

The state of lawlessness affects Serbs from other parts of Kosovo in many different ways. For instance they get their higher education at the Mitrovica University and medical care at the Clinical Center. Both institutions are under the control of local radical leaders powerful enough to impose on doctors and professors the duty of standing at the barricades⁴³.

43 Interviews with citizens of Kosovo North.

Citizens interviewed by the Helsinki Committee's team believe that implementation of the Ahtisaari plan implies that the Kosovo government would influence the university curricula in Mitrovica. The Kosovo legislation provides that the university shall enact a statute to specify its internal organization and governance, and procedures and interaction with public authorities, in accordance with central framework legislation of the Republic of Kosovo.

The Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo⁴⁴ provides that the University of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North shall be an autonomous public institution of higher education; the University may use Serbia's textbooks and curricula if they are in concordance with Kosovo legislation. A commission of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo decides whether a particular curriculum or textbook from the Republic of Serbia shall not be placed in classroom. In the event of an objection by the MEST to the application of a particular Serbian curriculum or textbook, the matter shall be referred to the independent commission composed of three representatives selected by MEST, three representatives selected by Members of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo holding seats reserved or guaranteed for the Kosovo Serb Community, and one international member selected by and representing the International Civilian Representative. The Commission decides by the majority vote. The Municipality of Mitrovica North shall have authority to exercise responsibility for this public Serbian language university, in accordance with applicable law of the Republic of Kosovo; The university shall have a Board consisting of nine members, of which two (2) shall be appointed by the municipality, five elected from among the faculty and/or student body of the university, and two to be appointed in a manner to be determined by the statute of the university; Funding for the university from the government of the Republic of Serbia must be transparent and made public, in accordance with the laws of Kosovo. (See Annex: The Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo.)

What stands in the way of the Law's implementation are deep-rooted negative stereotypes among Serbs in Kosovo North, additionally fueled by Belgrade-seated media's biased reporting and the propaganda of radical leaders. These stereotypes include views such as: the Ahtisaari plan is unviable; the end of supervised independence will deprive the Serb community south of the Ibër/Ibar River of its acquired rights; acceptance of the Ahtisaari plan equals recognition of Kosovo independence; all public servants will be fired in the

⁴⁴ Law No. 03/L-068.

event of the implementation of the plan, and Serbia will be allowed to assist Kosovo Serbs no more, etc.

These stereotypes can be counteracted only through impartial information about mechanisms for the protection of the Serb community and the safeguard of its identity. That is it the road traveled by the Serb community south of the Ibër/Ibar – the same community that had been skeptical about integration into Kosovo community only a couple of years ago. What it achieved by taking this road testifies that it had made a good choice?

Annexes

Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo

Source:

☛ http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/09_2008_03_L068_sr.pdf

REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS-REPUBLIKA KOSOVA-
REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly

Chapter V-Education in the Serbian Language.

Article 12. Education in the Serbian Language.

- 1) Municipalities shall have the competency to create conditions for providing educational services in the Serbian language.
- 2) Schools that teach in the Serbian language may apply curricula or textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia upon notification to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo.

- 3) A particular curriculum or textbook from the Republic of Serbia shall not be placed in classroom use before notification of MEST; if, after notification, MEST raises no objection within three months (to provide sufficient time for specific curricula or text to be reviewed by the Ministry), the material may be utilized.
- 4) In the event of an objection by the MEST to the application of a particular Serbian curriculum or textbook, the matter shall be referred to the independent commission established in Article 13 of this Law, to review the curriculum or textbook(s) to ensure conformity with the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and applicable legislation. The specific curriculum or textbook(s) may be not placed in classroom use until the independent commission so determines.

Article 13. Independent Commission

- 1) The independent commission for review of Serbian-language teaching materials shall consist of seven (7) members:
 - three (3) representatives selected by MEST;
 - three (3) representatives selected by Members of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo holding seats reserved or guaranteed for the Kosovo Serb Community, and
 - one (1) international member selected by and representing the International Civilian Representative.
- 2) The commission shall take all decisions by a majority vote.
- 3) The Chairmanship of the commission shall rotate between a representative selected by Members of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo holding seats reserved or guaranteed for the Kosovo Serb Community and a representative selected by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology every year.

Article 14. Enhanced Competencies of the Municipality in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North

The following shall be the municipal competencies for higher education in Mitrovica/Mitrovica North:

a) The university of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North shall be an autonomous public institution of higher education;

b) The university shall enact a statute to specify its internal organization and governance, and procedures and interaction with public authorities, in accordance with central framework legislation of the Republic of Kosovo, which shall be examined by an independent commission:

- i. the independent commission shall consist of seven (7) members:
- ii. three (3) representatives selected by the MEST;
- iii. three (3) representatives selected by the university; and
- iv. one (1) international member selected by and representing the International Civilian Representative.
- v. the commission shall take all decisions by a majority vote;
- vi. the Chairmanship of the commission shall rotate annually between a representative selected by the university and a representative selected by the MEST.

c) Decisions on the conformity of the statute with central framework legislation, European standards and best practices and on matters concerning the accreditation of the university within the Kosovo university system shall be taken by the independent commission established by Article 14.b of this law; 9

d) The Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North shall have authority to exercise responsibility for this public Serbian language university, in accordance with applicable law of the Republic of Kosovo;

e) The university shall have a Board consisting of nine (9) members, of which two (2) shall be appointed by the municipality, five (5) elected from among the faculty and/or student body of the university, and two (2) to be appointed in a manner to be determined by the statute of the university;

f) The Municipality of Mitrovica/Mitrovica North shall ensure that the university receives adequate premises and funding for its operation from the budget of the Republic of Kosovo and other institutional sources. Funding for

the university from the government of the Republic of Serbia must be transparent and made public, in accordance with the laws of Kosovo;

g) Operations and budgetary resources provided to the University of North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica shall be in accordance with standards and criteria developed and promulgated in accordance with the laws on Local Government Finance and Local Self-Government in legislation prior to 1 January 2009; and

h) The Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North may cooperate with any other municipality in operating the university.

