



CONFERENCE ON PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS FOR KOSOVO

## MUNICIPAL AND MINISTRY COORDINATORS FOR STANDARDS ASSESS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS FOR KOSOVO

The Association of Kosovo Municipalities with the support of KFOS organized a conference between Municipal Coordinators of Standards for Kosovo and Ministry Coordinators of Standards for Kosovo to prepare a 'preliminary assessment' of the current situation in relation to implementation of "Standards for Kosovo".

Twenty nine Municipal Coordinators of Standards for Kosovo and two Ministry Coordinators of Standards for Kosovo participated in the conference.

The AMK Executive Director (designate), Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, opened the conference by laying out the main issues of the daily agenda and gave the floor to the AMK Acting President and Municipal President of Prishtina, Mr. Ismet Beqiri.

Mr. Beqiri stated that "one of the main challenges that municipalities will face in the coming months is the same issue we are discussing today - implementation and assessment of Standards for Kosovo, which is also a condition for us. The main burden with implementation of Standards for Kosovo falls on local government. We should be aware there is still lack of responsibilities for municipalities then there will also be partial implementation of Standard for Kosovo".

According to Mr. Beqiri "return process cannot be possible without local economic development and political status, because even the Standards for Kosovo lead to the status of Kosovo as a state. Standards are more of a necessity for us and rather than conditions, and Kosovo deserves to be part of European Union even as it is today".

The Minister of Local Self-Government, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, stated that "we will work together with Municipal Presidents to enable every citizen to live in his own property. This can only be achieved through implementation of Standards. The new government of Kosovo does not accept the recent dynamic of implementation of Standards. The current dynamic foresees full implementation of Standards in every link there is. Institutions of Kosovo are obliged to establish a sustainable environment, to secure the property of citizens, to create necessary conditions to a better life, and justice and rights for everyone. The period of six months for the implementation of Standards from municipalities is a very short



time". Regarding some points of Standards that cannot be implemented by Municipalities because of lack of competences, such as in municipal courts, Mr. Haziri added that "the Municipality and Municipal bodies cannot know who is a criminal and who can or cannot return". Mr. Haziri congratulated the work of AMK for this conference and wished that AMK become a home of municipalities and facilitate implementation of their duties and responsibilities.

The Municipal Coordinator for Standards in

Viti, Mr. Jakup Jahiri, stated that "we are for the implementation of Standards and Kosovo aims at their fulfillment in all possible segments, but we need to know why those people that do not vote in Kosovo ask for more responsibilities?"

The Coordinator for Standards of Kosovo in the Ministry of Public Services, Mr. Daut Krasniqi, stated that "we are very satisfied with the cooperation with Municipalities of Kosovo. They have provided us with much needed information on preparation for implementation of Standards. MPS has assessed 26 main points of the "Rule of Law" Standard as well as 88 more detailed ones that need to be implemented within the following months. We are in the implementation phase of already assessed Standards. Some of these standards are 30% implemented, some of them 60% and some others are 90% implemented. It is worth mentioning that most points of "Rule of Law" Standard are reserved part of the international institutions in Kosovo".

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The new Government of Kosovo and changes in AMK Chairmanship

### Ismet Beqiri - AMK Acting President

The Municipal President of Gjilan and AMK President, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, resigned from his position to take up the position of Minister of Local Self-Government in the new government of Kosovo.

AMK organized a meeting with municipal presidents to thank Mr. Lutfi Haziri for his work and involvement so far as AMK President. In addition, the Municipal President of Prishtina, also member of AMK Board, Mr. Ismet Beqiri, was elected AMK Acting President. Mr. Beqiri thanked the Municipal Presidents for believing and entrusting him with the task of leading the Association of Kosovo Municipalities in the coming months.



MEF, EAR and AMK joint project

# Preparation of Internal Auditing and Systems of Internal Financial Control

The Ministry of Economy and Finance, European Agency for Reconstruction and the Association of Kosovo Municipalities are working on a project of Internal Auditing and Systems of Internal Financial Control that will enable a better administration of resources and realization of programs. According to the Minister of Economy and Finance, Mr. Ali Sadriu, "this project aims at complementing the financial management system with the system of internal financial control and internal auditing in the central and local level".

