



Monitoring Regional Cooperation in South East Europe: Country Report - KOSOVO

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List of Abbreviations:

CEFTA – Central European Free Trade Agreement

CPESSEC – Centre of Public Employment Services of Southeast European Countries

EC – European Commission

ECAA – European Common Aviation Area

EPAP – European Partnership Action Plan

EU – European Union

EUOK – European Union Office in Kosovo

EUSR – European Union Special Representative

GDP - Gross domestic product

ILECU - International Law Enforcement Cooperation Unit

IPA – Instrument for pre-Accession

MARRI – Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative

NGO – Non-governmental organization

RAI – Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative

RCC – Regional Cooperation Council

RESPA – Regional School of Public Administration

RP-SSCSSR – Regional Programme on Social Security Coordination and Social Security Reforms in South-East Europe

RRI – Regional Return Initiative

SAPD – Stabilization and Association Process Dialogue

SECI – Southeast European Cooperative Initiative

SEEHN – South-Eastern Europe Health Network

SEETO – South East Europe Transport Observatory

SELEC –Southeast European Law Enforcement Center

UNMIK – United Nations Mission in Kosovo

WB – Western Balkans

1. Background information

Kosovo has been under the interim administration of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999. On 17.2.2008, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia, while on December of same year, the European Union set up a police and rule of law mission (EULEX) who took over from UNMIK, to assist with preserving stability in Kosovo and supervise on matters of rule of law, customs and police.

Currently there are 98¹ (out of 193) countries members of the UN that have recognized Kosovo as an independent state. Currently, 22 out of 27 EU member states have recognized Kosovo².

The non recognitions, especially the EU 5 (Slovakia, Romania, Cyprus, Greece and Spain) are one of the main reasons behind EU not having contractual relations with Kosovo. Any progress within enlargement process is subject to unanimity in the council of the EU, hence this creates obstacle for Kosovo to advance towards EU membership and increases the gap among the Western Balkan (WB) neighbors. Kosovo has political and sectoral structured dialogue with the EU under the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). Kosovo benefits from Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) same as other potential candidate countries. Kosovo has a perspective of EU membership but not yet contractual agreement that would formally pave the way towards European future. The first step forward was marked last fall with the Feasibility Study which was proposed by the European Commission with the aim of assessing capabilities of Kosovo to start negotiations for a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)³. The study called for establishing first contractual relations between EU and Kosovo, which on 10-11.12.2012 the EU Council 'took note' of Commissions assessment but made no commitment towards starting the negotiations on the SAA until June when further progress was made, both on the short term requirements and the Belgrade-Prishtina dialogue. It is still unclear how the EU would sign an SAA with Kosovo once Kosovo meets the short term priorities, having in mind

¹ <http://www.kosovothanksyou.com/>

² As of next year there will be 23 EU countries to recognize Kosovo since it is expected for Croatia to join EU on 1st of July, 2013

³ EC Communication to the EU Council and EP "Feasibility Study for Kosovo 2012" of 10th Oct, 2010

the EU's 5 non-recognizers⁴. This would be an important step since Thessaloniki Summit when European perspective was first promised to Kosovo.⁵

Relations with the US and NATO remain very constructive and strong. US always has had the strongest influence in political agenda in Kosovo while NATO is present on the ground through its KFOR mission (although decreasing in number) providing security in Kosovo since the end of the conflict in 1999.

The political interest to engage in regional cooperation remains high for Kosovo mainly due to ambitions as a new state aiming to get recognitions and become a partner at regional initiatives thus overcoming isolation. On the other side, it is necessary for Kosovo to be part of regional free trade arrangements since it is economically not self-sufficient and is very dependent on the imports. Kosovo's trade balance is marked by a significant trade deficit, which exceeded €2 billion in 2011 (45% of GDP). The EU is by far Kosovo's most important trading partner, accounting for nearly half of its external trade. A significant proportion of Kosovo's total exports (61%) are primary products such as raw materials or goods with a low level of processing and relatively low added value, essentially base metals.⁶ The economy expanded on average by around 4% over the last three years. Growth is expected to have accelerated to 5% in 2011, mainly driven by domestic demand with strong increases in government consumption and investments. Exports of goods and services have also increased, but still cover only about a third of total imports.⁷ The overall performance of the country's economy is based on trade, services, remittances and government investments in infrastructure projects. Hence, its integration and benefit from regional economic cooperation and trade agreements is of high priority and interest.

However the elections in the past two years, which were a complex political exercise, shifted the focus to find solutions on the representation of Kosovo in the regional arena. The elections were another reason the regional cooperation issue was not on the forefront of the government agenda for some time. The latter internal power-struggle combined with the government's missing strategy to tackle the issue of representation has impaired Kosovo's participation in regional

⁴ Feasibility Study requires from Kosovo authorities to deliver on short term priorities (Rule of Law, Public Administration Reform, Protection of Minorities, Trade) before EU can start negotiations for an SAA.

⁵ European Council Summit was held in Thessaloniki on 1993 where the European perspective was promised to Kosovo in the framework of the European future for the whole region.

⁶ EC Staff Working document accompanying the Feasibility Study for Kosovo of 10th Oct, 2012, Page' 20

⁷ Ibid, page 15

cooperation initiatives and task forces operating under the RCC umbrella and to this day this situation continues to be complex.

Main ethnic communities living in Kosovo are of Albanian (majority of population) and Serbian (biggest minority) origin. Depending which ethnic population you ask living in Kosovo the identification would be with their southern neighbour Albania respectively northern neighbour Serbia. Hence the Kosovar identity, as such, is more associated with territorial/geographic terms than cultural, ethnic or linguistic. Majority of Kosovo is of Albanian language hence the language barrier has complicated its participation in regional fora, whereby the rest of the Western Balkan countries speak languages of Slavic origin and hence can more easily understand each other than is the case with Kosovo.⁸ This is one element which hinders regional cooperation and therefore has caused in several occasions regional events to be held only between Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia in order to take advantage of using Albanian as a language of the meetings. Religious diversity and tolerance is one trait that depicts ethnic Albanian culture which in Kosovo can be of majority Muslim or Catholic background and is a characteristic which supports regional cooperation.

The geographical position of Kosovo poses significant difficulties, mainly due to Serbia's and BiH non recognition of Kosovo and therefore the travel to those countries causes tremendous difficulties with documents, licence plates, visas and car or health insurances. Additionally, a concrete obstacle to good regional cooperation is the poorly developed infrastructure throughout the region, although this is improving⁹. Observing the existing flight network in the WB the easiest place to meet for people coming from the Western Balkans is Vienna, Budapest, Ljubljana or Istanbul– all countries outside the region and among few destinations with direct flights.. Until now, there is no Balkan air flight company which is well connected throughout the region. In addition, there are visa requirements for Kosovo¹⁰ passport holders to enter BiH,

⁸ The language barrier is particularly evident for Kosovo public administration representatives (mid 40 - 50s) which speak neither English nor Serbian. As underlined by the interviewees from RP-SSCSSR.

⁹ Kosovo has only recently (27.11.2012) inaugurated its first highway linking Prishtina with Tirana. The connection with its other neighbours (Skopje, Podgorica, Belgrade) is via regular magistrale roads.

¹⁰ "Living in Gheto" FORUM 2015, 2010. Kosovo passport holders can travel Visa free only to 4 countries in the region, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey. As of 2012, based on Kosovo – Serbia Dialogue outcomes, travel to Serbia has been also facilitated with Kosovo passports or regular ID.

Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. Only as of 2012 it has been possible for Kosovo citizens to enter Serbia.

However, last few years the travel and visa process has been facilitated and participation of Kosovo authorities in regional meetings has become more regular. Strong hesitation of Serbia supported in several occasions from BiH and Romania remains the major obstacle for Kosovo to participate in regional initiatives. All these factors add to the existing impediments for Kosovo being connected as well as benefiting from regional initiatives.

From the international presence in Kosovo few main moments should be mentioned. The double-hatted office of the EU Special Representative and the International Civilian Representative has been decoupled. The office of the EU Special Representative and the European Commission Liaison Office have been merged into one EU Office. This has enhanced the EU's presence and visibility in Kosovo. The EUSR /Head of EU office in Kosovo has also appointed an advisor on regional cooperation which shows the importance the EU has given into assisting Kosovo in joining the regional structures.

To reflect increasing capacities of the Kosovo authorities, the mandate of EULEX has been reconfigured and downsized. To assist the Kosovo authorities in facing the remaining challenges, its mandate has been extended until June 2014. Kosovo needs to maintain good cooperation with the mission and actively support the implementation of its mandate. The Commission is cooperating closely with EULEX throughout its reconfiguration to ensure a smooth transition and sustained support to the Kosovo authorities.¹¹ All these elements paint the existing landscape of Kosovo in regional initiatives which will be further elaborated in the following chapter.

¹¹ EC Staff Working document accompanying the Feasibility Study for Kosovo of 10th Oct. 2012, Page' 6 available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/kosovo/index_en.htm

2. Analysis of Regional Cooperation – Case of Kosovo

The story of Kosovo in regional cooperation is very different from the rest of its neighboring countries. Kosovo struggles to this day to be represented on an equal footing with the rest of the countries in regional fora, or at least to have its representation not questioned or dismissed based on its non-recognition by few regional countries.¹² This part of the paper will endeavor to examine the representation and participation of Kosovo in regional fora through analysis of two following components. The first component will depict the participation of Kosovo in regional cooperation in general, including RCC and the six regional initiatives taken as a case study for the purposes of this research.¹³ Drawing a special emphasis on the political milieu, this part will tend to gravitate more towards political implications. The second part will put emphasis on the institutional structure of Kosovo and analyze the capacities of implementation of regional initiatives on the national level as well as their performance. This part will present the evaluation of the dimensions based on three indicators: **Implementation** (legislation, administrative structures, technical infrastructure), **Local Ownership** (resources, agenda setting, eagerness of the state, decision making) and **Gender** (women inclusion, gender mainstreaming).

Regional Representation

Kosovo aims to advance the regional cooperation, respectively good neighborly relations as well as contribute to the Brussels and Washington agenda for achieving a stable, democratic and a region integrated into EU and NATO. Strategic aim of Kosovo's foreign policy with regards to the region is to promote Kosovo as a contributor to security and stability in the region.¹⁴ Moreover, Kosovo aspires to be an actor ensuring peace and stability in the region with the aim to intensify and enlarge the diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with all its neighbors. Kosovo also aspires to become member of regional organizations and contribute to good neighborly relations and joint aspirations for EU membership. The representation and

¹² The biggest opposition comes from Serbia, but also from BiH and Romania in some occasions – note from all interviewees.

¹³ Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative -MARRI, Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative-RAI, Southeast European Law Enforcement Center -SELEC, Southeast European Health Network-SEEHN, Regional programme on Social Security Coordination and Social Security Reform in Southeast Europe -RP-SSCSSR, Centre for Public Employment Services of Southeast European Countries-CPESSEC.

¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Republic of Kosovo. Visit <http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=1,11> »Foreign Policy Objectives of the Kosovo Republic« page 2.

participation of Kosovo in regional initiatives is very important for it not to remain isolated from the rest of the region.

Unfortunately this willingness and positive attitude from Kosovo has little or no effect for its representation, participation and regional cooperation. The non recognition of final status settlement by Serbia and BiH remains the main reason for this. Russia and China as permanent members of the UN Security Council also did not accept the declaration of Kosovo's independence of 17.02.2008 as a wide internationally accepted proposal.¹⁵ As a consequence, Serbia continuously blocked or boycotted regional initiatives where Kosovo has been invited as a partner. The only exceptions were the regional initiatives where the signatory party on behalf of Kosovo was UNMIK where Kosovo representatives would sit side by side or behind UNMIK representatives.

Since the take-over of the RCC from Stability Pact for SEE in 2008, Kosovo has continued to be represented with the same formula "UNMIK/Kosovo". The reconfiguration of UNMIK has foreseen to facilitate this process, where necessary and possible, for Kosovo's continued engagement and assumptions of international agreements. The shift in policy came with the Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, whereby Kosovo's external representation needed reconsideration. UNMIK is the signatory on behalf of Kosovo on a number of international agreements as well as regional initiatives (Energy Community Treaty, European Common Aviation Area Agreement, South East Europe Transport Observatory, Central European Free Trade Agreement — CEFTA, Regional Cooperation Council). Although under the Kosovo constitution, the Kosovo authorities ought to ensure its regional and international representation, the Kosovo authorities, however, are not accepted as a successor to UNMIK by some parties to these agreements. This has caused serious challenges for Kosovo to be represented in regional affairs.

