

## Working for Kosovo's European perspective

15.10 Press Conference at the Caglavica Media Center with Pieter Feith, EU Special Representative, Renzo Daviddi, Head of the Commission Liaison Office and Yves de Kermabon, Head of EULEX Kosovo

Moderator: Good day to everyone and welcome to Media Center in Caglavica. Today's public debate on the topic Presence of the EU in Kosovo is organized by the Media Center, with the support of the Commission Liaison Office in Pristina. I have a special pleasure to introduce today's participants, and they are Mr. Pieter Feith, Special Representative of the European Union in Kosovo, Mr. Renzo Daviddi, Head of European Commission Liaison Office in Kosovo and Mr. Yves de Kermabon, Head of EULEX. Mr. Pieter Feith, Special Representative of the European Union in Kosovo, presents commitment of the EU to Kosovo. He advises Kosovo Government on political processes and promotes overall coordination of EU presence in Kosovo. He also offers directions to the EULEX which is Mission of rule of law in Kosovo. Mr. Renzo Daviddi presents European Commission, which has a role in realization of EU commitment in Kosovo, manages significant support projects for institution strengthening, economic development and European standards. Also directs reforms through regular laws and technical dialogue, as well as monitoring Kosovo's progress. Mr. Yves de Kermabon is Head of EULEX, that has operational mandate in Kosovo. EULEX is rule of law Mission, for development and strengthening of independent multiethnic judicial system in Kosovo. EULEX performs supervision and advises government of Kosovo, and in the same time holds limited and executive power in rule of law area. This was short introduction of our guests, I thank them ones more for coming here to be with us in Media Center and answer the questions. In the beginning we'll here introductions of our participants. First we'll here Mr. Pieter Feith, Special Representative of the EU. Mr. Feith floor is yours.

Pieter Feith: Hello, thank you very much for your introductory, kind words and for the opportunity you offer us to explain the position of the EU's presence here in Kosovo. I am the EU Special Representative and I think it would be appropriate if I would start of by reminding you of mine main functions that is to provide the EU's advise on political processes here in Kosovo and secondly to coordinate with, in particular the European Commission Liaison Office here with Renzo Daviddi and with the Head of Mission of EULEX on how to move forward. I would like to say that we all are working the three of us towards Kosovo's European perspective that is Kosovo moving toward European institutions for that clearly certain requirements have to be met, in particular we have identified that the area of rule of law is weakness that we would like to offer support for and that is the rationale behind the intention to deploy the EULEX mission. But Renzo will be more articulate in explaining to you the efforts taken by the Commission in providing technical assistance, financial assistance and by advising the Government on how to prepare itself, the institutions, Kosovo for coming closer to do EU institutions. We are working as part of perspective that goes for all region not only for Kosovo, we think that as EU we have particular role to play in enhancing stability in the region and therefore the perspective that has been opened for Kosovo has also being open to neighboring countries, in particular Serbia and others. We in particular thing that regional cooperation in the area of trade, economic cooperation, transport, power transmission are important for stability and for realizing the European perspective that I mentioned. Membership of the EU that one will bring important benefits to the Kosovo citizens and to citizens in the region. But lets be clear, a lot of progress has to be made a lot of work has to undertaken to make sure that we are there in particular in the areas of improving economic conditions, human rights, institutional reform and capacity building. I would also like to say that we are facing challenges and we are ready to discuss this if you would like to know more about them. The main challenges as I see them are twofold at this stage because we are working towards the multiethnic society, one of the challenges is certainly that we need to engage minority community in Kosovo in particular the Serbian community. The second challenge and Iv de Kermabon will answer your questions on that one is to deploy the EULEX mission throughout of Kosovo in all parts of the territory. With those words I would like to conclude I appreciate very much the opportunity to come here to Caglavica to talk to media representatives and I hope se can have constructive discussion. With that said maybe I can hand over to one of my colleagues.

Renzo Daviddi: Good morning ladies and gentlemen I am also extremely happy to be here in

Caglavica today to discuss together with my colleagues EU SR and Head of the EULEX Mission on the EU perspective of Kosovo, I think this is in fact why we are here as the EU family underlines the EU commitment to Kosovo and is a sign of our good cooperation on the ground. As you know commissioner Rhen who is commissioner for enlargement visited Kosovo last week and I think he reiterated very clear message, that the Commission work towards realizing Kosovo's clear EU perspective in line with the EU perspective with the rest of the region. I think this is not just empty talk but is a position which is matched by credible and tangible initiative, political and technical dialogue, supports to sectorial reforms, progress monitoring, regional integration and substantial finance assistance. I think these are the ingredients of our support to the partners throughout the region including of course Kosovo. My Office, European Commission Liaison Office has an important role to play in order to implement this policy together with local authorities and our colleagues from the EU family, the other two which are represented here and the member states which are not represented here in this particular case. Let me say few words more in detail of some of the points I was mentioning. When it comes to policy dialogue I think commission engages systematically in regular policy and technical dialogue with the Kosovo authorities, this is already taking place for a few years now, and the discussion is very much based on the EU approximation process. Over the course of the year we had one big policy gathering discussion, so called sub SAP tracking mechanism plenary session and then we had a number technical meetings in fact at the rhythm of about one every month on sectorial and more technical aspect. We expect to have another big STA meeting in November when we will be discussing progress report. The progress report is, as you probably know very important mechanism for the Commission, as part of the so called enlargement package, the EC is publishing the report on all candidates and potential candidates in the region plus Turkey of course, and as you know this year will be as already for several years progress report on Kosovo. I can not of course disclose what is the content of the report but this can be discuss at the beginning of November when it will be presented in a more articulated manner our findings. This is clearly an important activity for us but I think Kosovo is a small place and as such I think needs very much regional integration for its development, in this respect Commission is on of the institutions that fosters participation in regional integration and Europe wide, some initiatives have been launched by the Commission itself, just think of a energy community Treaty, the common aviation area, and other programs like transport treaty that will be open soon. In addition in this particular context of Kosovo as you know last summer in July to be more precise we have organized a Donor's Conference for Kosovo to meet economic and social challenges that Kosovo has ahead of it, this was fairly well attended and successful event where donors pledged 1,2 mil Euros for meeting this particular challenges. Let me draw your attention to the fact that very much chunk of this money is going to come from European tax payers money, we are talking of over than 500 million Euros, which is the budget of EU which is administered by European Commission, by our office, and on top of this we had the bilateral contribution of member states that reached 700 millions so this is very substantial contribution. When it comes to Commission work in implementing this assistance, as you know in the presence of the Commissioner Rhen we signed last week the financing agreement for IPA 2008, the instrument of pre-accession which is instrument devoted to implement the number of projects in terms of infrastructure intervention in terms of institution building which support Kosovo's approximation towards Europe. And I think here there is a very large number of projects, if there is interest we can get into the details, in any case this details are on our web site which supports vast variety of things such as civil society strengthening, the rural law, the preservation of cultural heritage and some infrastructural intervention in municipal level and Kosovo wide. Let me draw your attention in conclusion to couple of important points, I don't think that assistance is not only a way of underpinning our policy dialog and reform, our financial assistance is very important because it helps to create good conditions for all citizens of Kosovo, and I think this is very important to stress – all citizens of Kosovo, and let me close by underline that coming closer to the Europe is not just an administrative exercise, coming closer to Europe is also something that means creating the conditions for a safe and prosperous life for everybody here. Thank you very much and looking forward to your questions.

Moderator: Thank you very much Mr Davidi. Mr Kermabon, floor is yours.

Ives de Kermabon: Thank you very much, good morning everybody, thank you for this initiative I think it's a very good one, because we could have a better understanding what we are doing here in Kosovo and a better understanding with you about what is exactly situation, and I think that good cooperation with media and journalist is also good thing as usual. So let me say first of all Eulex is

rule of law mission as you know decided by the 27 EU member states in February through its joint action which is a basic document for this mission. Once again I say it's agreed by 27 member states and through UN decision on reconfiguration international community here in Kosovo is working under R 1244, and with aim to deploy Kosovo wide, I think this has to be very clearly said from the beginning, it means that this mission has a clear EU identity and chain of command but working with this two legal basis 1244 and EU joint action. My second point is to say once again that this mission is technical mission, for all the communities and for the all population here in Kosovo. We want to achieve the settlement of a peaceful and democratic society needed for the stability in the region. Everybody and all the communities must be able to rely on a strong rule of law mission and to have access to the police, to the justice, to the customs. It means in concrete terms freedom of movement, unrestricted access to justice, impartial trials, and security for the all population of Kosovo, security being the key to good living standard and economic development. The prosecution and adjudication of serious crimes and handling conflict property reality claims is also essential the peaceful development of Kosovo multiethnic society, ensure equal treatment of all ethnic communities in Kosovo, establish certainty with respect to property and housing and encourage the return of displaced persons. And to conclude, my third point would be to explain that deployment of EULEX is by the time being ongoing in close consultations and cooperation with UNMIK in order to soft this deployment and to avoid any security gap. By the time being we have approximately 500 international officers already deployed and 200 local staff and we expect to be operational and start implementing our mandate from beginning December. Thank you very much for you attention, and I am ready to answer your questions.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Respected colleagues I would now ask you since there are many of you that would like to ask questions to go one by one, and if we have enough time we'll have another ones. And please continue in one language that you start asking and present yourself before making questions.