EAR representative and project leader, Ms. Nadia Konstantini, stated that "this project has initiated this January and will

end in January 2005. The Project is comprised of two components: development of internal control of public finances and development of internal auditing, which are interdependent and are developed in parallel". Ms. Konstantini added that the first training phase for auditors of ministries and municipalities has been concluded. A policy document has been prepared, which will become an action plan. The purpose of this program for every municipality is to clarify and elaborate on public finances control and the practical and implementation side of the project.

On behalf of AMK, Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, stated that accounting standards for public sector and regulation for public

finances should be in compliance with international standards. There should be a regular auditing track that enables verification of funds flow from the source to the aim. Competent procedures should be included for controlling commitments and payments. In addition, transactions should be given special consideration. According to Mr. Ibrahim, AMK in cooperation with the Project for Development and Reinforcement of Internal Auditing and Systems of Internal Financial Control, will organize in the future workshops with Municipal Presidents and Civil Servants to discuss on the role of internal auditing and internal financial control.

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The Municipal Coordinator for Standards in Gjilan, Mr. Sherif Kurteshi, stated that "we have set the work for standards and have drafted a municipal document for "Rule of Law" that outlines 142 duties for the Municipality of Gjilan. We should publish good practices of implementation of Standards as a sample and guideline for others".

The Coordinator for Standards of Kosovo in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Mr. Fitore Jusufi, stated that "the third and fourth standards are very important, sensible and require determination, political support and are subject to minorities. The municipality is the basis for implementation of Standards". She also mentioned the possibility to research an "integrated public transportation" strategy. Ms. Jusufi added that "the Municipal Strategy for Returns was based on a rather delayed but imperative questionnaire on imple-

mentation of standards from municipalities. Use of language is also very important; even if there is no minority community in a municipality, the municipality is obliged to use two languages". According to Ms. Jusufi "municipalities should have their Strategy for Returns, their Returns Officer and their Officer for Protection of Communities".

The AMK Executive Director (designate), Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, emphasized that "despite the implementation strategy we should also have a strategy on the cost of implementation. The implementation cost of the Returns standard is very high and therefore we should know who covers these costs".

Municipal Vice President of Kamenica, Ms. Nexhmije Kallaba, stated that "the placement of signs throughout the municipal territory is not responsibility of local authorities; therefore we should know what is and what is not a responsibility of the municipality regarding the implementation of Standards. Moreover, PISG's should draft a strategy for implementation of standards and Municipalities should establish a Commission for preparing the draft-strategy for implementation of Standards, which strategy should be unified between municipalities".

### CONCLUSIONS

The meeting of Coordinators for Standards drew eleven conclusions:

- 1 - Final status of Kosovo cannot be hostage of the implementation of Standards
- 2 - Most part of the First Standard - Functioning of Democratic Institutions - has been fulfilled
- 3 - There is lack of legal infrastructure for the Second Standard - Rule of Law - and most of sub standards are under the responsibility of UNMIK
- 4 - It is requested transfer of competences to Local Institutions
- 5 - Regarding the Second Standard, Municipalities have more of an advisory role for citizens; this related to cooperation with judicial and public order authorities
- 6 - Standards III, IV and VI (Freedom of Movement, Returns and Reintegration and Economy) are deemed the most important Standards.
- 7 - Fulfillment of these Standards depends also on Serbian community
- 8 - Additional budget is needed for the fulfillment of these Standards
- 9 - Elimination of parallel structures that encumber the fulfillment of Standards is needed
- 10 - Municipalities are eagerly working towards the fulfillment of Standards.
- 11 - Greater support from the Central Level is needed.

## The successful Conference of Association of Kosovo Municipalities



Mr. Nexhat Daci, after declaring officially opened the conference, stated that "the harmony between the whole and its part is equal to the progress and welfare of citizens. The Municipality as a fundamental self-government unit is the very place where laws are applied and the type and character of governance is realised, and is also the place where citizens either are or are not satisfied with services provided and competences of local authorities".

