

UNMIK



United Nations Mission in Kosovo

Division of Public Information

Media Monitoring

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17 December

Holkeri: There can be positive elements in the very first report (*Koha/Zëri*)

Koha Ditore and *Zëri* carry reports from a meeting that UNMIK chief Harri Holkeri had with a group of journalists and editors of Kosovan media yesterday in Prishtina.

Koha Ditore quotes Holkeri as saying that he believes that there are going to be positive statements about developments in Kosovo in the very first report that he will present before the UN in New York.

Koha Ditore added that Holkeri didn't provide any details, but mentioned that if progress is achieved in the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) then it could be a positive element to report in New York.

Zëri reports that SRS Holkeri will submit his first report before the UNSC in January next year. 'My responsibility is to submit a report before the UNSC every three months. My first report will take place in the end of January and I feel that in my first report there would be positive elements. If we achieve to show the achieved progress, then it is very important. We can do nothing within a single night,' Holkeri was quoted as saying.

He added that there is not enough time and that mid 2005 is after 18 months, therefore we need to invest lots of energy while the discussion about the competencies have ended. 'We are determined to work closely with the PISG. As you know we had endless discussions about the competencies, but this is over now. We should sit down and work together, thus in mid 2005 the UNSC can decide when the final status talks may begin,' he said.

Questioned whether Serbs will be included in the implementation of standards, Holkeri said that he expects their involvement. 'Unfortunately, we have such a political situation in Belgrade and they aren't cooperative. However, we will keep the doors open while the impact of Belgrade on the K-Serb political campus is very important. In the end of the day it is in the interest of the K-Serbs to be on board and I am sure they would do that,' said Holkeri.

‘If they refuse, we should find other ways of cooperation. It is in their interest. I think, it is more in their interest than in the interest of the K-Albanians,’ he added.

Holkeri further said that the dialogue should continue because it is one of the standards, while answering to the reporter’s conclusion that dialogue is stopped he said: ‘You need two sides to tango’.

According to him, the quarterly report before the UNSC is crucial. ‘I invite you to follow my reports before the UNSC and there you will find answers concerning progress in the fulfillment of standards and whether mid 2005 will be the time when the Kosovo final status would be addressed,’ said Holkeri.

Questioned about the preamble in the document ‘Standards for Kosovo’ and whether he found a common language with Kosovan leaders, Holkeri said that the preamble is already prepared with a new language in which is included the UNSC statement. ‘We hope to resolve this issue, because the preamble is necessary in that document. All 15 members of the UNSC supported that statement and this is an order for myself,’ Holkeri firmly said.

The reporters asked Holkeri further, who are the institutions that may say that Kosovan institutions have fulfilled the standards and the definition of the final status can start. ‘The decision will be taken by the UNSC, however this depends on how we will report. We will report only the facts and if there are enough facts, then the UNSC would take its decision,’ replied Holkeri.

‘I am eager to know how my first report before the UNSC will look. Are we able to present a few positive elements before the Security Council? I do not know yet, but the cynicism in this issue doesn’t help. Cynicism is the lowest intellectual level,’ said Holkeri and also added that the plan for the implementation of standards will be ready in January next year.

He reiterated that his mission is to become superfluous in Kosovo. ‘I am working in this direction and my UNMIK colleagues as well,’ he said.

Holkeri didn’t accept to comment the elections in Serbia. ‘I do not want to speculate, lets wait for December 28 and whatever the result is, we are determined to work with them, regardless of their options and people, because this is the art of politics,’ he said.

Questioned whether he would cooperate with Belgrade if there win people that are indicted by The Hague, Holkeri added that he doesn’t to speculate, however ‘if we speak frankly, I do not believe that there will be a complete break in the relations with Belgrade.’

‘I am realistic, pragmatic and optimistic,’ Holkeri answered to a question whether he is optimistic that standards will be fulfilled by the mid 2005.

‘I work in a pragmatic way. We are transparent as much as we can. We have nothing to hide and I believe that the same behavior will be also from your side, and from people in the streets,’ Holkeri said.

‘Kosovan leaders are also pragmatic. I do not know them for a long time, but they are working effectively with the media,’ concluded Holkeri.