This law can be found at:

↖ http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=56&lang=sr

Law on Radio Television Kosovo

The Law passed on March 29, 2011 provides that RTK shall consist of two TV channels: a TV channel in Albanian and a TV channel in Serbian language (Article 8). These two (2) channels are obliged to share 15 % of their program scheme with the languages of other communities of Kosovo.

Management and RTK Board should take all necessary steps to ensure operational functioning of channel RTK 2 in Serbian language as content provider not later than twelve months from adoption of this law (Article 8, para 7).

In every calendar year RTK shall allocate 10% of its own overall budget received from all sources for the channel in Serbian language. RTK shall continue to allocate 10% of its own overall budget for second channel of RTK in Serbian. The amount of 10% of the RTK budget that shall be transferred to the second channel of RTK in Serbian language, initially shall be used to start its work by ensuring premises, different technical equipment and equipment for office and furniture for office, as well as for employment of due staff. After RTK 2 in Serbian language becomes functional, then the 10% of the funds from the RTK budget shall be used to cover expenses for functioning of RTK 2 in Serbian language, including also production of specific programs of any kind in Serbian language. Allocation of 10% of the funds from the budget of RTK for channel RTK 2 in Serbian language shall not be used for any other purpose except for administrative, technical and editorial functioning of channel RTK 2 in Serbian language (Article 21, para 4).

The RTK Board shall be composed of eleven members. At least two members of the Board shall be appointed out of the Serb community (Article 25). The RTK Board members are appointed by the Assembly of Kosovo (Article 26).

This law is available at the website of the Assembly of Kosovo at

☛ <http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/Zakon%20o%20Radio%20Televiziji%20Kosova.pdf>

Law on Local Self-Government

Law was approved by the Assembly of Kosovo on February 20, 2008 and promulgated by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kosovo on June 15, 2008.

The law enhanced competencies in secondary healthcare of the municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Shtërcë/Štrpce. It provides that these municipalities shall have the competence for provision of secondary healthcare, including registration and licensing of health care institutions, recruitment, payment of salaries and training of health care personnel and administrators (Article 20).

It enhanced the competence of the municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North for the provision of higher education, including registration and licensing of educational institutions, recruitment, payment of salaries and training of education instructors and administrators (Article 21).

The law provides that all municipalities in which the Kosova Serb Community is in the majority shall have authority to exercise responsibility for cultural affairs, including, protection and promotion of Serbian and other religious and cultural heritage within the municipal territory as well as support for local religious communities in accordance with the applicable law (Article 22).

Further on, it regulates that municipalities in which Kosova Serb community is in a majority shall exercise enhanced participatory rights in the selection of the local station police commanders in accordance with law on police (Article 23).

Under the same law, partnerships between Republic of Kosova municipalities shall be entitled to direct relations with institutions in the Republic of Serbia only to the extent necessary to implement practical activities of the partnership (Article 30, paragraph 7).

The law quotes that the membership of the Communities Committee shall include the members of the Municipal Assembly and community representatives. Any community living in the municipality shall be represented by at least one representative in the Communities Committee. The representatives of communities shall comprise the majority of the Communities Committee. The Communities Committee shall be responsible to review compliance of the municipal authorities with the applicable law and review all municipal policies, practices and activities related with the aim to ensure that rights and interests of the Communities are fully respected and shall recommend to the Municipal Assembly measures it considers appropriate to ensure the implementation of provisions related to the need of communities to promote, express, preserve and develop their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities, as well as to ensure adequate protection of the rights of communities within the municipality.

In municipalities where at least ten percent of the citizens belong to Communities not in the majority in those municipalities, a post of the Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly for Communities shall be reserved for a representative of these communities. The post of the Deputy Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly for Communities shall be held by the non-majority community's candidate who received the most votes on the open list of candidates for election to the Municipal Assembly.

The Deputy Chairperson of a Municipality for Communities shall promote inter- community dialogue and serve as formal focal point for addressing non-majority communities' concerns and interests in meetings of the Assembly and its work. The Deputy Chairperson of a Municipality for Communities shall be responsible for reviewing claims by communities or their members that the acts or decisions of the municipal assembly violate their constitutionally guaranteed rights. The Deputy Chairperson of a Municipality for Communities shall refer such matters to the Municipal Assembly for its reconsideration of the act or decision. In the event the Municipal Assembly chooses not to reconsider its act or decision, or the Deputy Chairperson of a Municipality for Communities deems that even upon reconsideration the act or decision presents a violation of a constitutionally guaranteed right, the Deputy Chairperson of a Municipality for Communities may submit the matter directly to the Constitutional Court, which may decide whether to accept the matter for review (Articles 53, 54 and 55).

The law is integrally available at the website of the Assembly of Kosovo at: http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L040_sr.pdf

Law on Special Protective Zones

Article 1. Purpose of the Law.