In his welcoming speech in the third annual AMK conference, its President Mr. Lutfi Haziri stated that "the role of the Association remains the same as when it was formed in 2001 - to take the principles of the European Charter of Local Self Government - and apply them to the development of the municipalities in Kosovo". Regarding the Conference theme on the dialogue between local and central level, he stated that "we have been invited onto a number of Ministry working groups. Within the Association structure we need to be more prepared to respond to the demands of government as they are presented to us. Strong local-central dialogue needs willingness on the part of government to engage with us. We are therefore proposing to the Association Assembly that we form more commissions so that we can give stronger support to the government on the different themes of local activity." - concluded his speech Mr. Haziri. Prior to opening the debate with Kosovo Assembly Chairman, Mr. Haziri thanked again Mr. Daci for enabling the municipalities to participate in Kosovo Assembly commissions during his last mandate and for enabling them to raise problems faced by the local authorities in Kosovo in the recent years.

On the greeting messages, Mr. Francesco Bastagli (UNMIK) said "AMK is essential for the development of civic society, which in turn will be able to cooperate with local government and participate in all decision making aspects". Mr. Odran Hayes (EAR) said "AMK has become a strong foundation which demonstrates the AMK importance and possibility to give shape to future structures in Kosovo". Ms. Christine Roth (UNDP) said



"the cooperation between UNDP and AMK shows the devotion of these two organizations to understand the daily life of citizens". Mr. Ken Yamashita (USAID) said "I invite you all to work and make AMK a main actor in Kosovo and I invite AMK to be stronger in the future and a relevant force in discussion with the central government to determine and enforce the role of local government". Mr. Owen Masters (Council of Europe) said "I have seen AMK developments, which are one of the greatest achievements in Kosovo for its citizens. In my view, this is an important achievement for local government in Kosovo". Mr. Pascal Fieschi (OSCE) said "We will pay much attention to the upcoming local government reforms, since this is an issue where AMK is a key factor". Mr. Alan Packer (IFES Ltd.) said "the Association of Kosovo Municipalities - in common with Associations throughout Europe - has a critical role to play to bring together the thinking of the municipalities and to advocate for their position to the central government." The deputy President of ZELS, Mr. Imer Selmani, in his greeting speech stated that "it is an honor to talk in this meeting and this conference. As two neighboring Associations, we have many things in common, such as our objective to be part of the EU".

Ms. Ruth Coleman - Leader of North Wiltshire District Council - Liberal Democrat Leader, Local Government Association - European and International Affairs Panel, and Local Government International Bureau stated that "at the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB), we are proud to be part of the consortium, with IFES and others, which is working with the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AMK) to help develop local democracy and to build the capacity of AMK to itself help local municipalities provide good governance and services to local communities". The Executive Director of Local Government International Bureau, Mr. Mike Ashley, in his speech stated that "I have watched the development of the project with AMK, from the development of the consortium with IFES and other partners, through putting the huge bid document together and sending it off to the European Agency for Reconstruction, celebrating winning the contract, to work starting over here". The second day session of the Third Annual Conference of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities was opened and chaired by the AMK Board member and at the same time the Municipal President of Prishtina, Mr. Ismet Beqiri, who introduced the participants with the agenda.

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Informational study program of Conrad Adenauer Foundation

### Five Municipal Presidents stayed in Germany

Municipal Presidents of Podujevo, Pristina, Peja, Prizren, Gjakova and Fushë Kosovë stayed for a one week visit in Germany. They participated in a program organized by the German Conrad Adenauer Foundation, an informational study program for Municipal Presidents of Kosovo.

During the first two days, Municipal Presidents visited the city of Dresden and were guests of Prime Minister of Saxony Land and a Bundestag Assembly member. They also met with State Secretary of Education and Federal Assembly member Mr. Gunther Portune. Municipal Presidents visited a watch production factory, and met with the city's Municipal President, Mr. Markus Drebler. Another visit included the Ministry of Education and Culture of Saxony land where they met Mr. Portune and discussed on current issues like education, sport and culture reforms.



## The successful Conference of Association of Kosovo Municipalities



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During the presentation of the Annual Report of AMK for 2004, Mr. Haziri stated "it is my pleasure to present to you today the annual report of the Association for 2003/2004. During this period, Kosovo has seen substantial progress. The government structures have grown in experience and have achieved many things for the people of Kosovo. These developments are most frequently implemented through the municipalities, for example, improvements to schools, local roads, water supply, building plans, youth action and social welfare. It is understandable that we have much more to achieve than what we have today, but still we are in the right direction".

