



# KOSOVO

## COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

---

August 25, 2008

## West Slammed for Caucasus Policy and Kosovo Recognition

Deutsche Welle

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3587298,00.html?maca=en-rss-en-all-1573-rdf>

Romanian President Traian Basescu has strongly criticized the West's policy on the Caucasus, joining a growing number of voices which claim the West's recognition of Kosovo's independence created the problem.

After returning from a whirlwind trip to Georgia and other countries in the region, Basescu said Friday, Aug. 2 that the existing peace mechanisms for the Caucasus had proved inefficient and only maintained the tension. He also said it was wrong to grant ethnic minorities collective territorial rights, specifically naming Kosovo as an example.

"The problem that started with Kosovo must be stopped," the Romanian president said. His country has not recognized Kosovo's independence.

Basescu said he wanted to convey his conclusions to Romania's partners in NATO and the European Union. He also wanted to highlight his concern over the "frozen conflict" in Romania's neighbor, Moldova, and its separatist region of Transnistria.

The EU had to be more active in dealing with these conflicts, he stressed.

Basescu said that in principle he was in favor of ethnic minority rights of a cultural nature, but only on an individual basis and never in conjunction with territories.

Failure by the West to realize this would result in "big problems of territorial integrity" in the Balkans, the Black Sea region and other parts of Europe, Basescu said.

Basescu and Foreign Minister Lazar Comanescu embarked Wednesday on a tour of five countries to review the Georgian-Russian conflict and its effects on the region.

In just two days, they visited Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey, meeting with their counterparts to review developments in the wake of the conflict in Georgia's breakaway province of South Ossetia.

In Kiev, Basescu met Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko to start a series of top-level meetings. He also met Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Abdullah Gul.



# KOSOVO

## COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

---

Basescu arrived in Tbilisi on Thursday accompanied by humanitarian aid to be distributed to displaced persons in Georgia.

Romania recently confirmed that it had provided weapons support to Georgia's infantry, with this assistance falling within international conventions.

At NATO's special foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, Comanescu stated that Romania continued to support Georgia's aim to join the Western alliance.

### **Analysts link current crisis to Kosovo's independence**

Basescu is not alone in linking the current problems in the Caucasus to the West's handling of Kosovo,

Analysts believe that if Russia recognizes Georgia's breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia then the West's backing of Kosovo's independence move this year will have played a key role.

In the Abkhazian capital Sukhumi on Thursday tens of thousands of people thronged the main square urging Moscow to back the bid for independence from Tbilisi.

Western nations have repeatedly championed Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity even as Russian troops advanced to within 30 kilometers of the capital Tbilisi.

However Moscow argues that it has been protecting its nationals in peril abroad, as the United States, France and other western powers would do.

### **West recognition opened Pandora's Box**

Russian leaders also cite the example of Kosovo, which unilaterally declared independence from Russian ally Serbia in April and has since been recognized by the United States and 20-odd European Union nations among others.

"With the recognition of Kosovo, they opened Pandora's box," said Dmitry Rogozin, head of Russia's mission to NATO.

Western officials strongly reject the Kosovo-South Ossetia parallel.

"In Kosovo there was a UN presence, there was also the issue of ethnic cleansing, there was a standstill in negotiations, no chance for a negotiated settlement all these different things came into play," one British diplomat said. "I don't think you can draw parallels."



# KOSOVO

## COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

---

His foreign secretary David Miliband puts the case more succinctly, describing the comparison as "completely bogus".

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer speaks of "a special UN trajectory for Kosovo" which has been under United Nations control since NATO bombing in 1999 ousted Serbian forces waging a crackdown on the ethnic-Albanian separatists.

But for Alain De Neve, of Belgium's Center for Security and Defense Studies, Moscow and Tbilisi have made the connection even if the West doesn't want to.

"Without the issue of Kosovo's independence I don't think that we would have seen this (Georgia) story unfurl as quickly as it has," he argues.

"Those opposed to recognizing Kosovo's independence feared above all that it would unleash a series of declarations of independence. But that provoked the intervention of one state, Georgia, which wanted to keep control of all its territory," De Neve told the AFP news agency.

Kosovo link goes back to NATO's 1999 war

Thomas Gomart of the French Institute of International Relations also believes that "the backdrop behind Russia's moves was the West's behavior in Kosovo, with the launching in 1999 of a military operation without a United Nations mandate and then recognizing its independence ... despite Moscow's opposition."

However in his opinion Russia will nonetheless think twice before recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.

Just as Russia was opposed to Kosovo's unilateral move it would not want to further encourage secessionist tendencies within the Russian Federation, such as the Chechens, he said.

Russia is "more interested in maintaining an unclear situation in the two (rebel Georgian) regions, which would allow them to intervene when they wish."

Political science Professor Bruno Coppieters thinks the Georgia problem will eventually have to be sorted out as part of a wider solution.

"Russia can't expect a lot of countries to follow suit if it recognizes the independence of the two regions.

"For their part Western nations haven't got the means to put effective pressure on Russia. The most likely scenario is that the conflict will become frozen again and, in



# KOSOVO

## COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

---

the long term, there will have to be a wider agreement between the permanent members of the UN Security Council."

DW staff