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KOSOVO SERBS AND BELGRADE: SHIFTING STRATEGIES

Activity Report

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Executive Summary

The participation of the Kosovo Serbs south of the Ibar River in Kosovo's 12 December parliamentary elections signals a major shift in strategy: from boycott to participation. The policy of boycott, regarded as an adequate policy in response to Kosovo's declaration of independence, is no longer considered effective, because it does not prevent Kosovo's institutions to "make decisions about Serbs without Serbs." The new strategy of participation confronts a number of challenges: persisting divisions among Kosovo Serbs; Belgrade's and northern Kosovo Serbs' objections to participation; and Kosovo Albanian negligence to the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan provisions related to the Serb community and their fear that the participation of only the southern Serbs may reinforce the idea of the partition of the north.

Divisions exist among the Serbs in the south, and between the Serbs in the south and the Serbs in the north. Divisions among Serb parties in the south could be overcome by forming a post-election coalition. Kosovo's constitution provides for automatic inclusion of the Serbs in the government, allocating them two ministries, but it does not specify if all Serb parliamentary parties are entitled to the allocation. Based on the concept of proportionality applied in the distribution of the reserved seats among Serb parties, the two ministries should also be divided in proportion to the votes won in the elections. If the two ministries would be given to only one Serb parliamentary party, that party would risk being considered as the "Albanians' loyal Serb party," and the seeds of a protracted intra-Serb confrontation would be planted.

There are reasonable fears that the growing fault lines between Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs in the south could have adverse repercussions for primarily Kosovo Serbs but also for Belgrade. Few Serbs would remain in Kosovo without Belgrade's support, but there would also be no Serbian presence in Kosovo without Kosovo Serbs. If their relationship is interdependent, then it will survive the existing fault lines. But if not, the exacerbation of Belgrade-Kosovo Serbs relations would directly affect the welfare of the latter. The source of the disagreements is their conflicting visions regarding political action in Kosovo, participation versus boycott. The Kosovo Serb community is aware that without Belgrade's support, it will have limited success in working with Kosovo's bodies, mainly because it is too small to maintain the pressure on the Albanian-dominated institutions, especially now that international influence in Kosovo's institutions is waning. Despite these implications, the Serbs in the south seem determined—shown by the high election turnout—in abandoning their policy of boycott in favor of participation.

The Kosovo Serbs in the south are not alone in changing strategy. Belgrade is also reviewing its policy on Kosovo. It has made three major policy changes. First, although it does not support the election participation and institutional integration, it no longer sanctions those who vote, run for office, and join Kosovo's institutions. Second, it has decreased its funds dedicated to Kosovo Serbs by reducing social assistance and salaries and by abolishing certain positions, such as parallel mayors of municipalities without substantial Serb population. Third, and most important three years after severing communication with Pristina, Belgrade has agreed to a direct dialogue with Kosovo's institutions, expected to begin in the spring, under a slogan of "engagement without recognition." Now that Belgrade intends to engage directly with Kosovo's institutions, the boycott of the very same institutions by Kosovo Serbs is impractical and ineffective. Despite

these major policy shifts, Serbian officials warn that Kosovo Serbs should have no illusion that Belgrade would support their participation into Kosovo's institutions before an overall agreement with Pristina is reached.

Some Albanian parties and politicians are also against the Serb participation, but for different reasons. They fear that integration of only the Serbs in the south—while those in the north continue to consolidate the Serbian parallel institutions—would reinforce the idea of the partition of the north. Whether in government or in opposition, these parties and politicians have significant potential to delay the implementation of the Ahtisaari Serb community related provisions, primarily decentralization.

These conclusions came out of a series of activities—one roundtable for Kosovo Serbs in Pristina and one roundtable for Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade officials in Belgrade, individual discussions with several politicians and analysts in Pristina and Belgrade, as well as with international representatives in Kosovo—organized by the Council for Inclusive Governance.

New Strategy

Who are the Kosovo Serb community's legitimate representatives has been a recurring question since 2004, when the 22-member Serb coalition Povratak left Kosovo's government and 120-member parliament in protest of the March interethnic clashes of the same year that left scores dead and hundreds of Serbs displaced. The Serbs boycotted Kosovo's elections in 2004 and 2007 and instead took part in Serbia's 2008 local elections, forming separate local institutions, known as "parallel" institutions, supported by Belgrade but opposed by Pristina.