He added that "this report shows that the Association of Kosovo Municipalities has played a critical role in these developments. The Association is also building the right contacts and networks to support local government in Kosovo in the future. The Annual Report of AMK presents the main themes of AMK activities including, international activities, relations and partners of the Association, AMK and Municipalities activities on Standards for Kosovo, projects for interethnic dialogue, commitment to municipal property, policy development of local government, administrative reform and local economic development" said Mr. Haziri then explained in detail each theme. After the debate the AMK Assembly members approved with a majority of votes the Annual and Financial Report of AMK for 2004. The Executive Director (designate) of AMK, Mr. Sazan Ibrahim, presented the AMK future projects. After explaining in detail these future projects, the AMK Executive Director said that these projects could only be implemented with the support of Kosovo Municipalities and other

donors. The Association of Kosovo Municipalities has developed Policy Statements with the support of Municipal Analysis Groups that met during 2004 followed by consultations with all Municipalities of Kosovo. The presentation of Policy Statements was divided in three parallel groups: the first group on finance, education and primary health care was chaired by the Deputy President of AMK and the Municipal President of Skenderaj, Mr. Ramadan Gashi, the second group on public places, urban and rural planning and licensing was chaired by AMK Board member and Municipal President of Prishtina, Mr. Ismet Beqiri, and the third group on social housing, youth and gender issues and tourism was chaired by AMK Council of Presidents member and Municipal President of Vushtrri, Mr. Muharrem Shabani. The meeting of AMK Council of Municipal Presidents was opened and chaired by AMK President, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, who presented to the participants the daily agenda for the meeting of the Council.



In this meeting, the Municipal Presidents chose the members of 11 AMK Commissions from the political arena of the Municipalities, while the members for the civil arena of the Municipalities will be chosen by the Collegium of Chief Executives of Municipalities.

The Municipal President also discussed and approved in principle the World Bank Project in close cooperation with AMK regarding business registration. In this aspect, it was said that the aim of "Integrated Municipal Business Services" (IMBS) is to support new enterprises and to reduce expenditures for opening and operating a business in Kosovo. This could be achieved by reducing administrative barriers and improving transparency and responsibility of regulatory services provided by Municipalities. In order to reduce administrative barriers and improve the transparency, the project will support the establishment of "contact

points" or "Business Service Centers" (BSC) in every Municipality.

The meeting of AMK Collegium of Chief Executives was opened by the IFES Ltd team leader, Mr. Alan Packer. He asked the Chief Executives to present their experience to the SOLACE - UDITE representatives, so that they can be informed and be able to compare this experience to the above-mentioned organizations' experience, and to learn from the GB experience.

The floor went to Mr. William Saunders, who spoke on "The Role of Chief Executives in Great Britain". He said that the Statute does not include the position of chief Executives.

"The Chief of Paid Services is together with the Officer for Finances and the Officer for Monitoring, but they are not considered separate when mentioned during different matters, and despite the law most of Chiefs of Paid Services are called Chief Executives. Some are called Management Directors. For our purpose we will deal with Chief Executives. In addition, the law does not provide specific qualifications for a Chief Executive, although a university diploma or professional equivalent is always required".

In addition, Mr. Beadle James stated that "it would be good for the Collegium of Chief Executives to organize a meeting with Ms. Ruth next March, when she will be in Kosovo, in order to have feedback from chief executives, especially the ones that have been to London to discuss on the experience achieved from that visit". Regarding this meeting, Mr. Pllana said that "we welcome this delegation to visit our Municipalities so that they are informed on the performance of Chief Executives of Municipalities of Kosovo".

A.Osmani and M.Shaqiri



### ASOCIACIJA KOSOVSKIH OPŠTINA BILTEN

Godina I, Izdanje. 7 Novembar & Decembar 2004

Odbor Urednika: Sazan Ibrahim, Arsim Osmani,  
Mexhit Shaqiri, Merita Krasniqi

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