This law shall ensure protection of Serbian Orthodox Monasteries, Churches, other religious sites, as well as historical and cultural sites of special significance for the Kosovo Serb community, as well as other communities in Republic of Kosova, through the establishment of Special Protective Zones.

Article 2. Special Protective Zones

“Special Protective Zone” shall be an area defined by a map, or by a defined area surrounding a monument, building, group of buildings, ensemble, village, or historic town center that is safeguarded from any development or activity which could damage its historical, cultural, architectural or archeological context, natural environment or aesthetic visual setting.

Article 3. Objectives

The objectives of the Special Protective Zones are:

- a) to provide for the peaceful existence and functioning of the sites to be protected, and to preserve the monastic way of life of the clergy;
- b) to preserve the character and appearance of the sites to be protected, in particular, the historical, cultural, architectural or archeological context, natural environment or aesthetic visual setting; and
- c) to prevent adverse development around the sites to be protected, while ensuring the best possible conditions for harmonious and sustainable development of the communities inhabiting the areas surrounding such sites by regulating development and other activities.

Article 4. The Implementation Monitoring Council

The Implementation and Monitoring Council (hereinafter referred to as the “IMC”) shall be established to, inter alia, monitor and facilitate the implementation of this Law. The IMC tasks relevant to this Law shall include:

- a) supervise the delineation of the Special Protective Zones on the ground and their implementation;
- b) recommend changes to the boundaries of Special Protective Zones, and the restrictions to be facilitate the resolution of disputes between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the central or local authorities of Republic of Kosova with regard to implementation of the provisions of the present Law; and
- d) advise the Republic of Kosova law enforcement agencies and other relevant institutions on security related issues affecting the religious and cultural heritage sites.

Article 5. Activities Prohibited within the Special Protective Zones

Any new activities in the following areas shall be prohibited:

- a) industrial construction or development, such as the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources and the building of dams, power plants or power lines, kilns and factories, and transit roads in rural areas; and
- b) construction or development leading to deforestation or pollution of the environment.

Article 6. Activities Restricted within the Special Protective Zones

Any new activity from the following list of activities may be restricted as circumstances warrant. Prior to any such activities being conducted in the following areas, the municipality concerned shall seek the agreement of the Serbian Orthodox Church. If no agreement is reached, the parties shall refer the matter to the IMC for review, in accordance with point c of Article 4 of this Law:

a) commercial constructions or development such as structures or edifices taller than the monastery/ church/cultural monument to be protected; road/street construction; construction of warehouses, workshops, shops, restaurants, bars, cafes, hotels/motels, food stalls and kiosks, petrol and automobile repair stations, supermarkets, night clubs, any other large scale construction in rural areas;

- b) public gatherings, recreation and entertainment; and
- c) urbanization of agricultural land.

Article 7. Classification of Special Protective Zones

7.1 Special Protective Zones shall be defined for the following sites, as in the attached maps:

a) Deçani i Lartë/Visoki Deçani Monastery, Deçan/ Deçani (this Special Protective Zone is identical to the previously established Special Zoning Area);

- b) Peja/Peć Patriarchate, Pejë/Peć;
- c) Graçanica/Gračanica Monastery, Prishtinë/ Priština;
- d) Church of Presentation of the Virgin, Lipjan/Lipljan;
- e) Devič Monastery, Skenderaj/ Srbica;
- f) Gorioč Monastery, Istog/Istok;
- g) Budisavci Monastery, Klinë /Klina;
- h) Sokolica Monastery, Zveçan /Zvečan;
- i) Draganac Monastery, Gjilan/ Gnjilane;
- j) Holy Archangels Monastery, Prizren/Prizren;
- k) Banjska Monastery, Zveçan / Zvečan;
- l) Zočište Monastery, Zoqishtë/ Zočište , Rahovec/Orahovac;
- m) Village of Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoça, /Rahovec/Orahovac;
- n) Duboki Potok Monastery, Zubin Potok;
- o) Church of Saint George, Gornje Selo/Gornjasellë, Prizren;

- p) Sočanica Monastery, Leposaviq/ Leposavić;
- q) Hermitage with Church, Uljarice, Klinë /Klina; and
- r) Hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša, Korishë/ Koriša, Prizren.

7.2 The Special Protective Zone for Sokolica Monastery Zvečan/ Zvečan and the Isa Boletini Memorial Complex are Special Protective Zones as in the attached map. The Municipality concerned shall seek agreement from both the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Isa Boletini Museum Administration for any new activity as envisaged by Article 6 of this Law.

7.3 For the following Special Protective Zones defined in the attached map in the case of any new activities as described in Article 6 of this Law, the municipality concerned shall consult directly with the IMC:

- a) Gazimestan memorial monument and Bajraktarevo Turbe, Obiliq/ Obilić will be included in the same Special Protective Zone;
- b) Zvečan medieval fortress, Zvečan / Zvečan;
- c) Medieval town of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo; and
- d) Vojnović Medieval/Old Bridge, Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

7.4 Special Protective Zones for the following sites shall be limited to a 100-meter area around their perimeter and shall be identified by the Republic of Kosova Cadastral Agency, in cooperation with the relevant municipalities in a map to be attached to this Law, which will form an integral part of this Law and shall be adopted before the end of the transitional period:

- a) Monastery of Saint Petka, Leposaviq/Leposavić;
- b) Monastery of the Holy Healers, Leposaviq/Leposavić;
- c) Monastery of the Holy Virgin of Hvosno, Istog /Istok;
- d) Monastery of Saint Mark, Korishë/ Koriša, Prizren/Prizren;
- e) Trinity Monastery, Mushtisht/Mušutište, Suharekë/Suva Reka;
- f) Church of the Holy Virgin, Sredskë/Sredska, Prizren/Prizren;
- g) Monastery of Saint Uroš, Nerodime/Nerodimlje, Ferizaj/Uroševac; and
- h) Monastery Binač, Buzovik/ Buzovik, Viti/Vitina.

7.5 Special Protective Zones for the following sites shall be limited to a 50-meter area around their perimeter and shall be identified by the Republic of Kosova Cadastral Agency, in cooperation with the relevant municipalities in a map to be attached to this Law, which will form an integral part of this Law and shall be adopted before the end of the transitional period.

- a) Dolac Monastery, Klinë/Klina;
- b) Church of Saint Nicholas, Gjurakoc/Đurakovac, Istog/Istok;
- c) Church of the Holy Virgin Hodegetria, Mushtisht/ Mušutište, Suharekë/Suva Reka;
- d) Church of Saint Nicholas, Shtrpcë/Štrpce;
- e) Church of Saint Theodore, Biti e Poshtme/Donja Bitinja, Shtrpcë/Štrpce;
- f) Church of Saint Nicholas, Gotovushë/Gotovuša, Shtrpcë/Štrpce;
- g) Church of the Holy Virgin, Gotovushë/Gotovuša, Shtrpcë/Štrpce;
- h) Church of Saint George, Biti e Epërme/Gornja Bitinja, Shtrpcë/Štrpce;
- i) Church of Saint Nicholas, Mushnikovë/Mušnikovo, Prizren/Prizren;
- j) Church of Saint Nicholas, Bogoševci, Prizren/Prizren;
- k) Church of Saint Nicholas, Drajçiq/Drajçici, Prizren/Prizren;
- l) Church of Saint Nicholas, Sredskë/Sredska, Prizren/Prizren;
- m) Church of the Holy Apostles (or Saint Petka), Mushnikovë/Mušnikovo Prizren/Prizren; and
- n) Church of Saint George, Sredskë/Sredska, Prizren/Prizren.

Article 8. The Establishment of the Special Protective Zone for the Historic Centre of Prizren.

8.1 The Special Protective Zone for the Historic Center of Prizren shall be established by the municipal authorities of Prizren in cooperation with the IMC, and shall include Serbian Orthodox, Ottoman, Catholic, vernacular and other sites of historic and cultural significance. The following Serbian cultural and religious sites shall be included in the Special Protective Zone: Church of the Holy Virgin of Ljeviška; the old “Maras Mahala”; the Church of the Holy Savior; the Orthodox Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius; and the Episcopal Residence Complex (including the Bishop’s residence, St. George Cathedral, Churches of St. George (Runović) and St. Nichoilas (Tutić).

8.2 The application of Article 6 of this Law on any new activities in the Special Protective Zone for the historic centre of Prizren shall be set forth in a Law.

Article 9. Special Provisions for the Village of Hoçë e Madhe/Velika Hoča.

The village of Hoçë e Madhe/Velika Hoča, described in point m), paragraph 1 of Article 7 of this Law, shall have the right, in consultation with the municipality of Rahovec/Orahovac, to exercise limited authority over activities in the areas of protection and promotion of religious and cultural heritage, and rural planning with respect to its Special Protective Zone, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the legislation on Local Self-Government and the principles of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The IMC shall facilitate such consultation.

9.2. The application of article 6 of this Law on any new activities in the Special Protective Zone for the village of Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoca shall be set forth in a Law.

Article 10. Spatial Planning.

10.1 The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning shall ensure that spatial plans for areas within the Special Protective Zones are in conformity with the provisions of Articles 5 and 6 of the present Law and in accordance with Articles 12, 13, 14 of the Law on Spatial Planning.

10.2 The local authorities shall fully comply with the provisions of Article 10.

Article 11. Final Provisions.

11.1 This Law shall supersede any provision in the applicable law that is inconsistent with it. Special Protective Zones also fully enjoy protection set forth under the Law on Cultural Heritage and its further amendments.

11.2 The IMC cooperates with the Republic of Kosova Council for Cultural Heritage, as foreseen in paragraph 8 Article 4 of the Law on Cultural Heritage on any other issue related to the protection and preservation of religious and cultural heritage in Republic of Kosova.

11.3 The IMC shall work closely with the Reconstruction Implementation Commission for Serbian Orthodox Religious Sites in Republic of Kosova.

11.4 The provisions of this Law shall in no way prejudice or alter any existing obligations undertaken with respect to any site designated under the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

11.5 The provisions of this Law shall not prejudice the ownership rights over the property located within the Special Protective Zones.

Article 12. Entry into force

This Law shall enter into force after its adoption by the Assembly of Republic of Kosova and after its promulgation in the Official Gazette.