A year and a half later, in November 2009, the Serbs south of the Ibar River also participated in solid numbers, around 25 percent, in Kosovo's 2009 local elections, forming another set of local institutions, supported by Pristina but opposed by Belgrade. The solid number of votes allowed the representatives of these institutions to claim a degree of legitimacy and allegiance of the Serbs, even though their legality and legitimacy was questioned by Belgrade and the parallel institutions.

The Serb representatives at the central level, however, having received a negligible number of votes, around 1 percent, could not claim the same level of legitimacy. This issue was resolved by the Serb participation in Kosovo's 12 December elections. The solid Serb turnout, about 40 percent, not only confers adequate legitimacy to the elected Serb members of parliament but it also approves the strategy shift, from boycott to participation. "Resistance through boycott has lived up its time," an interlocutor noted. Some argue that it even went on for longer than was prudent—many decisions about Serbs but without Serbs were made in Kosovo's institutions during this time. Three years after the declaration of independence, the number of Serbs supporting participation is growing. Sources say a significant portion of the Serb population in the north is also in favor of participation, and they would have voted had the condition, primarily security, been provided.

Kosovo Serb politicians expect Kosovo's authorities and the Serbian government, albeit tacitly, to support, or at least not to undermine, the new participation approach. Pristina is expected to

support the new approach but voices within Kosovo's Albanian political parties, which, fearing the partition of the north, oppose the institutional inclusion of the southern Serbs while the northern Serbs continue strengthen their own parallel system. Belgrade is expected to neither support nor undermine the inclusion of southern Serbs in Kosovo's institutions. But in "the name of national interests, and in the name only," it may tell the Serbs not to join the institutions, but it wouldn't take any actions against them, an analyst said.

Three factors account for the change in strategy: Kosovo Serbs' pragmatic approach, entailing accepting Kosovo's institutions but not its independence; Belgrade's decision to start a dialogue with Kosovo's authorities, rendering the Kosovo Serb boycott of the very same institutions ineffective and meaningless; and the substantial normalization of relations between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. The improvement of Albanian-Serb relations resulted from the realization by the Albanians that Serbs, though opposing it, are not a threat to their independence, and the realization by the Serbs that an accommodating status for them could be found in Kosovo. This status would primarily eliminate their isolation in enclaves and dependence on social assistance from Belgrade and Pristina.

The majority of the Serb community related issues—decentralization, local institutions, education, employment, telecommunications, property, and so on—could be most effectively addressed through the implementation of the legal provisions built into the Ahtisaari plan and guaranteed by Kosovo's institutions. The Ahtisaari plan, for example, commits the Kosovo authorities to provide education in Serbian at all levels and to establish within the Radio and Television of Kosovo, Kosovo's public broadcaster, a Kosovo-wide television channel in Serbian, where about 200 journalists and supporting staff could be employed. RTK, with one television channel and two radio stations, currently employs about 800 people. Though Kosovo's authorities have not fulfilled these obligations, few Serbs have complained about it, mostly because they rejected the Ahtisaari plan altogether on the basis that it envisioned independence for Kosovo. Recently, however, the issue of the television channel has resurfaced and a number of political party representatives have pledged to take up the issue once in the institutions.

Serbs are aware that the election participation is no panacea. It is simply a necessary but not sufficient step to obtain the aspired accommodating status. The hardest and most complicated work begins after the elections. Serb parties have been careful not to raise hopes that could not be realized by taking part in elections only. Subsequent steps are crucial and the Serb representatives need the support of the Serb population. Some Albanian parties that openly oppose decentralization and other extra rights for the smaller communities may also cause some delays to the implementation process. This is why, many analysts suggest, the international supervision of Kosovo's institutions is a determining factor, and that is also why Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs should improve their relations with the international organizations in Kosovo. The implementation of these rights ultimately depends on the conviction of the Kosovo political actors that these rights are not merely necessary—to primarily please the international community—but that they are also just. In post-conflict societies, the rights of smaller communities are inherently less secure. "But this is precisely why the Serbs must engage more intensively in the political process, not boycott it," a Kosovo Serb said.

