

Joint Conclusions on Rahovec / Orahovac

10 May 2007

Key leaders of the municipality of Rahovec / Orahovac came together today to confirm their goodwill and cooperation of working together on issues challenging the municipality. This meeting follows up on previous joint meetings and the problem-solving workshops conducted by CSSP. The following are the conclusions of the joint meeting on 10 May 2007:

1. All recognize that there has been progress in the area of freedom of movement, overall security and joint contacts between business persons from all communities. All support the ongoing dialogue between the communities in the municipality in working together on interethnic dialogue and all challenges facing Rahovec / Orahovac. All welcome the work of CSSP and confirm that the joint meetings and problem-solving workshops support the efforts of all key leaders in Rahovec / Orahovac in working together.
2. The selection panel for filling municipal positions has been reviewed and now represents an ethnic and gender balance. It is good that there has been progress in filling the 17 vacancies opened by the resignation of Serbian employees in September 2006. It is important that the open positions are filled as soon as possible. It is suggested from all sides to conduct a needs assessment to ensure that the new positions reflect the actual needs of the municipality. The CEO agrees to meet and consult with the Additional Deputy Municipal President, the Head of MCO, and Head of the Communities Committee to discuss this issue. A written plan should outline what steps need to be taken.
3. The position for a translator for Serbian and Albanian language remains open after over one year. This issue needs to be resolved immediately and be made a high priority in order to further support the improving interethnic relations in Rahovec / Orahovac. While it was agreed to expedite the hiring procedure for the translator position, the Additional Deputy Municipal President agrees to identify a qualified candidate for the vacant position.
4. In the absence of the Additional Deputy Municipal President there needs to be appropriate Serbian representation in municipal proceedings. All agreed to extend an invitation to the Head of the Communities Office to participate in meetings of the Policy and Finance Committee as a guest in cases of absence of the Additional Deputy Municipal President. The Additional Deputy Municipal President will initiate a dialogue with the municipal leadership, OSCE and UNMIK to develop a concept and ensure that the solution found meets all legal requirements.
5. All welcome that the work of the Communities Committee has improved as it is now meeting on a more regular basis. Furthermore everyone encourages the members of the Communities Committee to make efforts to produce more

outcomes in form of concrete recommendations for action of the Municipal Assembly. The Chair of the Communities Committee or his deputy must attend all sessions of the Municipal Assembly to support dialogue between the Municipal Assembly and the Communities Committee.

6. One of the problems of the Communities Committee is the drafting of minutes of their meetings, translation of documents and the distribution of all documents relevant for the meetings. All agree that minutes can be drafted in Serbian language to be then translated into Albanian language by the municipal services.
7. The MCO is responsible for supporting the Communities Committee, including minute taking, translation and distribution of documents. The OSCE has provided initial skills training for the MCO staff members and offers to conduct further training. The MCO will support the Communities Committee beginning with their next meeting.
8. Everyone recognizes the continuing difficulties in collecting the fees for the garbage waste collection in the Serbian community. As it is a very time consuming process, it is important to find a viable solution for this issue as soon as possible. Both the Chair of the Communities Committee and the Additional Deputy Municipal President agreed to make efforts to raise awareness to start paying the fees for garbage waste collection. The Chair of the Communities Committee will place the topic on the agenda for the next meeting of the Communities Committee which will develop recommendations to be introduced to the Board of Directors. It has been suggested from members of the Serbian community to consider hiring a cashier to facilitate the process of collecting the fees or to consider directly deducting the fees before paying out the pensions. The issue of collecting fees for the garbage waste collection will be raised in the Board of Directors during one of its coming sessions.
9. Following the previous success of the six month plan for integration, all key leaders agree that it is important to adopt a new action plan for integration and sustainability in Rahovec / Orahovac. The CEO tasked the Head of MCO to draft such a plan. A working group will be formed to assess the draft action plan, its implementation and necessary amendments for its timeframe. It has been suggested that this working group consists of 4 persons. There should be a specific emphasis on economic development of all communities.
10. One of the problems of the municipality is public information and communicating the successes of the municipality to the wider public, for example the lack of knowledge of the successful implementation of the previous six month plan. The Board of Directors is encouraged to discuss this topic and to develop some options on how to further promote the work of the municipal structures.
11. All confirm that all efforts will be made to contribute actively to promoting a positive atmosphere for return to the village of Zoçishtë / Zočište. It is essential that all sides promote return and its positive aspects. Everyone agrees to focus on making the returns sustainable and to further work on improving the situation of all communities in Rahovec / Orahovac.

12. It is very unfortunate that the project to fence the graveyard of the Serbian Orthodox Church still remains unresolved despite continuous discussion during the past years. It would be unfortunate if the OSCE project fails because a creative option involving all sides cannot be found to settle the dispute. It is of utmost importance to respect the sanctity of graveyard and not to misuse it. The municipal government should encourage the Kosovo Police Service to discourage people from using the graveyard for their animals. A working group will be set up to identify the non-controversial aspects of the project and to move quickly on securing the graveyard.
13. All welcome that the Board of Directors has approved funds for transportation as part of the “Seeds for a better Future” project initiated by Partners Kosova and USAID taking a multi-ethnic group of farmers to Macedonia for a field visit and exchange. The Board of Directors has agreed to provide funds matched by CSSP to finance the transportation for this event.
14. All welcome the approval of the Austrian Development Agency funds for one more problem-solving workshop for the Municipality and have expressed the benefits of the previous workshops which have contributed to improved interethnic relations between the communities in Rahovec / Orahovac. It has been agreed to conduct the final, Level 3 workshop from 9 – 13 July 2007. The location of the workshop will be Struga, Macedonia.

The joint conclusions were approved by verbal acclamation at the meeting under the condition that they would be circulated in translation. All present may comment until 30 May 2007 where upon the conclusions become accepted.