Hoti: Standardization (Koha Ditore)

*In an opinion piece for **Koha Ditore**, Rexhepi Hoti, head of the government’s liaison office with UNMIK/SRSG, writes, ‘I believe that the local institutions still do not realize the importance of the issue of standards and their responsibility to lay the foundations of a modern state where Kosovan citizens can feel free and equal’.*

A lot has been said and written about standards for Kosovo so far, about their weight and their importance for Kosovo, region and elsewhere. Of course, the beginning of the work to implement them in practice is the biggest challenge for the PISG in Kosovo. There are many unclear things, dilemmas, and much ado about the way to reach the goal.

However just taking this path is a big success. But, it seems that our institutions are not aware enough, be it with a reason or without a reason, of the importance and relevance of this issue, and at the same time of the responsibilities they have for laying the foundations of a modern state where everybody feels free and equal.

It is understandable that once you start talking or writing in this way, almost idyllic, you can see a reflection of irony, doubt, in the faces of many, not to say contempt. It also reflects various unclear and worrisome things. Facing standards is a waking call for the society, especially for the educated part of it, even through irony. Since standards of the country are directly linked to all individuals of Kosovo, who will be the main players with their actions and their stances. I would even say that if their role is not bigger than the one of the institutions, at least it is equal.

When this is said, one needs to have in mind the circumstances in the country. It has now become clear that respecting property rights, free movement of people, goods and ideas, and interethnic tolerance will play a key role in achieving standards. This requires discipline from all the citizens.

It is understandable that respecting this currency requires the majority population in Kosovo to overcome the pain they experienced four years ago. The pain is still big and fresh. There are many cases, like the missing for example that aggravate the general situation in the country. But the future of Kosovo and making of the free and independent state of Kosovo justifies any pain for which this human and material sacrifice has been done.

Kosovo sacrificed for a bright future and for equality with others. Therefore standardization serves the purpose of that pain, of the future and the building of a safe and secure Kosovo, region and beyond.

One of the key factors to help raise awareness about standardization is the media, broadcast and print media. They need to treat standards properly and even be critical of institutions in charge of their implementation. They do not need to close their eyes when they see a lack of work, lack of discipline and lack of success at these institutions, be it local or international in Kosovo.

When we talk about this it is understandable that local institutions were often 'forgiven' by the media because of UNMIK. I think that this long honeymoon of the PISG is over and their promises should be looked at with more responsibility.

The coordination of institutions with the people would avoid many negative movements, which have already started all across the country; corruption, economic crime, extreme poverty, prostitution, illegal trafficking to name a few. With the politics exercised so far, the people of Kosovo have become very passive and we should not allow what is already happening in some neighboring countries.

You cannot only criticize the bureaucracy within UNMIK at a time when local bureaucracy is not transparent and continuously hides behind the responsibilities of UNMIK.

In the current circumstances the bureaucracy of the local institutions is a result of a lack of engagement and professionalism rather than of their being able to be bureaucratic. But this inability cannot last forever. It is also a standardization that needs to be built in accordance with values internationally recognized.

KTA Board corrects Lambsdorff's mistakes (*Koha Ditore & Zëri*)

Koha Ditore reports that after a five-hour meeting filled with tensions and clashes, the Managing Board of the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) has made it clear that all the enterprises of the first three rounds of privatization are socially owned and that they meet all the criteria to be sold.

The paper added that the decisions of the KTA Managing Board confirmed that the stopping of the process of privatization was unnecessary.

The KTA Board decided to ratify and sign the contracts for all the enterprises included in the first and second wave of tenders, besides enterprises, which will be re-tendered in the third wave of tenders since the first winning bidder withdrew the offer. The Board decided to review the sale of Plastika since there is a suspicion of misuse by the purchasers.

'We have dealt with all the enterprises and have voted for all of them. The contracts for four enterprises from the first wave will be ratified. We decided to sign the contracts for most of the enterprises included in the second wave whereas some of them will be re-tendered with the third wave,' the KTA Chairman was quoted as saying after the meeting.

Referring to their sources present in the meeting, *Koha Ditore* reports that the enterprises to be re-tendered in the third are the following: Farmakos, Hotel Metohia, Mladosti, Silcapori, and Kosova. The offers from the second winning bidders were considered as insufficient by the Board, the paper reports.