Kosovar delegates have not been able to participate in all events hosted by countries that do not recognise Kosovo, due to strong resistance of Serbia but also difficulties in relation to the use of Kosovo passports. Such occurrences have become increasingly frequent and have been an

¹⁵ Kosovo may get 2/3 of necessary votes at the UN General Assembly to become a UN member, however as China and Russia - permanent members of UNSC would block Kosovo membership in UN by using a veto.

obstacle to the development of effective regional cooperation. The EU has stressed that regional cooperation must be inclusive in order to be successful and regrets that disagreements regarding the manner of Kosovo's participation in regional fora have resulted in Kosovo's absence from key regional events.

Kosovo representatives were continually not able to participate in key political meetings of regional character such as the Summit of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) held in Chisinau in June 2009, then in 2010 in Istanbul, in 2011 in Budva and in 2012 in Belgrade.

Moreover, Kosovo participation in RCC Board meetings became a quest on its own with Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities were unable to find arrangements for Kosovo authorities to enter the country with Kosovar passport, although they were obliged to facilitate under the RCC Host Country Agreement.¹⁶ This situation continued until September 2009 when a special arrangement was found for Kosovar authorities to attend only RCC hosted meetings.

Although a streamlined procedure was eventually put in place for holders of Kosovo passports to obtain visas to attend RCC activities in BiH, the visa procedure remains cumbersome and time-consuming for other regional events held there. The latter circumstances have been the main reason for Kosovo's non participation in the RCC Board meetings between June 2008 and September 2009, as well as other regional events hosted by RCC at this period.

With the evolving political developments on the ground and especially with the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling on 22.07.2010 that Kosovo's declaration of independence was not in violation of international law, Kosovo authorities were not content with their UNMIK/Kosovo *modus vivendi* for regional representation. This together with the internal changes of the RCC national coordinator resulted for Kosovo authorities not to participate at RCC Board meetings in 2010. They did, however, participate, as part of the UNMIK/Kosovo delegation at the RCC

¹⁶ On September 14, 2007 in Plovdiv, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other SEECP participating States, as well as UNMIK on behalf of Kosovo signed the agreement establishing the secretariat of the RCC in Sarajevo. The Host Country agreement (HCA) provides a sound legal basis for the RCC Secretariat to start its work as planned by the end of February 2008. The HCA allows also the Secretariat to conclude a Headquarters Agreement with Belgium to establish the RCC Liaison Office in Brussels.

Annual Meeting in Montenegro in June 2011 and at the Board meeting of September 2011. The new coordinator of the RCC office was eventually appointed in May 2011.

The Kosovo institutions attended most regional and international meetings for which UNMIK facilitation is required, thereby enabling Kosovo to remain included in regional/ meetings. However, most of them still posed difficulty with representation of Kosovo under its constitutional name hence making it difficult for practical cooperation let alone benefit or show performance in regional fora.

Against this background, since 2008, Kosovo was assisted by the International Civilian Office (ICO) and the International Steering Group (ISG) in seeking representation in international and regional organizations. With the involvement and support of these two bodies, Kosovo has managed to become a member of only three international organizations IMF, World Bank and EBRD. Membership and representation in other important international organizations such as NATO, EU, UN, OSCE, CoE - important in strengthening Kosovo's international legitimacy - still lag behind.¹⁷ The promise for more international representation and the inability of the independence supporters to effectively deliver upon such promises leaves the Government in Prishtina without realistic prospects to soon acquire membership in regional initiatives.

Following the UN General Assembly Resolution of September 2010 the EU has facilitated a dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. The dialogue was launched in March 2011 to promote cooperation, achieve progress on the path to the EU and improve the lives of the people. The parties reached agreements on free movement of persons, customs stamps, recognition of university diplomas, cadastre records, civil registries, Integrated Border Management (IBM) and on regional cooperation. The agreement on regional cooperation of 24.02.2012 provides the modalities for Kosovo's participation and representation in regional cooperation arrangements.¹⁸ This has been an important step ensuring participation of Kosovo in regional initiatives. However, there have been several occasions during 2012, especially in the beginning,

¹⁷ For more read also »The unsupervised state« KIPRED, Policy Brief No.1/12-August 2012 www.kipred.net

¹⁸ See Annex 1 "Arrangements Regarding Regional Representation and Cooperation" since Kosovo and Serbia do not sign on the same page these EU facilitated arrangements are considered an agreement between two parties.

that either Kosovo or Serbian delegates have withdrawn from the meetings due to different interpretations to these arrangements.¹⁹

Kosovo's membership and representation in regional initiatives became a priority for Kosovo government to show commitment and achievements against its electorate. In parallel, Kosovo's representation and membership in regional organizations became heavily spoken media topic. Regional cooperation is seen by the political elites as very important in convincing the electorate that Kosovo statehood is recognized internationally.

In this light, eager to gain legitimacy in regional organizations, Prishtina ended up accepting a controversial footnote on its name when being represented in regional organizations and meetings. Republic of Kosovo accepted to be represented in regional organizations as Kosovo*. The asterisk would read "*this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence*".

Left without other alternatives, international partners have pressed Prishtina and Belgrade into an agreement which would potentially normalize the relations between the two. EU has used carrot and stick policy by promising candidate status for EU membership for Serbia and regional representation and visa liberalization for Kosovo. Serbia gained candidate status for EU membership whereas Kosovo neither achieved regional representation nor visa liberalization. The regional representation was subject of interpretation of the agreement while the visa roadmap was given in June 2012 requiring around 96 criteria divided in 4 blocks to be implemented by Kosovo authorities, a process which is expected to last for at least few years.²⁰

Belgrade and Prishtina were given different interpretations on the implementation of the asterisk agreement. Belgrade was told that in every regional organization, Kosovo would be represented by both the asterisk and the footnote reading the text. Prishtina, on the other hand, was told that it would be represented only by the asterisk in the nameplates, while the footnote would be

¹⁹ RCC Board meeting in Sarajevo 15.3.2012 where Serbian delegation withdrew its presence from the meeting and Conference "Partnership for change, civil society and the governments in Western Balkans and Turkey" 15.3.2012 organized by Serbian government in Belgrade where Kosovo delegates withdrew .

²⁰ Visa Liberalization with Kosovo Roadmap. Full text of the documents can be found at:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/documents/eu_travel/visa_liberalisation_with_kosovo_roadmap.pdf

mentioned only in written documents. As a result, the regional organizations received the Brussels “conclusions” without guidance on how to implement it, thus leaving it subject to interpretation for all parties. Since Serbia has never accepted to sign any document, including this agreement, in the same page with Kosovo which would ultimately mean recognition of other entity, there is no formal agreement on what was agreed besides the famous Brussels “conclusions” that later turned out to be also in different versions , as posted in both governments websites. In all this, Kosovo – with or without the asterisk and the footnote – is still unable to achieve full representation in majority of regional organizations.

