



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo
Qeveria - Vlada - Government

Ministria e Administrimit të Pushtetit Lokal
Ministarstvo Administracije Lokalne Samouprave
Ministry of Local Government Administration

Interview given to "Express" newspaper by minister of MLGA, Mr. Sadri Ferati

Integration Project

The Government is preparing to establish 5+1 new municipalities with majority of Serbs. These municipalities can be legitimated only if Serbs go to vote. Kosovo is interested for integration of all communities and is committed to implement its obligations that it has taken. Majority of Albanians are conscious about this project's importance. Minister of Local Government Administration, Mr. Sadri Ferati, said for "Express" newspaper



Kosova Institutions will try to implement Decentralization, foreseen by Ahtisaari's package, which is one of the biggest challenges of this plan and is the biggest concession that Albanians have made during negotiation for the solution of Kosovo status.

Until now, a lot of preparations are undertaken, but practical results will be seen during the next months and finally after local elections, through which five new municipalities with majority of Serbs will be legitimated and will become functional.

Even though, he was not present in Vienna negotiations, the person who carries the main burden and obligations for implementation of this project is Minister of Local Government Administration, Mr. Sadri Ferati.

By the end of April, the vacancy announcement will be opened until persons, who will participate in six Preparatory Teams for establishment of new municipalities will be selected: Graçanica, Ranillug,

Partesh, North Mitrovica and extension of Novo Brdo municipality. This will be the first test to survey the volition of Serbian Community for their participation in Decentralization project.

"In those places where the interest of people is not high (pleasing) as well as the quality, the vacancy announcement will be renewed", said Minister Ferati.

Teams are obliged to prepare six localities for the next local elections, in order to sensitize people in making propaganda regarding implementation of Decentralization process, to cooperate with the administration, which will be established and about other issues as well.

"The team undertakes all actions in the case of holding free elections, municipality will become more functional, in order that the transition phase to be shorter process", said minister Ferati.

The next election that is going to be held during this autumn will be the main prove for the future fate of each new municipality. Majority of Serbian community, encouraged by official Belgrade have boycotted the last elections that are held in Kosova.

"Until now, we have not received any response from them. I have my ideas to make an evaluation regarding the percentage of citizens' volition, a municipality will be established, but this issue will be solved by international partners and Serbian Community decision; who will decide together with preparatory teams".

Regarding the next local elections, there are indicators that this election will be postponed, hoping that in the next year Serbs will have more will to participate in these process.

But, Minister Ferati believes that these elections are uncontestable "We may only express our regret if any of localities do not use this opportunity; it will be postponed for the next elections, but I can not risk the other part of the process, which is considered as a solution".

Mr. Ferati and other Kosovar and international officials have held a lot of direct meetings with Serbian community, where the establishment of new municipalities is foreseen. He has listened to their concerns about the process of Decentralization and other concerns as well. A part of Serbs are afraid that they will lose their benefits from Belgrade if they would be included within legal framework of Kosova. Other Serbs, influenced from official Belgrade are prepared to impede this process in order to prohibit well functioning of this society and the state of Kosova.

"In several localities, the interest for the process of decentralization is increased, in some of them. But, the interest is more increased nowadays than it was 7-8 months earlier", said minister Ferati.

"Because a group of villages with about 5 or 6 thousands inhabitants will have their municipality, with all competencies as municipality of Prishtina or as Prizren, Mitrovica and Gjakova/Đakovica has, until it is not regulated by the law in power. These municipalities will have competencies, autonomy and power for higher management than a municipality with 150 thousands inhabitants in Serbia. This is also a full factorization of them in this project".

With Ahtisaari's plan, in north Mitrovica is allowed establishment of a Public University in Serbian language, which now exists but as a parallel structure. Competencies in the realm of secondary education will have Gračanica, Štrpca and Northern Mitrovica. The all new municipalities will take their responsibilities in the area of religious and cultural Heritage and in election of the chief of Police station there, which will have special relation with Belgrade.

There were assessments that after establishment of these new municipalities with majority of Serbs, the Government will be ill-treated and in Kosova will be created even more new municipalities of a model municipality of " Štrpca", where Kosovo constitution is not implemented. Minister of Local Government Administration mentioned Albanians' concerns, but he believes that such of ill-treatment will not happen.

He emphasized that competent bodies will react against violation of law.

"Serbian citizens of Kosova are tired from such actions. They are conscious that each deviation will not be in their benefit. There will not be tolerated any longer and are going to be punished even by International community, and from Kosova Institution because they only cause delays in the process of integration and violates the law", said Minister Ferati.

He also said that now Albanians are more conscious about importance that Decentralization process has and they are confident that its implementation even though it will not be accepted in the beginning will change for good actual situation in Serbian enclaves and will normalize the life, there.

Minister Ferati strongly believes in the success of the project of decentralization, which will eliminate parallel structures in new municipalities' territory. According to him, majority of Serbs are tired of these structures and see no future in them.

Kosova Institutions are doing the best to implement the most sensible part of Ahtisaari's package.

“We have done all we could do as the state institutions. The opportunity for establishment of a new municipality is a constitutional and legal right but it is also a chance given to them. We can only wish that citizens will know how to use this chance”, said minister Ferati.

Implementation of decentralization does not cost a lot until the next local election. The total project, capital investments in municipalities and in other realms, is evaluated that about 30 million euros are required, which will be provided by Kosovo Institutions and International donors.

The interview is made by
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