The Serbs are in fact getting more involved in the process. The reason for this growing involvement is not because they have become receptive to Kosovo's independence but because they believe the political participation is the only way to preserve the shrinking Serb community. Though the participation is gaining popularity among the Serbs, at least in the south, efforts to create a joint electoral list failed. Sources say this happened because of personal grievances rather than ideological differences. But some party representatives expect these personal grievances to be overcome after the elections. Although the Serb community is far smaller than the Albanian one, which ran on seven lists, Serb voters had to choose among eight lists, with the Independent Liberal Party and the United Serb List as two main contestants for the Serb vote. An official admitted that a joint list would have been better, but added that eight lists are better than none.

But if the personal grievances prevail, not only there would be no Serb intra-party cooperation but the ensuing conflict may also harm the Serb community's long-term prospects. If only one Serb parliamentary party is invited to join the government, it risks being considered as "the Albanians' loyal Serb party," similar to "Serbia's loyal Albanians in the 1990s," a discussant noted. A Serb party official stated that his party, if it makes it into parliament, would insist on assuming its proportional power according to the Ahtisaari plan and Kosovo's constitution, which, according to him, do not foresee a Serb opposition in Kosovo's parliament. The Ahtisaari plan and Kosovo's constitution provide for automatic Serb inclusion in the government, allocating them two ministries, but do not elaborate on whether all Serb parties should be part of the government, perhaps because the issue was not foreseen at the time. So the matter remains open to interpretations.

Many Serb representatives recommend the two ministries to be allocated in proportion to the number of votes won in the elections, similar to the allocation of the 10 reserved parliamentary seats. But others argue that it is up to the winning party, in effect an Albanian party, to decide which Serb party or parties to invite to join the governing coalition. Though the largest party may have this right, it would nevertheless go against the spirit of the Ahtisaari plan provisions on the inclusion of the smaller communities in decision-making bodies. If some Serb parties would be excluded, unless they voluntarily choose to remain in opposition, from the coalition government, the seeds for a prolonged intra-Serb confrontation would be planted.

The possibility of reaching an intra-Serb agreement does not depend on "who is running, but who is elected," a Serb analyst explained, adding that the quality of the elected parliamentarians would also determine the success of the Serb institutional representation. The best candidates are elected in free and fair elections, but Kosovo's elections, some Serbs noted, may be free, no one is restricted to cast a ballot, but not fair, some parties have more financial advantages and access to public resources for campaigning than others. Some Serbs were concerned that those who have more money, referring to the Independent Liberal Party, would get more votes. The independent liberals have repeatedly denied such claims, noting that they do not have access to the alleged resources. They have also pledged to cooperate with all Serb parties after the elections, including those that do not make it into parliament.

Kosovo Serbs suggested cooperation with other non-Albanian communities' parliamentary parties, which are allocated ten 10 reserved seats. Such cooperation would bolster the relevance

and bargaining power of the Serb parties, especially when considering that no Kosovo Albanian party alone is able to form the government. The Serb 10 reserved seats, in addition to another 3 they may win, combined with the 10 reserved seats of the other communities are precious in a 120-member parliament. In the last mandate, Serb parties in the parliament were divided, with some in government and others in opposition. These divisions were also reflected in the voting patterns, with those in the government voting in favor of government proposals while those in the opposition against them. For example, those in the government voted in favor of the rather sensitive privatization of the Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo, supported by Prime Minister Hashim Thaci's party only (Albanian parties, including the junior coalition partner, the Democratic League of Kosovo, voted against). The Serb opposition parties considered the Independent Liberal Party—a governing coalition partner with two ministries—as the most loyal partner of the Democratic Party of Kosovo of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci. The Liberals have denied such claims.

Past experiences indicate that the Serb political cohesion—the willingness of politicians and political parties to compromise with each other and to respond to calls by the voters for united action—is difficult to attain and maintain. A former Kosovo Serb member of parliament, familiar with the internal dynamics of the former Serb coalition Povratak, reported that the 22-member coalition Povratak for two years of its existence did not manage to bridge the differences among its constituent members. He expected this experience to be repeated. The conditions for a Serb party post-election coalition are now even less favorable than between 2002-2004. The Serbs in the north massively boycotted the elections and a number of Serbs in the south remain loyal to the parallel institutions. But past experiences also show that the Serb community objectives could also be pursued separately, another member of parliament added.

