

**KOSOVO:  
ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS  
OCTOBER 2004**

Report  
by  
Björg Hope Galtung

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Series editor: Siri Skåre

Series consultants: Hege Mørk, Gry Kval, Christian Boe Astrup

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## **Preface**

Council of Europe (CoE) by the Ministers' Deputies on 5 May 2004, accepted the invitation of Harri Holkeri, then Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) of the United Nations, to organise the international observation of the election process, intended to elect representatives to the Kosovo Assembly, as called for in United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Regulation 2004/12.

The Council of Europe Election Observation Mission IV (CEEOM IV) was established accordingly, placed under the authority of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Members of the Core Team arrived in Pristina during July and the HQ of CEEOM IV opened on 15 July 2004.

14 Long Term Observers (LTOs), seconded by member and observer States of the CoE, as well as CoE staff, mostly persons with earlier relevant experience, arrived by 5 August, and followed a two-day training session on electoral issues, security, health problems, communications etc. on 6-7 August. This was organised by the Core Team in co-operation with speakers from Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE,) Kosovo Force (KFOR) and other relevant bodies. All members of the Core Team and the LTOs were also required to sign a code of conduct which stipulated a number of standards to be observed, drawn up as a result of the experience of earlier missions.

One Norwegian LTO, Bjørg Hope Galtung, was recruited to the CEEOM IV by NORDEM. Additionally NORDEM recruited the following Norwegian Short Term Observers (STOs), Kari Osland and Bjørn Vagle. The STOs were respectively deployed to Nis in Serbia, and Malisheve district in Prizren region in Kosovo, while the LTO was deployed to GjilanGnjilane region.

The information in this report is based on the CEEOM IV's Preliminary report on the Kosovo Assembly Elections 2004 and on the observations of the Norwegian observers. All the opinions in the report is the author's responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights.

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights / NORDEM  
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## Introduction

Since 10 June 1999, Kosovo has been under United Nations (UN) administration through the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) which was set up under the UN Secretary Council Resolution 1244/99. UNMIK is headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), at present Mr. Søren Jessen Petersen from Denmark.

UNMIK should “*provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy, (...) and which will provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions*”.<sup>1</sup>

To meet such responsibilities the Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS) was set up in February 2000 under UNMIK Regulation 2000/1. For the purposes of developing meaningful self-government in Kosovo pending a final settlement and establishing provisional institutions of self-government in the legislative, executive and judicial fields through the participation of the people of Kosovo in free and fair elections, JIAS was succeeded by Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) under the Constitutional Framework formed by the UNMIK Regulation 2001/9 of 15 May 2001.

Rather than a joint structure, this regulation outlines the divisions of powers between the SRSG (reserved powers<sup>2</sup>) and the PISG (transferred powers<sup>3</sup>). The PISG was established by people’s participation through elections which were held 17 November 2001.

Kosovo is according to the Regulation 2001/9 an “*entity under interim international administration which, with its people, has unique historical, legal, cultural and linguistic attributes*”.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore it is said that Kosovo “*shall be governed democratically through legislative, executive and judicial bodies and institutions in accordance with the Constitutional Framework and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99*”.<sup>5</sup>

The highest representative and legislative PISG is the Assembly of Kosovo. The other institutions are: the President of Kosovo, the Government, the Courts and other bodies set forth in the Constitutional Framework.

The total number of seats in the Assembly is 120 of which 100 hundred are to be distributed amongst the political entities in proportion to the number of valid votes received by them in the election to the Assembly.

Another 20 seats are reserved for additional representation of non-Kosovo Albanian political entities.

On 23 October, the Kosovars went to the polls to elect the Assembly of Kosovo, for a second term of office. These elections had a particular significance, both for the

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<sup>1</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1244: p.3

<sup>2</sup> UNMIK Regulation 2001/9, Chapter 5

<sup>3</sup> UNMIK Regulation 2001/9, Chapter 8

<sup>4</sup> UNMIK Regulation 2001/9, Chapter 1

<sup>5</sup> UNMIK Regulation 2001/9, Chapter 1

population of Kosovo and for the international community, as the PISG, which will emerge as a result, are expected to participate in the negotiations concerning the future status of Kosovo, possibly to commence in mid-2005. The new members of the assembly will have more responsibilities than their predecessors as the UNMIK transfers more unreserved competencies to the PISG.

This was the fourth election in Kosovo since 1999 but the first partly organized by Kosovar institutions. The OSCE retained control over finalizing voter lists, setting the number and location of polling stations (1622), organizing the mail-in voting and out-of-Kosovo polling stations and financing the election.

CoE was asked by the SRSG to accept the responsibility for international observation of the electoral process, culminating in recommendations directly to the SRSG regarding the certification of the registration process and of the election process.

The following processes were to be observed: Claims period, registration and updating of the Voters List, (VL) the regulatory framework, electoral campaign, Election Day and the count and results centre.

A Core Team was established and as mentioned in preface, 14 LTOs arrived in Pristina by 5 August.

On 9 August the LTOs were deployed in seven teams of two to their respective areas of responsibility (AoR) – Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Pejë/Pec.

LTOs were required to send weekly reports to CEEOM IV HQ and attend fortnightly meetings for additional election-related briefings and to discuss their observation findings. Preparation of introduction packages and briefings for the expected STOs were included in LTOs' responsibilities.

120 STOs from the CoE's member states as well as the Secretariat in Strasbourg and parliamentarians from European Union (EU) joined CEEOM IV by 18 October 2004.

Visibility for the mission was also ensured, coinciding with the deployment of the LTO's to the regions. Arrangements were made for the Head of Mission (HoM) Mr. Andrej Tehov to meet journalists from the media in Kosovo. LTOs were also permitted to give short interviews after their training course. As far as the team could assess, the coverage was extensive, both in the press and on local TV.

## Political background

After the parliamentary election on 17 November 2001, no party got majority. Out of a voter turnout of 64 % the Assembly seats were divided between 15 parties with Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) being the largest party with 47 seats followed by Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) with 26 seats and Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) with 8 seats. The Koalicija Povratak (KP), a Kosovo Serb (K/S) coalition party, got 12 seats and 10 seats set a-side. In addition to these 10 seats set a-side, four were set

a-side for the Kosovo Romas, Ashkalis and Egyptians, three for Bosniacs, two for Kosovo Turks and one for the Goranis.

Discussions about the division of power between the 3 main parties LDK, PDK and AAK seriously delayed the signing of an agreement, however, by the end of February 2002, the agreement on the President and the Government of Kosovo was finally signed.

During the three years rule of this coalition there has been no opposition in the parliament and the expectation from the population and accomplishment of the priorities have hardly been fulfilled. The present formula of “co-governance” (LDK, PDK and AAK) is considered as outdated and many stress the need for a strong opposition.

