

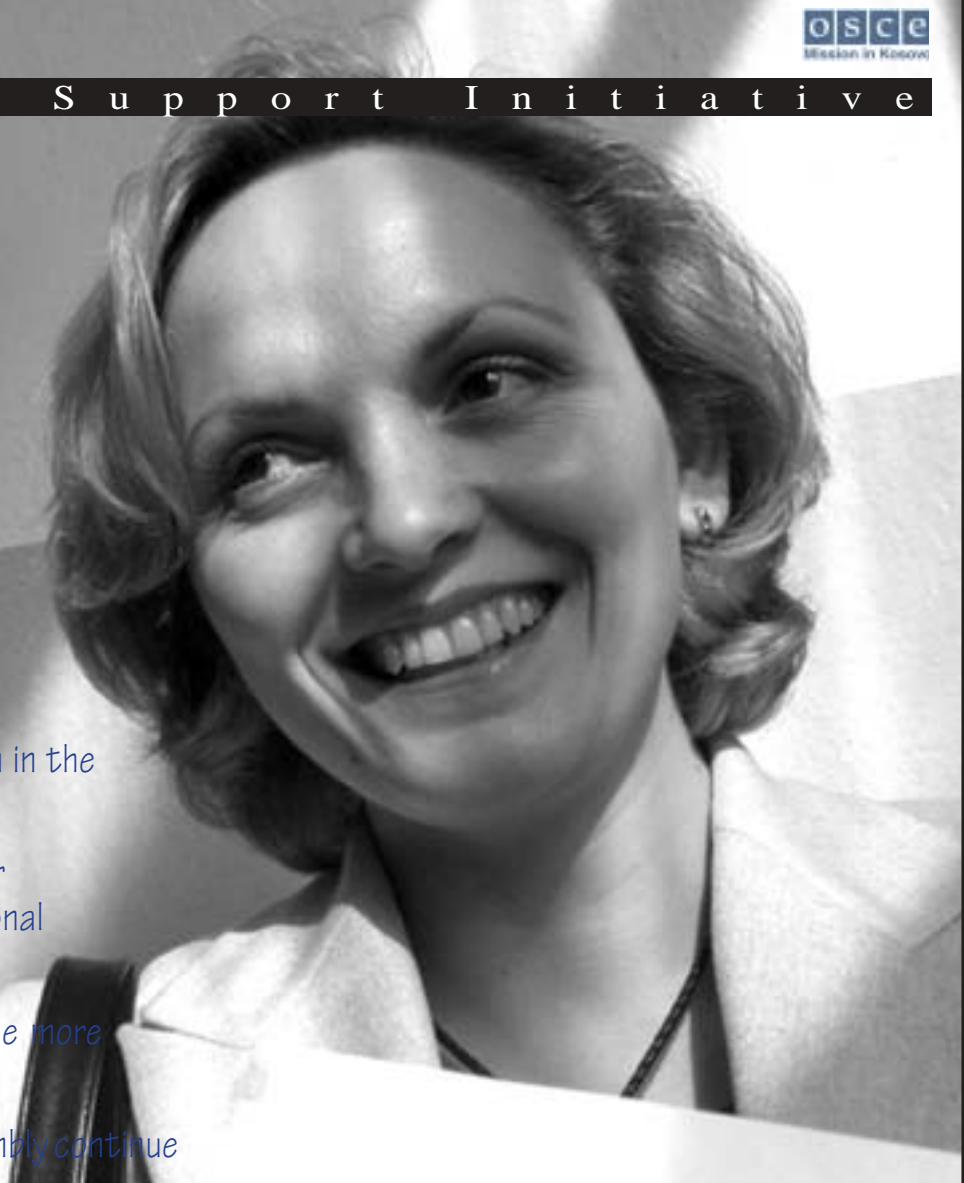


A s s e m b l y   S u p p o r t   I n i t i a t i v e

## Newsletter

March 2003, No 05

- Ms. Nafiye Gas, first woman in the Assembly Presidency
- Dr. Alush Gashi seeks better co-operation with international community
- “Coalition Return” to become more active in Assembly
- Support initiatives to Assembly continue



# THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE KOSOVO ASSEMBLY PRESIDENCY

Ms Nafiye Gas is one of the young members of the Assembly, and is the representative of the Group of Other Communities in the Assembly Presidency, since January 2003. She is President of the Kosovo Democratic Turkish Party (KDTP) branch in Gjilan/Gnjilane. An economist by education, she speaks fluent English, Albanian, Serbian and Turkish. "I am a Scorpio by Zodiac, like many of the prominent Turkish politicians," she points out, smiling

Interview was compiled by David Buerstedde and Lydia Lecheva

How does it feel to be the only woman in the Assembly Presidency?

Mr. Nexhat Daci, the Assembly President, and all the other members of the Presidency have made me feel very welcome. Most of my colleagues are men. As a matter of fact, most of my friends are male, so I'm accustomed to them and feel comfortable. It should be noted, though, that this is my first year in the Presidency (non-Serbian minorities are represented in the Presidency on a rotational basis). All my other colleagues here have already a year of experience behind them. But I feel self-confident because I stand both for the interests of Turkish, Bosniak, Gorani, Ashkali and Roma parliamentarians and for all the female parliamentarians, as well as for the younger gene-

ration. But it also means I have to work much harder on behalf of the interests of all these groups.

What do you think about the Central Election Commission (CEC) Gender Rule that brought you and other women into the Assembly?

The CEC did well in establishing the rule that there must be one woman out of every three candidates for the Kosovo Assembly. It is excellent that it was kept like that for the Municipal Elections. I do hope that this regulation will not change for Kosovo institutions in the future. For me, it was not difficult because I have the support of my KDTP which gave a chance to young people and to women in particular. Moreover, I hope that this Gender Rule will

find its way to the Kosovo Government as well. By comparison, there are a lot of clever and experienced women in the Assembly but none of them was appointed as a minister. But this is a problem of their parties, I should say. However, I do believe that women should be better represented in positions of responsibility. Women should be in politics, and are perfectly capable of making the right decisions.

How did you decide for yourself?

My party saw that I could go into politics. I never thought it would happen but I always thought in terms of politics. My measure for things goes in that direction. For example, during the civil registration, I found my name had not been recorded in Turkish. I

know my rights as a member of a minority community and I used to stand up for them not even being a politician. A politician should know one thing: to listen and then to co-operate and thus to be useful for his or her own community and for the entire population of Kosovo because who respects himself, will no doubt, respect others as well.

How you will be encouraging progress in women's rights?

I am a member of the Assembly's Women's Caucus and will do all I can to encourage women to participate actively in politics and public life. Of course, I also strive to be a good example for them. As a member of the Assembly Presidency, I will be able to raise issues of interest to women at the highest parliamentary

level. I don't like to make promises, but I can say that the door of my office is open for all the women in Assembly. One of the first issues I am going to put for discussion is more to be done about women's education, especially in rural areas. Our society cannot afford in the 21st. century to have uneducated women in Kosovo. We can then suggest how to resolve the other social problems concerning women: I will not even try to count them.

The "Other Communities" in the Assembly is a group of parliamentarians of different ethnicities representing different political parties that co-operate in order to improve their status within the Assembly. How do you coordinate the Group?

With OSCE's help we are working on establishing



"Other communities" as a Provisional Technical Group based on the practice of the European Parliament to better stand together for all minority interests. However, we try to meet regularly, usually on the day of the plenary session. When I became a member of the Presidency in January,

"Other communities" still did not have an office and I immediately requested one. There are now ongoing preparations to get our office ready and very soon we will have a place where "Other communities" could meet. The co-ordination then will be easier.

Your party, the Kosovo Democratic Turkish Party, was quite successful in the Municipal Elections 2002. Your party colleagues in Prizren are now part of the Municipal Government. What could other non-majority communities learn from your party?

To organize themselves more effectively. It takes effort and a lot of work to do this but it is the only way. Good internal co-ordination and having the ability and courage to overcome apathy, to voice concerns and to make constructive proposals for positive change are indispensable. This is also the only way to convince your constituents that things can change for the better. However, special encouragement should be given to the small parties. Yes, KDTP was successful at the last Election, but we could do better if we had more adequate access to media.

What in your view are the biggest challenges that face minority communities in Kosovo today?

Minority communities can only be an asset for Kosovo. My party, for example, could be a strong connection for good co-operation with Turkey which Kosovo needs today more than before. The biggest challenge is to generate optimism in a better future. Much will depend on the state of the economy. I as an economist am

always thinking about how to improve Kosovo's economy and job prospects for all communities. Kosovo is nothing without a well-functioning economy. We are currently working on many draft laws that will make Kosovo more attractive for investment.

You are now the most important political figure for the Turkish, Bosniak, Gorani, Ashkali and Roma communities represented in the Kosovo Assembly. What do you plan to do for them?

Whatever is good, whatever is in our interest. Co-operation with all the political parties in the Assembly will be one of the key issues. I believe that it will not be difficult for me to achieve this because my political party, KDTP, is always tolerant. We, the Turkish people, don't like fights. Sometime we prefer to step back but only to achieve what is good for all.

Ms. Gas, thank you for your time and all the best for your future work in the Assembly.

# LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASSEMBLY

Franklin De Vrieze

## TRANSFER OF MORE COMPETENCIES TO KOSOVO INSTITUTIONS

On 20 January 2003 the SRSG addressed the people of Kosovo in a televised speech. He identified the economy, crime and multi-ethnicity as the key challenges for Kosovo and UNMIK in 2003. He reiterated UNMIK's willingness to transfer further authority within the existing legal parameters but stressed that hand-over would depend on commitment and performance of the Provisional Institutions. The SRSG made it clear that external relations, the fight against organized crime, security and minority rights would not be transferred. He said that the time for solving Kosovo's final status would come, but not in 2003. Speaking of relations with Belgrade he stressed that co-operation and dialogue were welcome and had produced results. However, interference would not be tolerated. Following the SRSG's speech the President of the Assembly of Kosovo, Prof. Nexhat Daci, expressed his dissatisfaction with the work of the SRSG. Prof. Daci indicated that Kosovan institutions would be less tolerant and obedient towards UNMIK,

and noted that 2003 would be the turning point for either the good or bad of Kosovo. To address the frictions between local and international leaders the SRSG held separate meetings with the three leaders of main Kosovo Albanian political parties. On 27 January 2003 prof. Daci stated: "In this year, we should be more co-operative. Local institutions and UNMIK should work together in reducing the tensions and creating a vision for the future of Kosovo citizens." Meanwhile, the SRSG has asked the Provisional Institutions to write down their ideas on the present status of the transfer of competencies. UNMIK is also examining which competencies could legally be handed over to the people of Kosovo by the end of the year.

## AGREEMENT ON THE PROMULGATION OF LAWS

Following the SRSG's non-promulgation of the Laws on Higher Education, External Trade and Telecommunication (see previous ASI Newsletter - p. 5), on 13 February 2003 Prof. Daci sent a letter to the SRSG with four proposals

for overcoming the problems related to UNMIK's approval of laws passed by the Assembly.

++ First, UNMIK's Office of the Legal Advisor should submit its remarks on the proposed laws, with regard to a potential conflict with the Constitutional Framework, at the Office of the Prime Minister, before they are brought to the Assembly.

++ Second, UNMIK's Legal Office should add a statement to the laws that are returned, giving detailed explanations of how the approved laws are in conflict with the Constitutional Framework and the ways in which they should be improved.

++ Third, some concerns have been raised by the government has raised regarding the approval of proposed laws, together with a number of amendments about which the executive was neither informed nor consulted in advance. The Assembly Presidency had approved several additional instructions regarding procedure with the aim of improving relations between the government and the Assembly, which will be applied during future Assembly debates of proposed

laws. Ministers are requested to participate in the initial discussions of the proposed laws that the parliamentary commission proposes. Deputies that add new articles to the law are required to hand them in on time to the commission so they can be referred back to the minister. The government will call on the commissions to give their opinions, which will be registered; and at the second reading of the law at the Assembly, the chairman will consult the minister and the corresponding commissions.

++ Fourth, laws that the SRSG refuses to sign and returns to the Assembly. According to the Constitutional Framework, there can be no third reading of the law. Therefore, the creation of a working group of the corresponding commissions was proposed to the SRSG, which would include the ministers in question and also UNMIK legal officers. The working group would look into conflict with the Constitutional Framework and reach agreement by consensus on the new proposed text, which would then come before the Assembly as the new proposed law.

The SRSG agreed to Prof. Daci's

four proposals. It is expected that the working groups will start to function soon

## "COALITION RETURN" RETURNS TO ASSEMBLY

Ms. Rada Trajkovic resigned, on 30 December 2002, as head of the parliamentary group of "Coalition Return" (KP) in the Assembly. She was replaced by Prof. Dragisa Krstovic, a lawyer, former judge from Leposavic and a member of the Democratic Party of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. (see interview with Mr. Krstovic in this Newsletter). Following three months of boycott, KP rejoined the plenary sessions of the Assembly in mid-February. Prof. Daci, president of the Assembly, "warmly welcomed" the Assembly members of KP. Prof. Krstovic referred to a "difficult decision made by KP" and asked for "a tolerant atmosphere in the Assembly's

## JOINT STATEMENT OF FOUR PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS ON INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

On 4 February 2003 the Federal Parliament in Belgrade promulgated the Constitutional Charter that established the new state of "Serbia and Montenegro." Because of the reference to Kosovo in the preamble of the Constitutional Charter, a group of Kosovo Assembly Members began collecting signatures in order to include in

the Assembly procedure the adoption of a declaration for independence of Kosovo. Mr. Bujar Dugolli, head of the parliamentary group of AAK, announced the support of 42 Assembly members. Representatives of the Kosovo Serbs strongly condemned the independence move. The SRSG, EU and US strongly opposed the initiative because outside of the competencies of the Assembly, while senior officials of LDK and PDK discussed "whether it is the right moment to take the decision to declare independence now."