Several problems could be resolved by Kosovo Serb committed action, united or separate: electricity, telephones, car registration plates, establishment of a Serbian-language Kosovo-wide television channel, employment in public companies, and so on. “We have to conduct an election campaign with no reliable phones lines or television stations to communicate with our voters,” an interlocutor who ran for office said. The resolution of these problems will not be easy now that Kosovo's institutions seem to be asserting their independence and the international influence is waning. A top official of Kosovo's ministry of internal affairs, which has begun distributing new car registration plates with the ‘Republic of Kosovo’ inscription, declared that cars with Serbian registration plates for Kosovo Serbs would be barred from traffic soon. He further warned that if Serbia refuses to recognize Kosovo's registration plates, his government might consider retaliatory action, ‘derecognizing’ Serbia's plates, an action that would gravely restrict Kosovo Serbs' movement. Though the announced dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, expected to begin in the spring, is officially supposed to address such issues, Kosovo Serbs are rather skeptical about its eventual results. “The dialogue may go on endlessly, without producing any results, resembling previous series of negotiations,” a discussant familiar with past Belgrade-Pristina negotiations stated.

Some Serbs interpreted the car registration plates warning of the ministry of internal affairs official as a signal of the beginning of a Kosovo's government “aggressive strategy” aimed at countering Belgrade's actions but which would harm primarily Kosovo Serbs in the south, given their obvious vulnerabilities. “Although the aim of this strategy is to stick it to Belgrade, the Serb

community is the one who will suffer, not Belgrade,” a discussant said, adding that Serbs can prevent the application of such harmful policies only from the “inside institutions.” This should serve as evidence for Belgrade to recognize the unfavorable reality and support the Serb participation into Kosovo’s institutions. Some suggested that the Serbs in the institutions could also act as an informal intermediary in the future communication between Belgrade and Pristina.

Interdependent Relationship

Many Serbs fear that the growing fault lines between Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs could have major, adverse repercussions for primarily Kosovo Serbs but also for Belgrade. “There would be no Serbs in Kosovo without Serbia’s support, but also no Serbian presence in Kosovo without Kosovo Serbs.” This is how a Kosovo Serb summed up the Belgrade-Kosovo Serbs relationship. If their relationship is indeed interdependent, then it will survive the existing fault lines. But if not, the exacerbation of Belgrade-Kosovo Serbs relations would directly affect the welfare of the latter. The source of the disagreements is the different and increasingly conflicting visions of Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade regarding the political participation in Kosovo’s institutions.

An increasing number of Kosovo Serbs believe that their standard of living—reliable electricity and telephone lines, security, employment, and so on—takes precedence over Serbia’s national interests. This growing number of Serb voters, despite Belgrade’s call for boycott, is often presented as evidence to this changing Kosovo Serb view of Belgrade. Although Belgrade could decrease its support for Kosovo Serbs, especially its financial support, thus affecting their welfare, many Serbs maintain that they do not fear “revenge” from Belgrade because Belgrade-Kosovo Serb relationship is interdependent: there won’t be Serbian presence in Kosovo without Kosovo Serbs, but there won’t be Serbs in Kosovo without Serbia either. “Kosovo Serbs are the only remaining ‘tapija’ of Serbia’s ownership of Kosovo.”

The struggle of Kosovo Serbs is directed on two fronts: to enter Kosovo’s institutions to improve their political and economic prospects in an Albanian-majority Kosovo; and to continue their efforts to convince Belgrade to tailor its policies to the changing circumstances—a dynamic as opposed to a static policy. While the fight on the first front will take place in Kosovo’s institutions, government and parliament, where the Albanians cannot ignore them, the fight on the second front will be more difficult, not only because Kosovo Serbs are not as represented in Serbia’s institutions, at least not those who disagree with the Serbian government, but also because Serbian officials tend to ignore Kosovo Serbs. The Democratic Party of President Tadic, which runs the ministry for Kosovo and Metohija, has been consistently ignoring events in which Kosovo Serbs critical of Serbian government take part, several discussants reported.

Many Kosovo Serbs are angry at Belgrade for making essential decisions on their future, such as the one on the elections participation, in conference calls and without proper consultations with them. “It is appalling that Belgrade officials decided about our future in that way, while we in Kosovo were begging Belgrade to talk to us and work out a consensual solution,” a Kosovo Serb said. This decision contributed to the view that Belgrade is more interested in taking decisions that “appeal to voters in Serbia than decisions that safeguard the interests of the Kosovo Serbs.” Some suggested that Belgrade’s decisions should be advisory rather than authoritative determinations of what course of actions the Kosovo Serbs should follow.