More specifically the Board decided to tender 19 companies (14 + 5) in the third wave of tenders as per the privatization plan and through spin-off method, the papers' sources informed.

The paper reports that Lambsdorff did not indicate a date of the announcement of the tender but said that this will happen in the near future.

Surprisingly, the KTA general manager did not vote in favour of any of the decisions taken by the KTA Board. The request for her discharge will be discussed in the next KTA Board meeting scheduled for 16 January, sources told the paper.

Due to major disagreements between K-Albanian and international Board members, the Board did not take a decision to change the operational policies, which includes also the case-by-case review of tendered enterprises. This issue will also be discussed in the next KTA Board meeting.

Referring to the same source, the paper further reports that the discussion about Hotel Adriatiku in Mitrovica lasted for about two hours. The Serb representative insisted that this is a joint-stock company but following rejections from K-Albanian members, KTA presented evidence that the shareholders had never paid the total amount of the money. 'The purchasers paid only 0.5% of the price, therefore they decided to sign the contract for Hotel Adriatiku,' the source is quoted as saying.

The paper further reports that Fucci is requested to present the changes in KTA's organization in written to the Board members prior to the next Board meeting.

Also UNMIK Legal Office is required to take a decision on the legality of some of Lambsdorff's decisions, reports *Koha Ditore*.

Zëri also reports that after a marathon meeting of the KTA Managing Board, the decision was made to resume the third round of privatization before New Year.

Under the headline 'Privatization continues with ratification of 17 enterprises', *Kosova Sot* reports that Lambsdorff stated that after a long meeting he achieved a result and privatization will continue. According to him the KTA Board voted for all enterprises of the three waves, and decided to ratify four contracts for the first wave of tenders.

Lambsdorff, the German that unblocked and blocked privatization (Koha Ditore)

Koha Ditore runs an article in its economy section saying that the head of EU Pillar, Nikolaus Lambsdorff himself, decided to suspend privatization, although a few of them can understand the reasons of this action. The paper mentions international sources as saying that 'his poor professional abilities' could be behind this decision. These reasons plus his personal interests prevail even now when he tries by all means to prove that his decisions were right.

Koha Ditore cites well-informed international sources, as they call them, saying that the chief of KTA is now worried about his career or rather about the renewal of his contract as head of the UNMIK Pillar 4.

‘His temporary contract expires at the end of this year, therefore he is trying to show he was right about suspending the privatization’.

According to these sources, Lambsdorff hopes that through not signing the selling contracts of three enterprises that do not meet the requirements for privatization, he wants to show the world that he was right when he suspended the privatization.

‘With this argument, the head of the KTA thinks he will renew his contract for some more months’, the same sources claim.

UNMIK Pillar 4 denies that he has a ‘probationary’ contract that expires at the end of this year.

‘He is nominated by Kofi Annan, as a deputy SRSG’, the spokesperson Monique de Groot said briefly.

The verification of the status of enterprises from the first three rounds showed the opposite of what he said, but it seems he did not like it, and instead of waiting for the verification to complete, the head of KTA invited journalists some ten days ago to crack the news that 20 out of 23 social enterprises tendered in the first two rounds of privatization had a clear property status and selling could be signed straight away.

While he was announcing this statement, the head of the KTA had a ‘memo’ on his table, which he covered with another white paper.

The announcement that 20 out of 23 enterprises were ready to get privatized was written in the ‘memo’ he had got from senior officials of KTA.

The problem is not about by which sources he uses to get informed, but it is the hurry of his and his subordinates to make public the results of a process that had not yet been concluded.

In an interview with the same paper in September, Lambsdorff used positive tones and called the process of privatization simple and well organized

But everything changed later when he ‘temporarily suspended privatization’ and some weeks ago he said the way privatization was running was not correct. ‘The KTA needs to make sure it controls all companies and that they sell a social owned company, not something else’, he said in an interview for the paper.

Kosovan members of the KTA Board, the Government of Kosovo and a part of the KTA contest the policy of hiring and nominating staff. They also oppose the procedure followed to hire Marie Fucci as a managing director of KTA.

The Albanian trio has said that she is an unacceptable candidate and that none of the Albanians has voted for her nomination. But, Lambsdorff responded to these accusations saying they do not like her just because she used to work in Belgrade in a World Bank mission.