Regional Participation on six chosen initiatives for this study

The agreement on regional cooperation of February 2012 should allow Kosovo to increase and extend its direct participation in regional mechanisms. This includes the Transport Community Treaty, judicial cooperation, and arrangements for employment and social policies within the framework of the SEE, Employment and Social Policy Network and the SEE Health Network. It should also ensure Kosovo's full participation in the Roma Decade.²¹ The process of dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina on regional representation and other hot topics is still in progress. The implementation in good-faith of those agreements will determine Kosovo’s future in the regional fora where Serbia still has a strong upper-hand when it comes to Kosovo participation and representation.

The same challenges for Kosovo exist also with the six regional initiatives under the loop of this study. Initiatives like MARRI, RAI and SELEC are of high priority for Kosovo Government.²² With regards to MARRI and RAI²³, Kosovo government has sent official letters requesting membership in these regional organizations to which it has never officially received a reply with approval or dismissal.²⁴ Although the EU office in Kosovo attempted to facilitate the negotiations with MARRI this remains a challenging task since Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are members and they have to agree to broaden the membership of the

²¹ EC Staff Working document accompanying the Feasibility Study for Kosovo of 10th Oct, 2010, Page’ 19

²² Statement by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Petrit Selimi at the Regional Workshop organized by EUSR and KCSF in Prishtina on 7.12.2012

²³ Serbia actively place against Kosovo’s membership into these initiatives. Immediately after the Kosovo letter requesting membership to RAI, Serbian MFA has sent a several pages of legal justification why RAI should not do so.

²⁴ Kosovo Government through MFA sent a letter requesting membership to RAI Secretariat on 2.4.2012

organization.²⁵ Same holds true for membership in RAI. Until now Kosovo has only an observer status in RAI Steering Group.

Kosovo under UNMIK has been an observer in former SECI Center now SELEC with its seat in Bucharest. Two developments have happened with SELEC since then. Firstly SELEC has sent a letter to UNMIK asking them to clarify which kind of relationship they intend to have in the future with SELEC to which there was no reply. Secondly the Kosovo authorities through MFA have sent an email requesting information on membership and afterwards an official letter was sent to the SEEPAG chair requesting membership to which again no reply was received.

All of the above-mentioned correspondence as well as from respective regional initiatives the research found that Kosovo authorities did not meet the appropriate procedural requests of either organization. Each regional initiative has appropriate bodies and manners which new members should address their request in an official fashion. Although the reasons for Kosovo authorities not receiving replies on admission is not purely procedural still a thorough analysis of requirements from each regional initiative should be conducted by Kosovo administration before official ways of communication are initiated. Otherwise this shows lack of knowledge, and professionalism.

On the other hand, Kosovo Police and Ministry of Internal Affairs are very much active in ILECU (International Law Enforcement Cooperation Unit).²⁶ The Government of Kosovo it has approved the decision to establish the latter, which will function as part of the Kosovo Police. The following will be incorporated within these units: Office of INTERPOL, EUROPOL, EUROJUST and FRONTEX. This unit has a primary objective of coordinating the activities between law enforcement agencies as part of the fight against organized crime and terrorism.

²⁵ <http://www.marri-rc.org/Default.aspx?mId=1&Lan=EN>

²⁶ ILECU – is a project financed by EC IPA MIPD 2011-2013 on the Fight against organized crime: International Cooperation in Criminal Justice . The project is designed in accordance with the recognized challenges of the JHA system, and as such, it will contribute to strengthening international law enforcement cooperation in the fight against organized crime and corruption, and better understanding EU best practice in justice and law enforcement are. In fact, in the regional context, the objectives are to strengthen regional and international cross-border cooperation mechanisms between law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities in the combat of the various forms of organized crime and corruption, through networking, mutual legal assistance, transfer of proceedings, requests for extradition, joint investigation teams and witness protection programs.

Additionally, with the objective of coordinating the international cooperation within this unit, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and State Prosecution. For this the respective department within Kosovo Police has dedicated a considerable, space, equipment and staff²⁷.

Unfortunately, out of three targeted regional initiatives from social development area Kosovo is not a member of neither SEE Health Network nor Centre for Public Employment Services of SEE thus very little can be reported on these two. According to officials from Ministry of Health, they sent an official request to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo to ask for official membership in the SEEHN so as the health officials could take part in those meetings but they never received an answer from the MFA. On the other side, the MFA officials said they were unclear of the membership procedures and how to contact the SEEHN Secretariat hence no further progress was made in this front.²⁸

Out of six (6) regional initiatives taken as a case study for the purposes of this research Kosovo has participated in only one of them i.e Regional Programme on Social Security Coordination and Social Security Reforms in South East Europe (RP-SSCSSR). The reason for the non-problematic participation of Kosovo in this initiative was due to it being an EU initiated regional affair, i.e. funded by EU and being a CoE project. The purpose of the RP-SSCSSR Joint Programme between the EC and the CoE was to continue assisting the beneficiary parties in the South-East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia and Turkey, as well as Kosovo) in further enhancing the regional coordination of the social security systems and facilitating institutional, legislative and administrative reforms in the field of social protection according to CoE and best EU practice.

The RP-SSCSSR has started in March 2008 until November 2010. This Programme was an integral continuation of the Social Institutions Support Joint Programme of the EC and the CoE under the CARDS Regional Action Programme (2004-2007).²⁹ The participation and benefit of

²⁷ Fully IT equipped, high security office, with 7 employees have been allocated to perform ILECU obligations.

²⁸ From the discussions we had with Ms. Mentor Sadiku- Acting Director of DEIPC in Ministry of Health and Mr. Melhin Mahmuti – official from the Directorate for Regional cooperation in MFA.

