



# KOSOVO

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## **Serbia plans a new feasible strategy for return of displaced Kosovo Serbs**

KosovoCompromise Staff

Serbia's minister for Kosovo Goran Bogdanovic has announced a new, feasible strategy for the return of Kosovo Serbs to their homes.

The strategy will be based on the economic strengthening of areas populated by the Serbs, he said.

"The return process has so far been minimal and haphazard. We have to do everything we can to make it a lasting one so that all the returnees and Serbs who survived and stayed there after 1999, grow economically. It is unacceptable to let them live on social welfare and charity that comes from Belgrade," Bogdanovic said in an interview.

The minister said that for this to happen, jobs must be created, opening small and medium businesses and stimulating Serbian companies to invest in Kosovo.

"It is very important to correct the abuses of position in the employment process," Bogdanovic said, and added that he had already told municipal officials that they could no longer employ people without proper procedure.

Bogdanovic also said that in the near future, he would send a request to the municipalities to do a check up of the list of employees.

"It is necessary to determine who these people are, where they live – to see whether they live in Kosovo or not. We do not know the exact number of employees who work in the municipalities, we do not know the exact number of those who are getting bonuses. We also don't know whether there are deceased listed among them, or people who work more than one job," he said.

The minister added that seven to eight percent of the total money sent to Kosovo comes from the Ministry for Kosovo, while the rest comes from the ministries in charge of health, education, culture and finance. He added that all the possible irregularities will be investigated jointly.

Bogdanovic also said that it was possible that there were certain irregularities, since "around EUR 500mn from the Serbian budget are sent to Kosovo".

The minister added that the entire budget of Kosovo was EUR 670mn and that EUR



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470mn went to the infrastructure projects and the local power company, while the rest was used for salaries.

The minister expressed his conviction that in time UNMIK would realize it could only cooperate with the legitimate representatives of the Kosovo Serbs, elected in the local elections held on May 11.

The churches and monasteries destroyed by ethnic Albanians will be rebuilt with the help of the ministry, Bogdanovic said, in the interest of Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo. He also pledged support "for all projects important to the Serb Orthodox Church and its worshippers"