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Unmik: Kosovo's status - heavy burden for whole world

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Most of the UN member countries are pleased with the fact that the authorities in Belgrade have decided to resolve the Kosovo issue in a peaceful manner, and this is one new Serbia, Deputy Chief of the UN Mission in the southern Serbian province (UNMIK) David Harland has said.

In an interview to the Friday edition of the Belgrade daily Vecernje Novosti, Harland assessed that the possible decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding Serbia's initiative that the Court gave its opinion on the legality of unilaterally proclaimed Kosovo independence would create a unique problem in the international system, and added that regardless of that, the polarization among the strongest European countries would continue to exist on that issue.

Even in case that hundreds of countries recognise independent Kosovo, this polarization will, basically, remain, which means that the issue will be aggravating the relations in the years to come, Harland noted.

The official reminded of the fact that the mandate of the UNMIK mission was determined by the UN Security Council (SC), and said that as long as the body did not receive clear instructions from the SC, it would cooperate with the EULEX mission in a pragmatic manner.

Meanwhile, the UNMIK chief Lamberto Zannier said that after nine years, the situation in Kosovo has changed and that means UNMIK too has to change.

“Substantial number of staff, local and international, will leave between now and the end of the year, but UNMIK will retain key functions given to it by UN Security Council Resolution 1244, including political reporting and facilitating a dialogue on practical issues between Pristina and Belgrade”, Zannier said at a staff meeting on the reconfiguration process.

Additionally, UNMIK will maintain, as needed, its field presence through its office in Kosovska Mitrovica and three smaller field offices in other parts of Kosovo, UNMIK said in a press release.

Zannier made it clear that Kosovo's non-Albanian communities will continue to be a strong focus of UNMIK's future work.