²⁹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/sscssr/Edito/001Feb06-1_en.asp

Kosovo from this regional programme is limited.³⁰ Participation in regional programs is regarded as additional work where major impediment is language barrier. Although, the participation at events and activities of this regional programme is at satisfactory the knowledge level and ability to transpose the regional best practice into national legislation and practice is almost impossible or slow. This is mainly due to lack of capacities, inter-ministerial coordination and appropriate budgetary allocation to transpose regional commitments into local policies. The only experience sharing project and exchange of practices in social areas is implemented with Albania. In some occasions, irrelevant Kosovo officials have been sent to regional meetings to balance the participation among Ministries, to respect the hierarchy and even based on ability to speak foreign languages. It is difficult to follow on regional programmes in particular when one needs to have proper national capacities to coordinate or reform social policies or sign bilateral agreements. The coordination within national priorities has also been difficult, in particular with the Ministry of Health which plays a major role in social reforms.

For the analysis of Kosovo's place in regional initiative it is clear that those regional initiatives that are mostly run and on the regional level (i.e. MARRI, RAI, SELEC, SEEHN but also RCC) they are the most problematic for Kosovo's participation. The regional cooperation initiatives led by the EU or some other international organization tend to have easier participation methods for Kosovo. Hence they insure all-inclusiveness, especially on the technical and operational level.

Institutional challenges

Kosovo government is not only a victim of external factors that impede Kosovo benefits from regional initiatives. There is an essential lack of understanding in Kosovo government and administration as well as a lack of comprehensive strategy and coordination for external representation and for joining regional bodies and organizations. The arrangements for Kosovo's participation in regional events have followed the ad-hoc arrangements usually done at the last minute without proper inter-coordination. Kosovo's approach to UNMIK's role has not been consistent either. This has led again to ad hoc arrangements on a number of occasions.

³⁰ Input from interviewees from MLSW participating at activities and board meetings of RP-SSCSSR.

The cumbersome initiatives from two contended structures on regional and foreign affairs (the Office of Prime Minister with national coordinator on Regional initiatives and recently established Ministry of Foreign Affairs) have led to the lack of coordination and mismanagement which reflected Kosovo's representation in the regional fora. The administrative instruction instructing Kosovo delegates for participation in regional meetings is clear and concise but in practice it is inefficient.³¹ Due to different approaches of different regional initiatives depending on their host country or organization there are divergent interpretations and specific circumstances that require last minute instructions. At operational level the line Ministries and independent government agencies continuously are faced with difficulties in participation due to lack of human resources capable to attend and link regional obligations with national policies.

Role of the Office of Prime Minister - Office of Prime Minister since the start of Stability Pact (SP) has established an office for coordination of SP activities comprised of three employees, a coordinator who was politically appointed by the PM and two civil servants. This has continued to persevere until today except with transformation of SP to RCC the coordinator of RCC was the political advisor of the Deputy PM and had only one civil servant dealing with regional cooperation.³² At this point in time the first RCC national Coordinator and Advisor to Deputy PM endeavored to establish contact points in each Ministry where they could coordinate the invitations coming from RCC (through UNMIK) to the Kosovo authorities so that relevant line Ministries would be informed and ready to participate. These contact points in line Ministries were usually placed within European Integration departments utilizing same individuals responsible for the EU affairs.

The reason why the national coordinator for regional initiatives and RCC is a political figure directly responsible to PM was done initially because the MFA is relatively newly established and doesn't have institutional memory of SP and RCC activities before 2008. Unlike other countries in the region Kosovo situation is specific and due to sensitive issues the direct approach to PM for the time being is considered necessary. However, such structure patronizes the regional participation and representation and diminishes the role of line ministries and creates

³¹ Administrative Instruction on participation at regional meeting issued by MFA. Dated 22.04.2012

³² Government Decision 228/08 of 19.11.2008 transformed the Stability Pact Office into Office for RCC. Responsible to implement this decision is national coordinator of the Office for Regional Cooperation Council.

unpleasant atmosphere internally with regards to obligations and follow up from regional commitments

Role of Ministry of Foreign Affairs – With the establishment of MFA, those dealing with regional cooperation could easily notice the contention between the OPM and the MFA on issues of regional affairs. In 2008 it was even more discerning than today since the PM and the MFA were representing conflicting political parties (PDK vs. LDK), while today they both come from same party (PDK). Substantial disagreements were very astute back then and they reflected in the participation at regional events. The differences in opinion still persist between these two institutions and those civil servants belonging to opposite parties although the general idea is that after 2014 the department on regional cooperation will be entirely shifted within the auspices of the MFA.

Line Ministries and Agencies – represent either direct beneficiaries or those institutions bound to obligations or commitments made at regional level. Unfortunately, there is a general lack of understanding in line ministries and independent government agencies how to follow-up and benefit from regional initiatives. In several cases a major mechanisms and structures need to be in place in order to follow up from regional meetings. It would not be too presumptuous to say that officials having relevant travel documents, speaking languages and having no family obstacles participate on regional and international meetings. In most cases an official that speaks English participates regardless of relevance, or in other cases the attendance is done in rotation so that everyone has a chance to go. Consequently, there is no proper follow up or coordination after those meetings abroad.

These trips are mostly considered as study excursions/meetings whereby they would share experiences and once they are back there is no follow-up that would ensure government bodies would benefit and keep further track on developments in the region and apply them at home. Although the situation has slightly improved in the past few years still major change in attitude is required at this front. An interviewed official in charge of regional cooperation linked the latter weak coordination of the government bodies with Kosovo's non-membership in regional initiatives which does not give incentive for the structures to be strengthened at home if proper regional participation and ultimately regional cooperation is not ensured.³³ Once Kosovo could

³³ Interviewees stressed this on political aspect as well.

be an equal part and hence have direct benefit from regional initiatives this will immediately require strengthening of institutional structures for coordination inside the government.

2.1 IMPLEMENTATION

As described in the previous parts, out of six regional initiatives monitored in this study Kosovo participated only in the activities of the RP-SSCSSR. Although analyzing the implementation indicators is limited to only this regional initiative the assessments and outcomes from this part also relate to meetings, activities, regional forums and participation or representation of Kosovo in similar initiatives in the area of rule of law and social development issues in general. The implementation in the sectors of rule of law and social development has been monitored according to four indicators: legislation, administrative structures, technical infrastructure and practices and procedures as is limited to participation in events or regional meetings.

2.1.1 Legislation

Kosovo underwent an intensive legislative agenda since 2000. In average 100 to 150 pieces of primary and secondary legislation needed to be drafted and adopted each year. The majority of regional initiatives did not directly require new legislation to be passed in Kosovo. Since most of the legislation was prepared by international and European consultants the enacted legislation always considered obligations under international agreements and where relevant the commitments or obligations deriving from regional agreements such as CEFTA³⁴, SEETO, ECT, ECAA etc.