On 13 February 2003 the Assembly of Kosovo met in plenary session. Although the independence declaration was not formally included on the agenda, a Member of the Presidency read a joint statement of leaders of four political groups - Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and Other Communities (OC - Non-Serb minorities) - regarding the declaration. In the joint statement, the leaders expressed their support for the initiative to approve an independence declaration and agreed to review the text and present a "harmonised" declaration for approval at a future session. There was no further discussion on the proposed independence declaration, and the Assembly proceeded to the consideration of draft laws.

#### HEAD OF PDK PARLIAMENTARY GROUP INDICTED BY THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL

Four former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA/UCK) have been charged by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for war crimes committed in the territory of Kosovo between May and July 1998. Three of the indicted were detained by KFOR in Kosovo on 17 February. The fourth, Fatmir Limaj, was in Slovenia when he learned about the indictment and announced his willingness to surrender voluntarily while calling for calm and discouraging demonstrations. Mr. Limaj is a member of the Assembly of Kosovo and the leader of the parliamentary group of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK).

All four are under indictment for war crimes committed while allegedly serving for UCK at the Llapushnik/Lapušnik prison camp located in Glogovac/Glogovac municipality. Mr. Fatmir Limaj at that time was a commander in the KLA and was allegedly responsible for the operation of the Llapushnik/Lapušnik prison camp. The indictment states that during 1998 the four indicted committed or otherwise aided and abetted the execution of the crimes of imprisonment, cruel treatment and murder of both Serb and Albanian civilians. These are the first arrests carried out on

the territory of Kosovo against Kosovo Albanians following an indictment by the ICTY. The indictment of the head of PDK parliamentary group led to the canceling of the regular plenary session of the Assembly on 20 February 2003. SRSG Steiner called the stance of the Kosovo institutions to respect the proceedings of the Tribunal an example to the region.

#### THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2003

During the first two months of 2003 the Assembly adopted three laws after the second reading: the Law on Environ-

ment Protection (see article in this Newsletter), the Law on Forests and the Law on Management of Public Finances. During the same period the Assembly also approved in principle (first reading) the Law on Seeds and the Law on Liquidation and Bankruptcy.

#### NEW LEADERSHIP OF "OTHER COMMUNITIES" IN ASSEMBLY

Members of "Other communities" in the Assembly elected their new group leaders on 20th February 2003. The Turkish, Bosniak, Gorani, Ashkali and Roma parliamentarians

appointed Mr. Faik Marolli (Ashkali from PDASHK) as the leader and Mr. Sadik Idrizi (Bosniak from VATAN) as his deputy. There is an agreement among the non-Serbian parliamentarians that they will take one-year leadership each on a rotational basis. This year, it is the Roma/Ashkali turn to chair the group. Mr. Zylfi Merxha, the Roma representative (PREBK) announced that he was leaving the group and will act independently in future because he was not elected as leader. "Other communities" now consists of 9 representatives.



Prof. Daci, President of the Assembly (LDK) and Hydajet Hyseni, Member of the Presidency (PDK), announce the postponement of the regular plenary Assembly session of 20 February 2003, following the indictment of Fatmir Limaj, chair of PDK parliamentary group, by The Hague Tribunal (ICTY).

# “THERE IS NEED FOR MORE COOPERATION BETWEEN ASSEMBLY AND SRSG”

**Prof. Alush Gashi is the newly appointed Deputy Leader of the LDK parliamentary group. In a friendly and strong way, he communicated his main message: it is necessary to establish new mechanisms that would allow Kosovan institutions to become engaged “on a daily basis” with the UN administration.**

Interview by Mustafa Eric, OSCE

Prof. Alush Gashi is aware that the SRSG represents the UN Security Council in Kosovo. He also sees that the SRSG represents Kosovo abroad and makes decisions on behalf of the entire Kosovo. “Therefore, I do believe that elected representatives should be part of that process. There is no reason for not sitting in all his meetings, on international affairs or security or whatever of the reserved powers, both to learn and to witness the work,” Mr. Gashi said.

He insisted that there should be mechanisms for regular co-operation between the Kosovan institutions and the office of the SRSG, saying that, “the lack of such a mechanism creates problems.” As an example, it was “unacceptable” that legislation adopted by the Assembly would need two months to be signed by the SRSG. “I do not accept that,” said Gashi. He added that “better co-operation should exist, such as a mechanism of daily co-operation and communi-



cation, with accountability, between the Government of Kosovo, Presidency of the Parliament, President of Kosovo and the Office of SRSG should exist.”

“A member of the Parliament has been indicted and it is no minor event,” said Mr. Gashi referring to the indictment of Mr. Limaj by the ICTY. “One should understand that the Parliament has been disturbed by that event. At the same time, members of Par-

liament are committed to continue with their broad mandate of passing laws and strengthening Kosovo institutions, which is the best guarantee that Kosovo citizens are protected. If we had been more engaged with the work of the SRSG, we would have known that the indictment would take place and Mr. Limaj would turn himself in and would not be in a position to do that in another country. So engage-

ment of elected Kosovo officials with the work of the SRSG is needed, not just to demonstrate respect for local institutions, but to really ensure what has been promised by Resolution 1244.”

As for the process of transfer of competencies to Kosovo institutions from UNMIK, he saw that elected Kosovan officials would have to work together now with the Office of the SRSG, and not as “parallel institutions.” Mr Gashi stressed his strong belief that the SRSG “should open the door for us and for that process,” while also admitting that KFOR would remain in the area for some time due to the “fragile” situation in the region.

Asked about his view on the proposed declaration of independence, Mr. Gashi reminded that Kosovo’s population had come out in support of a democratic, free and independent Kosovo in the 1991 referendum. He said the debate on the independence issue had demonstrated the very good co-operation among the

major political parties in the Assembly of Kosovo and that the leaders of the parliamentary groups had jointly submitted a proposal to the presidency of the Assembly. “When the leaders believe it is the right time, it will be done,” he added.

With regard to the input to policy-making by other communities, Mr. Gashi emphasised that the majority was open to discussing all proposals, “because we have supported the article of the Constitutional Framework where all citizens of Kosovo are equal. We believe as soon as the Serb representatives see Kosovo as the center of decision-making, and not Belgrade, tensions which do exist will be erased.”

He said the Assembly had not adopted a single piece of legislation, which could jeopardize the position of Serbian community in Kosovo. “At the same time, we have to make sure that democracy works in the parliament, we have to work for decisions and in the end the votes have to be counted. I believe everybody in the parliament should accept the name of the game, which is the vote,” Mr. Gashi stressed. “At the same time we are committed to continue to respect the rule of law, and the procedures of the parliament, which have been adopted.”