Following the major disturbances of mid-March of this year, the security situation throughout Kosovo has gradually improved and at present could be described as relatively stable and calm. Kosovo wide about 4100 K/S fled their homes during the incidents in March. 19 people were killed of which 11 were Kosovo Albanians (K/A) and 8 Kosovo Serbs (K/S). Approx 950 people were injured. An estimated total of 935 houses, apartments and public buildings - including a number of churches were destroyed or damaged.

The global damage amount was 12, 5 million Euros (churches and monasteries not included).

The overall situation in Gjilan/Gnjilane region had less damage during the March events than the rest of Kosovo, but these incidents have never the less shown that violence can easily flare up. Kosovo Force (KFOR), UNMIK Police and Kosovo Protection Corps (KPS) are actively involved in strengthening the security situation.

As a result of the efforts of the PISG, some progress to repair the material damages has been achieved. A sum of 4.5 million Euros has been earmarked for reconstruction.

Several weeks before the elections, the current state of Kosovo society as a whole could be summarised as one of increasing dissatisfaction and frustration of all its constituent parts – the K/As, the K/Ss and the other minority populations.

Most K/A leaders consider the current policies of the international community in the territory as contributing to the deteriorating economic and social conditions. Likewise, some of them tend to regard the principle of “standards before status” formulated by the international community as a convenient instrument for postponement of the unresolved issue of “final” status. The international community, originally seen as the arbiters of peace, stability and security and the harbingers of the way forward, is now more associated by the Kosovars with the maintenance of the status quo and lack of clarity over the future status.

These views seem to have wide support among the majority population, which besides the general economic difficulties, is faced with dwindling remittances from the diasporas (a traditional source of funds) and growing donor fatigue.

However, many Kosovo Albanian politicians appear to have also gradually understood that the March events, and – not less important – their apparent reluctance to accept responsibility for not doing enough to prevent them, may have seriously affected their reputation and, potentially, the existing international support for their proposals for Kosovo’s political future

The general feeling of discontent with the performance of the current dominant K/A political parties (LDK, PDK and AAK) has also apparently inspired the formation of new political entities, such as ORA and Democratic Alternative of Kosovo, (ADK), which have been certified for participation in the elections.

However, many of the root causes, which gave rise to the March events, are largely still present.

## **Political parties running for the 2004 parliamentary elections:**

For the 2004 parliamentary elections the Central Election Commission (CEC) certified 32 political entities. In addition a K/S list, List Kosovo and Metohija, was launched shortly before the election by the K/S leader Oliver Ivanovic and certified by the CEC. In total 33 political entities are competing for the 120 seats in the parliament. 20 of these seats are set aside seats for minorities.

The most important parties are:

### **Democratic League of Kosovo led by Dr. Ibrahim Rugova.**

The LDK cites democratic institution building, and the creation of an open and liberal society based on the rule of law and respect for minority rights as its priorities at the Kosovo-wide level. In particular, it supports measures to guarantee security for all groups in society, K/A as well as non K/A, a programme of privatisation and economic reforms, and a range of social measures, particularly in the fields of health and education. Like nearly all the K/A parties, it continues to press for full independence for Kosovo. LDK aims at a peaceful and patient transition towards independence, peaceful resistance to Belgrade and at the same time guaranteeing independence. LDK stresses the importance of the 2004 elections where the deputies elected will draft the constitution.

#### **Slogan: Freedom, Democracy and Independence**

According to opponents, LDK representatives lack the dynamism and professionalism to be competitive in a political world just being able to organize big gatherings where monologues are held in front of the audience.

### **Democratic Party of Kosovo led by Hashim Thaci:**

The PDK with its roots in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is also committed to “freedom, independence and democracy” and to “ethnic tolerance and integration in Europe”. It promises to solve the problems for the people of Kosovo. The leader, Hashim Thaci, does not support the holding of an international conference on Kosovo. According to him the final status should be determined through a referendum of the citizens of Kosovo. Only by getting the independence, Kosovo can improve its economic conditions. The party underlines the importance of education and economy as well as the importance of law and order where all citizens are equal and where no one is above the law. Strict measurements against corruption and organized crime are important.

PDK enjoys quite some popularity in rural areas.

#### **Slogan: Jobs, Status and Dignity**

### Alliance for the future of Kosovo led by Ramush Haradinaj:

The general aim is described as normalising every citizen's life. The AAK sees politics as a grass-roots exercise. Because society is made up of smaller units, Kosovo will only advance as a whole if people first become actively engaged in political and public affairs at the individual, family and community levels.

The independence and the creation of a sovereign state should be established in a democratic and peaceful way. However, if that does not work, the option of violence is not excluded. There are considerable achievements concerning the standards to be fulfilled by mid 2005, and afterwards a referendum should be organised concerning the independence.

AAK supports a quick process of privatisation in a legal way and to clarify the issue of property in a transparent way. The party stresses the creation of a professional civil administration separated from political interests.

### ORA led by Veton Surroi:

The political entity is launched by publisher Veton Surroi. The party hopes for the support of disaffected citizens, and that it will attract considerable numbers of voters who are tired of traditional party politics in Kosovo. Mr. Veton Surroi has the support of the International Community (IC) and is the owner of a Kosovo-wide newspaper (Koha Ditore) and TV (KTV).

He has been quite critical to President Rugova's policies and officials from LDK view him as a pro-Serb element, a Yugo-nostalgic and a man who is attempting to integrate Kosovo and Serbia. Surroi has also been critical to UNMIK and the PISG. Contrary to other political parties, his first priority is not independence for Kosovo but the improvement of daily life for all the Kosovars.

As he has the most European oriented approach, his party has a strategy for integration of Kosovo into the Euro-Atlantic structures as well as increasing cooperation with neighbouring countries.

The party promises to strengthen the positions of minorities. Introduction of IT in all aspects of society is a main issue as well as introducing a new policy concerning the power supply system.

### Democratic Alternative of Kosovo (ADK) led by Edita Tahiri:

Edita Tahiri left LDK this spring and established her own party ADK. Being the only female political leader, she has been regarded as a mentor for women in politics in Kosovo.

Mainly the same program as the other parties but her main issues have been attacks directed against LDK.

Slogan: **Engagement for a successful state.**

## K/S lists:

Citizens' Initiative of Serbia led by Slavisa Petkovic

List Kosovo and Metohija launched by K/S moderate leader Oliver Ivanovic

The final signals from Belgrade concerning the K/S participation in the polling process came very late. The general expectations were that the parliamentary elections would be boycotted by the K/S. This time by the particularity that the President Mr. Tadic told the K/S to vote, and that MPs would be withdrawn from the Kosovo Assembly within 90 days if K/S would not have been granted the necessary institutional protection whereas the Premier Mr. Kostunica said that the present conditions according to the government do not allow the participation in the political process. This divided attitude increased the general confusion among the K/S.

The K/S community was urged by the International Community (IC) to cast their ballots in order to protect their rights and to play a role in the future of Kosovo.