Due to Kosovo's participation in the Stabilization and Association Process Dialogue, the framework for WB towards EU integration, in general it can be stated that the legislation fulfils the regionally set criteria and standards. Usually, the legislation is sponsored by Ministries, where the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo plays a major role. During the research it was found that it is impossible to propose new legislation or reforms based on some good practice or coordination with the regional partners mainly due to intensive legislative agenda, ad-hoc planning, budgetary limitations and capacities to link national priorities with regional

³⁴ With regards to CEFTA there is big disappointment from Kosovo government blaming EU not being able to keep Serbia accountable. "EU delivered too slowly at the expense of Kosovo" stated Mr. Edon Cana (National Coordinator for Regional Cooperation) at the Regional Workshop organized in Prishtina on 07.12.2012.

programs/initiatives. The enacted legislation is sufficiently detailed, however by laws and sometimes concrete action plans and strategies are missing or their implementation lags behind. For example there is a strategy for anti-corruption which has been passed however their translation into by laws and administrative regulations is missing along with proper budgetary allocations. Another example is the law on re-admission whose implementation has been very difficult due to low knowledge of necessary secondary legislation and mechanisms to be put in place for its implementation.

2.1.2 Administrative Structures

Kosovo only participated at RP-SSCSSR and as an observer under UNMIK at SELEC and RAI events. After the declaration of independence the participation of UNMIK was complicated as described in the previous chapter, thus the findings from this indicator have certain limitations. The findings of this research illustrate that the participation in aforementioned initiatives has not had a significant impact on the administrative structures in Kosovo. There was no creation of new units or bodies and for all of them functional redistribution of the same staff was utilized. These have been primarily various administrative units in line ministries or independent agencies dealing with the issues and fields covered by the activities of the specific initiative.³⁵

In practice, there are two concrete cases which can be reported when it comes to the question of certain advancements in administrative structures. The first one, working on the rule of law area is related to ILECU and placed at the Kosovo Police HQ and was created as a new unit to perform the obligations under that umbrella. Whereas, the second case relates to RP-SSCSSR programme which is already closed as project/regional programme. In the latter programme two (2) employees of MLSW have participated and after the closure of the project they have no links with the regional programme or the partners from the region. For this particular purpose, the existing staff has been used and deployed in charge of implementation of activities within this regional programme. It is important to note that there was no specific training offered to them except the ones offered within the EU funded project. Last but not least, Kosovo doesn't have any seconded staff in regional bodies. The lack of seconded staff in regional bodies dealing with the regional initiatives is explained by the interviewees in two different ways: they either

³⁵ Cases were found in Anti Corruption Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Health.

underline that Kosovo is a new and small administration so there is no possibility for seconded staffor it's a result of missing formal representation of Kosovo in these bodies.³⁶

2.1.3 Technical Infrastructure

Not many changes have been also introduced in the field of technical infrastructure either. For the purposes of operation of the initiatives, no new facilities were purchased, rent or built. In case of ILECU some renovation of the building and adaptation was needed. For the majority of the initiatives also the technical capacities have not been increased when compared to the capacities of the responsible bodies before establishment of the frameworks for cooperation. Eventual purchases have been rather of common nature and related to software update or replacement of old devices. Again ILECU represents an exception in that field as well. Due to the specific area of activities, mainly police cooperation, the provision of secure channels of communication was highly required for an effective functioning of the initiative and all needed devices have been purchased, equipment installed and staff trained.³⁷

2.1.4 Practices and procedures

The practice and procedures for participation in regional initiatives are not standard and they differ from initiative to initiative. One should not underestimate the role of the host country as well since various interpretations and attitudes towards Kosovo come depending on host country or organization, in several cases even individuals play a role. The preparatory meetings at the national level to prepare regional position are missing or are basically organized on an ad-hoc basis or consulted in small circles of political advisers. The national level meetings are usually initiated by relevant ministries on the level of directorates or sometimes even at Ministers level. In general, the meetings are organized on Ministerial level where political advisers play a crucial role. No fixed structures are in place. All of the respondents underline that when consultation needed with national coordinator or representatives of the MFA it is difficult to reach and due to several addressees inconsistent instructions are sent.³⁸ Adding to this, their input and contribution is not always appropriate or relevant. Moreover, the meetings are attended by

³⁶ As underlined by the interviewees in more than two occasions.

³⁷ Ibid 24

³⁸ For example the Administrative Instruction (22.04.2012) giving guidelines for implementing the representation of Kosovo in regional initiatives appoints 4 officials responsible, two of which belong to MFA and two others to OPM. On top of this, the consultation is also done through the national coordinator for regional cooperation and Deputy Minister of MFA.

external experts and numerous consultants working in Kosovo, both on EU and other missions. However, even if their inputs are necessary local experts regard their presence as disclosing national position too early in the process and have reservations when foreign experts are involved.

Civil society organizations are not included in the work of government with regards to regional affairs. Some government bodies conduct consultations; however, the processes are ad-hoc rather than formalized and structured. Only Anti Corruption Agency (ACA) works with the CSOs and includes them in its activities, but still ACA expects the CSOs to become partners in fighting corruption and not only serving as a critical mass. This approach should be rethought since CSOs enjoy the freedom to be partners and become “whistle blowers” when necessary. Whereas, the rest of the government include CSOs in its own activities in a limited way, such as joint events organization³⁹ (conferences, round tables) or programs implementation (mainly in the field of social policies). CSOs are not included or consulted during the decision making process in any initiative. The majority of respondents do not recognize a need for inclusion of civil society in the practices of regional cooperation initiatives as they consider this purely government business.

2.2 LOCAL OWNERSHIP

2.2.1 Resources

The majority of respondents declare that there is sufficient budget allocation for the implementation of the regional initiatives. But, when asked about precise amounts that have been allocated for certain initiative government officials can hardly give an answer. This outcome mainly comes due to Kosovo regularly having budget suffice at the end of the year, and in some occasions even the membership fee for RCC⁴⁰ has been taken from budgetary reserves through government decision. The research outcome shows that budget has never been an impediment for Kosovo’s participation in regional initiatives.⁴¹ On the other hand, there is a lack of planning culture and allocation of budgetary lines for commitments or even participation at regional meetings since these are covered from goods and services budget lines within ministries.⁴²None

³⁹ For example Germia Hill Conference organized by MFA jointly with ECFR is such a case. However, NGOs here are mainly the ones present from the region, whereas local NGOs have not been invited in sufficient numbers.

