



Practical considerations for the potential future ESDP mission to Kosovo

Briefing at the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
Meeting in Brussels on 24 October 2007

Recommendations: The official mandate of the potential future ESDP mission to Kosovo should:

- guarantee that all components of the mission (police, justice and customs) work together and are well co-ordinated
- develop mechanisms to properly address people's grievances and complaints and allow for internal investigations to be as transparent as possible
- design a communication strategy to communicate with people and communities around Kosovo and to allow them to access decision-makers
- emphasise the need to undertake regular conflict analyses to inform the mission's work and policies
- limit the scope of executive powers and confine their use to exceptional circumstances
- call upon the mission staff to adopt behaviours that are not discriminatory or condescending, and ensure that the training of the mission's staff reflects such approach

Drivers of conflict

Saferworld, through ongoing participatory conflict analysis in Kosovo involving a diverse range of actors in different communities, has identified the following key issues as potential drivers of conflict:

- **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 the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG);
- **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.

Key considerations and building blocks for peace

Based on Saferworld's experience in Kosovo, our analysis of local perceptions, and our discussions with representatives from EU institutions, EU member states, and the European Union Planning Team for Kosovo (EUPT), we believe that the mandate of the potential future ESDP mission would benefit from taking the following six 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. The mandate of the potential future ESDP mission should guarantee that all components of the mission (police, justice and customs) work together and are well co-ordinated;
- **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.' Perhaps through the planned Internal Investigations Unit, the mandate of the potential future ESDP mission should therefore develop mechanisms to properly address people's grievances and complaints and allow for internal investigations to be as transparent as possible;
- **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. The mandate of the potential future ESDP mission should design a communication strategy to communicate with people and communities around Kosovo and to allow them to access decision-makers;
- **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. The mandate of the potential future ESDP mission should therefore emphasise the need to undertake regular conflict analyses to inform the mission's work and policies;
- **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. The mandate of the potential future ESDP mission should limit the scope of executive powers and confine their use to exceptional circumstances;
- **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. The mandate of the potential future ESDP mission should call upon the mission staff to adopt behaviours that are not discriminatory or condescending, and ensure that the training of the mission's staff reflects such approach.

About Saferworld

Since 2001, Saferworld and the local non-governmental organisation Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ) have focused their work on improving community safety, researching and providing recommendations on small arms control and security sector reform, and surveying public perceptions on security and drivers of conflict.

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