During the observation period the team met with the local chairpersons of the main parties in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Ferizaj/Urosevac. A few of them were quite interesting to listen to but in general their information about their respective parties and programs was quite vague and none of the parties had specific issues for their region.

## The Legislative Framework

According to UNMIK Regulation 2001/9 "*Kosovo shall, for the purpose of election of the Assembly, be considered a single, multi-member electoral district.*"<sup>6</sup>

For the 2004 parliamentary election three new Regulations have been promulgated by the SRSG. Those are UNMIK Regulation no.2004/12 of 5 May 2004 on the Elections of the Assembly of Kosovo which contains provisions governing most aspects of the 2004 election process. This Regulation is in accordance with the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government (Regulation no.2001/9) and is establishing the basic rules governing the conduct of elections for the Assembly of Kosovo.

The two other regulations are UNMIK Regulation no.2004/9 on the Central Election Commission and UNMIK Regulation no.2004/11 on the Registration and Operation of Political Parties in Kosovo.

The different chapters in Regulation no.2004/9 include distribution of seats,<sup>7</sup> voter eligibility and voters' list.

A person is eligible to vote in an election to the Assembly if he/she is 18 years of age on the day of election and is registered in the Municipal Civil Registry Centre in his/her municipality of residence. Persons living outside Kosovo and who have left Kosovo on

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<sup>6</sup> UNMIK Regulation 2001/9 Chapter 9

<sup>7</sup> See Section "Introduction"

or after 1 January 1998 and meet the criteria in UNMIK Regulation no. 2000/13 on the Central Civil Registry are also eligible to vote.

An eligible voter who is temporarily residing outside of or displaced from Kosovo, is entitled to cast a ballot in the election to the Assembly through a by-mail voting programme if she/he has successfully applied for a by-mail ballot in accordance with procedures and the deadline of 8 September. The applicants will receive the voting kit containing everything needed to cast the ballot.

Polling Centres opened in Serbia proper and Montenegro on 23 October to enable eligible people to participate in the election to cast their ballot in person. All these ballots were conditional.

The Voters List which shall list all eligible voters who are registered in the Central Civil Registry and who have successfully applied for by-mail ballot from abroad, is maintained by the Central Election Commission (CEC).

Furthermore the chapters in Regulation no. 2004/9 deals with political entity certification, candidate lists, incl. guarantees for balanced gender representation, candidate eligibility,<sup>8</sup> campaign spending and financial disclosures, campaign activities, election observers, election complaints and appeals and voter information. It also defines the campaign period.

There is a gender requirement that says that *“of the first 67 % of candidates on a candidate list, at least 33 % shall be male and at least 33 % female with one candidate from each gender included at least once in each group of three candidates, counting from the first candidate on the list”*.<sup>9</sup>

The Regulation defines who are allowed to observe the process in the polling stations. In principle the Election Day processes and procedures are open to certified political entities, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and governmental and inter-governmental organizations provided that they are accredited for that purpose by the CEC.

## The Electoral Administration

The Central Election Commission (CEC) established by UNMIK Regulation no.2004/9 is responsible for the conduct of elections in Kosovo. It has an independent status, under international control. The Commission is chaired by the Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMiK), Ambassador Pascal Fieschi. The role of the CEC is to regulate the electoral process through the adoption of Electoral Rules (15) and supervise all aspects of the process to ensure that the election meets international standards.

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<sup>8</sup> See Section "Candidate Registration"

<sup>9</sup> UNMIK Regulation no.2004/12 chapter 5, section 21

The CEC is composed by representatives from the three strongest political entities representing the K/A community (3), from the K/S (1), from the Turkish (1), the Bosniak and Gorani communities (1) and the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community (1) as well as from two local NGOs related to the field of human rights and to people with physical and mental disabilities and nominated by the Presidency of the Kosovo Assembly (2). Two more seats are reserved for internationals appointed by the SRSG.

Decisions should be reached by consensus, otherwise the Chair decides on his/her own.

The CEC has responsibility for electoral rules, the voters' list, certification of political entities and candidates, ballots, appointing members of Municipal Election Commissions, approving polling station committees, accreditation of observers, voter awareness, publishing of election results, as well as research in relation to the electoral system and regulating coverage by news media.

By 21 October 2004 the CEC adopted 15 Electoral Rules:

1/2004 Code of Conduct for Political Entities & their Supporters & Candidates

2/2004 Certification of Political Entities

3/2004 By Mail Voting

4/2004 Candidate Certification

5/2004 Political Entity Mailboxes

6/2004 Electoral Process Observers

7/2004 Municipal Election Commissions

8/2004 Campaign Spending Limit and Financial Disclosure

9/2004 Appointment of Polling Station Committees

10/2004 Media during the Electoral Campaign

11/2004 Challenge and Confirmation Period

12/2004 Notification of Political Events

13/2004 Polling and Counting inside Polling stations

14/2004 Special Needs Voting

15/2004 Count and Results Centre

Compared with election management and practice of the three previous elections, the voter process is conducted by a new local election administration body, the Central Election Commission Secretariat (CECS). The CECS is an entirely technical organization with a non-political mandate established by UNMIK Administrative Direction 2003/28 and funded by the Kosovo Consolidated Budget.

It is responsible for field co-ordination and planning; the observer programme; public information; production of ballots and Election Day material. It also prepares proposals for certification of political entities and candidates. It is multi-ethnic in composition, headed by Adnan Merovci, a K/A. His Deputy is Mr Bogoljub Stalesovic, a K/S.

Mr. Adnan Merovci visited one of the mutual meetings between the core group and LTOs and explained in detail about the responsibilities of the CECS.

A Municipal Election Commission (MEC) is established by the CEC for each municipality (30) for each election. The number of members of each MEC is determined by the CEC taking into account the population of the municipality, the number of polling stations to be established and the physical area of the municipality. In the seven municipalities in Gjilan/Gnjilane region it differed from three to five.

The members of a MEC are composed of employees of the Municipal Administration nominated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in each municipality. Each MEC shall administer the election within its municipality ensuring legality, legitimacy and efficiency of the electoral process. The MEC is chaired and co-ordinated by a Municipal Election Commission Executive Officer (MEO) employed by the CEC. The Commission receives support from Municipal Assemblies (MA) for logistics, staffing at the Polling Centres and transport. MECs are responsible for providing information to voters and political entities about their rights and obligations. Prior to the election, they also appoint and train Polling Station Committee (PSC) members and assist in technical arrangements at polling stations. All the PSC members (approx 7000) have to be approved by the CEC.

The number of Polling Stations (PS) in the seven municipalities in Gjilan/Gnjilane region was as follows:

Novo Bërdë/Novo Brdo	4
Viti/Vitina	49
Kaçanik/Kacanik	35
Kamenicë/Kamrnica	43
Gjilan/Gnjilane	96
Ferizaj/Urosevac	80
Strpce/Stërpçë	14

Compared to the municipal election in 2002 the numbers of PSs have been reduced this year due to the increased allowed number of voters at each PS. (700 in 2002, 1000 in 2004.)