⁴⁰ Kosovo contributes 40,000 EUR annually for the RCC.

⁴¹ An interviewee responded that Kosovo has around 500,000 EUR available yearly for regional cooperation.

⁴² In the case of Agency for Anti Corruption about 2,5% of its annual budget is invested in regional trainings.

of the officials was able to answer how much of GDP is allocated for regional participation and representation.

The solutions regarding financial resources in the analyzed initiatives of regional cooperation vary significantly. As some budgets do not include any resources from the national level and the local ownership does not exist in this dimension at all, such as in the case of the RP SSCSSR, the other initiatives include national contributions in their budgets; however the amounts and ways of contributing are not coherent. For example RAI has fixed rate of 20,000 EUR whereas other initiatives have quotas and formulas based on GDP. However, for Kosovo a challenge remains at the political level but when it comes to payment the respondents say that Kosovo is always ready to pay contributions.

2.2.2 Agenda setting

Another important indicator representing the level of local ownership is who sets the issues that are discussed in national meetings and/or regional meetings. With regards to monitored areas the national meetings are hardly organized. The meetings are organized for internal matters and they have a clearly task-oriented character and the agenda is obviously related to the purpose on which the meeting has been set. If there is a linkage with regional commitments depends a lot on the pro active participation of local experts at regional initiatives and bringing it into national discussions. In the majority of the regional initiatives the agenda setting is conducted at the managerial level in relevant ministries. The preparatory discussions for the regional meetings are usually conducted for nominating the participants and instructing them in case of counter moves from Serbia. As far as Kosovo is concerned, the respondents believe that the final responsibility usually is in the hands of the regional bodies setting the agenda. As previously mentioned, the cooperation with the civil society sector is rather poor in Kosovo and this is reflected also in the influence of civil society organizations on the agenda setting which remains very limited.

2.2.3 Eagerness of state

The eagerness of the state represents another crucial factor that shapes the level of local ownership in the regional initiatives. The example of RP-SSCSSR shows that predominantly the rhythm and frequency of meetings is set by regional programme headquarters/secretariat. The

research concludes that Kosovo doesn't show great eagerness in neither hosting nor initiating meetings of regional nature. Somehow, the respondents are self satisfied and excuse themselves as stating that Kosovo is young country thus initiative is not expected. In general, the way the national and regional meetings are conducted varies depending on the frequency set by regional initiatives themselves. In sum, the regional level meetings are organized usually once or twice each year and are initiated either by the regional bodies or in seldom cases by the member states.

2.2.5 Decision making

Decision making represents final indicator of local ownership. Kosovo lacks structures and mechanisms responsible for decision making. Due to sensitiveness of the issue the national coordinator for regional cooperation reports to the Prime Minister, thus making him an ultimate authority when it comes to decisions. However, a general trend may be identified that the majority of decisions concerning the implementation of the initiative on the national level are made by relevant ministers, heads of independent agencies and high ranking officials. Some less important decisions are made on the high managerial level of relevant ministries. RP-SSCSSR was a special case, since the body responsible for the national coordination was at the Department of Social Affairs at MLSW, therefore the decisions were usually made by the Head of this Department. The operational decisions are made on lower level of the state administration, usually the responsibility for implementation is appointed to managers and high level managers – heads of departments and heads of sectors. It is important to note that interviewees had serious problems with identifying any examples where decisions needed to be taken thus limiting the importance of the indicator on the share of local ownership.

2.3 GENDER ISSUES

2.3.1 Inclusion of woman

Gender issues represent the last indicator analyzed during the research which is based on two indicators, namely inclusion of women and gender mainstreaming. In most of the regional initiatives and meetings men constitute the majority of people involved. However, the involvement, implementation and operations side on the national level is on the hands of women. For example, in the case of the RP-SSCSSR there are two men who are engaged in its implementation whereas the same department constitutes 60% of women and 40% of men. In

addition, the Office for coordination with RCC is lead by a man (national coordinator) and supported by two women. The respondents explain it mainly by the fact that Kosovo state administration is generally dominated by women when it comes to administrative and support staff⁴³, whereas managerial positions belong to men.⁴⁴ It should also be noted that due to family obligations and mindset man travel much more than woman.⁴⁵

However, this does not mean that there are no women at Ministerial and higher managerial positions as one can note that the President of Kosovo is woman, there are woman Ministers and indeed a chief negotiator for Kosovo's participation in regional meetings was a woman - Deputy PM Edita Tahiri. All in all, one can conclude that men occupy and play a major role when it comes to regional cooperation.

2.3.2 Gender mainstreaming

The question of gender mainstreaming needs much more attention in Kosovo when it comes to international and regional affairs. Alongside with good governance, transparency and accountability the government of Kosovo has included gender mainstreaming as horizontal priority within its public administration reform plan. However, the low number of women in the decision making structures of the regional initiatives seems not to be an effect of strategic approach but rather incidental. On the other hand, women tend to be less proactive or ready to travel and assume obligations of regional nature in comparison to men. This might have the explanations in the culture and mindset of the Kosovans as interestingly quoted by one high official asking a women employee to attend a regional meeting where the answer was only if accompanied by another female colleague.⁴⁶ Therefore, there are considerations to include gender related issues in the work and policies presently governing regional and international affairs.

⁴³ The office for regional cooperation at OPM employs three (3) women and a man holding the position of National Coordinator for Regional Cooperation.

⁴⁴ For example the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA) has 34 employees where men occupy management positions, whereas 13 employees about 33% are women occupy mainly administrative positions. ACA's regional cooperation office has 4 employees, where 2 or 50% are woman.

⁴⁵ Due to the nature of work for example at the Ministry of Internal Affairs all regional tasks are dealt by man.

⁴⁶ Interview with the Head of ACA.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

As it was perceptible from this study the Kosovo story in regional cooperation is very different from the rest of its neighboring countries. Kosovo still continues to struggle for equal representation with the rest of the countries in regional meetings, or at least to have its representation not questioned or discharged based on its non-recognition by regional countries, mainly Serbia and BiH but also Romania and Moldova. The challenges for membership into regional organizations are three fold: first one is certainly blockade from Serbia, which leads to the second, the lack of feedback from regional bodies and third being legal justifications.⁴⁷ The “*Arrangements Regarding Regional Representation and Cooperation*” agreed with Serbia, should allow Kosovo to increase and extend its direct participation in regional mechanisms. This includes full participation of all regional initiatives and gradually moving towards membership to RCC and its political umbrella SEECP. The process of dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina on regional representation and other hot topics is still in progress and very much linked to both countries European perspective. The implementation in good-faith of those agreements will determine Kosovo’s future in the regional fora where Serbia still has a strong upper-hand when it comes to Kosovo participation and representation.

Although there is political will the government of Kosovo lacks essential understanding of the importance of regional cooperation and lacks comprehensive strategy and coordination for external representation and for joining regional bodies and organizations. Much stronger focus, inter-ministerial coordination, resources and administrative and physical infrastructure should be invested for both securing participation but also performing the obligations deriving from regional initiatives. Ultimately regional cooperation should be done for the benefit of citizens. While undergoing intensive legislative and administrative reforms, adequate and proper human resources should be allocated for Kosovo to participate, increase performance and import knowledge and projects of regional dimension. Since Kosovo has a priority list of regional organizations⁴⁸ where it wants to join, it should develop a strategic plan, and devote financial and administrative structures to support this plan. In the meantime, a clear and definite list of regional organizations and initiatives should be designed by MFA and made available to the

⁴⁷ Ibid 22

⁴⁸ The list of priority regional organizations is created and exists with MFA.

public.⁴⁹ Kosovo authorities should be realistic about their budgetary constraints and aspire for membership only in those regional initiatives where there is clear strategic interest and benefit for Kosovo's citizens.

Recommendations for Kosovo authorities:

- Regional cooperation momentum built up lately for Kosovo should be effectively used by the government for its participation, membership and ultimately benefit from regional initiatives.
- Choose strategically and cautiously which regional initiatives are most beneficial for development of Kosovo and benefit its citizens
- Undertake all necessary planning and homework for participation, representation and membership in regional initiatives as well as become active in structures and various bodies of regional initiatives.
- Increase visibility and awareness from regional success stories coming from regional cooperation initiatives thus raising direct interest of the citizens on the benefits from regional cooperation.
- Restructure the Human Resources responsible at central level for regional cooperation. Make an immediate shift of responsibilities from OPM to MFA's relevant department thus linking responsible political coordinator with implementation and follow up structures. Than MFA should increase professional capacities in this department in substance and capacities not only in numbers.
- Appoint the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs as responsible for all issues related to regional cooperation. Currently, Deputy MFA is responsible only for implementation of so called arrangements agreement between Kosovo and Serbia.
- Take proactive stance and initiate to host regional meetings and make efforts to send seconded staff as well as endeavor to host secretariats of new or existing regional initiative secretariats on issues relevant to Kosovo's development.

⁴⁹ Currently, there are several non unified lists which remain of internal MFA use - as some officials refer to them as Robert Cooper's list (Robert Cooper – being the former facilitator in Prishtina-Belgrade dialogue from Baroness Ashton's team. This list contains mistakes and includes several organizations or initiatives which are not even regional or belong to civil society such as BCSDN – Balkan Civil Society Development Network.

- Allocate necessary funds and human resources to perform and deliver during the rotating chairmanships of regional initiatives. Chairmanship of CEFTA during 2011 was among the few ones where Kosovo showed its capacities.
- Establish inter ministerial system for knowledge and information sharing with regards to participation, commitments and benefits from attending meetings of regional character.
- Improve gender mainstreaming in the work and policies presently governing regional and international affairs including in decision making processes and representation positions.
- Increase capacities in presentation, public speaking, negotiating and communication skills of line ministries personnel including language skills. As well as seek assistance and professional support including TAIEX and Twinning projects to assist Kosovo in these endeavors.
- Build strong interpersonal links and network since personal links play a big role in regional matters.
- Include civil society organizations in the work of government with regards to regional affairs especially on planning, consultations and where expertise exists on execution of activities.
- Increase the awareness and understanding of the importance of regional cooperation, its benefits, its obligations and commitments made at regional fora of Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and high level officials.

4. List of Interviewed officials: (in alphabetical order)

1. **Arta Hasimja Efendija** - Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Senior Officer
2. **Artan Duraku** - Acting Director of the Directorate for Re-integration, MIA
3. **Damijan Sedar** – Political Adviser for Regional Cooperation, EUSR/EU Office in Kosovo
4. **Edon Cana** - National Coordinator for Regional Initiatives and Adviser on EU affairs to PM
5. **Hasan Preteni** – Head of Agency for Anti Corruption
6. **Lirak Çelaj** - National Coordinator for Regional Cooperation (Sept 2008 – February 2011)
7. **Lulzim Beqiri** – Head of European Integration Office, Ministry of Justice
8. **Mentor Morina** - Head of Division for Budget Analyses and Poverty Evaluation, MLSW
9. **Muhamet Gjocaj** – Director of Department for Social Welfare, MLSW
10. **Petrit Selimi** – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
11. **Veton Elshani** – Director of Unit for International Cooperation and Law Enforcement

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Annex 1: Text of Kosovo's regional representation agreement

Arrangements Regarding Regional Representation and Cooperation

1. Both parties confirm their commitment to effective, inclusive and representative regional cooperation.
2. To this effect 'Kosovo*' is the only denomination to be used within the framework of regional cooperation.
3. The footnote to be applied to the asterisk in para 2 above will read "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence."
4. 'Kosovo*' participates on its own account and speaks for itself at all regional meetings.
5. Where new agreements are to be initialled and/or signed, a representative of 'Kosovo*' will sign under the designation in paras 2 and 3 above.
6. As concerns modifications to existing agreements signed by UNMIK, nothing in these conclusions will be interpreted as prejudicial to UNMIK's legal rights. A representative of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) will be invited to meetings organised within the framework of arrangements for which it is a signatory. It is for UNMIK to decide whether to attend any particular meeting.
7. Hosts of meetings will be encouraged to avoid the display of national symbols except for their own and those of the EU, taking into account the statutes of relevant organisations.
8. The EU as Facilitator will inform relevant regional organisations and entities of these arrangements for denomination, representation and signature. They should be reflected in the practical organisation of regional meetings. The EU will monitor the implementation of these arrangements.
9. Both parties and the EU will urge partners to support these arrangements and to assist in their implementation.
10. The regional organisations referred to in these conclusions are existing and future intergovernmental organisations or arrangements whose aim is to promote cooperation or integration in the Balkan region. "Regional meetings" includes meetings of these organisations and also ad-hoc or informal meetings with similar aims. It also includes meetings with EU institutions in the context of the European agenda.
11. These arrangements are adopted on an interim basis.