A number of discussants suggested organizing a series of events between Serbia's members of parliament, especially those coming from Kosovo, and Serb members of Kosovo's parliament. The objective of such initiative would be to formulate a common platform for cooperation among all those who work on Kosovo Serb issues.

The Kosovo Serb community is aware that in the absence of Belgrade's full support, it will have limited success in working with Kosovo's bodies, mainly because it is too small to maintain the required pressure on the Albanian-dominated institutions, especially now that the international influence in Kosovo's institutions is declining. Though it never agreed to it, Belgrade's influence in obtaining the rights guaranteed by the Ahtisaari plan is crucial. Without Belgrade's support, Kosovo Serbs, comprising only about 5 percent of Kosovo's populations, would be just one of the many tiny minorities in the region, many Kosovo Serbs said. Therefore, severing of relations between Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs should not be an option. What should be on the table is amending this relationship, adjusting it to the changing circumstances.

Belgrade's Policy Shift

Belgrade has made three major policy changes towards Kosovo and Kosovo Serbs. First, though it does not support the election participation, Belgrade no longer sanctions those who vote, run for office and join Kosovo's institutions. The Serbian government, in a conference call, decided to oppose participation in the elections because "the conditions for the Serbs to vote do not exist." But it also noted that those who "deviate from this policy would not be punished." Belgrade's ambiguous position left many Serbs wondering whether Belgrade supported or opposed the elections. Subsequent statements of government officials added to the confusion. They declared that those who join Kosovo's institutions and work in the interest of the Serb community would have the support of the Serbian government. Belgrade's officially ambiguous position encouraged the Kosovo Serbs to decide about participation on their own. A Kosovo Serb journalist noted that when "Belgrade does not say no, it means yes." A political analyst explained that Belgrade is not popular for hesitating to speak up its mind. "It is ambiguous only when it is not sure what position to take."

Second, Belgrade has decided to decrease its funds dedicated to Kosovo Serbs by reducing social assistance and salaries. This decision follows Belgrade's last year decision to suspend the "parallel" municipal administrations of municipalities with no substantial or no Serb population. Serbia has been heavily affected by the recent financial crisis and the government is cutting costs to decrease its budget deficit. Belgrade is also concerned that Serbian taxpayers may protest the endless subsidization of the Kosovo Serbs, especially when the funding allegedly does not reach those for whom it is destined and its distribution has serious transparency problems.

Third, almost three years after it severed its communication with Pristina, Belgrade has agreed to a direct dialogue with Kosovo's institutions, expected to begin in the spring, under a slogan of "engagement without recognition." Now that Belgrade intends to engage with Kosovo's institutions, the boycott of the very same institutions by Kosovo Serbs, especially by those living in the south, is impractical and ineffective, many Kosovo Serbs say.

Despite these major policy shifts, Serbian officials warn that Kosovo Serbs should have no illusion that Belgrade would support their participation in Kosovo's institutions before an overall agreement with Pristina is reached, which could take years, or, if past experience is any lesson, may not happen at all. Some Serbs supporting the elections explained that they don't doubt that Belgrade's efforts are well intentioned, but that Belgrade is severely limited in its ability to help the Serbs in the south. "You can't solve problems in a territory you don't control," a Serbs from the south noted.

Some Kosovo Serbs go further, arguing in favor of independent decision making, even at the expense of cutting off relations with Belgrade. "Kosovo Serbs should take their fate in their own hands." An interlocutor predicted that recent developments are inevitably leading in that direction: "Belgrade said no to the 2007 elections, some Serbs took part; Belgrade said no to the 2009 elections, more Serbs took part; Belgrade said no to the 2010 election, even more Serbs will take part." Some explained that Belgrade's "suggestions" would have been followed had it elaborated what conditions, technical or political, don't exist, and for whom, for Belgrade or for Kosovo Serbs, and how these conditions could be created short of reversing Kosovo's declaration of independence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions and recommendations for actions by Kosovo Serbs, Belgrade, and Pristina emerged from these discussions.