## Voter and Civic Education

CEC by CECS developed and conducted a public information campaign both for in-Kosovo and out-of-Kosovo voters starting on 28 June 2004. Material suitable for transmission by radio and television informing the public on the electoral process in Kosovo was produced. All radio and television broadcasters were to transmit informational material provided to them by the CEC free of charge at the times and in the manner specified by CEC.

Tri-lingual Kosovo Election Websites where the voters could search for information, aimed at answering the most common questions related to voting inside of Kosovo for the coming election. The voter could find the information regarding voter eligibility, the need of being registered in the Municipal Civil Registry Centre (MCRC), voting location in the voter's municipality, how to change polling station if the voter had moved residence and if the voter was uncomfortable with his/her assigned PS due to concerns regarding freedom of movement, a long distance to the PS, data base error regarding allocation to more than one Polling Centre etc.

In addition to the websites any voter had the possibilities to visit the MEO in his/her respective municipality and address the same questions there.

Voters had to be aware of the deadline of 6 August for registration in the MCRC to be included in the Voters List.

Relevant material was available in at least three languages. Campaign monitoring was carried out, to ensure the accuracy of the transmitted information and the effectiveness of the campaign. Since the beginning of the publicity campaign, there had been near 10,000 individual hits from 53 countries on relevant websites.

The Voter Services were followed by the Challenge and Confirmation Period (CCP) which lasted from 30 August till 10 September. During these days voters were able to challenge the Voters List on omissions or inaccuracies and in addition check their own details and raise objections to entries. The objections were to be considered subsequently through an appeal procedure to ECAC.

Within the team's region close to 900 voters showed up in the MEOs' offices in the seven municipalities to challenge the Voters List. In Strpce/Stërpcë the chairperson of PDK found 17 dead persons' names in the Voters List and objections were raised by written appeals. In Ferizaj/Urosevac 18 names were not in the list. These names were added and the voters would have to vote conditionally on Election Day. In Viti/Vitina 8 persons wanted to be allocated to another PS. Otherwise only five additional challenges were raised. The CCP was considered very quiet.

During the CCP the Team was asked by CoE to knock on the doors of minority houses in the region –both in urban and rural areas- to ask for names, date of birth and ID numbers of eligible voters. The purpose was for CoE to check if these persons –mostly K/S- were on the Voters List. In total the team checked about 80 names against the Voters List. Nobody was missing.

After the CCP people still showed up at the MEOs' offices to check which polling station they were allocated to.

## Voter Registration

The UNMIK Central Civil Registry started in 2000 for the first Municipal Elections but at the time remained incomplete and controversial because there were quite a lot of inaccuracies and omissions. People wanting to register had problems with providing

documents as proof of their identity even if family and neighbours could confirm the applicant's identity. Many of them had lost all their papers during the war in 1999.

However, since 2000 it has been progressively improved and recent screening has shown it to be highly accurate, (200 mistakes out of a sample of 130,000 names.) However, since civil registration is not mandatory, the registry is considered by those officials responsible for it, to cover only 80% of the population. Clearly more accuracy could be obtained through a new census, the last more or less reliable one having been undertaken in 1981.

All voters who were registered on the civil registry during previous elections and those who registered since the 2002 Municipal Elections received polling station allocations automatically. Civil registrants wishing to amend their civil registry details might do so at the Municipal Civil Records Centre (MCRC). Further assistance could be gained through contact with the MEO in different localities.

## Candidate registration

The candidates for the assembly election appeared on "closed" lists of the political entities. This meant that the choice of persons and their place on the lists had been selected by the respective entities.

For LDK as the biggest party, the regional branches of the party all over Kosovo had proposed candidates before the list was decided and later on, the leadership and the General Committee of the party made conclusions about the list. Each municipal branch is represented in the General Committee. This procedure was more or less the same for all the parties we visited.

The names of the candidates did not appear on the ballot papers. However, they were displayed at the polling stations on Election Day.

Quite a lot of people the team met were dissatisfied with the closed list. They wanted to know who the candidates were and vote for persons, not a party. Until Election Day they did not know the candidates' names except for the top positions. As a result of the closed lists, voters voted for the top candidates Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, Hashim Thaci, Ramush Haradinaj and Veton Surroi without emphasizing the different parties' programs. In some villages the team was told that the population would not vote at all because of the closed list.

Also politicians from different parties in the team's region (except LDK) uttered their dissatisfaction with the closed list when discussing this issue with them.

According to a special gender requirement, a third of the candidates must be women; otherwise political entities would be disqualified by CEC.

Candidates were required to complete a personal income and assets statement which should include among other things current personal income and sources of income, profit from property, contributions, cash, bank accounts, shares etc.

Candidates must be registered voters, over 18 years of age, must not be deprived of their legal capacity or under indictment by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the candidate cannot appear on more than one political entity, and must not be a member of an electoral body nor a member of Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), Kosovo Police Service (KPS) or the Armed Forces.

By 24 August, the 32 political entities certified by 4 August had submitted their lists of candidates. CEC made a thorough verification of eligibility and accepted approx. 1300.

Some candidates were rejected, including notably seven of the 14 candidates of the Citizens' Initiative of Serbia, either for failure to register with the civil registry or failure to submit a financial disclosure form.

## The Election campaign

The Election campaign started on 22 September, one month before the Election Day. Throughout Kosovo except for the Serb dominated areas, more than thousand meetings and rallies took place. The parties organized their meetings in places allowed according to the electoral rules issued by CEC. Campaigning was prohibited during 24 hours before Election Day.

In Gjilan/Gnjilane region approx. 260 rallies were organized by mainly the biggest parties. The team attended as many as possible but because of restrictions on traveling after dark, the team missed quite a lot of the meetings.

No tense situations occurred during these four weeks and the public/audiences behaved extremely well. In most cases KFOR, CIVPOL and KPS (Kosovo Police Service) were present near the places where the parties were campaigning.

Quite some enthusiasm was shown at the rallies of LDK, PDK and ORA but in general the audiences cheered politely after delivered speeches.

For LDK's biggest rallies in the teams's AoR a famous singer supporting this party, Adelina Ismajli, was cheered much more intensively than the speakers -even after president Ibrahim Rugova's speech.

In general it can be said that most party programs were almost identical. The campaigns were remarkable for their vagueness, poor vision and lack of concrete information.

Most of the parties conducted a modern campaign close to the electorate, getting in contact with every level and every association of the Kosovo society.

As expected the K/A political parties – both the traditional and the newly-formed – included in their electoral campaigns demands for further transfer of competencies. They stressed the importance of external relations, including states and international institutions and secondly to get the authority to administer public, state and socially owned property.

Nearly all parties offered independence.

