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Statement by Deputy Special Envoy Albert Rohan during his joint press conference with Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu in Pristina

Following is the statement made by Deputy Special Envoy Albert Rohan during his joint press conference with Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu in Pristina today:

Albert Rohan: We had a very useful exchange of information on the situation. There are important dates which are upcoming, president Ahtisaari will present his interim report on the negotiations so far on the 13th of July to the Security Council where he will also reflect on the way forward. And we will have before the end of July two more meetings on practical issues, namely on decentralization and on the protection of religious sites. And even before July we will also have a meeting on the Status question itself.

In view of this timetable I appeal to the Kosovo side to be forthcoming, to make concessions, I explained that if you want the negotiations to be successful, if you want to narrow down the differences that exist in the various questions between the two sides, then both sides have to make compromises, concessions and I said that now is the time to do it in concrete terms. And we expect that the Kosovo delegation in Vienna in these two meetings will be forthcoming.

Question: Mr. Rohan, are you leaving from Pristina satisfied or disappointed with what you have received here ?

Albert Rohan: As a mediator my emotions are immaterial, I try to narrow down positions and my appeal to both sides is to make concessions.

Question: Mr. Rohan how close are you or your office on the Kosovo stands? Or how can you describe it ?

Albert Rohan: You see we don't have a stand in the sense that we are not a party. We are mediators. We have the position of Belgrade, we have the position of the Kosovo delegation, we try to narrow the distance. If we feel that it is useful we can make compromise proposals and we expect the parties, if they want progress to be achieved, that they accept our proposals or they discuss them. If they have good arguments to reject them, then it is alright with us.

Question: So how close is Kosovo position with your proposals ?

AR; I don't know if you can measure this in meter or millimetres or with a meter, but there are areas where we are much closer and others where additional mileage is necessary.

Question: Is the timetable still the end of the year 2006?

Albert Rohan: Yes.

Question: Do you have the support of the Contact Group ?

Albert Rohan: Yes.

Question: Of all the Member States including Russia?

Albert Rohan: If you read the declaration of the Ministers of the Contact Groups of 31 January 2006 where it clearly says that one should endeavour to finish the process in 2006 and the Russian side stands to this declaration now as it did on the 31st.

Question: Well it's a wish...

Albert Rohan :No it's more. this is the goal. We cannot say what will happen tomorrow what will happen in 2 months, but this is the basis for our work and it's feasible.

Question: Mr. Rohan do you feel after this visit that the Kosovo delegation is more ready for compromise ?

Albert Rohan: Quite frankly we will see in the meetings in Vienna. I have told our friends here, that the rhetoric alone isn't going to change things. We need concrete concessions, concrete steps. From all sides. This is normal. And we will see in Vienna there's a good occasion in one week whether these steps are forthcoming.