Asked about the tensions between the various Kosovo Albanian parties, Mr. Gashi said: “The parliament has

contributed to bring different political parties together. On a daily basis LDK, PDK and AAK work together in the committees and in the presidency of the parliament. We get together as the leaders of parliamentary groups, and also for crucial debates on what is needed for Kosovo. Fortunately, all political parties agree. I do believe that the constructive co-operation in the Kosovo parliament will continue. We cannot afford to fight with each other, we have to work with each other."

With regard to the situation among the local branches of the political parties, Mr. Gashi said that the Message of President Rugova was loud and clear: "The work has to be democratic, it has to be transparent, it has to be a work of co-operation and not confrontation. This goes for locals as well as for the internationals."

Asked about the forthcoming legislative agenda, particularly the draft laws on health and social welfare issues, Mr. Gashi reminded that in the post conflict situation there was a very high rate of unemployment and a need for a comprehensive coverage of various sections of the population with regard to health and social welfare sectors. But he underlined that they viewed it necessary to have the private sector involvement and competition in the health sector alongside the public health services.

## CHALLENGES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW

***On 16 January 2003 the Assembly of Kosovo passed an important law for Kosovo's future. The Environmental Protection Law (EPL) was passed after another eighty amendments were adopted to it. EPL came as a compromise between those who want to have a cleaner environment and others that want to have faster economic development while using the natural resources.***

Blërim Vela, Information Manager of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe in Kosovo.

Someone might 'translate' this as 'removing the "environmental obstacles" in the future economic development of Kosovo'. But the issue has not been properly raised. The citizens of Kosovo should have a safer environment and health combined with economic development. This, in fact, means having sustainable development - using the natural resources to that extent that would not endanger the future of the next generations.

The first hearing of the Environmental Protection Law in the Assembly of Kosovo was in October 2002. The EPLs sponsor, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, explained that the Law sets clearly the duties and responsibilities for environmental protection in Kosovo, including the natural resources such as water, air, soil and biodiversity. Furthermore, the Law stipulates the creation of the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency and the Kosovo Environmental Fund.

The purpose of EPL is to establish a basic legal framework that will provide an increas-

ingly healthy environment through gradual introduction of environmental standards of the European Union. It will also establish a specific authority and clearly set the obligations of the public authorities responsible for gradual introduction and enforcement of such standards. The Law outlines key principles for Kosovo's environmental policy, including the principle of precaution and prevention, the principle of clean production and recycling, and the principle that the polluter and exploiter pays.

Although it's the first time that Kosovo has an Environmental Protection Law in its legislation, the Law is full of ambiguities and leaves much of space for numerous interpretations. For example, article 13 (Consent and Prohibition for Import) paragraph 4 states: "The Ministry may dispose of any illegally imported, exported, stored or transported goods or those goods that are considered to exist in contravention of this Article." However it doesn't clearly state who will bear the cost of these actions, where will they be dis-

posed off and in which time frame.

Today, environmental problems in Kosovo are severe, and include: litter in populated areas; air pollution from open burning of garbage, coal, and fuel wood; heavy metals in drinking water as a result of uncontrolled open pit mining and heavy industry; deforestation on mountain slopes; and abundant unexploded ordnance. A very big threat to public health and environment represents the Kosovo Power Corporation (KEK), the main energy supplier for households and industry, and the opening of previous industrial plants of 'Trepça' and 'Ferrokobel'. Their reconstruction and privatization should include environmental concerns too. The implementation of the Law should bring about a healthier and safer environment for citizens.

If the EPL is promulgated by the UN Special Representative, environmental NGOs will have to work hard to play an active and important role in further development of this law. Access to Information

and access to Justice, principles of the Aarhus Convention included in the Law, represent an effort that will contribute to the democratization of the Kosovan society. These 'environmental democracy' principles should be enforced and implemented so that the Kosovan citizens have the right to be informed about the environmental situation, environmental degradation and threats to public health, but also to file complaints when required by the situation. In this respect, local environmental NGOs need to be involved more actively in solving the current and potential environmental problems.

The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is a neutral, non-advocacy, not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 by the United States, the European Commission and Hungary. The Kosovo office was opened in June 2000. Its mission is to assist in solving the environmental problems of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) Region and to encourage its progress toward sustainable development.

Interview with Mr. Dragisa Krstovic, Head of the Parliamentary Group of Coalition Return (KP).

## “WE ARE GOING TO BE MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE ASSEMBLY”

*Dragisa Krstovic was elected in 2001 to the Kosovo Assembly as a parliamentarian for “Coalition Return.” Recently he took up the position of head of this group. He worked as a judge for much of his career and currently lives in Leposavic.*

Interview by Jonathan Browning, OSCE Democratization Officer in Leposavic/Leposaviq

Thank you Mr. Krstovic for taking time to discuss with us your ideas on the work of the Kosovo Assembly.

In December last year you became the new leader the KP caucus. Any thoughts on your new position?

It is not easy to be the head of the KP group. It carries much responsibility. But I think that I will be able to conduct this role in a very positive way and satisfy all deputies of the KP caucus, including the will of the people represented by us. In the near future we will have to face important decisions, many questions that need discussing, questions that are sensitive. It is also important that KP takes the right attitude towards these discussions, and discuss them as much within KP as inside the Assembly itself.

What are you and KP as a whole hoping to achieve in the near future with upcoming laws. For

example laws related to economic, agricultural and social affairs?

I am expecting that in the near future the Kosovo Assembly, as a priority, will deal with passing legislation, which takes into account the points of view of all different communities. I also expect that the Assembly will not try to discuss issues for which it is not authorised. For example, discussing issues such as sovereignty and the independence of Kosovo, in which case we would feel provoked to react. As far as legislative activities is concerned, I expect that the Assembly will enact well thought out laws which create a legal framework for all that needs to be determined by law. These will include laws on taxes, social affairs and any other issues that directly affects each citizen in Kosovo. I think that the delegates of the Assembly will have an opportunity to make laws which will sat-



isfy the needs of all the citizens of Kosovo and will be implemented in the best possible way.

How will you work towards getting your ideas and proposals enacted within the

Assembly? How will you reach your goals?

We will take a different approach than we have up until now. First, we are going to be more actively engaged in the Assembly committees.

We will try to secure some agreements if we think they are good and worthwhile. We are establishing a legal service in KP composed of legal experts. They will advise us during discussions on laws, amendments and aspects of our work. All of that will be aiming to change the draft laws and improving them. Second, within KP we will try to formulate and propose amendments. As it is not certain that we will get the majority of our suggestions immediately, we will try to follow them up with clear arguments, prepared in advance, so that our proposals are the right and best ones. We will see how successful we are, but we will do our best. It is not good that the government working groups drafting laws do not include Serb representatives. If we had been involved from the very beginning, Serbs could have had some impact in the law making process. Though I must say that whenever we find that the interests of our community are in danger, we will use the tools and mechanisms foreseen by the Constitutional Framework. One of these mechanisms is to be able to object to a law, if so needed. Firstly it can be



given to the presidency of the Assembly. If the presidency cannot find a solution, it establishes a proper panel, which would be formed by the SRSG. Using this mechanism, we could try to remove things that jeopardise the interests of our community from laws adopted in the Assembly.