Lambsdorff also made a mistake when he allowed KTA to be defended in a New York court by an American Lawyers' Company, in which the head of the KTA Legal Office had worked before coming to Kosovo.

The Kosovo Government had immediately identified Lambsdorff as the main hinderer of the privatization, and had even asked for his resignation. But due to some political calculations, they withdrew their request.

Lambsdorff personally does not feel guilty of the mistakes everybody is accusing him of.

Lambsdorff is said to descend from an aristocratic family. He really acts like a count in Kosovo. He does not ask anybody about his actions, and he never admits mistakes.

Ibrahim Rexhepi: Strategies for strategy (Koha Ditore)

Koha Ditore carries an opinion piece by Ibrahim Rexhepi who states that the strategy for mid-term economic development presented by the Kosovo Government suffers from a lack of data on the current state of affairs in Kosovo. The Statistical Office of Kosovo is still in a reviving mode, and the data offered are most of the time approximate or based on research data, writes Rexhepi.

'Since the day the strategy was promoted, the approaches of Government officials on crucial issues for Kosovo are scandalous. What will the GDP be by 2008? The document that carries the seal of the Kosovo Government, prepared by the Ministry of Trade and Industry says that the GDP will be 8.8 billion Euros. Thus each of 2 million and 660 thousand Kosovans by 2008 will have 3.3 thousand Euros from GDP. The harshest reactions came from MFE, who stated that such data are quite exaggerated.'

The work of MTI (ministry of Trade and Industry) in drafting this strategy is not a waste of time, says Rexhepi. 'However, a lot can be added to this document. The addition can be done through a public debate, but even in this phase we will face the lack of data based on scientific methodologies. They can come to different conclusions, but none of them will be sustainable,' concludes Rexhepi.

Çeku: We need funds to fulfill the KPC standard (Koha Ditore&Zëri)

Koha Ditore reports that after the meeting of the working group that looks into the possibility of financing the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in 2004, KPC Commander General Agim Çeku said that the KPC needed funds to fulfill the obligations deriving from 'Standards for Kosovo'.

'We are optimistic we will fulfill this standard, but for this we need support, funds and equipment,' Çeku was quoted as saying.

Zëri reports that the fulfillment of such standard does mean an increase of professionalism within the KPC. The paper further reports that the KPC has lots of projects but due to the lack of financial assets it risks to fail. The primary financial donor of the KPC, IOM has finished its activity, therefore all activities now depend on commitment of donors and of the Kosovo budget.

Koha Ditore quotes COMKFOR General Holger Kammerhoff as saying that the KPC must fulfill the standards required by the international community, and not to have other dreams and try to do things other than what is required from this organization.

‘It is a very clear message that the KPC is a civil emergency organization and if it has other dreams it is going to endanger the standard,’ added Kammerhoff.

‘We agreed that there is an urgent need for money in order to provide trainings for the KPC,’ **Zëri** quotes General Kammerhoff.

‘We knew that there was a donor conference about the KPC, which has failed and we are very disappointed. We hope that in the next meeting we will see more donor countries,’ he said.

Shala: Plans and funds (Zëri)

Zëri editor Blerim Shala comments on the ‘failed’ donor meeting for the KPC, and yesterday’s ‘gloomy’ meeting of the Working Group for the development of the KPC.

This is about funds. And it is always better to talk about them in the beginning, than later on. In reality, if a plan is not accompanied with a financial package for its implementation then it is all useless.

This is the impression from the recent situation surrounding the Kosovo Protection Corps, or the Eighth Standard in the plan of Standards for Kosovo.

A failed donor meeting on Monday and a gloomy meeting of the Working Group for the development of the KPC, a day later, have led to a point where concern and suspicion accompanied the initial phase of the fulfillment of this standard, which is first of all based on the professionalism and multiethnic composition of KPC.

After the withdrawal of IOM, the financing of the KPC depends on the budget of Kosovo, the help of donors and the eventual support of western governments. It is especially important to ensure the financial, professional (trainings, and experts from these countries) and political support of these five leading western countries. We are certainly going to need their support in the fulfillment of other standards, too, especially with the standard for the rule of law, IDP returns and in creating better relations between the majority and minority communities.