They furthermore stressed:

- the reinforcement of the economy based on free market economy
- need of investment in private businesses
- importance of education (presently in some schools they have up to three daily shifts)
- depoliticising the university
- improvement of the health system
- improvement of social assistance
- general pro American attitude (clearly shown by the presence of American flags during rallies)
- necessity of financial aid delivered by the international community.
- need to have access to the International Money Fund (IMF) and the World Bank which for the time being is impossible since Kosovo is not considered as a country.
- removal of any influence by Belgrade over the Kosovo Serbs
- issue of missing persons (3000)
- fighting corruption and criminality

## The Media

According Election Rule No.10 2004 from CEC, all radio and television broadcasters in Kosovo must transmit informational material provided to them by CEC free of charge.

All certified political entities should receive “fair and equitable” news coverage and access to political discussions and debates. Before the election campaign started, all the political entities got reserved time for presentation of their programs on one of the TV channels (RTK) by drawing lots.

The team watched some of the programs (without understanding the language) and was highly impressed by the polite and calm way the discussions/debates/information were performed. Reporters, moderators and studio audiences projected an image of impartiality.

Media professionals standing as candidates for the 2004 Kosovo Assembly were not to contribute or otherwise influence the material content of their respective media.(Example: Veton Surroi)

Broadcasters that aired paid political advertising were required to offer a minimum number of minutes of free air to all certified political entities during the campaign period. This did not include daily news coverage where reports from the different parties’ rallies/ meetings were shown.

If a private broadcaster offered free air time to any certified political entity, it had to offer free air time to all certified political entities. The price per second charged for paid political advertising spots should be no more than 60% of a broadcaster's normal prices for the same time slots in the 30 days prior to the campaign period.

During the 24 hours prior to the opening of the polling stations until the official close of the polling stations nobody was allowed to report on or otherwise publicize in the print, broadcast or electronic media any political campaign activity or any results of public opinion polls or researches of a similar kind.

As far as the team observed, the access to media for the political entities was according to electoral rule 10/2004. No violation occurred.

## Observation on the Polling Day

Polling Stations were opened for polling at 07:00. Pre-opening procedures included collecting sensitive material from the MEOs' offices early in the morning and then unpacking the materials and sealing the ballot boxes in presence of observers at the PS. The PSs closed at 20:00.

The LTO team visited six of the seven municipalities in the AoR during the Election Day. The Gjilan/Gnjilane region is widely spread and the possibility for visiting all municipalities was impossible. The team had also to be present at the LTO office in Gjilan/Gnjilane city when two duty drivers were bringing in forms from the STO teams to be transferred by Internet to CoE HQ by a hired IT clerk three times during the Election Day.

10 STO teams (two persons in each) were deployed to Gjilan/Gnjilane region. The municipalities of Ferizaj/Urosevac, Kaçanik/Kacanik and Gjilan/Gnjilane were observed by two teams each while Novo Bërdë/Novo Brdo, Viti/Vitina, Kamenicë/Kamenica and Strpce/Stërpcë were observed by one team each.

The team did not meet the STO teams during the day. Information about the observing was received early next morning at the debriefing session.

The LTO team observed the opening of a polling station in Gjilan/Gnjilane city as well as the closing at a K/S polling station in the municipality of Strpce/Stërpcë where only two ballots were cast. The ballots were quickly counted but finalizing the Reconciliation and Results Form took more than an hour even if the PSC did it according to the procedures. The team accompanied the transport of voting material to the MEO's office where it was received in an efficient way.

During the day the LTOs paid short visits to 15 polling stations, both K/A and K/S PSs. By observing and by talks for 10 to 15 minutes with the chairpersons of the PSCs and local observers from parties and NGOs, the team got the clear impression that the conduct of the voting process was performed in a professional way everywhere and according to the electoral procedures.

## **Election Day Report from STO Bjørn Vagle, Malishevë district in Prizren region.**

### **Relevant regional specific information**

Malishevë municipality was established as a municipal entity in 1986. In 1991, the municipality was abolished and the territory divided among neighboring municipalities. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) formally re-established the municipality in July 2000.

The municipality is largely rural with 43 settlements, totalling approximately 63.000 inhabitants. Malishevë town alone has roughly 3.500 inhabitants. The economy is based on agriculture, with the largest employer being the cooperative Mirusha with 30 employees (1000 prior to the war).

The population is 99% Kosovo Albanian. The Kosovo Serb population, previously numbering 700 all left in 1999, and none has so far returned.

Before the war, Malishevë was one of the most underdeveloped areas in Kosovo. During the war Malishevë became one of the largest centres of resistance against the Serbs. UCKs headquarters with the military/political leadership was throughout the war based just outside the tiny mountainous village of Novosellë. Due to this fact, Malishevë was subjected to massive destruction during the fighting. In the municipal elections in 2002 PDK received 51,8% of the votes, while LDK received 42,4%. The third largest party was the AAK which received 2,1%.

### **Preparations ahead of Election Day**

Election observation team 404 was comprised of Julia Szelivanov from Hungary and Bjørn Vagle from Norway. The team was deployed to Malishevë on the 21<sup>st</sup>, two days prior to election day. The first day passed by with the team getting acquainted with driver/interpreter and the area in close vicinity to Malishevë town. In the evening, it was arranged for a meeting with the president of the Municipal Assembly, Gani Krasniqi and his deputy, Ragip Begaj. The conversations were friendly, and centred on the inhabitants pride in respect to their resistance against the Serbs.

The second day was spent crisscrossing more or less the entire municipality. Among the 18 Polling Centres, we visited 13 in which we talked to various members of the different Polling Station Committees

### **Election Day**

#### **Observation of opening**

The team observed the opening of a polling station in Kievë. Everything went according to the rules; both sensitive and non-sensitive material was in place, the polling box was sealed and the committee members had all arrived in time.

### Observation of polling

The team visited 12 out of 18 Polling Centres around the whole municipality, some different than the day before. In general, the polling was conducted in an orderly manner and in accordance with the electoral procedures. For instance, queue control was maintained throughout all the centres and identification of the voters was carried out without problems.

Furthermore voter secrecy was maintained, although in a few cases the team observed family voting.

### Observation of closing and counting

The closing and counting was observed in the polling station in Malishevë town. The station was supposed to close at 20.00 h., but late voters were allowed in until approximately 20.15. Besides that, closing was conducted according to the prescribed rules and regulations. The problems started when counting commenced. It took more than 2 ½ hours to count around 450 ballots. The team had to restart several times, and had great difficulties in organising a method for counting that was sound. During the counting, people – including other election observers - that left the station was allowed in again, which was not according to rules and regulations. The team laid down their best efforts, and finally was able to round up the counting. Team 404 checked out ballots that were deemed invalid by the Polling Station Committee Members, and this seemed to be all in accordance with prescriptions.

