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Belgrade, Pristina further discuss the creation of new Kosovo-Serbs majority municipalities in Kosovo

Vienna – Delegations from Belgrade and Pristina today further discussed Decentralization as part of the direct talks held under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for the future status process of Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari. Deputy Special Envoy Albert Rohan chaired the meeting, which focused on the creation of new Kosovo-Serbs majority municipalities in Kosovo.

The Deputy Special Envoy assessed today's meeting as “substantive and issue-oriented, with a minimum of polemics”. However, he said, there was no real progress, ‘no major movement on either side’, adding “Some of the concessions which were made in the experts talks by the Serbian delegation are now being made contingent to the acceptance of other requests’.

On Mitrovica both parties maintained their positions, Mr. Rohan said. He explained that the main preoccupation of the Pristina delegation is to have “one city, two municipalities”, with a compulsory joint board responsible for local services, while the Serbian delegation proposes to merge the Northern part of Mitrovica with Zvecan, and any joint Board being just a voluntary institution.

In his conclusion, Mr. Rohan said that the prospect of progress in these talks was increasingly slim. Addressing a question from a journalist, he underscored that “we are approaching the moment where by talking alone we will not accomplish the goal. We could talk for another ten years and not change anything”, bearing in mind that UNOSEK works within a timeframe given by the Contact Group.

The Deputy Special Envoy added that “nevertheless, UNOSEK will continue to work on these technical issues and we will try to find solutions - by whatever means that may be useful - solutions which are fair, which are reasonable and which are functional.”