RTK: Mr. David said that commitment is shown by EU regarding Kosovo's development. That's what we hear when EU officials visit this country. We know that your presence can be made attractive here and that you can force it as well. We also know that some are opposing to your presence here. How will you make your presence attractive, do you have any projects in Kosovo, concrete project which is welcomed by all communities? Can you talk about figures?

Renzo Davidi: I guess this one is for me. This is an easy one. I said many times before that European Commission will stay here till the end of our lives. Even when any country becomes member state, our office becomes an office of the representative within the member state. In that sense, our vision is definitely long-term vision, and that is something that is initiated by short-term interest and motivation. Secondly, we are trying to be attractive but it is very important that authorities and citizens, themselves are committed to the European integration process. That's two way street, that certainly isn't something which belong only to us. We suggest, we give more ore less clear and fair description on what are the preconditions in this process, which flows more than 50 years, process which in last 10-15 years attracted big number of states into EU, that are coming from traditional institutions which are similar to ones that prevail in region of transitional economy, which are coming from certain political systems. Preconditions are clear, those are Copenhagen criteria which we set up. A lot of efforts are required and support in sense of our political dialog, financial support, in order that preconditions are fulfilled. Our assistance is not based on geographical criteria, but on assistance to entire Kosovo. Certainly, there are projects that bring benefits for certain communities of areas. There are concrete examples. We've been very actively engaged in promotion of water-supply plan in Mitrovica, which is part of project that clearly points out benefits for all inhabitants who live in Mitrovica, in the south and north. We know that there is huge problem with water supply and this is one of ways that bring solutions by our opinion. There are initiatives in respect on infrastructural development on municipal level. Many things are already underway and they are following its path. „Ibar 2008“ is main idea that is on the table in this

moment and its being realizing in sense of local development by the local agencies, whose expertise bring together various experts on the local level in a sense of promotion of local economic development. I can talk further but I wouldn't like to monopolize the debate. We can go in detail later if necessary.

Nedjejkó Zejak – Blic: I came today to Kosovo accidentally, I got your leaflets and there it stays that EULEX is deployed throughout Kosovo. I kindly ask you to explain it to me where are offices of the EULEX in the north Kosovo, and since when is mission deployed in the north? I have a question for Mr. Kermabon, since in the end stays his TOR. Is EULEX since yesterday only EU mission, after US got green light to become part of EULEX? That is question for Mr. Feith, and for you Mr. Kermabon, here in Balkans we have a custom that after 100 days we get reports on what was done and what wasn't, which problems you have identified and which are the results that you could consider as achievements of your Mission?

Ives de Kermabon: Thank you for your question and I think that there are two parts of your question. First where is EULEX in the north Kosovo? I said couple minutes ago that EULEX is deployed in phases. That means that we are working and expecting to be operational in the beginning of December. This means that till then UNMIK is in charge. As far as it refers to Europe and mission characteristics due to the fact that there are Americans in the mission, there is a fact that member states decided that third countries may participate in the mission. That means not only these 27 member states can participate, but US, Turkey, Norway, Switzerland, Croatia and Canada.

Kosova Sot: Good-bye Kermabon, you said you want to be operational in December. That's vacation month. How efficient can you be when deployment is in question? When will you deploy? Are you going to be operational in the north?

Ives de Kermabon: Phase deployment is underway, meaning 500 international staff and 200 locals. They are coming every week. Weekly we have 80- 100 officials and we give them a chance to get sorted, to get induction training and those are activities that we work on together. That is first point, second one is, as I said on the beginning, nothing changed, EULEX has to be deployed throughout Kosovo. That was repeated several times by Mr. Solana, when he visited Kosovo in February. We'll be ready in the beginning of December when technical side is in question. We said that we expect to fulfill our mandate till that date. There might be some technical and political issues which will have to be solved, but we expect to become operational by beginning of the December.

Stojan Jovanović – Beta: Whoever deems it appropriate can answer, either Mr Kermabon or Mr Feith. EULEX's mission is faced with significant obstacles. Serbs clearly said that EULEX is not acceptable without adequate SC UN Resolution. Recently even Albanians, through organization „Self-determination“, send certain message to EULEX. I have before everything a personal question. It's not clear to me, if EULEX is that good as you state, why it is not followed by the UN Resolution and thus acceptable, at least, for Serbia. By this you would solve part one part of the problems.

