



# The Western Balkans and the EU: Challenges and Prospects – Governance and the Prospects of the Future

Kosovo: Challenges to peace, prospects of stability  
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## Introduction

- Introducing myself: three-year field experience in Kosovo (UNDP, Saferworld), security sector reform (police, PISG, ISSR, etc.), recent visit to Kosovo (mid October)
- Presentation aimed at introducing some of our work in Kosovo, and more specifically our conflict analysis (the process and the most recent findings)
- Presentation also aimed at offering practical recommendations to keep in mind while preparing the post-status international presence in Kosovo

## Saferworld in Kosovo

- Saferworld started its engagement in Kosovo in 2001 and has maintained a programme of work there ever since
- Saferworld established a close partnership with a dynamic local NGO called Forum for Civic Initiatives
- We have recently conducted a second conflict analysis of Kosovo, and the report is launched today in Pristina
- The purpose of our conflict analysis was to gather information on the causes of insecurity, tension and divisions in Kosovo, in three stages:
  - Stage 1: Analysis of tensions and divisions (What is causing insecurity, tension and division in Kosovo at this time?)
  - Stage 2: Analysis of current responses (What is the effect of current work of different institutions and actors on these tensions?)
  - Stage 3: Developing strategies and options (What are the potential building blocks for peace? How can different institutions and actors reduce tensions, improve security?)
- Our approach puts the emphasis on the participation of local institutions, civil society and ordinary citizens

## Drivers of conflict

- Our March and October 2007 conflict analyses have identified some key drivers of tension in Kosovo
- We firmly believe that the PISG, UNMIK, EU actors, donors, and local and international NGOs would benefit from carefully considering these drivers which, if ignored, could potentially lead to unrest or conflict
- Many organisations already perform one form of conflict analysis or another, but it is not yet a widespread practice done on a regular basis using a tried-and-tested method
- Our analyses from the field have so far identified the following key findings:
  - **Final status:** the issue, especially nowadays, permeates the concerns of people throughout Kosovo and links to all spheres of life: social, economic, cultural, political and security. People are understandably anxious about how its resolution will affect

their lives, and frustrated that delays in its resolution are hindering efforts to improve the situation in Kosovo, in addition to feeling cut off from high-level international negotiations and powerless to influence decisions made by the United States, Russia and the EU about Kosovo;

- **Very high unemployment and bad economic situation:** overarching problem requiring carefully designed, conflict-sensitive and sustainable solutions rather than quick, short-term, short-lived initiatives;
  - **Poor governance:** huge dissatisfaction with the performance of UNMIK and the PISG, and there is confusion as to the roles and responsibilities of different authorities, exacerbated by the non-transparent workings of governing institutions and agencies, and leading to disenfranchisement and cynicism among the public;
  - **Lack of two-way communication channels:** poor consultation of the public and no mechanisms for feeding back policy decisions to the public, combined with misinformation and confusion surrounding key issues such as future status and decentralisation;
  - **Unhelpful generalisations:** neither Kosovo Serbs nor Kosovo Albanians speak with one voice, instead having a wide variety of opinions, but international organisations consistently generalise, reinforcing ethnic division and often wrongly labelling criminal or political incidents as 'ethnic';
  - **Poor access to justice:** the relatively good progress made on many aspects of policing is severely undermined by a highly deficient judicial system and poor access to justice.
- There are obviously other drivers which were discussed during our meetings with Kosovars, and some came out stronger in some areas of Kosovo than others

### Key considerations for the international presence

- Many of them can be linked to UNMIK's weaknesses or mistakes, which the international community constantly states should not be repeated
- Based on Saferworld's experience in Kosovo, our analysis of local perceptions, and our discussions with representatives from the international community, we believe that the future international presence in Kosovo would benefit from taking the following recommendations into careful consideration:
  - **Strong internal co-ordination** to avoid unnecessary confusion, misunderstandings and the disjointed development and implementation of policies and activities. In the past, compartmentalisation between the Civil Administration, Police and Justice pillars of the international presence in Kosovo affected the quality of decision-making and public perceptions of UNMIK;
  - **Greater transparency and accountability** of the potential future ESDP mission to the population of Kosovo is necessary to avoid or defuse the frustration stemming from years under an international presence often perceived as 'above the law';
  - **Two-way and sustainable communications channels** should replace the current lack of systematic engagement by international organisations with actors at the community level, which have led to distrust of international agencies in Kosovo. While some good efforts have been made, communications strategies to date are often one-off and one-way, with no feedback mechanisms for the public to respond to and understand the policy-making process;
  - **Conflict analyses** would allow the potential future ESDP mission to Kosovo to tailor its activities more accurately to the needs, hopes and concerns of Kosovo's society and to avoid creating or increasing tension levels. These analyses would help gather

useful and nuanced information about drivers of tension and public perceptions, in addition to giving citizens the opportunity to share their views and to feel involved;

- **Limited use of executive powers** is important for sustainable and relevant development of Kosovo's society and institutions. Previous extensive use of executive powers by UNMIK and lack of input into policies and decisions by Kosovo officials and politicians have failed to build sustainable capacity among local actors;
- **Respectful ways of working** would help the potential future ESDP mission to Kosovo in establishing good relationships with the Kosovo population, develop a positive public image, and decrease some of the current frustration. Arrogance displayed by foreigners living and working in Kosovo has damaged perceptions of the international presence and the quality of its relationships with Kosovars.

## **Questions and Discussion**