How do you now see your relationship with other political entities and parties in the Kosovo Assembly?

Our relations with other political entities are not better than when we left the Assembly, perhaps worse now. This is because some issues not foreseen for discussion in the Assembly are being proposed, or people are talking of them being proposed for discussion on the agenda. This is not in accordance with Assembly procedures and pursuant to Constitutional Framework and other legal documents. KP is very concerned about these issues and we seriously and rationally need to think about the role that KP plays in the Assembly. At the first Assembly session after we returned to the Assembly, on 13 February 2003, KP faced an unpleasant situation. It was very hard to decide whether to stay or to leave the session. On

20 February the scheduled session did not take place because Kosovo Albanian deputies were worried about the indictments of the Hague Tribunal. That's why we had a hard decision whether to enter Assembly room to make a quorum or not. I am expecting to have difficulties in the future, during each Assembly session, which will raise the question of realistic need of KP to be in that body.

As you have now been welcomed back into the Assembly what would you like to say to your fellow MPs for the future work that lies ahead?

I would like to send my fellow members the following message. Let us leave aside things that are not for the Assembly to debate, and which in accordance with Constitutional Framework cannot be written in the agenda. Let us start doing useful things such as adopting laws and creating the legal framework to work towards a better future. We need to do something on the return of IDPs, to work on a safer and more certain life for all inhabitants of Kosovo, along with many other issues that are crucial for the life of the people who live in Kosovo.

## FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG AND THE ASSEMBLY IN 2003

Besa Luzha, FES program co-ordinator for Kosovo

Considering the fact that the parliamentary work has been strengthened as far as compliance with the rules and procedures is concerned, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) plans to continue along the similar lines focusing more on content related consultancy. The focus will be on the same committees we've worked with last year. These are the Committee for Labour and Social Welfare, Public Services Committee, Environment and Spatial Planning; but we will also involve other committees in common issues and subjects concerning the three main committees.

Training on methods of research and data collection for the committee needs, planned for the end of February, will help the committee members to have more information and background of the laws that they will have to review, discuss and amend.

An internship program where successful students of the University of Prish-

tina will be assisting the parliamentarians - individually, within the committees and fractions - is also proposed work in the future.

Another form of support for the parliament activities will be in promoting and strengthening the cooperation between the parliament and other actors of civil society as NGO's, local communities and youth organizations, through debates, trainings and seminars. This is very important input for a better and overall legislative process that will include the inputs from various groups of the society.

An exchange of experience and regional cooperation will also remain a focus of our work in cooperation and coordination with other partners of ASI. This fruitful regional cooperation between Kosovo Assembly and the parliaments in the region will continue to relate to common issues and related to help the work of the committees as well as individual deputies.

A visit to Albania is foreseen for March 2003 as the starting point, continuing with a visit to the Croatian Parliament.

As we consider the staff of the parliament to be a very important factor for professional work being developed, we will continue supporting them with various trainings in march and April based on the evaluation of their needs and problems that they and the parliamentarians face.

For a better understanding of the committee work and a fruitful cooperation with the committees and other parliamentary bodies, we plan to support a parliamentary guideline brochure. This will be an important tool for all kinds of cooperation and make the process of identifying points to be supported from various donors.

All these forms of support will be jointly prepared with the deputies themselves, the ASI group and other partners who are involved.

## ASSEMBLY ANALYSES AND DEBATES SECURITY THREATS

On 23 January 2003 the Assembly of Kosovo looked into the security situation in Kosovo. Mr. Jean-Christian Cady, Deputy UNMIK Special Representative of Pillar 1, Police and Justice, as well as Police Commissioner, Stefan Feller, offered their assessments. After a thorough debate the Assembly adopted a statement against violence. Following are a summary of Mr. Cady's report on the security situation in Kosovo for the period October 2002 to January 2003 and the statement adopted by the Assembly.

The crime statistics for 2002 show progress towards a stabilization and normalization of the security situation. Murder rate in 2002 is down by 61% compared to 2001. The number of kidnappings is down by 51%. The number of robberies is down by 10%. The number of interethnic crime is decreasing. And the crime clearance rate is at a very encouraging 53%, which is higher than in many western countries.

One of the main reasons for this progress is the growing numbers, and increased presence, of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) in the streets - 5200 in January 2003, compared to 4300 in December 2001 - and the increasing competence of KPS officers. Another important milestone has been the establishment of UNMIK's authority in the northern part of Kosovo, and the dismantling of the parallel police and justice structures which were functioning there and the establishment of KPS in the North.

### The Establishment of Multi-Ethnicity in Police

KPS is a multiethnic police force with 84% Kosovo Albanians, 9% Kosovo Serbs and 7% other ethnicities. UNMIK police, including KPS, are now present throughout Kosovo. More KPS of all ethnicities are being deployed in the North.

Multi-ethnicity in policing is the goal for all parts of Kosovo, and this is equally true for North Mitrovica. The KPS must reflect all the ethnicities of its communities. There is one Police school in Vushtrri/Vucitrn through which all KPS officers must graduate. On 15 January 2003, 10 Kosovo Serbs and 10 Kosovo Albanians began an accelerated eight-week class to become instructors within the KPS. On 20 January 2003, 40 Kosovo Serbs, 50 Kosovo Albanians and 10 from other minorities began a twelve-week training course. The KPS recruits will train together and the work together as policemen.

### The Establishment of Multi-ethnicity in the Judiciary

The establishment of a multiethnic judiciary to uphold the rule of law is also essential to the stability and security of a society. With the recent appointments of 13 judges and prosecutors of Kosovo Serb ethnicity, the judicial system in Kosovo is now truly multi-ethnic. We now have a total of 373 in local judiciary: 326 judges and 47

prosecutors. There are 336 Kosovo Albanian judges and prosecutors; 17 Kosovo Serb judges and prosecutors; and 20 judges and prosecutors of other minorities. They deal with 100% of the civil cases and 95% of the criminal cases.

UNMIK is cognizant of the challenges in the justice system. Where we recognize that circumstances undermine the impartiality of the local judiciary, UNMIK has 27 international judges and prosecutors to take up investigations and prosecutions so that justice does not fall through the cracks. International Judges and Prosecutors are involved in 87 cases which represent approximately 3-4% of the cases pending before the District and Supreme Courts. These cases involve war crimes, ethnically motivated crimes, terrorism/ extremism, corruption and organized crime.

### An Increase in "Mafia" type crimes:

Though we have made progress towards establishing a multi-ethnic police and judiciary and the security situation in Kosovo has stabilized, I am, nevertheless, very concerned about the increase of certain "mafia type crimes": these being the use of bombs and execution style murders. There has also been a rise in crimes with apparent political motivation. Such high-profile crimes have a particularly negative impact on the security situation, by increasing the level of public fear and uncertainty. At least 8 incidents of this type have occurred in the last three months and emphasize the need for effective witness protection.

I refer, of course, to incidents such as the murders in last October of AAK leader Avni Elezaj and Suhareke/Suva Reka Municipal Assembly President Uke Bytyci, the murder in November of prominent human rights lawyer Ibish Hoti, the car bomb which exploded in Dardania in December injuring 31 people, and the recent murder of former FARK leader Tahir Zernaj and two of his relatives, and the rocket which was fired last night at Peje/Pec UNMIK Regional Police HQ, which resulted in extensive damages to the building but caused no injuries.

UNMIK is committed to providing adequate protection to all who are threatened. Witnesses will not testify if they are subject to intimidation. We are calling on the international community to help us extend our existing witness programs as a matter of urgency. We are determined that no one should be deterred from coming to the police from fear of retribution, and that the rule of law in Kosovo prevails over the rule of silence. It must be made clear that UNMIK Police, that is the international civilian police and the Kosovo Police Service, and KFOR are the sole providers of protection in Kosovo. No private militia can be tolerated.

### Progress in fight against Organized Crime and Corruption

As the security situation has stabilized and inter-ethnic crime has decreased, UNMIK has intensified the fight against organized crime, which gained a foothold during the more chaotic immediate post-war period. In 2002, UNMIK Police made a number of successful seizures of weapons, and drugs another contraband such as cigarettes.

One of the priorities set by the Commissioner and myself is the fight against prostitution and human trafficking. The Trafficking and Prostitution Investigation Unit in UNMIK Police carried out 353 operations in 2002, closing down 61 premises. I hope we shall achieve even more this year. With the establishment of a safe house for victims and witnesses, and the increased activity of the Victim Advocacy and Assistance Unit in the Department of Justice, we aim to make it easier for the particularly vulnerable victims of trafficking to give evidence in safety against gang-leaders and thereby to secure their conviction.

We have also begun to make significant arrests in corruption cases, such as the recent arrest of officials in the Pristina Municipal Cadastre Agency. We intend to do much more in this field in 2003. We have set up a special anti-fraud unit, the Financial Investigation Unit, which will be initially staffed with 10 experience criminal fraud investigators from the Guardia di Finanza coming from Italy. They have wide experience with mafia. They will have wide powers to investigate the activities of public institutions and publicly funded enterprises, and to carry out criminal investigations where evidence of fraud is discovered. In this area, we rely on the assistance of members of the Kosovo public to come to the police, in confidence if necessary, with any information they may have about corruption in public office.

As we can see from the examples of other countries, the fight against organized crime and corruption is long and slow. In this fight, Kosovo is still at an early stage. But UNMIK has now established the tools to work with and we are committed to engaging the battle fully.

Jean-Christian Cady,  
Deputy SRSG for Police and Justice.

## ASSEMBLY DECLARATION ON SECURITY

The Assembly of Kosovo is strongly against violence, any kind of crime and organised crime in Kosovo and strongly supports the fight of responsible institutions against crime and their efforts to create security in Kosovo for all its citizens.

The Assembly of Kosovo is determined to co-operate with KFOR and UNMIK regarding security and other developments in Kosovo.

The Assembly of Kosovo asks to be informed at least once a month from responsible institutions on the security situation in Kosovo.

The Assembly of Kosovo considers that the solution of Kosovo's final status in accordance with the political will of the people creates security in the country and the region.

The Assembly asks and suggests local institutions to get as much as possible competencies and responsibilities regarding the security problems and greater co-operation with international institutions to exist between them.

The Assembly of Kosovo asks for order, protection, justice and foreign representation of Kosovo institutions to be created and structured and to have a civil control.

The Assembly of Kosovo calls upon all citizens to denounce crime and to help in preventing and solving crime through testimonies by considering this as citizens' duty and life's indispensability.

The Assembly of Kosovo considers that there are foreign implications in ruining security in Kosovo in order to impede its democratic development.

The Assembly of Kosovo calls upon print and broadcast media to professionally treat the security problems in Kosovo, by being based on data, escape hate speech in order to help the explanation of situations and to help creating a positive opinion in Kosovo.

Assembly of Kosovo,  
23 January 2003

## RECENT SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO THE ASSEMBLY

### Assembly adopts new Rules of Procedure

In July 2002 the Assembly Presidency authorized the Committee on Judicial, Legislative and Constitutional Framework Matters to revise the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. Under the chairmanship of Prof. Arsim Bajrami (PDK) a working group of 5 Assembly members met during the second half of 2002. Amongst others the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNSt) and OSCE were asked to advise on particular issues, while members of the working group included in the text their considerations on other issues. Between 3 and 5 January 2003, the Assembly Presidency organized a retreat to finalize the revised Provisional Rules of Procedure, based upon the proposals of the working group. The final draft was adopted with additional amendments at the plenary session of the Assembly on 9 January 2003. Consultations on particular issues with the SRSG are foreseen.

### Gender Equality Committee considers Equal Opportunities Law

The Gender Equality Committee in the Assembly held a series of consultations during the week of 3-7 February 2003 to ask for the support of various international organisations in drafting a law on equal opportunities for men and women in Kosovo. UNIFEM, FES, NDI, World Learning Star Network and OSCE have replied positively to this request. The Omnibus Anti-Discrimination Law, currently under consideration by the Office of the Prime Minister, will focus on preventing and fighting all kinds of discrimination in the fields of employment, vocational training, social protection, education, and other areas. In addition to this Omnibus Anti-Discrimination Law the need for a law to promote equal opportunities for men and women has been highlighted. International organisations will support the Gender Committee by providing the translation of gender equality laws from European countries, offering advice on how to review draft laws from gender equality perspective, offering expertise on gender budgeting, offering consultations on existing legislation in the fields of domestic violence, anti-trafficking and women's rights.

### Freedom of Information Law being prepared

Following various consultations with political analysts, civil society and Kosovo politicians, the Office of the Prime Minister is considering a "Freedom of Information Law," to be introduced in the Assembly during March 2003. The law ensures the right to access information from local, Kosovan institutions to the greatest extent possible and consistent with the public interest. The availability of public infor-

mation aims to contribute to greater transparency and accountability of the Kosovo institutions. As part of its good governance programme, NDI envisages to support the Assembly in debating, adopting and implementing this proposed law.

### European Agency for Reconstruction to support legislative process

On 28 January 2003 the Prime Minister and the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) announced EAR's support programme to the government in the field of legislation. The project will focus on the harmonisation of Kosovo's legislation with the "acquis communautaire" of the European Union as well as increasing the local capacity in legislative matters, including in translation matters. GTZ from Germany was selected as the implementing partner through a tender procedure. The team leader of GTZ is from Slovenia. As part of its support to the legislative process, EAR also envisages a support programme to the Assembly of Kosovo, starting mid-2003.

### Workshop on Research Methods and Data Collection

On 24-26 February 2003, FES and OSCE organised a workshop on research methods and data collection for the Committees on Environment and Spatial Planning, Agriculture, Health, Labour and Social Welfare, Public Services. The workshop aimed to strengthen the ability of Assembly Members to conduct research in the field of interest and relevance to future social, environmental and public services related legislation. Various research institutions in Kosovo offered their services to Assembly members, including RIINVEST, the Center for Political and Social Studies of the University of Pristina, Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED), Kosovo Institute for Democratic Society

(KIDS), Index and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe.

## Working visit of Assembly senior staff to Brussels and Paris

From 28 January until 6 February 2003 the Assembly Senior civil servants conducted a working visit to Brussels and Paris. The delegation was headed by Mr. Isuf Demaj, Secretary to the Assembly of Kosovo, and included Mr. Isa Neziri, Head of the Administration Department; Mr. Daut Beqiri, Head of the Legal Department; Ms. Natasa Prica, Head of the Main Committees' Secretariat; Mr. Sali Rexhepi, Head of the Table Office; Mr. Ilaz Berisha, Head of the Language Services and Mr. Gazmend Kelmendi, Co-director OSCE Department of Elections (Interpreter).

The delegation visited the Secretariats of the Brussels Regional Parliament and the Federal Belgian Parliament, to explore the functioning of bi-lingual institutions. In Paris the delegation was hosted by the French National Assembly and the training focused more on the use of procedures attached to one specific action (tabling a document, drafting a report, an amendment...). This highly interesting visit was organised by the Assembly Secretariat with the support of the liaison offices of France and Belgium.

## Assembly Secretariat Weekly Bulletin

The External Affairs Unit of the Assembly of Kosovo is dealing with institutional public relations and attached directly to the Office of the Secretary to the Assembly. One of its duties is to send every week a bulletin in 3 languages listing all events to occur in the Assembly or related to it during the upcoming week. It also gives all agendas for Plenary, Presidency and Committee meetings and is tasked with the Public Gallery's management during the plenary meetings. To be added on the mailing list of the Assembly Bulletin, please send an email to the following address: marzal@un.org

## Time-line of support activities to the Assembly

### February 2003

- Visit of Assembly Senior staff to Paris, by Assembly Secretariat and French Assembly.
- Consultations on the Rules of Procedures.
- Consultations with Assembly Gender Committee on an Equal Opportunities Law and with the Office of the Prime Minister on Omnibus Anti-Discrimination Law, by OSCE, NDI, FES and other donors.
- Consultations with country offices on ongoing support programs, by OSCE.
- Consultations on establishing a Glossary of parliamentary and legal terms, by OSCE, NDI, FES and Assembly Secretariat.
- Workshop for Assembly members on research possibilities, 24-26 February, by FES and OSCE.
- Assistance to the legislative process, by Bearing Point/ Barents.

### March 2003

- Workshop with Assembly Members of Other Communities, by OSCE.
- Workshop on Constituent Relations, by NDI.
- Workshop with Gender and Budget Committees on budgeting from gender perspective, 14 - 16 March, by OSCE and Star-network.
- Workshop for Assembly members on negotiating skills, by KIPRED.
- Workshop for Assembly Legal Staff, by FNSt.
- Workshop with Committees on Trade & Industry, and Finance & Economy, 25 - 26 March, by FNSt.
- Workshop on Rules of Procedure, by FNSt. and NDI.
- Visit of the Committees on Public Services and Social Welfare to Albania, by FES.
- Consultations on the legislative process, by FES.
- Consultations on Freedom of Information Law, by NDI.
- Consultations on establishing a Glossary of parliamentary and legal terms, by OSCE, NDI, FES and Assembly Secretariat.
- Public Hearing in the Health Committee on the Law on Medicine Products and Medical Devices, by FES.
- Assistance to the legislative process, by Bearing Point/ Barents.
- Roundtable "Media and Parliament", last week of March, by OSCE.

### April 2003

- Visit of Assembly Senior Staff to Berlin, by Assembly Secretariat, Bundestag and FES.
- Workshop on Freedom of Information Law, by NDI.
- Committee field visits, by OSCE.
- Public Hearing in Committee on Social Welfare on the Law on Social Assistance Scheme and the Law on Essential Labour and Health, by FES.

## NDI & THE CENTRAL ASSEMBLY IN 2003

Kevin Deveaux, NDI

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a Washington-based NGO that has been working with Kosovans since June of 1999 to build democracy. Since the general elections of November, 2001, NDI has been working with Member of Parliament (MPs) and Central Assembly staff to provide training to ensure all MPs are more able to effectively represent their constituents.

In 2003, NDI will continue to provide training with regard to developing relationships with constituents. NDI will also work with parliamentary groups and Central Assembly Committees to ensure they have the capacity to consult with the citizens of Kosovo on a regular basis in developing and debating crucial legislation that affects all of Kosovo.

NDI is also working with the Office of the Prime Minister, the Central Assem-

bly Presidency and key Committees to develop good governance legislation. This includes revised Rules of Procedure that ensure MPs are able to hold the Government accountable for its decisions and to provide regular feedback to the Government on the opinions and needs of Kosovans. A new Freedom of Information Act is planned for Assembly debate in the first part of 2003. Other good governance legislation will be developed later in the year.

Finally, NDI hopes to work with Central Assembly Committees to ensure they have the capacity to work effectively, across multi-ethnic and multi-party lines. It is also hoped that the Committee on Gender Equality will be provided with the support to ensure the women of Kosovo have a strong voice in the Assembly to address their concerns.

## FRIEDRICH NAUMANN STIFTUNG: A REFLECTION ON 2002 AND PLANS FOR 2003

Minire Çitaku, Project coordinator of FNSt for Kosovo

Following the inaugural session of the Assembly of Kosovo, the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNSt) began its support to the Assembly within the framework of the Assembly Support Initiative (ASI).

On the level of elected Members of the Assembly, special emphasis was placed on supporting the Committees of Trade and Industry and Finance and Economy by facilitating a process of dialogue and exchange of experience in the field of economy. This was achieved through various activities including workshops, seminars and open discussions with representatives of various economic organizations. Furthermore, assistance was granted in the debate on the revision of the provisional Rules of Procedures and a series of trainings were given to the legal staff of the Assembly Secretariat.

Based on its consultations, FNSt has observed a weak cross-information flow

within the parliamentary process. On the level of individual members, more regular engagement in exchanging views among deputies from other parliamentary groups is recommended, both formally and informally. On the level of political parliamentary groups, efforts should be made to improve internal working structures through the division of labor and regular internal information exchange. On the level of committees, regular contact with high-ranking civil servants from the respective ministries (e.g. mutual participation in meetings) would increase executive oversight.