Law No. 03/L – 039

February 20, 2008

Source: Official Gazzette of the Republic of Kosovo

http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&i

[d=146&Itemid=56&lang=bh](http://www.gazetazyrtare.com/e-gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&i)

The Ahtisaari Plan and the Rights it Guarantees

“Know Your Rights in Kosovo – The Ahtisaari Plan Explained,” International Civilian Office for Kosovo, <http://www.ahtisaariplan.info/>

Education in the Serbian Language

The Plan provides for the Serb communities to have the right to receive public education in the Serbian language at all levels (including an autonomous Serbian language University in Mitrovica), and to use curricula or text books developed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia in those schools. Specifically, Serb community members can:

- Receive pre-school, primary and secondary public education in their own language to the extent prescribed by legislation, with the thresholds for establishing specific classes or schools for this purpose being lower than normally stipulated for educational institutions;
- Establish and manage their own private educational and training establishments for which public financial assistance may be granted, in accordance with the law and international standards
- In September 2011, the Serbian primary and secondary schools curriculum and teaching materials were formally approved.

And in respect of Mitrovica University

- The university shall enact a statute to specify its internal organization and governance, and procedures and interaction with public authorities – in the main, the Mitrovica North municipality.

Serbian Language and Serb Identity

The Plan says that the Serb community has the right to express, maintain and develop their culture and preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and culture. It not only defines Serbian as one of two Official Languages, it also sets out what this means in public and private life. For example, it provides for Serbian speakers to be able to:

- Use their language and alphabet freely in private and in public;
- Use of their language and alphabet in their relations with the municipal authorities or local offices of central authorities in areas where they represent a sufficient share of the population. The costs incurred by the use of an interpreter or a translator shall be borne by the competent authorities.
- Use and display Serb community symbols, in accordance with the law and international standards;
- Have personal names registered in their original form and in the script of their language as well as revert to original names that have been changed by force.
- Have local names, street names and other topographical indications which reflect and are sensitive to the multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic character of the area at issue;
- Guaranteed access to, and special representation in, public broadcast media as well as programming in their language, in accordance with the law and international standards;
- The right to create and use their own media, including to provide information in their language, and the use of a reserved number of frequencies for electronic media in accordance with the law and international standards;
- Enjoy unhindered contacts among themselves within Kosovo and establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts with persons in any States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage, in accordance with the law and international standards;
- Enjoy unhindered contacts with, and participate without discrimination in the activities of local, regional and international non-governmental organizations;
- Establish associations for culture, art, science and education as well as scholarly and other associations for the expression, fostering and development of their identity

And, all municipalities in which the Kosovo Serb Community is in the majority shall have:

- Authority to exercise responsibility for cultural affairs, including, protection and promotion of Serbian and other religious and cultural heritage within the municipal territory as well as support for local religious communities.

Religious and Cultural Heritage

The Plan provides for the Church having a special, protected position with Kosovo – including guarantees about Church property, and the way of life for monks, nuns and priests. In addition, 45 sites of religious or cultural significance for the Serb community are given the status of Special Protected Zones. The Church in Kosovo is also free – in a transparent manner - to receive donations from Serbia.

Specifically:

- Kosovo shall grant customs duty and tax privileges to the Serbian Orthodox Church, in addition to those enjoyed by all religions in Kosovo, for economic activities of the Church specific to its financial self-sustainability, such as the production of embroidery and clerical vestments, candles, icon painting, woodcarving and carpentry, wines, brandy, honey and other bee products. These privileges shall cover import and purchase of relevant products, materials, machinery and tools; and export of products resulting from the said activities.

• Protective Zones are established for 45 sites including: Visoki Dečani Monastery, Pec Patriarchate, Gračanica Monastery, Church of Presentation of the Virgin, Lipjan, Devic Monastery, Gorioc Monastery, Budisavci Monastery, Sokolica Monastery, Draganac Monastery, Holy Archangels Monastery, Banjska Monastery, Zočište Monastery, Village of Velika Hoča, Duboki Potok Monastery, Church of Saint George, Gornje Selo, Socanica Monastery, Hermitage with Church, Uljarice, Gazimestan memorial monument, Zvečan medieval fortress, Medieval town of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Vojnović Medieval bridge, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša.

• In the Special Protective Zones certain new activities are forbidden—for example, industrial construction or development, such as: exploration of mineral resources; building of power plants or power lines, kilns and factories, construction or development leading to deforestation or pollution of the environment.

- For conducting certain other new development activities (categorized

as restricted activities), in the Special Protective Zones, prior to conducting them the municipality concerned shall consult the Serbian Orthodox Church. For example: structures or edifices taller than the monastery/church/cultural monument to be protected; the use of hazardous materials in any new construction (including residential); through roads, petrol and automobile repair stations; supermarkets; night clubs.

The Right to Keep and Develop Links with Serbia

The Plan provides for linkages with Serbia, both in terms of municipal funding, and political association with Serbian municipalities. The only condition is about informing Kosovo, and being transparent with that funding. Any funding from Serbia will be in addition to funding from the Kosovo Central Budget, and will not be subject to tax. Plus, individuals can still keep their Serbian pensions.

- Municipalities shall be entitled to cooperate, within the areas of their own competencies, with municipalities and institutions, including government agencies, in the Republic of Serbia.

- Municipalities shall notify the Kosovo Ministry of Local Government Administration in advance of any intention to engage in such cooperation. The notification shall include the draft agreement between the municipality and its proposed Serbian partner institution. The draft cooperation agreement shall define the areas of the envisaged cooperation, the provision of staff and equipment, the level of funding and its processing mechanisms, and other relevant procedural arrangements, in accordance with public financial management requirements applicable to all municipalities.