Ives de Kermabon: I would like to answer on technical part of the question. I am not in charge for political issues. I would like to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding. First EULEX is technical mission. The aim of this Mission is to enable Kosovo citizens, before everything to Serbs good

guaranties regarding rule of law, individual rights, freedom of movement, access to justice, property etc. I think that understanding of this is beneficial for everyone and that they will understand that it is good for everyone that EULEX is here, and to rely on European experts who are bringing their expertise and knowledge. This means that concept of EULEX is advisory, also giving liberty to local authorities, as well as responsibilities to local authorities, local institutions and local partners, since their responsibility is key of this Mission. Fact is that for now there are misunderstandings. This has to be discussed and that's why all this meeting are very important, where we can explain what is the aim of EULEX. This is my technical answer. As it matters political side, there are discussions ongoing between EU and Serbia, and it's not my responsibility to give my personal assessment in this moment.

Piter Fejt: I would just add few explanations. As Ives said, further consultations between EU and Belgrade, as well with New York – UN are ongoing. In this moment there is possibility of obtaining approval from UN, in certain form. We think that it is not necessary, because I think that EULEX can go forward under R 1244. But if there is consensus in SC UN, or presidential statement, or any other statement by the Secretary-general or consent, that would be of course desirable outcome. You are aware that there are differences amongst the SC UN member states and I don't think that it's easy to foreseen the outcome of such consultations, but I would like to correct your assessment that there is not consent in UN about this issue, since it is still possible to achieve. As Ives said, deployment will still go in accordance with the SC R 1244 and under UN authority.

Koha Ditore: Question for Mr. Kermabon and Mr. Feith. Mr. Kermabon, are you in any form going to be deployed in the north of Kosovo without firm approval by Belgrade? That's a question for yes or no answer. Mr. Feith, you are very optimistic, you sound optimistic when you say that SC UN might issue a presidential statement, but is it realistic? Can we get any resolution or statement, since these are issues pending from 2006? How realistic is for such things to happen? Thank you.

Ives de Kermabon: First, our Mission should be deployed in the north, but it must not be by force. It has to be efficient and we have to deploy and our mission, by convincing people that this process is in everyone's interest. This is especially important regarding situation in the north.

Ivesde Kermabon: Yes, my answer is yes. We are technically ready, we need additional work in political area.

Piter Feith: I don't have to repeat what I already told before. I don't have to speculate on outcome of situation, what I say is that if it leads to certain form of agreement of certain SC UN member states regarding EULEX, that would be desirable outcome.

Jasmina Stojković-TV Most - RTS: Peter, in which way you can convince Serbs to cooperate with EULEX, or concretely, is it going to be political or financial pressure? I guess that you have a project for such a thing, or you'll be satisfied with certain marionettes, as in the case of Provisional institutions of Kosovo, what would be enough for you to state that Serbs have accepted the Mission.

Piter Fejt: I think that I should pass also on to Iv to reply on this question. It is clear that this is

process which goes bottom up and top down. I think that along with the European Commission, with rule of law experts, active and together we can do a lot for Kosovo communities. I think that strengthening of rule of law is needed, especially on the north. I think this is recognized, not only here but in Serbia as well. I would say that this is the process that we would like to articulate through our public campaigns. We have an opportunity and here, today, to say more about it, about our intentions. When we get to the bottom, it's clear that we need Belgrade's cooperation, since Serbian community looks toward Belgrade for directions regarding preservation of their interest. That is generally legitimate and normal, but as we said in introductory, I think that we need positive answer in order that Iv's intentions realize, regarding deployment of his Mission.

Renzo Davidi: I would like to say something about this. Kosovo and Serbia have same perspectives in EU, that is process of integration. That is open and clear. Road is open for all countries of Western Balkans. If there are preconditions and political criteria are fulfilled, it can become member state. I don't think that states which want to become members of EU can ignore basic criteria for joining EU. I think there is consent regarding finding a form of dialogue on very important questions like the ones we already mentioned here.

Ives de Kermabon: To go back to the process from bottom up to top down. You know the situation regarding judiciary and customs. I think that due to everyone's brighter future, rule of law has to be set up, which is basis for democratic society, for better economy and the rest. By this mission, we are giving opportunity to everyone, we bring expertise in the area of customs, what means good custom officers, judges and people with grate experience, which in large amount can assist to those in rule of law area. This is good situation, where everyone could gain. Many in Kosovo are waiting for situation to get better in the area of rule of law, Albanians for sure, and we are receiving requests from minority communities as well. We had Serbs here, who talked about EULEX, who expressed the will for EULEX to help them in certain situation.