Finally, the members were able to pack all the equipment, including the ballots, into the ballot box. We followed the chairperson/ballot box to the hub. At the hub there was a long line of chairpersons from all over the district trying to hand over their boxes/results. It soon became clear that this would take time due to the fact that most packing had not been according to prescriptions. Thus, all material had to be re-packed.

Team 404 was of the opinion that the irregularities that occurred, was due to lack of preparations and tiredness, rather than due to any deliberate intent to compromise the integrity of the process.

The cooperation between the two members of the team was good. Likewise, the relationship with the driver and the interpreter were excellent.

## **Election Day Report from STO Kari Osland, Nis, Serbia**

### General information

Ten days before election day it was decided that IDP's in Serbia and Montenegro should be able to perform in-person voting. For this reason one LTO-team and six STO-teams where sent to the area, which constituted 15 polling centers and 100 polling stations.

The AOR of team 703 was Vranje that lies in the south of Serbia and Montenegro. The great majority of the people living here are Serbs. There are also some IDPs from Kosovo, primarily Kosovo-Serbs. There are between 220-260,000 IDP's from Kosovo in Serbia and Montenegro today. Approximately 104,000 of these are registered voters.

The district was affected by the NATO-bombing in 1999 and the Third Division of the Army is based in this area, which has been a hardline nationalist stronghold for quite some time. It is a relatively poor farming area and the industry is in decay. Before the war and the sanctions imposed against FRY in the 1990's it was an area with a considerable tourist industry, mainly due to its natural hot mineral water.

### Observation of the opening

Vranje had one polling center with 5 polling stations. We agreed with our LTO's that we should observe the opening of one polling station in Nîs and then observe the voting and closing during the rest of the day in Vranje. The team arrived at the polling station in Nîs at 06:30. The atmosphere was good and the polling board seemed to have everything under control. All the election material was present according to REC instructions. The PS opened at 07:00 and the team observed no irregularities. The team stayed until 08:15 when the first voter arrived.

### Observation of the polling

In addition to the polling station in Nîs, the team visited all the polling stations in our AOR. Since there were only five polling stations in Vranje, we spent more than an hour in each of them. In general, the conduct at the polling stations was very good. The voting was done in secrecy; we observed no family voting, no intimidation, etc. Because of the very low voter turnout there was little activity at the polling stations. The members of the polling boards therefore went back and forth from their own polling station to talk to friends and others who worked at the election board of other polling stations. Since all polling stations were located at the same school, this never created any problems. In all the polling stations the 5-member polling station committee consisted of at least two women. In three of the stations the chairperson was a woman.

All the voters cast conditional ballots. The observer team filled out the CoE-forms although there were many questions that were not really relevant. One example is observation report form B – voting, C1.3: Which minorities were represented on the PSC: None, Turk, Serb, Ashkali, Roma, Egyptian, Bosniac or other. All the members of the polling station committee were either Serbs or Kosovo-Serbs (the latter category represented a minority). At the polling center, there was an international supervisor and an international registration supervisor present. In addition to the CoE-observers, there was a team from the European Union Monitoring Mission present at the polling center. The police was present outside the polling center, to make sure that no intimidation took place. They held a distance of minimum 25 meters to the main door of the polling center.

### Observation of the closing and counting

The team observed the closing in Vranje at the first polling station we had visited in the morning. The polling station was closed on time at 20:00 and no voters were turned away before closing. According to our unverified counting at that time, 18 persons had voted at the 5 polling stations altogether. All the material was wrapped together and put in the car that was going to drive the ballot boxes to an hotel outside Nîs, where the OSCE had its office. Although there was a tiny bit of confusion on the procedures, the polling board followed the procedures for closing according to the rules provided by the OSCE.

### Observation of aggregation and verification of results

When the people in charge, from the OSCE, had assembled all the ballot boxes and voting material from the polling center, it was placed in a car and escorted by the police to the office of the OSCE outside of Nis. The observer-team followed the escort to see that the material was safely delivered. When all the ballot-boxes had been delivered, they were driven to Pristina for the ballots to be counted there.

The final turnout in Serbia and Montenegro was 52.3. Hence, less than 0.05 of the IDP's cast their vote. While there may be many explanations to this, it is important to note that before the elections only President Boris Tadic expressed that the Kosovo-Serbs should use their right to vote. Most other politicians appealed for a boycott due to the ways the events on 17-18 March 2004 have been handled and due to skepticism towards the negotiations on Kosovo's status that is announced to begin in mid 2005.

### Observation of the tabulation

At the end of Election Day preliminary results were made by the NGO Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedom which had observers in every polling station throughout Kosovo. The result showed that 51 percent of the 1,4 million eligible voters cast their ballot, down from 64 percent in the 2001 parliamentary election. This preliminary result did not include results from mail-in, conditional or questionable ballots. It also showed approximately the same results for LDK, PDK and AAK as in the 2001 election.

CEEOM IV indicated on Election Day from preliminary data that the voter turnout was around 53 percent which was largely in line with general expectations.

## The review of Complaints Process

The Election Complaints and Appeals Commission (ECAC) which is an independent body, has to be appointed by the SRSG no later than two months prior to each election. Once appointed it shall sit until dissolved by the SRSG at the recommendation of the CEC. ECAC is responsible for adjudication of all complaints and appeals concerning the electoral process.

The Chief Commissioner is an international and was officially appointed by the SRSG on 2 June 2004. Four Commissioners, all locals, complete the membership of the ECAC. Decisions should be reached by consensus but if no consensus can be reached on an issue, the Chief Commissioner decides on his/her own after consulting with the commissioners.

Individuals, who consider their rights have been violated concerning the electoral process, may submit a complaint to ECAC. ECAC shall provide legal and factual basis for its decisions in writing. Copies of the written decisions shall be provided to the parties involved within 48 hours of the issuance of the decisions.

ECAC may also take cases on its own initiative on any matter within its jurisdiction. In addition to adjudicating complaints, ECAC serves as the appeals body against decisions of the CEC on matters such as voter registration, participating in the by-mail voting programme, political entity certification and observer accreditation.

ECAC may order remedial action to be taken or impose sanctions, including fines of up to 200 000 Euros on political entities or observer organization.

When ECAC intends to sanction a political entity through e.g. removing a certain number of candidates from the list of candidates or decertify a political entity, it has to seek for prior approval of the CEC.<sup>10</sup>

During the election campaign the team was notified that two political entities had organized meetings in a schoolyard in the team's AoR which in the beginning of the campaign was prohibited. There were questions about complaints to ECAC but these were not executed.

This restriction was later changed and political rallies were allowed in such places.

By 10 November the figures of complaints and appeals to ECAC were not known and information from the commission said that no very serious appeals and complaints had been received.

## Conclusions and recommendations

For the Gjilan/Gnjilane region the LTO team had the opportunity since 5 August, concluding with the actual election and the few days subsequent, to assess from a technical perspective the function and administrative performance of the seven MEOs and MECs in the AoR.