- Such intention to cooperate and attendant draft agreement may be subject to review by the Kosovo Ministry of Local Government Administration of its compliance with central framework legislation. The Ministry, pursuant to such review, may enjoin amendments to the draft cooperation agreement, or, if a serious breach of the law cannot be remedied otherwise, the Ministry may suspend the intended cooperation. The municipality may challenge such Ministry-action in the District Court competent for the territory of the municipality. Partnerships between Kosovo municipalities shall be entitled to direct relations with institutions in the Republic of Serbia only to the extent necessary to implement practical activities of the partnership.

- Any financial donations to Kosovo municipalities from the Republic of Serbia shall be limited in their purpose to the exercise of a municipality's responsibilities in the areas of its own competencies, and shall be transparent and made public by reporting these donations, together with the corresponding expenditures, in their municipal budgets.

- Based upon the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, municipalities shall be entitled to form and participate in an association of Kosovo municipalities for the protection and promotion of their common interests. Such associations may cooperate with their international counterparts.

Policing and Local Police Commanders

The ethnic composition of the police within a municipality shall, to the extent possible, reflect the ethnic composition of the population within that municipality. This means that in Serb majority areas, the majority of police officers will be Serb community members. Further, local station commanders will be selected by the local Serb majority municipality. While a unified chain of command for police services throughout Kosovo is envisaged by the Ahtisaari Plan, the boundaries of police station districts are the same as municipal boundaries, with special local councils (chaired by the municipal president) to discuss policing matters with the community. The details are as follows:

- Local Councils composed of municipal and police representatives including the Station Commanders shall be made fully functional in order to facilitate the cooperation between the Police Service and municipal authorities/local community leaders. Municipal Presidents shall chair the Councils.

- Local Station Commanders shall be informed in advance of operations by central or special police forces within the perimeters of local police stations unless operational considerations require otherwise.

- In Kosovo Serb majority municipalities, the local Station Commanders shall be selected according to the following procedure: The Municipal Assembly shall propose at least two names for Station Commander fulfilling all minimum professional requirements as set forth by Kosovo legislation. The Ministry of Internal affairs may then appoint one candidate from this list within 15 days upon receipt of the list. In the event none of the candidates are acceptable to the Ministry, the Municipal Assembly shall provide a second list

of at least two different candidates for consideration by the Ministry, stemming from the existing Kosovo Police Service staff and fulfilling all minimum professional requirements as set forth by Kosovo legislation. The Ministry is then obliged to appoint one of the candidates from the second list within 15 days of its receipt.

Serb Community Participation in Decision-Making

In elections, there are guaranteed seats for the Serb Community in the Assembly, so the voice of the Serb community is always heard. The detailed provisions are as follows/small print?:

- The Kosovo Serb community shall have the total number of seats won through the open election, with a minimum 10 seats guaranteed if the number of seats won is less than 10)).

There are also a number of laws that can't be changed unless the majority of the Serb members agree. These laws are:

- Laws changing municipal boundaries, establishing or abolishing municipalities, defining the scope of powers of municipalities and their participation in inter-municipal and cross-border relations; Laws implementing the rights of Communities and their members; Laws on the use of language; Laws on local elections; Laws on the protection of cultural heritage; Laws on religious freedom or on agreements with religious communities; Laws on education; Laws on the use of symbols and on public holidays.

The Ahtisaari plan also foresees the creation of new municipalities with a Serb majority population. This allows the Serb Community to have a stronger say in matters related to their local needs and administration. Five of these municipalities have already been created (Graçanica/Gračanica, Ranilug/Ranilug, Klllokot/Klokot, Novbërdë and Partesh/Parteš) and four of these have a Serb mayor. The creation of the new municipality of Mitrovica North is also proposed. These new municipalities have more autonomy than the other municipalities, in areas like education and health provision, and in their financial affairs. Plus, like other Kosovo municipalities:

- have full and exclusive powers, insofar as they concern the local interest, while respecting the standards set forth in the applicable legislation in the following areas (hereinafter referred to as their own competencies):

- a. Local economic development
- b. Urban and rural planning
- c. Land use and development
- d. Implementation of building regulations and building control standards
- e. Local environmental protection
- f. Provision and maintenance of public services and utilities, including water supply, sewers and drains, sewage treatment, waste management, local roads, local transport, and local heating schemes
- g. Local emergency response
- h. Provision of public pre-primary, primary and secondary education, including registration and licensing of educational institutions, recruitment, payment of salaries and training of education instructors and administrators
- i. Provision of public primary health care
- j. Provision of family and other social welfare services, such as care for the vulnerable, foster care, child care, elderly care, including registration and licensing of these care centres, recruitment, payment of salaries and training of social welfare professionals
- k. Public housing
- l. Public health
- m. Licensing of local services and facilities, including those related to entertainment, cultural and leisure activities, food, lodging, markets, street vendors, local public transportation and taxis
- n. Naming of roads, streets and other public places
- o. Provision and maintenance of public parks and spaces
- p. Tourism
- q. Cultural and leisure activities
- r. Any matter which is not explicitly excluded from their competence nor assigned to any other authority

In addition, certain competencies are also delegated to Serb majority municipalities, in the areas of: 1. Cadastral records; 2. Civil registries; 3. Voter registration; 4. Business registration and licensing; 5. Distribution of social as-

sistance payments (excluding pensions); 6. Forestry protection.

Furthermore, the Ahtisaari plan guarantees that members of the Serb community shall have access to public sector employment:

- Communities and their members shall be entitled to equitable representation in employment in public bodies and publicly owned enterprises at all levels, including in particular in the police service in areas inhabited by the respective Community, while respecting the rules concerning competence and integrity that govern public administration.

