

INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN MONTENEGRO

Second PER Roundtable Albanians in Montenegro

October 26-27, 2001
Ulcinj, Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

After several years of efforts PER was finally able to bring representatives of Montenegro's Albanian minority (presidents of the two ethnic Albanian political parties, their MPs and mayors) to the same table with leaders of that republic's ruling party and every other parliamentary party. The minister for ethnic minorities in the government of Montenegro, the adviser to the President of Montenegro for constitutional issues, as well as, diplomats from the US Embassy to Yugoslavia and the OSCE Mission to Yugoslavia also took part.

Montenegro's Albanians have been pressing for a constitutionally defined "special status," a concept that the Montenegrin majority has found unclear and unacceptable, invoking for them images of Kosovo and the agreement that was recently signed in Macedonia.

All of the participants were therefore pleased and surprised by the breakthrough at this roundtable. By asking the Albanians to make their requests specific and practical, and to defer a discussion of constitutional questions, we were able to reach a consensus among all of the participants on six specific Albanian proposals (the establishment of a maternity hospital in Ulcinj; giving Tuzi, a region of Podgorica with a predominantly Albanian population, the status of a separate municipality; opening a department for Albanian-language teachers at the University of Podgorica; recognition of diplomas issued for Albanian graduates in Tirana and Pristina; opening a border crossing close to Ulcinj; appointing ethnic Albanians as the chief of police in Ulcinj and as the head judge). A commission was appointed under the minister for ethnic and national communities of Montenegro to implement these recommendations. The commission included a deputy from each parliamentary party.

The commission met in Podgorica in January 2002 and approved the implementation of three points (the establishment of a maternity hospital in Ulcinj; opening a department for Albanian-language teachers at the University of Podgorica; and recognition of diplomas issued for Albanian graduates in Tirana and Pristina, they also added Tetovo). These points were submitted to the prime minister of Montenegro for approval and financing from the state budget.

PER continues to be in touch with the minister for ethnic minorities, relevant MP's, and OSCE on the next steps.

Participants in the Ulcinj Roundtable

Sanda Babić, Political and Legal Officer, EU Delegation to FRY
Mehmet Bardhi, President, Democratic League of Albanians in Montenegro
Razvigor Bazala, Public Diplomacy Officer, US Diplomatic Representation in Montenegro, FRY
Goran Danilović, Member, Parliament of Montenegro (Serbian People's Party)
Srdjan Darmanović, Director, Center for Democracy and Human Rights
Ferhat Dinosa, Member, Parliament of Montenegro (Democratic Alliance of Albanians)
Svetlana Djurdjević-Lukić, Representative in FRY, Project on Ethnic Relations
Alex Grigor'ev, Program Officer, Project on Ethnic Relations
Gëzim Hajdinaga, Minister for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National and Ethnic Communities of Montenegro
Skënder Hoxha, Mayor, City of Ulcinj
Dušan Janjić, Director, Forum for Ethnic Relations (Belgrade); Member, PER Council for Ethnic Accord
Allen Kassof, President, Project on Ethnic Relations
Izabela Kisić, Chief of the Cabinet of the Minister for Ethnic and National Communities of FRY
Dragan Koprivica, Spokesperson, Socialist People's Party; Member, Parliament of Montenegro
Leon Malazogu, Consultant, Project on Ethnic Relations
Fuad Nimani, President, Democratic Alliance of Albanians
Michael Robinson, Senior Political Adviser, OSCE Mission to FRY
Dejan Vučićević, Member of Parliament (People's Party)
Nebojša Vučinić, Professor, University of Podgorica
Miodrag Vuković, Adviser on Constitutional and Legal Issues to the President of Montenegro; Head, Parliamentary Group of the Democratic Party of Socialists, Parliament of Montenegro

Members of the Working Group

***(Met for its first session in January 2002 in Podgorica
at the Ministry for the Protection of Rights of Persons
Belonging to National and Ethnic Groups of Montenegro)***

Mehmet Bardhi, Member of Parliament (Democratic League of Albanians in Montenegro)
Goran Danilović, Member of Parliament (Serbian People's Party,)
Ferhat Dinosa, Member of Parliament (Democratic Alliance of Albanians)
Gëzim Hajdinaga, Minister for the Protection of Rights of Persons Belonging to National and Ethnic Groups, Government of Montenegro
Martin Ivezaj, Member of Parliament (Democratic Party of Socialists)
Dragan Koprivica, Member of Parliament (Socialist People's Party)
Džemalj Perović, representing the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro
Dejan Vučićević, Member of Parliament (People's Party)