In 2003 FNSt would like to continue what was successfully started in 2002. The overall aim of FNSt will be to convey European standards to Kosovo's institutions by supporting the work of the legal staff and the Committees of Trade and Industry and Finance and Economy with modern

concepts in the respective fields.

Further support to the sharing and exchange of experiences concerning the Rules of Procedure will be made.

FNSt will also strive to improve the exchange of information between UNMIK and local institutions as well as social groups in order to proceed faster towards fulfilling the standards set by the SRSG. By doing so, FNSt aims to support the hand-over of competencies from international to Kosovan institutions. In addition to this, FNSt will offer its support in other requests if expressed by the Assembly.

Additional efforts shall be made to participate in the newly founded Municipal Assembly Support Initiative, MASI. In order to support and give technical advice to local trainers in the process of creating the municipal politics, a "train the trainers" program will be conducted.

# ASI LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING A YOUNGER BROTHER, MASI

*The Assembly Support Initiative (ASI), who saw the light of the world in December 2001, has turned out to be such a lively and alert child, that his family - agencies supporting the establishment of democratic institutions of self-government in Kosovo - decided he should have a younger brother: "MASI", the "Municipal Assembly Support Initiative."*

Hartmut Pürner, OSCE Democratization Department, Municipal Assembly Support Team

hartmut.purner@omik.org

On January 27 and February 10 of this year the first preparatory meetings took place. The Association of Kosovo Municipalities, Council of Europe, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Office of SRSG, UN Development Programme, UN Habitat and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) happily responded the invitation from the OSCE Democratization Municipal Assembly Support Team. They met as they had already then agreed that "MASI" should do to the 30 Municipal Assemblies in Kosovo, what the elder brother ASI has already done to the Assembly of Kosovo.

As the inter-agency co-ordinator of democratization programmes to support the Assembly of Kosovo, the ASI has sought to strengthen and professionalise the Assembly of Kosovo. This has been and is being done through skills development so that it may become a stable, functional and productive legislative assembly, as rapidly as possible, operat-

ing in accordance with the rule of law and on behalf of all communities and citizens equally. "MASI" seeks to achieve the same aims on municipal level, working with the Municipal Assemblies. Target groups are the elected officials of the Kosovo Municipalities, members of Municipal Assemblies, its Presidents, Vice Presidents and Committee members. Professional training for municipal civil servants is under the legal responsibility of the PISG Ministry of Public Services.

Also the internal set-up and the means of co-operation between the partners will be modelled on the example of the successful elder brother. Members of the Initiative will work to bring resources together in a common pool in the furtherance of their joint goal. As with ASI, the work of MASI will focus on a democratic political culture based upon knowledge of and respect for democratic rules of procedure, transparency and accountability to the public.

Now is the right time to come together for a joint effort to support the performance of Kosovo Municipal Assemblies.

Ahead is a four-year term for the newly elected Municipal Assemblies, which will be crucial for the full establishment of functioning democratic structures on local level. At the same time the overall allocation of resources to Kosovo is decreasing. MASI aims to consolidate efforts by coordinating training efforts, on the one hand, and achieve mutually beneficial effects through this assistance, on the other hand. So while the overall amount of resources and finances dedicated to capacity building might shrink, MASI might be the tool to nevertheless provide the same quality of training for the common clients, the Municipal Assembly members in Kosovo.

The list of the future participants is already impressive and might increase in the future. Like ASI, MASI will open for all agencies that plan to contribute to the capacity building of Kosovo Municipal Assemblies. The partners are looking forward to welcome more participants at their table. The first ideas for co-operation have already been brought up. The Association of Kosovo Muni-

cipalities will in 2003 continue to strengthen municipal self-government in Kosovo. The Council of Europe and the Association of Local Democracy Agencies will in February 2003 be opening a "Local Democracy Agency (LDA) for Kosovo" in Gjiilan/Gnjilane. The Friedrich Naumann Stiftung has elaborated a training programme consisting of 10 training units, which will be implemented, in co-operation with the OSCE. The Kosovo NGO KIPRED will be conducting political party training on the central and municipal levels. While the first target groups are political parties, KIPRED made the point that the political parties must not be disconnected from the political work in the Assemblies. NDI will work on improving the party-to-constituency relations, and training session on policy making, on both the central and municipal assembly levels.

UNDP and UN Habitat are focusing on the training of civil servants, their counterpart being the Ministry of Public Services. However they responded positively to the pro-

posal that the content of civil servants training programmes should also be shared with Municipal Assembly members to ensure that it remains in a position of effective policy making and monitoring of the civil administration. USAID, another partner of the Ministry of Public Services, currently does not conduct training for municipal assemblies, but are however currently preparing a four-year project that is planned to start in late 2003 or early 2004.

The OSCE's Municipal Assembly Support Team will continue their capacity building activities, though their projects of "Municipal Assembly Start Kit" (MASK) which has been running since November 2002, ReGoCip ("Responsible Government and Citizen Participation"), projects developed by OSCE Offices all over Kosovo, and additional activities of the Ethnic Communities and Citizen Participation Support Teams.

MASI is supposed to make his first steps when spring comes. Hopes are high that he will be as vibrant as his elder brother.

## ASI Mission Statement

As the inter-agency coordinator of democratization programs to support the Assembly of Kosovo, the Assembly Support Initiative (ASI) seeks to strengthen and professionalise the Assembly of Kosovo in developing skills so that it may become a stable, functional and productive legislative assembly, as rapidly as possible, operating in accordance with the rule of law and on behalf of all communities and citizens equally.

Members of the Initiative will work to bring resources together in a common pool in the furtherance of this goal. ASI will work in accordance with the principle that responsibility for the actual work of the Assembly is and must be the responsibility of the Assembly Members.

The work of ASI will focus on a democratic political culture based upon knowledge of and respect for democratic rules of procedure, transparency and accountability to the public, developing and implementing a legislative agenda, oversight over the Executive and respect for multi-linguality of the Assembly.

As the inter-agency coordinator of democratization programs to support the Assembly of Kosovo, ASI supports the Assembly via conferences and training, workshops with the Committees, technical assistance to the Presidency, Committees chairpersons and individual Assembly Members, working visits to other countries and parliaments, training for the legislative staff and interpreters of the Assembly. The work of advisers and consultants to the Assembly and its Committees is also part of the ASI-coordination.

### Currently participating in ASI:

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNS), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in cooperation with National Democratic Institute (NDI), OSCE Democratization Department and the Assembly Secretariat with the active support of the country offices in Pristina of USA, UK, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Austria the EU-pillar and the European Agency of Reconstruction (EAR), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in co-operation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the East-West Parliamentary Practice Project (The Netherlands).



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