Rights of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

All refugees and internally displaced persons from Kosovo shall have the right to return and reclaim their property and personal possessions based upon a voluntary and informed decision – to a place of choice, not only to their original place of residence.

Justice System

The judiciary in Kosovo is governed by the Kosovo Judicial Council. It is fully multi-ethnic and independent in the performance of its functions to ensure an integrated, independent, professional and impartial justice system. It contains guarantees that the Kosovo justice system is inclusive and fully reflects the multi-ethnic nature of Kosovo, and that the Serb Community is represented. Therefore:

- The Supreme Court shall ensure the uniform application of the law by deciding on appeals brought in accordance with the law. At least 15% of the judges of the Supreme Court, but in no case fewer than three (3) judges, shall be from Communities that are not in the majority in Kosovo. The same applies to District Courts, the only difference being a minimum of 2 from non-majority communities. To fulfill its responsibilities to this end, the KJC shall, inter alia, give preference, among equally qualified applicants for service as judges or prosecutors, to members of under-represented Communities. And, in majority K-Serb municipalities, only K-Serb candidates nominated by K-Serb appointed members of the KJC can be put forward as judges in basic courts. Only if this opportunity is not taken up will the KJC as a whole decide on the positions.

Missing Persons

Kosovo and Serbia shall, in accordance with domestic and international norms and standards, take all measures necessary to determine and provide information regarding identities, whereabouts, and fates of missing persons, in full cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other relevant international partners.

Belgrade-Prishtina Agreements

Source: website of the Government of the Republic of Serbia at <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/kosovo-metohija/?id=164576>

Customs Stamp

The sides will make every possible effort to ensure free movement of goods in accordance with CEFTA;

The Customs stamps, stating ‘Kosovo Customs’, as confirmed to all CEFTA parties, will be accepted;

All accompanying documents and communication will also reflect this usage;

Cadastral Records

In order to protect the rights of people with legitimate claims to property, the parties will jointly make every effort to establish a fully reliable cadastre in Kosovo;

A tripartite implementation group, consisting of cadastral experts from the two parties and chaired by the EU will monitor the work of a technical agency, (selected by the EU after consultation with both parties), whose role will be to identify gaps in original pre-1999 cadastral records;

The EUSR will receive scanned copies of all original pre-1999 cadastral records removed from Kosovo. Upon request, the EUSR will provide specific information from Kosovo;

The technical agency, mentioned in bullet 2, will compare all copies of the original pre-1999 private property cadastral records⁴⁵ with the reconstructed Kosovo cadastre. Cases where the comparison shows the records not to be the same will be transferred by the tripartite implementation group to an adjudication mechanism in Kosovo. This adjudication mechanism will make a final determination as to which cadastral record is correct;

⁴⁵ This will include private property, private commercial property and private church property cadastral records.

The first instance in the adjudication mechanism will be undertaken by a Commission consisting of International and cadastral and property experts from Kosovo. The majority of the experts will be appointed by the EUSR, taking into account the interests of all communities concerned;

The Kosovo Supreme Court will act as the second, appeal, instance of this adjudication mechanism. Decisions by the Kosovo Supreme Court will be taken by a panel in which international judges will hold the majority and will be final and enforceable and not subject to challenge;

Decisions resulting from above adjudication mechanism will be notified to all stakeholders concerned. The Kosovo Cadastre Agency will implement the final decision resulting from above adjudication mechanism by effecting the necessary changes in the Kosovo cadastre;

The tripartite implementation group will monitor the quick implementation and functioning of the above arrangements and will regularly brief the Dialogue on progress;

IBM⁴⁶ Agreed Conclusions

In line with the Lisbon Treaty, and relevant EU legislation⁴⁷ and given that both parties are part of the EU's Western Balkans agenda, they will be required gradually to harmonise their legislation with the EU acquis and in particular to apply the concept of IBM;

In the interest of faster and more effective processing, the parties, under the overall guidance of the EU, will apply the concept of IBM;

The parties intend gradually to set up joint integrated posts at all their common IBM crossing points. This cooperation will follow the best European practice as it is progressively further developed by the European Commission. The work will be given a high priority; the projects will be identified jointly and will be implemented as soon as practically possible;

The joint, integrated, single and secure posts will be located within a 'common area of IBM crossing points', jointly delineated, where officials of each party carry out relevant controls. Exceptionally, and limited to the com-

46 One party recognises the line as a border; the other party recognises the line as an administrative boundary.

47 As defined especially in the Schengen Borders Code, Frontex Regulation, Local Border Traffic Regulation, VIS Regulation and Community Code on Visas;

mon IBM areas, the parties will not display symbols of their respective jurisdictions;

The arrangements will include a balanced presence, in line with requirements, from both parties of all related services such as customs, police etc. and will cover matters such as the location of the crossing points, the nature of the facility, opening hours etc. In line with, and for the duration of its mandate⁴⁸ at the crossing points Jarinje/Rudnica and Tabalije/Brnjak, this presence will include EULEX officials. EULEX will also be present at crossing points Bela Zemlja/Končulj, Merdare/Merdare, Mutivode/Mutivode and Depce/Mučibaba;

At the core of the arrangement there will be a clear assignment of applicable legal responsibilities and liabilities to each party's jurisdiction;

