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July 14, 2008

Donors conference : 1,2 billion euros pledge for Kosovo

KosovoCompromise Staff

Some 20 international donors have pledged 1,2 billion euros to Kosovo for infrastructure and institution-building in the next two to four years.

The figure came short of the 1,4 billion expected by Pristina, but was in line with the expectations by Brussels and Washington – the main co-sponsors of the event.

The EU was the main donor with 508 million euros.

Nineteen countries also contributed, out of which only Saudi Arabia did not recognize Kosovo.

The US pledged 255 million, Germany 100 million, Norway 50 million, Switzerland 46, UK 35, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Luxemburg 30 each, Netherlands and Finland 16 each, Denmark 15, Italy 13, Sweden 12, Austria 6, Ireland 5, Czech Republic 4, Estonia 600,000 euros, and Bulgaria and Slovenia 500,000 each.

Several EU countries did not pledge any aid to Kosovo, including Belgium, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, which recognized its independence, and Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, Malta and Romania, which did not.

The EU commissioner Olli Rehn said the conference was a “success”.

"Our pledge today is an expression of our trust, but implementation remains an outstanding issue. We are waiting to see the results. I am sure that the Kosovo authorities know that they have to make the promises materialize for all people in Kosovo ensuring that every euro spent is accounted for and put to good use," Rehn said.

Members of the European Parliament, but also donors experts from donor countries, are worried that the money could continue to be poured in Kosovo without effect.

The donors conference also raised criticism from the Kosovo Serbs.

One of the Kosovo Serb representatives, Oliver Ivanovic, said that the fact that the European Union had to contribute 359 million euros under its previously determined pre-accession assistance programme showed that the conference was not a success.



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Calling Kosovo a "bottomless pit", he reminded that the province used to receive "huge funds" from the Serbian and Yugoslav budgets without great effect.

Pristina has received 1,1 billion euros for social and economic programs, while 100 million euros – mainly from the US – will be attributed to debt relief.

Pristina's own analysis states that unemployment in Kosovo is at around 40 percent and that, even with the double of the expected economic growth (six percent instead of three percent) in the next 15 years, unemployment could only be halved given that every year some 29,000 new people enter the work force.