The team is able to provide assurances that on the whole these seven MEOs have demonstrated through performance a sophisticated level of electoral competence. For the most part these MEOs have had prior electoral exposure and therefore have developed the ability to make considered and informed decisions as to what is to be valued as acceptable electoral practice. All of them stated with extreme passion that their role is technical and administrative and ought not to be confused with the politics of K/S participation. This positive assessment was also done by the other LTO teams in their respective AoRs.

Election Day for the most part proceeded smoothly and efficiently. The polling stations visited appeared to be operating well within western standards. The level of professionalism was high and the voters were processed in an efficient manner when considering the exigencies.

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<sup>10</sup> UNMIK Regulation No.2004/12, Chapter 8, section 43.3

Queue control on Election Day was excellent. Other countries could most certainly benefit from the advance planning the majority of the polling centers exhibited in ensuring that proper entry and egress by the voters was possible with minimal confusion.

The 10 STO teams emphasized the following views on Election Day procedures at the debriefing meeting on 24 October in Pristina:

- The Polling Centres were managed in a good way
- The PSC members were sufficiently trained
- The atmosphere between the different groups of observers was good
- The atmosphere between the PSC members and the observers was good
- The conduct of the domestic observers was good and they seemed to be properly trained for the job. The big number of observers did not create difficulties to get a full view of the electoral operation.
- The domestic observers were satisfied with the arrangements for them to observe the counting because it was possible to make proper assessment of the individual ballot
- The handover of the material at the MECs offices met some difficulties (crowds in front of the entrance of the buildings)
- People were sceptical to the use of conditional ballots.
- Some of the PSCs had problems with completing the Reconciliation and Results Form

In general, the following **positive aspects** of the Kosovo Assembly election 2004 were observed:

- An improved legal framework from UNMIK including the CEC's 15 electoral rules made the conducting of the election easier.
- The Kosovars were the ones responsible for conducting the election. During Election Day they showed a high level of maturity and professionalism which was in accordance with the principles of the Council of Europe and international standards for democratic elections. International organizations were only observers.
- Fair and efficient candidate / political entity registration process
- Polling Centres were opened in Serbia proper and in Montenegro on 23 October to allow eligible people to participate in the election to cast their vote in person.
- Possibilities for By-mail voting for Kosovars living outside Kosovo
- The electorate was offered a diverse range of views by the media and thus enabling voters to make a reasonably choice on Election Day.
- Media provided politically balanced reporting on the election contestants' campaign.
- The presence of domestic civic observers and party representatives made the election process on Election Day transparent.
- The members of the polling station committees were fairly well trained.
- The KPS were responsible for security issues. KFOR with additional 2000 troops for the election period and CIVPOL were to assist if necessary.

Some **issues of concern** were noted and should be dealt with/improved in future elections:

- After the count had been completed, the protocols to fill in closing down the poll seemed overly complex
- Specific training needed for the PSCs' members for finalizing the protocols.
- The voter's list and cross referencing could be made easier to cross check when a voter's name is verified against the list. This element of the voting process appeared to be the most time consuming/inefficient.
- Voter lists were inaccurate in some municipalities. As a result of inaccurate lists, more people cast conditional ballots in this election than in 2001.
- Voters were sceptical to conditional voting. They expected their ballots to be declared not valid or the ballots would not be counted.
- The low turnout of the K/S in these elections was particularly disappointing

## Comments on the election observation mission

The CEEOM IV was conducted in a professional way starting with a core team established in Pristina 15 July according to their Terms of References.

The arrival of the LTOs was well prepared with briefings on 6 and 7 August at the CEEOM IV HQ. Furthermore the preparations for the deployment of LTOs to the different regions were done in an excellent way.

All LTO teams had offices in UNMIK facilities in their AoR, but with no access to Internet in their temporary offices.

The core team requested a written weekly report from the seven LTO teams which created problems for some of them. The reports had to be sent from Internet cafes somewhere outside the offices. The access to these was difficult and the level of noise in these cafes was even worse.

The coordination/communication between the core group and the LTO teams was good. Every fortnight a mutual meeting with the core group and the LTOs was arranged in Pristina where information was delivered and received from both sides.

The STOs arriving by 18 October got a two-days briefing in Pristina before they were deployed to the different regions where another briefing on the region was organized.

Generally, CEEOM IV received excellent support from UNMIK and OSCE, including assistance in setting up the mission, security and radio communication, etc. OSCE staff members participated as speakers at the training sessions for the LTOs and similar support was received regarding the STOs' briefing both in Pristina and in the regions.

The Norwegian STOs comments on the election observation mission were as follows:

### From Bjørn Vagle deployed in Prizren region:

#### Briefing in Pristina

The briefing covered various fields, such as the social and political background in Kosovo in general, the atmosphere surrounding the present election campaign, and more specific information regarding the observers' particular mission. It was all carried out efficiently, with substance and relevance, and in good spirit. The LTOs preparations appeared to be good and they were helpful during the whole period. The deployment of the observers to Prizren was conducted in an orderly fashion, well organized.

### From Kari Osland deployed in Nis, Serbia

#### Regional specific information

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October the team visited the OSCE-representative that was in charge of organizing the elections in the Nis-area. This was useful given that parts of the briefing we had received in Pristina were not relevant in Serbia and Montenegro. We also met with Mr. Slavisa Petkovic, the president of the Citizens Initiative 'Serbia' that is one of two Kosovo-Serb parties, and with the head and officers of CeSid and Protekta, two NGO's dealing with election monitoring and strengthening the rights of refugees and IDP's, respectively. In addition, we went to see an IDP-camp.

#### Other remarks

The preparations and follow-up provided by NORDEM were exemplary. The briefing by the CoE in Pristina was good, while there was no briefing prepared by the LTO's when we arrived in Serbia and Montenegro. The only information we got was our AOR and the team-number. The LTO's had, however, done all the necessary preparations concerning drivers and interpreters.

In Gjilan/Gnjilane the LTOs with the assistance of European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and OSCE, informed the 20 STOs about specific knowledge about the region. In addition an introduction package for each of the seven municipalities had been made and was handed over to each STO.

Accommodation was provided; interpreters and drivers were hired for the STOs.

An issue of concern showed up just before and during the Election Day. The radios the STOs teams were equipped with did not function, especially in remote areas. Mobile phones would have solved the communication problem also regarding security.

The STOs stressed the need of some kind of simulation on the electoral process on Election Day when they had the briefing in Pristina.

Some of them uttered the need of simplification of the observing forms.

# Appendices

## Observing organisation's statement/preliminary report

### Preliminary statement from Council of Europe (CEEOM IV)

Pristina, 24.10.2004: The Council of Europe Election Observation Mission in Kosovo (CEEOM IV) observed the electoral process leading up to the 23 October 2004 Assembly Elections. The Mission deployed 120 observers on Election Day in Kosovo, as well as in Serbia and in Montenegro. Representatives of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities took part in the observation.

The elections were conducted generally in line with Council of Europe principles and international standards for democratic elections, albeit still in a difficult social and political environment.

The elections took place in a peaceful atmosphere, marking a further significant step in the process of constructing a democratic society in Kosovo. These elections had added political significance because the Provisional Institutions that will emerge as the result are expected to assume additional responsibilities through further transfer of competences and be actively involved in the implementation of the "Standards for Kosovo"

A number of features contributed to the overall positive evaluation of these elections:

- The elections were conducted in accordance with a legal framework that provided the conditions for free and fair elections. The Central Election Commission published electoral rules that complemented UNMIK Regulation 2004/12 and covered the entire electoral process.
- The electoral process was administered in an efficient manner, with the Central Election Commission and its Secretariat operating transparently and professionally. Municipal Election Commissions generally conducted their work in a neutral and professional way. Polling Station Committees performed their duties constructively, whilst the role of internationals in the process was significantly reduced.
- The emergence of a competent local election management body is particularly welcome as it creates the conditions for a further substantial transfer of responsibilities to local institutions for future elections.
- The electoral campaign was calm and relatively low-profile, but party rallies were often well attended and the political leaders made themselves available to the voters in most areas. The campaign environment was free of violence or intimidation.
- A broad range of electronic and print media provided voters with sufficient information on the electoral process. Media coverage of the campaign was generally balanced, although certain media outlets at times failed to provide objective reporting.
- There was broad participation of political entities in the elections. Voters from all communities participated, although participation of the Serb community was very low. Domestic and international observers were provided with full access to polling stations and all aspects of the electoral process.

- The overwhelming majority of observers evaluated the voting process in positive terms, with only minor and isolated irregularities reported. Polling stations opened and closed on time, and the vote count was evaluated equally positively.

Emphasizing the positive aspects of these elections in Kosovo, CEEOM IV wishes to highlight some areas where further improvement would be necessary:

- Although Voter Services, the Challenge and Confirmation period provided an opportunity for everyone to verify the voters' list, there was little interest and participation in the process. New methods should be found to strengthen public confidence in the voter registers.

- The by-mail operation yielded a disappointingly low response. In light of this, the sustainability of this type of operation in future elections should be reviewed.

- Various broadcast and print media failed to observe the reflection period as required by section 9.1 of Electoral Rule 10/2004.

- Preliminary data indicates that overall voter turnout was around 53%, largely in line with general expectations. To a certain extent this turnout reflects the widespread discontent with the prevailing socio-economic situation, which affects all communities living in Kosovo.

- The low turnout of Serbs in these elections was particularly disappointing. Mixed messages from various Serb political leaders contributed to the existing differences of approach within the Serb community in Kosovo regarding participation in the elections, deprived candidates of the opportunity to conduct a meaningful campaign and affected participation.

This preliminary statement is issued before the announcement of election results and before all complaints and appeals have been addressed by the Election Complaints and Appeals Commission. The final assessment of these elections will depend, in part, on the completion of counting and tabulation, the final announcement of results and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure. CEEOM IV will remain in place to observe the completion of these.

**Certified political entities for the parliamentary election 2004**

Nr	Entity Acronym	Political Entity	Type of political Entity	President of Political Entity	PE contesting set a-side seats
1	AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo	Political Party	Ramush Haradinaj	No
2	ADK	Democratic Alternative of Kosovo	Political Party	Edita Tahiri	No
3		Belul Beqaj	Independent Candidate		No
4	BK	National Front	Political Party	Sylejman Daka	No
5		Citizens' Initiative National Democratic Front	Citizens' Initiative	Naser Bresa	No
6	BSDAK	Bosniac Party of Democratic Action of Kosovo	Political Party	Hilmo Kandic	Bosniac set a-side seats
7		Fuad Ramiqi	Independent Candidate		No
8	GIG	Citizens' Initiative of Gora	Political Party	Rustem Ibisi	Gorani set a-side seats
9		Citizens' Initiative of Serbia	Citizens' Initiative	Slavisa Petkovic	Serb set a-side seats
10	IRDK	New Democratic Initiative of Kosovo	Political party	Bislim Hoti	RAE set a-side seats
11	KDTP	Kosovo Turkish Democratic Party	Political Party	Mahir Yagcilar	Turkish set a-side seats
12	LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo	Political Party	Ibrahim Rugova	No
13	LKCK	National Movement for Liberation of Kosovo	Political Party	Fatmir Humolli	No
14	LPK	People's Movement of Kosovo	Political Party	Emrush Xhemajli	No

15	ORA	Citizens' List ORA	Citizens' Initiative	Ylber Hysa	No
16	PD	Justice Party	Political Party	Sylejman Cerkezi	No
17	PDAK	Democratic Ashkali Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Sabit Rrahmoni	RAE set a-side seats
18	PDASHK	Democratic Albanian Ashkali Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Beqir Bytiqi	RAE set a-side seats
19	PDI	Initiative of Prizren-Dragas	Citizens' Initiative	Mehmed Meta	Bosniac set a-side seats
20	PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Hashim Thaqi	No
21	PLK	Liberal Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Gjergj Dedaj	No
22	PNSDH	Albanian National Democratic Party	Political Party	Rexhep Abdullahu	No
23	PREBK	United Roma Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Haxhi Zylfi Merxha	RAE set a-side seats
24	PReK	New Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Bujar Bukoshi	No
25	PSDK	Social Democratic Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Kaqusha Jashari	No
26	PSHDK	Albanian Christian Democratic Party of Kosovo	Political Party	Mark Krasniqi	No
27		Ramë Dreshaj	Independent Candidate		No
28		Riza Lluka	Independent Candidate		No
29	SDA	Party of Democratic Action	Political Party	Numan Balic	Bosniac set a-side seats
30	UD	Democratic Union	Political Party	Mentor Kazi	No
31	UNIKOMB	Albanian National Unification Party	Political Party	Muhamet Kelmendi	No
32	VAKAT	Coalition VAKAT	Coalition	Dzezair Murati	Bosniac set a-side seats
33		List for Kosovo and Methocija	Citizens' Initiative	Oliver Ivanovic	Serb set a-side seats

**Final result of the Parliamentary Election 2004**

	<b>Ballots</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Seats regular</b>
In Kosovo	695 285	LDK	45,42	47
Serbia & Montenegro	428	PDK	28,85	30
By Mail	3806	AAK	8,39	9
Total Turn out: 53,57%	699 519	ORA	6,23	7
		PSHDK	1,80	2
		KDTP	1,21	1
		PD	1,02	1
		KV		1
		LPK	0,66	1
		PLK	0,51	1
				Set aside seats
		List Kosovo and Metohija		8
		KDTP		2
		IRDK		2
		Gradanska Incijativa Srbija		2
		KOALICIJA VAKAT		2
		PDAK		1
		SDA		1
		GIG		1
		PREBK		1