



UNOSEK/PR/10  
Wednesday, 19 July 2006

## **Pristina, Belgrade delegations further discuss decentralization**

**Vienna** – Delegations from Pristina and Belgrade today held in Vienna a fifth round of direct negotiations on decentralization in Kosovo. The talks, held under the auspices of the Secretary-General Special Envoy for the future status process of Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, focused on the principles of decentralization, on new Kosovo Serb majority municipalities and on Mitrovica. The meeting, which was held in the format of “proximity talks” followed by a brief plenary session, was chaired by UNOSEK Senior Advisor Bernhard Schlagheck.

Mr Schlagheck said the discussion produced a “substantial exchange on all issues pertaining decentralization and some welcomed results, particularly on the set of principles” produced by UNOSEK. “We somewhat closed the gap, identified major areas of concerns, and to some extent of disagreements, and we all developed a better understanding on where each party stands on that very complex issue”, he said.

Mr Schlagheck said that “the stumbling blocks lie for the Belgrade delegation in the areas of competencies, particularly the degree of municipal involvement in police and justice, curricula for the educational system and the structure of the Serbian language in the university; for Pristina in the question of asymmetric decentralization”, namely whether additional competencies should be given to Kosovo Serb majority municipalities

Mr Schlagheck noticed that Pristina made a “welcome move to offer two new municipalities in Partesh and in Klokott/Vrbovac”. He said that Belgrade showed very little flexibility on the “standard municipalities” but seems to be ready to move regarding the “return municipalities” or some particular cases, and that Belgrade also reduced the number of Kosovo Serb majority municipalities it originally demanded. Mr Schlagheck said there was also a very useful, substantive exchange of views on Mitrovica.

Mr Schlagheck said that the parties decided to discuss further after the upcoming High-level meeting another round of consultations that could possibly have again the format of “proximity talks”.