- *All Serb parliamentary parties should be included in the government:* All Kosovo Serb parliamentary parties should be offered the opportunity to become part of the government, dividing the two guaranteed ministries in proportion to the votes received in the elections. If some Serb parliamentary parties are excluded, the seeds for a prolonged intra-Serb confrontation will be planted, unless they voluntarily chose to remain in opposition. Though the Ahtisaari plan and Kosovo's constitution provide for automatic Serb inclusion in the government, allocating them two ministries, they do not elaborate on whether all Serb parties should be part of the government, perhaps because the issue was not foreseen at the time. But the concept of proportionality, applied in the allocation of the reserved seats, should also be applied in the allocation of the government positions.
- *Belgrade should support Kosovo Serb participation:* Now that Belgrade intends to engage directly with Kosovo's institutions, the boycott of the very same institutions by Kosovo Serbs, especially by those in the south, is impractical and ineffective. Belgrade should establish informal channels of communication and cooperation with the Kosovo Serb representatives in Kosovo's institutions. This communication should begin with meetings between Kosovo Serb members in Serbia's and Kosovo's parliaments and between representatives of political parties of Serbia and Serb political party representatives from Kosovo.
- *Belgrade should adjust its Kosovo strategy to the changing situations:* Belgrade should take into account the policy suggestions of the Kosovo Serbs when formulating its Kosovo policy. Though it does not support the political participation of the Serbs in Kosovo's institutions, Belgrade no longer sanctions those who vote, run for office, and join institutions. Belgrade has also agreed to a direct dialogue with Kosovo's institutions, expected to begin in the

spring, under a slogan of “engagement without recognition.” Many Kosovo Serbs recommend that Belgrade should support a similar approach—inclusion without recognition—for the Kosovo’s Serb inclusion in Kosovo’s institutions.

- *Election participation is a necessary but not sufficient step:* The elections participation is simply a necessary but not sufficient step to obtain the aspired accommodating status for the Serb community. The hardest and most complicated work begins after the elections. Subsequent steps are crucial and the Serb representatives need the support of the Serb population, Kosovo’s institutions, the international community, and Belgrade. Cooperation among Serb parliamentary parties is considered key achieving the Serb objectives.
- *Divisions within the Serb community should be bridged:* The growing differences between the Serbs in the south and those in the north could have major repercussions for the Serb community. The source of the disagreements is their conflicting visions regarding political participation. Serbs in the south support participation and those in the north oppose it. The Serb in the south are aware that divided they will have limited success in working with Kosovo’s bodies. A united Serb community would strengthen the bargaining power of the Serb representatives in the institutions.
- *Consolidate Serb municipal institutions and eliminate institutional duplication south of the Ibar River:* The Serb-majority municipalities are too small to have two pairs of local institutions. The relatively high participation of Serbs in local and parliamentary elections attests to the increasing level of legitimacy of the Kosovo elected local institutions and declining influence of the parallel institutions. But simply eliminating the parallel institutions is not recommended since they continue to play a role in providing assistance to the Serbs. A potential temporary solution is to replace the parallel institutions with offices staffed with unelected professionals who would be responsible for carrying out the services. The inclusion of the representatives of parallel institutions in the Kosovo local institutions was also suggested.
- *Albanian parties and officials should support the partial Serb integration:* Pristina support the Serb participation but voices within Kosovo’s Albanian political parties, which, fearing partition, oppose the integration of the southern Serbs for as long as the northern Serbs strengthen their own parallel system. This may delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Ahtisaari plan. Instead of undermining the integration of the Serbs in the south, the Albanian parties should support it and search for ways to find solutions for the north.
- *Establish a Serbian-language television channel:* Kosovo Serb parliamentary parties should immediately take up the issue of the public television channel guaranteed by the Ahtisaari plan. A public channel would not only provide a sorely needed source of information for the isolated Serb population but also consolidate the scattered Kosovo Serb media sector.
- *Promote the normalization of Albanian-Serb relations:* Albanian-Serb relations have improved substantially. Albanians have realized that Serbs, though opposing it, are not a threat to their independence, and Serbs have realized that an accommodating status for them could be found even in a Kosovo outside Serbia’s control. This status would primarily eliminate their isolation in enclaves and dependence on social assistance from Belgrade and Pristina. To further improve these relations, Kosovo Serbs should be offered employment opportunities in Kosovo’s public administration and public companies, such as airport and Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo.