

ANNEX 2 INTERVIEWED PERSONS

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| Ademaj, Jehona | Project officer, Liaison Office of Finland in Pristina |
| Afrimetaj, Fidane | Itinerant teacher, Peje Resource Centre for the Blind and Partially Sighted |
| Alia, Avdulla | Director, Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Avdiu, Vahid | Agriculture Engineer, Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo |
| Bajraktari, Rifat | Agriculture Engineer, Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo |
| Bajrami, Meseret | Nursing teacher, Regional Hospital of Prizren |
| Bajrami, Vedeta | Officer, Unit for Special Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Bardhi, Niman | Coordinator, Unit for Nursing, Ministry of Health |
| Beqiri, Lirije F. | Nursing Director, University Clinical Centre of Kosovo, Pristina |
| Björnsson, Kjartan | Head of Operations, European Commission Liaison Office-Pristina |
| Blumenthal, Gisela | Health Advisor, Unit for Sector Policies, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Bunjaku, Zenel | Executive Director, Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo |
| Bytyçi, Ramiz | Nursing teacher, Regional Hospital of Prizren |
| Bytyqi, Agron | Nursing teacher, Regional Hospital of Prizren |
| Canaj, Blerim | Head, International Cooperation Centre, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Dzaferovic, Leila | Regional Operations Manager, Lutheran World Federation, Balkans Program |
| Eirola, Martti | Counsellor Development Policy Coordination, Unit for Western Balkans, Department for Europe, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Felbrich, Steffen | UNMIK Ministry Representative, Department of Civil Administration, Central Governance Unit for Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Fritz, Susan K. | Deputy Mission Director, USAID |
| Gutaj, Halil | Nursing teacher, Regional Hospital of Prizren |
| Häikiö, Antti | EULEX, Head of Best Practices Training and Evaluation Unit |
| Häikiö, Kristiina | Head, Liaison Office of Finland in Pristina |
| Hajdari, Rozeta | Head, Donor Coordination Centre, Government of Kosovo, Office of Prime Minister |
| Hajredini, Habit | Director, Office of Good Governance and Human Rights |
| Halmari, Tuija | Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Kosovo |
| Hasani, Fekrije | Executive director, FIDIDA |
| Hasani, Myrvete | Coordinator Centre for Continuing Nursing Education, University Hospital in Pristina, Ministry of Health |
| Holst, Jesper | Regional Manager, HandiKOS-Mitrovica |
| Kabashi, Luljeta | Chief Technical Advisor, FSDEK |
| Kakaba, Sahadete | Officer, Unit for Special Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Karahoda-Gjurgjeala, Natyra | Nursing teacher Training Centre for Nurses, University Hospital in Pristina |
| Karahoda-Gjurgjeala, Natyra | Head, Department for Nursing and Midwifery, University of Pristina |
| Karameta, Nerxhivane | Project assistant, FSDEK |
| Kastrati, Mehmet | Itinerant teacher, Peje Resource Centre for the Blind and Partially Sighted |
| Kelmendi, Dukagjin | Finance manager, HandiKOS |
| Kelmendi, Flora | Economist, Human Development Sector, World Bank-Pristina |
| Krasniqi, Selajdin | Nursing director, Regional Hospital of Prizren |
| Kukalaj, Elvane | Trainer, Centre for Continuing Nursing Education, University |

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| Kvale, Sverre Johan Laamanen, Markku | Hospital in Pristina, Ministry of Health Chargé d’Affairs a.i. Royal Norwegian Embassy Deputy Head of Mission, OSCE (ex Head of Finnish Liaison Office July 2003-August 2007) |
| Luma, Muzafer Luukkanen, Merja Maksut, Senaj | Chief Executive Officer, Kosovo Forestry Agency Project officer, FinnChurchAid, Unit for Humanitarian Aid Nursing teacher Training Centre for Nurses, University Hospital in Pristina |
| Manaj, Ramë | Deputy Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Kosovo |
| Matero, Marja Mazreku, Bedrije McDonald, Karen Milosevic, Olivera | Associate Advisor, FSDEK Nursing teacher, Regional Hospital of Prizren Liaison Office of Sweden SIDA, Deputy Head of Office Executive Director, Mitrovica Women’s Business Association/Community Centre |
| Mulliqi, Shefqet Muqaj, Baize | Headmaster, Peje School for the Blind and Partially Sighted Planner Centre for Continuing Nursing Education, University Hospital in Pristina, Ministry of Health |
| Murati, Valon Mustafa, Astrit | Director, Human Rights Centre, University of Pristina Administrator Centre for Continuing Nursing Education, University Hospital in Pristina, Ministry of Health |
| Nazifi, Ismet Osdautaj, Murteza | Lutheran World Federation, Program Coordinator-Kosovo Director, Science and Technology Department, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Ottman, Juha | Director, Unit for Western Balkans, Department for Europe, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Päivöke, Aira | Director Department of Development Policy, Unit for Evaluation and Internal Auditing (West Balkans desk officer 2003-2006), Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Poston, Mark Potoku, Remzije Rafuna, Florina | Dead of Office, DFID-Kosovo Mundesia, Coordinator for Networking and Fundraising Nursing teacher Training Centre for Nurses, University Hospital in Pristina |
| Rämä, Anu | Desk officer for regional projects, Unit for Western Balkans, Department for Europe, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Rostedt, Raikko | LtCdr, CIMIK, Assisting Chief of Staff, Finnish KFOR Contingency |
| Rouvinen, Kaisa | Advisor for development cooperation, Liaison Office of Finland in Pristina |
| Rrecaj, Illir Rrustolli, Kimete | Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health of Kosovo Nursing teacher Training Centre for Nurses, University Hospital in Pristina |
| Ruohomäki, Olli | Governance Advisor, Unit for Sectoral Policies, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Sadikaj, Arber Shala, Sabiha | ex Office manager, FSDEK (2006-July 2008) Acting Chief Executive Officer, Government of Kosova, Office of Prime Minister |
| Shigeno, Rei | UNMIK Ministry Officer, Department of Civil Administration, Central Governance Unit for Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| Sundström, Stefan Tahiraj, Gazmend Takala, Elsi | 1Lt, CIMIK Project manager, Finnish KFOR Contingency Interpreter, FSDEK I and II West Balkans desk officer 1998-2003, Unit for Western Balkans, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland |
| Turjaka, Arbresha Ujkani, Emrush | Aid coordinator, Ministry of Health of Kosovo Director, Office for Cooperation with EU and NATO, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo |
| Vrajolli, Shpresa | Nursing teacher Training Centre for Nurses, University Hospital in Pristina |
| Vuori, Hannu | Professor Emeritus, (ex Head of Department, International Co- |

Waelty, Samuel
Zhara, Aferdita

Head and Principal Advisor of the Ministry of Health of PISG
1999-2004)
Director, Swiss Cooperation Office
Teacher of attached class, Peje

ANNEX 3 CONSULTED DOCUMENTS

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FILES IN THE ARCHIVES (Names of the files translated from Finnish)

Given that the archive system at the MFA was changed as of May 1, 2001, the files corresponding to the period prior to April 30, 2001 have different codes than in the later classification. Therefore, only the project codes used in financial administration, which have not changed, are indicated here. The signum for all the files is 93.20 JUG, unless otherwise indicated. About 4 shelf meters of material was checked. The method consisted of going through every folder and all documents/papers and making notes on laptop computers of the important documents and any relevant observations concerning the files.

Consulted archive folders in alphabetical order:

Anti-human Trafficking project (86203701)

EULEX Kosovo police and state of law enforcement operation UM/32313 Signum 13.60

Health Sector Support (862003101, 86203102)

Human Rights Education, phases I and II (8620601, 8602602)

Kosovo UM/3151-25 Signum 21.50

Land register and real estate project (86204401)

Mine clearing projects (86202701)

Support to Education Sector (86205301, 86203201)

Support to Disabled Persons' Organisations (86203002)

Support to the Ombudsperson's office (no code, funded by remaining funds for cultural cooperation – non-ODA)

Water and Sanitation (86205201, 86203801)

Western Balkans, Women's Safety and Security Initiative (86206701)

Women's Crafts Centre in Mitrovica (86204601)

The projects started before 2001, if not included in the list above:

Balance of payments support to Albania and Macedonia (862002101)

Finnish Development Cooperation to Kosovo, general (starting date 2001, Signum 93.10, No 47866)

Kosovo situation/humanitarian aid (Signum 97.10, No 43998)

Kosovo support to agriculture, FAO (Signum 95.20, No 43646)

Local Cooperation Fund (starting date 2000, Signum 93.30, No 47037)

Reconstruction of the Mitrovica Region in the villages of Galica and Duovac (86204101)

Western Balkans Reconstruction project (86202201) (short term consultancies)

ANNEX 4 DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORY OF THE FINNISH KOSOVO COUNTRY PROGRAMME

This reconstruction of the formation process and evolution of the Finnish Kosovo programme is based on interviews, archive material and mission reports of the then Kosovo cooperation desk officer. Due to missing documents and some undated material in the archives, some details concerning the timing along with other details may be inexact.

The international community was already preparing for humanitarian assistance to Kosovo when the Rambouillet peace negotiations failed. At the same time, a political decision was made to engage Finnish peacekeeping troops in Kosovo, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time (currently the President of the Republic of Finland) insisted on budget allocations for reconstruction. When the NATO bombings started in Kosovo, massive numbers of refugees flooded into Albania and Macedonia. After the visit of the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Environment to Macedonia in early May 1999, a funding decision was made on humanitarian assistance and direct aid to be given to the Albanian and Macedonian governments for managing the refugee crisis in their territories. This aid was given as support to balance of payments (budget support).

Towards the end of the bombings between May and June 1999, the then Unit for Central and South-Eastern Europe applied for funding from the Department for International Development Cooperation (ex-FINNIDA) for planning the reconstruction of Kosovo. This budget line had its own project code and it figures in the archives as a project (West Balkans reconstruction project, code 86202201), although it was mainly used for short-term consultancies, short-term TA assignments, appraisals and identification missions. This type of activity (Finnish short-term TA to local Kosovo institutions) later continued until 2005. The same budget allocation permitted the Kosovo development cooperation desk officer to organise a fact-finding and identification mission to Kosovo immediately after the bombings had stopped (late June 1999). The mission was carried out by a locally established NGO led by a Nordic person who had lived in Kosovo for a long time. The mission report found the topic of human rights (and human rights education) particularly pressing: no reconstruction would be possible in the immediate aftermath of the conflict before addressing the human rights situation. The report also raised the need for education and small enterprise development.

Towards the end of summer 1999, it became obvious that massive funding was envisaged for reconstruction by the large donors, and the Unit for Central and South-Eastern Europe decided to concentrate on human rights and education in its cooperation with Kosovo, which was considered more appropriate for a small donor with limited funds available. Additionally, Finland already had experience of working in education in the Balkans, which it had been doing in Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1996.

By August 1999, a project on human rights education was in its design process, after it was realised that the OSCE civil administration staff employed for the purpose did not have any human rights training. At the same time, a multilateral FAO initiative on Agricultural Relief for Kosovo (fertilisers, seed production and distribution) came under the Finnish assistance programme, with the purpose of guaranteeing the next year's harvest. The human rights education project involved the OSCE, the Kosovo Helsinki Committee, Finnish higher education institutions and the Law Faculty of Pristina University.

Another result of the engagement of the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Environment was the initiative on clearing environmental hotspots (impoverished uranium residues), funded partially by Finland through the UNEP/Habitat and initiated immediately after the end of the war. A Finnish NGO (although a quasi-official one), the aid organisation of the Lutheran Church, FinnChurchAid (FCA), had started a housing and reconstruction project of its own in the Mitrovica region, and approached the MFA for extra funding. Another project that started in October 1999, a women's training and employment project in Mitrovica, the Mitrovica Women's Centre, was the personal initiative of the wife of a Finn involved with the FCA reconstruction project, which later also applied for assistance from the MFA. The Ministry's short-term TA funds were initially used for this purpose. The project collaborated with a local women's NGO, Mundesia, and HandiKOS, the association for the disabled. Later in 2001, a consultancy contract with the Finnish Refugee Council was signed to implement the project.

The specialisation of Finland in special education/pedagogy came about for historical reasons. As a result of the previous experience in funding teacher training in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Finland later decided to concentrate on teacher training in special education (later inclusive education), a decision that was also supported by the

MFA sector advisor for education. One of the implicit objectives was to diminish the influence of the DDR-originated school of defectology that was dominant in the ex-Yugoslavian educational system at the time. Defectology refers to an academic school within special pedagogy that classifies (and isolates) children according to their handicap (“defects”), and designs teaching according to the category of the defect, not according to the special needs and potentialities of the individual child. “Defectology” can therefore be considered as being diametrically opposite to inclusive education.

All these projects were being designed or implemented as far back as October 1999. In addition to human rights and special education, some of the additional elements of the Finnish programme in Kosovo began to become established, such as environmental hotspots, FAO agricultural support and FCA reconstruction. During the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to Kosovo, (probably) in September 1999, she had been persuaded by the then Finnish head of UNMIK’s health administration that Finland should engage in the health sector, particularly nurse training, and by October an initiative to design a health project had officially been taken. Not long thereafter, towards the end of the year, an order from the highest echelon of the MFA was received by the Unit for Central and South-Eastern Europe demanding that Finland should not only be involved in human rights and social sectors in Kosovo but also offer business opportunities to Finnish companies in infrastructure projects. Water and sanitation was chosen as the field in which a project would be implemented.

Some minor initiatives also took place in 1999, e.g. funding to the International Crime Tribunal for Yugoslavia for war crime investigations, and a budget for small projects of the civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) by the Finnish KFOR Forces. The Liaison Office in Pristina started operating in late August in order to coordinate EU assistance during the Finnish Presidency; the political decision to continue the operations after the Presidency was taken only at the very end of 1999.

The last (but not least) element of the Finnish Kosovo programme deserves a special mention because of an anecdote told by all the Finns interviewed for this evaluation. In the report by a Finnish TV company on Kosovo refugee camps in Macedonia, shown in a primetime news broadcast in Finland, a disabled person in a wheelchair had made a desperate call for help to his Finnish friend, a known spokesman for the disabled in Finland (“Kalle, help us, the disabled are suffering in Kosovo!”). His personal involvement in the second half of 1999 resulted in a support project for the association for the disabled in Kosovo, HandiKOS, which had originally been implemented through Oxfam due to non-existent banking operations in Kosovo at that time, and later given to FIDIDA and the Finnish Association of the Deaf through a consultancy contract.

By the end of 2000, Finland had three larger projects in Kosovo that had been tendered for and/or implemented by Finnish companies (in special education, water management, and primary health services), and five smaller ones: the FAO agricultural support project in its second phase (March 2000–October 2001), a human rights education project (local NGO), the FCA reconstruction project, support to HandiKOS (at this stage implemented by FIDIDA) and the project on women’s empowerment (Mitrovica Women’s Centre by the Finnish Refugee Council). In addition to these projects, the Finnish KFOR forces carried out their CIMIC projects funded from Finnish ODA funds. An additional project was given funds from Finland in 2000 (which continued until August 2001), a mine clearing project implemented by ACT (Action Churches Together, Norwegian People’s Aid and UNOPS). Kosovo also formed part of two regional projects as of 2000: a Balkans regional exchange of TV news material (ERNO) and an interethnic youth football project.

Between 2001 and 2007 only a few additional short-term initiatives were funded by Finland (e.g. paying for translators at the Kosovo Ombudsperson’s Office, a continuation project of the UN-Habitat environmental hotspots cleaning, UN-Habitat funding for a land register and solving property claims, a grant to the UNDP for women’s security and safety and three regional projects), which highlights the stability and strength of the chosen approach. With only one exception (human rights education), the projects’ first phases came to an end in 2002–2003, and their objectives became more ambitious in the second phase (2003 or 2004 to 2007).

The case of the human rights education project illustrates this change. During its first phase (1999–2001) the evaluation carried out was largely positive. The objective of information and awareness building and human rights education had largely been met, the establishment of a Human Rights Centre at the University of Pristina had been a success and the project had become a known actor in the field of human rights in Kosovo. This was achieved in spite of considerable “flexibility” in management (no official guidelines were followed, but nevertheless there was a good, adaptive response to local conditions). Three years later, in a mid-term review of the second phase (May 2004) after the project had been tendered by a Finnish company, the new objective of mainstreaming human rights education in all university teaching was seen as time-consuming and little progress had been made – although the project was still seen as an experienced and respected player in Kosovo.

Something similar happened in all the larger projects. In the health sector, the project's first phase, which started slightly later than the other major projects in 2001, changed from being a project on in-service training for nurses to a project on developing capacity, forward planning, establishing regional networks, and nationwide coordination and quality control systems. In education, the objective switched from in-service teacher training in special education to promoting the attendance of children with disabilities in ordinary school classes (inclusive education), and support to the Faculty of Education of Pristina University in order to make inclusive education central to all teacher education (according to a project document, to the establishing of the Faculty of Education), and to public policy formulation. In the water sector, the first phase had concentrated on establishing water management associations and promoting post-graduate training in the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, whereas in the second phase the purpose was to build the capacities of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning to develop water resources. In spite of several positive achievements, in all these projects there were problems and little progress towards the general objective during the early years of the second phase. The water project was dropped from the project portfolio after its completion in 2004, probably partially victim of the 2004 Development Policy but also on the basis of a disastrous evaluation.

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| Mitrovica Women's Centre would almost certainly have been cut had it not been for the written intervention by |
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Political priorities influenced the choice of funded projects (at least) once, in 2004, when the funding for the the Embassy of Finland in Belgrade making it vigorously clear that the phasing out of the project at that precise moment would be a political mistake and give the wrong signal, as Mr Harri Holkeri's term as SRSG was facing difficulties in the aftermath of the 2004 riots and violent outbursts. Except for this political decision and some active pressure from business interests for infrastructure reconstruction in the initial phases of cooperation, the Kosovo programme has been managed under normal technical criteria of international development cooperation.

A further characteristic in the cooperation with Kosovo was highlighted by all three Kosovo cooperation desk officers (1999–2008) interviewed. In their experience, Kosovo (and the Western Balkans in general) was a much more difficult place to work in than the traditional partner countries of Finland (or other developing countries), which was manifest in regular health problems of expatriate project staff, particularly in occupational health. The fact that today, in 2008, this is difficult to understand on the basis of the conditions prevalent in Pristina is proof of how much the situation has improved since the early post-conflict years.

ANNEX 5 THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN KOSOVO IN BRIEF

Political developments 1999–2008

Kosovo suffered a civil war in the 1990s between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Milosevic administration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) after Milosevic abolished the political autonomy of Kosovo. The war ended when NATO bombed the FRY between March and June 1999 in order to force Serbians out of Kosovo and to enable refugees to return and international peacekeepers to enter the region. NATO started the bombings after the FRY refused to accept the Rambouillet Peace Agreement in February 1999.

The international community started providing humanitarian aid to Kosovo immediately after the NATO bombings stopped on 11 June 1999. The overall situation in Kosovo was chaotic and public administration virtually non-existent when international civilian and military organisations entered Kosovo during the second half of 1999. Serbian rule had restricted Albanians from participating in public administration since 1990, but the Albanians had maintained their own shadow administration dating from the period of autonomy (pre-1989). During the war, Kosovo Serbs were expelled from public office but Kosovo Albanians did not have experience of public administration – or if they did, they had not worked in the civil service or other public posts in ten years. It was even unclear what laws were in force in Kosovo. The legal system imposed on the country by the Yugoslav Government since 1989 was discriminatory against the majority population, the Albanians, who rejected it. On the other hand, the UN made it clear that the former Yugoslav laws were to remain in place except where they conflicted with international standards. There was no common understanding of land and real estate ownership.

The need for humanitarian and emergency aid was massive: there were more than one million refugees and most of them were provided homes or temporary shelters before the onset of winter. Over 900,000 people received regular food aid over the winter and the population was protected against significant outbreaks of disease. In the spring of 2000, many of Kosovo's farmers received at least rudimentary supplies of seeds and other materials to allow them to begin sowing and planting. There were thousands of displaced people, a large number of whom were without shelter because their homes had been destroyed during the war. According to UNMIK's estimation, 10–40 per cent of Kosovars had no personal identification document.

The situation in Kosovo was made somewhat worse due to the slow start of UNMIK. UNMIK administrators arrived later than expected due to delays in recruitment in New York, and not all of them were aware of their job descriptions. "People started arriving in UNMIK's offices and said they had been contracted by the UN. Then they asked what they were supposed to be doing", as one interviewee described.

The Serbian minority established their own parallel administration, especially in the fields of health and education services, in areas where Serbs were the majority. These parallel administrations were financed by the Serbian government and are still functioning in 2008. UNMIK did not officially recognise them but UNMIK had to engage in de facto cooperation with the parallel Serb administration, and in this way recognise them because there was no other local administration in the areas populated by ethnic Serbs. In addition, the Serbs in Kosovo received – and continue to do so – financial support from the Serbian government. The problem with parallel Serb structures is in many ways similar to the Kosovo Albanians' "shadow administration" prior to 1999.

During the first half of the decade, there were no major changes in the international status quo of Kosovo. However, soon after the introduction of UNMIK institutions it became clear that Kosovo would never return to being under Serbian rule. The security situation was more or less stabilised due to the presence of KFOR and UNMIK, although extreme Albanian nationalists continued their attacks against Serbs.

Gradually, aspirations to find a final and sustainable solution to the international status of Kosovo were accelerated. The violent riots in March 2004 alarmed the international community. It was recognised that Kosovo Albanians were losing patience with the lack of a status decision, and the violent events of 2004 also showed that KFOR, UNMIK and the PISG were not prepared to maintain control in Kosovo should there be violent mass demonstrations.

Mr Martti Ahtisaari was appointed Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the future status process for Kosovo on November 14, 2005. Mr Ahtisaari together with his team and the so-called Contact Group (France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States) held a number of meetings with Kosovo and Serbia in order to find a compromise for a final solution to the Kosovo question. A compromise acceptable to both parties was not achieved, even after several postponed deadlines. Finally, on 2nd February 2007, Mr Ahtisaari presented his Draft Comprehensive Proposal on the Kosovo Status Settlement to Belgrade and Pristina. Serbia took a strong position against Mr Ahtisaari's plan and was supported in this by Russia.

During the negotiations led by Mr Ahtisaari, it was expected that the Final Proposal would come before a vote at the UN Security Council (UNSC). However, due to resistance from Russia, the UNSC did not vote on the proposal. Russia is a permanent member of the Council with veto rights, and had Russia vetoed a vote, the whole momentum for a solution to the Kosovo question would have been lost for years. During Mr Ahtisaari's negotiations, Russia had continuously announced that it would only agree a status solution for Kosovo that would be acceptable to Serbia as well. However, it was generally expected that Russia would finally agree to the outcome of Mr Ahtisaari's negotiations and would also persuade Serbia to accept it. Despite the failure to settle the Kosovo question at the UNSC and the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, the concept of Ahtisaari's plan will be followed. In its Declaration of Independence, the Assembly of Kosovo committed itself to fully implementing the Ahtisaari Plan.

After the immediate angry reaction to the declaration of independence by a relatively small number of Kosovo Serbs, the situation had already cooled down quite a bit by the end of August 2008. The impression is that a large majority of people living in Kosovo would not mind carrying a Kosovo passport, irrespective of their language or ethnicity. The main vocal opposition comes from a relatively small group of "Bridge watchers", i.e. extreme Serb nationalists who sometimes terrorise the Albanian population and those perceived as being sympathisers, but whose activities seem increasingly linked to criminal activity, not principally to ideological nationalism. After the May 2008 elections in Serbia and the August 2008 crisis in Georgia, observers have started to express slight optimism about ethnic relations in Kosovo.

Economic situation in Kosovo

Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe. About 45 per cent of the population of Kosovo is poor, with another 18 per cent vulnerable to poverty. As much as 13 per cent of population is extremely poor. Extreme poverty is considerably higher (44%) among the Serbian minority than among Kosovo's Albanian.

Economic growth in Kosovo has been slow during recent years, although immediately after the end of the war, economic growth was rapid. The growth in GDP was estimated at 21 per cent in 2000. However, the average growth in real GDP in 2002–2006 is estimated to be less than one and a half per cent. The short period of growth is explained mainly by the rapid increase in foreign assistance for reconstruction.

The unemployment rate is very high. There is lack of reliable statistics but the unemployment rate has been estimated to be 44.9 per cent of the active labour force (2006). However, there may be a considerable amount of unregistered employment in the country's grey economy. Unemployment among the female population is even higher at 60 per cent, while the figure among the male population is around 30 per cent. The youth unemployment rate is also extremely high and stands at about 76 per cent. At the same time, Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe: 70 per cent of the population is aged under 30 and there is a relatively high fertility rate.

The mass unemployment among the young may have the potential to cause unrest if the situation does not get improve in the near future. Several interviewees, both foreigners and Kosovars, considered labour migration as the only possible solution for unemployment. Some European countries have recognised the situation as being one solution to their own shortage of labour. There are plenty of donors active in developing the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. It seems that the VET sector will not be developed entirely on the basis of the needs of Kosovo but also on the need for a labour force in the donor countries themselves. One diplomat said directly that his country will support the construction of VET schools and that graduates from these schools will get permission to work in the donor country.

The economy has been showing increasing signs of growth recently. Real GDP growth has shown a modest upward trend, reaching 4.4 per cent in 2007. The Kosovo Consolidated Budget (KCB) generated surpluses in 2006 and 2007. This was partly explained by controlling current spending, but also by the weak spending capacity. Kosovo's external trade continues to be significantly out of balance, with the recorded current account deficit (CAD) (including grants) reaching 17.4 per cent of GDP in 2007, even after large inflows of remittances (12.9 per cent of GDP) and foreign assistance (8.9 per cent of GDP). The growth in the CAD has been driven by private sector demand, with the conservative fiscal stance of the past two years having little apparent impact on external imbalances.

However, the positive trend has been accompanied by acceleration in inflation – which had previously been modest or even negative – to 14 per cent year-on-year in May 2008. Although inflation has increased mostly due to rising international food and energy prices, price pressures in the non-tradable sector have also contributed to inflation.

Economic growth in Kosovo is largely dependent either directly or indirectly on donors and international staff working in the country. For example, it is impossible to assess the impact on the economy of consumption by international staff. Salaries paid by UNMIK, KFOR and other international organisations are considerably higher than average local salaries. Furthermore, the great number of well-paid international staff and highly-paid locals employed by international organisations keeps consumer prices high for average Kosovars. This may lead, or already has to some extent, to a kind of “Dutch Disease effect”. The term ‘Dutch disease’ originates from a crisis in the Netherlands in the 1960s that resulted from discoveries of vast natural gas deposits in the North Sea. The newfound wealth caused the Dutch guilder to rise, making exports of all non-oil products less competitive on the world market. It is an economic condition that, in its broadest sense, refers to negative consequences arising from large increases in a country's income. Dutch disease is primarily associated with the discovery of natural resources, but it can result from any large increase in foreign currency, including foreign direct investment, foreign aid or a substantial increase in prices for natural resources.

It is a paradox that the aim is to build independent and self-sufficient institutions in Kosovo, but the downsizing of the international presence may lead to a decrease in economic growth. Increased dependency on foreign aid should be avoided.

On 12 June 2008, the Government of Kosovo approved the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for the years 2009–2011. The MTEF sets out the Government's development priorities and spending guidelines for the coming years. The MTEF is also one of the most important reference documents for international donors providing aid to Kosovo. The MTEF calls for a gradual reduction in donors' TA and for a shift towards direct budget support. This is justified from the perspective of increasing local ownership of the development. However, the proposals of the MTEF also include a risk that revenue performance will be weakened by the proposed reduction in tax rates. Kosovo's own budget revenues are already fairly precarious: around 70 per cent of revenues come from customs duties.

Corruption and organised crime are endemic and remain a major problem in Kosovo. The Government's measures against corruption have been relatively weak so far and corruption is undermining the proper functioning of the public administration. Foreign investments in the country are low and are unlikely to increase remarkably in the near future due to corruption and organised crime, as well as the underdeveloped state of the infrastructure and public institutions.

Migrants living abroad are an important source of income for the population in Kosovo. It is estimated that 400,000 Kosovars live abroad and that 20 per cent of the Kosovo population receives remittances from abroad. The median value of the remittances is EUR 2000 per year. It is noteworthy that only 13 per cent of the population receives social assistance. The households that receive remittances have higher consumption levels than the population in general. Money flows from migrants seem to have a direct impact on the reduction of poverty, since households with migrants abroad are less poor than the population in average.