Nikola Bešević: I have a question for Mr. Feith and Mr. Kermabon. Colleagues have stated halve of the troubles that Serbian community has with the EULEX. Second halve is what Mr. Kermabon names as technical approach, what is that Serbia is against implementation of Ahtisari's Plan. Where there any discussion about it during your consultations in Brussels or New York and will any other package come along with EULEX activities in Kosovo? Second question, since you are including Americans, Turks, Canadians and else in EULEX: is EULEX going to be called WORLDLEX, WESTWORLDLEX...etc. So, what's the law that will be base for your work: Western-world law, Western law?

Peter Feith: I have to be clear here, EULEX has a mandate which it got from Council of the EU. We can, I assure you that general Kermabon can explain ti and to Government of Serbia – what is mandate, but it is approved by the Council of the EU and it is neither subject of any interpretation, nor changes. That is answer to your first question. EULEX is operation led by the EU with the participation of third countries. Command and control is with EU, and it is in hands of Europeans, that's where EU prefix comes for the Mission.

Ives de Kermabon: I know that you have difficulties you are facing, but you have to work with others and with Serbian institutions, especially on the technical level and I often say and repeat, I am absolutely ready to visit Belgrade, to meet people and discuss with them the topic - how can we work with Serbian minority in Kosovo.

Zeri: What is your position regarding last recognitions of Montenegro and Macedonia, and United Emirates of Arabia, which did it last night? Do you expect more recognition after this?

Peter Feith: I have no long answer, because it's something that explains the position of the EU. Position of the EU is that recognitions is individual matter for member states, and I have no further observation to make, about whether some will recognize Kosovo or not, and I don't have any other comments. It's clear what are my responsibilities, what they are not. If I would have to give comments about this process, I could have done it some other time.

RTK: Last time I was here in Media Center, panelists were members of the European Parliament and they said something confusing for me, and it wasn't clear to me whether EULEX is here due to independence of Kosovo or they would be here no matter of Kosovo status. I might be wrong, but both missions should be here, because Kosovo status is solved. Is it valid and today?

Peter Feith: You mean the EULEX and ICO?

Ives de Kermabon: When I am in question, my mission is clear. We work under SC UN R 1244, and European joint action, its technical mission and I am not in charge for political mission.

Peter Feith: ICO has started its mission and I don't have to explain it any further.

Nedjeljko Zejak - Blic: Do you have direct or indirect contacts with Belgrade, or with any leader from Belgrade?

Ives de Kermabon: I don't have any contacts with Belgrade.

Peter Feith: I have no direct contacts with Belgrade.

Davidi: I can say that for now I don't have any contacts. By the time being.

Fatmir Aliu – Koha Ditore: Here I am again, because I am interested and would like to know, Mr. Davidi, is EU ready to import to its family new crisis or country that has crisis with neighbors as was the case with the Cyprus? I am talking about Serbia, is it possible that Serbia become integrated within EU without recognizing Kosovo?

Renzo Davidi: Interesting question, I think if you look at it from the point of view of time, in

accordance with time we can reply on it when we got there or when we cross the bridge, or we get to the bridge, but I don't want to reply from the top of the head and you to think that I am avoiding answer. I think that situation with last enlargement for sure taught EU certain lessons, and its very important question which reflects on this. I think that some concerns will be taken into account in the moment when such questions come into line. To say it directly, of course that Serbia is not the only state in the region that has problems regarding borders and border disputes. There are and other states candidates have made more or less progress toward joining EU, but still remain in disputes regarding borders which have to be solved at some point of time, before accession agreement comes into force.

Kosova Sot: Mr. Feith, shortly on position of ICO, I think that you should answer, is everything all right with Ahtisaari's package taking into account how EULEX is deployed and engaged? Is it going to function in accordance with the R 1244?

Peter Feith: I don't really understand your question. Is everything all right with the Ahtisari's package? I speak as an EU representative here, as a representative of the International Office. Regarding Ahtisari's package I can say that Ahtisari got a Nobel award for peace. I think that it should be an opportunity for his proposals to be viewed, there is probably something which deserved Nobel's prize, and that there was something much better than it looked at first. Maybe this is a chance for package to be considered again. EULEKS is technical mission and EULEX's mandate is, as we said before, decided by the Council of the EU and general Kermabon can explain it in a best manner to anyone interested for it.

Moderator: I would like to thank gentlemen from EU and I hope that some questions are cleared. Thank you all for participation in this debate, thank officials from ICO, EULEX and European Commission on assistance in organization of this debate. Thanks to the Finish Office in Pristina and goodbye to all.

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