

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**Delegation of Canada to the OSCE
Response to Address by Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen, Special
Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Kosovo
544th Meeting of the Permanent Council
10 February 2005**

Canada welcomes Mr. Jessen-Petersen, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Kosovo, to the OSCE Permanent Council for the first time. We thank him for his presentation, which provides valuable insights into recent developments in Kosovo and the ongoing contributions of the international community to the stabilization and democratization of Kosovo. We are pleased to have Ambassador Fieschi here today.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen's visit is an excellent example of the ongoing efforts to increase and sustain complementarity and coordination between the UN and the OSCE, both at the level of policy and norms, as well as in making these policies and norms operational through field missions. In the case of Kosovo, coordination between the OSCE and NATO has also been invaluable, and continues to be so.

We were pleased to learn that our compatriot Craig Jenness, the former Head of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, has been appointed as Senior Advisor to UNMIK on Minority Issues for the next six months. Work in this area will be crucial during the upcoming status negotiations.

International Community in Kosovo

Canada strongly endorses the ongoing international commitment to Kosovo. We are heartened at the progress made in Kosovo, but we also believe that organizations such as the OSCE, UN and NATO must stay actively engaged.

Canada believes that full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia remains a requirement for all governments in the region. All members of the International Community have an obligation and responsibility to help the countries of the region fulfill this obligation.

The OSCE Mission to Kosovo has done commendable work. Canada welcomes the OSCE's ongoing engagement in areas such as popular participation in the democratic process, legal education and the growth of civil society involvement in the rule of law, and the transfer of responsibilities for elections to local elections management institutions. Mr. Chairman,

Standards and Democratic Institutions

Progress in establishing functioning democratic institutions continues to be a critical requirement for Kosovo, however, before the issue of its final status can be resolved. The UN and the OSCE must continue to support work to ensure that the rule of law prevails, so that Kosovo may meet the objectives set out in the "Standards" of 2003.

While the "Standards" embrace a large set of criteria, Canada welcomes the efforts of Mr. Jessen-Petersen in prioritizing those areas that will contribute most to the establishment of a multi-ethnic and democratic society, particularly in the areas of protection of minorities, promotion of returns, and freedom of movement.

The implementation of the "Standards" is not only linked to the issue of the final status, but is required to bring Kosovo closer to the rest of Europe. The success or failure of this rests with all the people of Kosovo.

Canada welcomes the recent transfer of competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. We note that with increased rights and powers come increased responsibilities.

Minorities

Canada reminds the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government that they must create and maintain conditions for the participation of minorities in public life. Likewise, Kosovo minorities, and Kosovo-Serbs specifically, must engage in these institutions. It is the best way to promote their concerns as Kosovo will not be held back by their non-participation.

We concur with Chairman-in-Office Foreign Minister Rupel, who said that stability and progress in Kosovo goes through the protection of minorities on the one hand and their active participation in political life on the other.

In this vein, we call on Belgrade to encourage Kosovo-Serbs to participate in the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government.

We also call on the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina to resume direct dialogue without delay and we express our satisfaction about Belgrade's readiness to do so. We welcome the recent indications that discussions will recommence on the issue of missing persons.

Closing

We look forward to Mr. Jessen-Petersen, as well as the UNMiK and OMiK teams, continuing their excellent work in this most critical year, which could prove to be an important turning point with multiple implications for the communities in Kosovo.

In closing, allow me to address a few words to Ambassador Fieschi on the occasion of his last Permanent Council. Ambassador, Canada would like to thank you for your devoted and valuable work during a challenging period in Kosovo and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours.