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Eulex still eyes December target date for deployment

KosovoCompromise Staff

Eulex chief Yves de Kermabon says that the target date for the mission's deployment in Kosovo remains early December, despite the lack of agreement in the UN Security Council and Belgrade's opposition.

The French general argues that an agreement with Belgrade "is not very far away".

"That is my feeling, but I am still cautious," De Kermabon said, adding he was aiming for deployment in entire Kosovo by the end of the winter.

"We are working on securing the most painless transition plan. That is not impossible, in the transitional period that should be as short as possible. I hope that by the end of the winter, at the latest, the EULEX mission will be completely deployed in Kosovo," he said.

"I think it will be possible to really kick off the mission in early December, in its first, initial phase, having in mind that we will again need a little more time, undoubtedly, to gather all personnel in order to be fully deployed throughout Kosovo," De Kermabon said.

Meanwhile, the State Secretary in the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo Oliver Ivanovic said that Eulex deployment in Serb communities in the province cannot be ruled out, but that it should be approved first by the UN.

"If the UN SC approves the deployment, it will then become an issue for an agreement. If it does not, there will be nothing to discuss any more", he said.

"It is important for Serbia that UN SC should remain a player, as its members Russia and China are advocating a principled stand. No talks should be held on Eulex anywhere without the presence of Russia and China", Ivanovic said.

The Serbian official rejected any possibility of accepting the so-called "International Civilian Office" (ICO) headed by EU envoy Peter Feith, since it was created only by countries which have recognized Kosovo.

"Serbia has no interest in cooperation with such an organization, as ICO is working on implementation of Martti Ahtisaari's plan and has arrived in Kosovo at the invitation of its authorities in disregard of Serbia's stand", Ivanovic said.