The Standard of the KPC is very sensitive, therefore, it would be very important to ensure western support in compiling the plan for the development of KPC.

A Freud in KFOR (Kosova Sot)

Kosova Sot carries a front-page editorial about yesterday’s COMKFOR statement that the KPC is an emergency organization.

Amongst attractive statements of yesterday was one of the COMKFOR in Kosovo, General Holger Kammerhoff. By stressing the refrain that the Kosovo Protection Corps should be only a civil organisation and nothing more, COMKFOR brought to attention ‘the KPC dreams’, too. By implicating the KPC dream to become Kosovo’s

army, Kammerhoff said that 'if there are other dreams of KPC, this will endanger the standard on KPC'. If Freud were alive he would probably laugh with this kind of interpretation of the biggest dream in Kosovo, after the declaration of a state. But, a German military, by taking the position of a Freudist, who can analyze the frustrations of KPC members, which are a result of the impossibility to become the Kosovo army in a short period of time, made his conclusion: A critical synthesis with little threatening tones. We all know that KPC is a civil organization, but we all know that in the future it will be the real Protection Corps of Kosovo. That kind of stance expressed by General Kammerhoff does not rise optimism, but it causes negative reactions amongst the public, so KFOR Commander should be more careful in his statements and not to repeat the example of his predecessor Mini, who produced many surprises at the end of his mission. Particularly in this phase the public assessment on KPC should be correct and fair.

First, there is nothing bad if KPC continues to become more professional in close co-operation with KFOR in order to become a protection well trained force. Secondly, the KPC is KLA's successor and the dominant majority of its members keep the dream to become the country's army. Thirdly, Kosovo as a new state in the Balkans should have its military force. When this will happen it remains to be seen, but it is certain that the KPC will be transferred into an army. So, the right of KPC members to dream is legitimate. The exercising of this right cannot be qualified as a threat to standards, on the contrary through this dream, the KPC members and all its supporters have an inspiration and stronger motivation to meet the standards in Holkeri's plan.

Minister Krasniqi: UNMIK legitimizes parallel structures in the north (Zëri)

Zëri reports that Public Services Minister Jakup Krasniqi, Social Work and Welfare Minister Ahmet Isufi and OSCE official Carsten Weber have attended the debate 'How damaging are parallel structures' organized by the club of journalists in Gjilan.

Krasniqi said that the remains of the previous regime still have roots in Kosovo and he added that they were illegal and that no one could legitimize them. Krasniqi said that the parallel structures were supported by a part of the international administration, while Serbia has constantly called on Kosovo Serbs to boycott Kosovan institutions.

Krasniqi said, it was a major mistake to compare the parallel authorities of Albanians from the 90's with the current Serb parallel institutions, 'because Albanians organized their parallel structures due to Belgrade's oppressing regime, whereas the same cannot be said for Serbs now, because they have the opportunity to integrate in Kosovan institutions, but unfortunately there are still some people who don't want to accept the new reality'.

'There are two authorities co-existing on the other side of the Ibër, the authority of Serbia and the authority of UNMIK, and the latter basically legitimizes the former, because the passports of a foreign country are sometimes issued in this part of Kosovo,' Krasniqi was quoted as saying. 'The new state of Kosovo is not going to build a wall with Serbia, and the latter should not keep hostage positive processes.'

Ahmet Isufi, minister of Work and Social Welfare in the Kosovo Government, said that no one has the right to set up mechanisms that block the development of Kosovo.

Isufi also said that Kosovans are told not to be involved in criminal activities, and there are calls for freedom of movement and integration of minorities, all this at a time when the Kosovo Government lacks the instruments to implement such requests. 'A half-government cannot implement these responsibilities, therefore, we need to have a complete government, if we intend to provide a free Kosovo to our citizens. The current situation is being neglected, and at the same time it is meaningless that the Prime Minister of Kosovo is attacked in his own territory of governance, whereas at the same time Nebojsa Covic comes and goes freely without any problem whatsoever,' he added.

Commenting on a recent report on parallel structures, OSCE official Carsten Weber, was quoted as saying, 'We wanted to say that parallel structures exist and that their long-term existence is not going to be tolerated'.