A tri-partite implementation group, chaired by the EU, will be established to implement above arrangement as soon as practically possible. For that purpose, a technical Protocol will be developed and signed, if necessary separately with the EU, which will take account of the parties' different views on the question of status. The implications of these conclusions will be taken into account in implementing freedom of movement;

This agreement does not cover any general or specific revenue or fiscal matters;

Civil Registry Books

1. The parties will jointly make every possible effort to establish a fully reliable civil registry in Kosovo;

2. A tripartite 'joint committee', consisting of civil registry experts from the two parties and EULEX, the latter acting as a chairperson, will be established to identify gaps in missing original pre-1999 civil registry books;

3. EULEX will certify copies of all original civil registry books from Kosovo, municipality by municipality, in consultation with experts from both sides if required. EULEX will process the certified copies in order to establish a fully reliable civil registry in Kosovo;

4. Upon request, EULEX will be ready to provide specific information from Kosovo.

⁴⁸ As defined by Council Joint Action 2008/124 CEFSP, Article 3, Section a;

Freedom of Movement

1. Residents of each party should be able to travel freely within or through the territory of the other;

2. Each party will apply, as soon as operationally feasible, an ID card system for cross Border/boundary travel of residents from the other party;

3. Each party may apply a system whereby ID cards will be accompanied by written 'entry/exit' documents⁴⁹ for persons from the other party who wish to transit to a third country;

4. As an interim solution, each party will enable residents of the other to purchase border/boundary insurance. Under the auspices of the EU, the parties will continue to work for a commercial arrangement on mutual vehicle insurance cover so that all vehicles are covered on both sides of the border/boundary as soon as possible;

5. Each party will take all necessary measures to enable residents of the other party to travel freely within or through the territory of the other using driving licenses issued by their own authorities;

6. As an interim measure, the authorities in Kosovo will extend the validity of KS vehicle license plates for an initial period of five years at the end of which the issue will be reviewed by the two parties (with the facilitation by the EU if required);

7. All car owners residing in Kosovo will use either RKS or KS (as per bullet 6 above) vehicle license plates. These will be issued by the relevant authorities in Kosovo and distributed with facilitation by EULEX where required. Each party will do its best to ensure the implementation of above:

8. As an interim measure, the authorities in Belgrade will enable vehicles from Kosovo bearing KS vehicle license plates to travel freely in or through its territory;

9. As an interim measure, for every car owner who wishes, temporary vehicle license plates will be made available at the relevant border/boundary crossings;

⁴⁹ All exit/entry documents will contain neutral language

10. With regard to readmission, and taking account of Pristina's obligations in this area, the arrangements agreed above will not create new obligations for Belgrade to accept readmission requests for persons holding Kosovo documents within the context of the existing readmission agreement between Belgrade and the EU;

11. An implementation group will be set up, chaired by the EU, by mid July, that will start preparing implementation in order to ensure that all arrangements above and any necessary follow up will be applied as soon as operationally feasible, bullet 7 arrangements will be applied from 1 November 2011;

Mutual Recognition of University Diplomas

1. Following the operative conclusions of July 1, 2011 on mutual recognition of university diplomas the two parties agreed to ask the European University Association to certify diplomas, issued by universities from each of the two countries so as to enable students from both sides to have further education and/or employment perspectives.

2. Once it verifies that university diplomas have been issued by authorized institutions and in a full accord with European practice, the Committee of European Academic Experts, established by the European University Association, will perform certification.

3. The appendixes to diplomas and excerpts from student records, in the format submitted during the dialogue, are presented in the attachment to these conclusions and will be attached to university diplomas. Authorities from both sides will decide on the documents valid for the process under the condition that they recognize professional degrees conferred by the diplomas.

4. EU will exert all the efforts necessary to secure implementation of the above-mentioned conclusions of January 1, 2012.

Mitrovica



Mitrovica landscape



Playground renovated by the North Mitrovica preparation team



Barricade on the bridge over Ibar river

Gorazhdec/Goradževac



Village center



Chief of the Office for communities in Gorazhdec-Goraždevac, Slobodan Petrović



Primary school



School



School - inside



School - gym

Graçanicë/Gračanica



Center



Laboratory



Primary school

Novo Brdo



Entrance to the municipality building



Bilingual poster in the municipality building



Mayor of Novo Brdo Bajrush Imeri (right) and Deputy Mayor Radovan Denić (left)

Kllokot/Klokot



Kllokot/Klokot



Current location of Kllokot/Klokot Municipality



Construction of Kllokot/Klokot Municipality



Kllokot/Klokot Spa esort



Spa resort in Kllokot/Klokot

Partesh/Parteš



View from the building of Partesh/Parteš Municipality



School in Partesh/Parteš



Municipality of Partesh/Parteš



New hospital in Partesh/Parteš

Rahovec/Orahovac



Hoça e Madhe/Velika Hoča wineyards



Neighborhood populated by Serbs



Chief of the Office for communities in Rahovec/Orahovac Slavisa Kolašinac



Interior of the cultural centre

Ranilug/Ranilug



Interior of the cultural centre where youngsters have rehearsals

Pejë/Peć



Near the Patriarchate of Peja/Peć



The Patriarchate of Peja/Peć



Office of the gymnasium principal

Shtrpcë/Štrpce



Deputy Mayor of parallel municipality of Shtrpcë/Štrpce Slaviša Staletović



Deputy principal of gymnasium in Shtrpcë/Štrpce Živo Šarkočević

