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Eulex starts its mandate in Kosovo

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The European Union's rule of law mission Eulex has started on Tuesday its two-year mission in Kosovo, following approval by the UN Security Council on the reconfiguration of the UN mission Unmik, which will pursue its downsizing.

"They are out taking their posts," Victor Reuter, Eulex spokesman said, underlining that Eulex members have also deployed in northern, Serb-populated part of Kosovo.

They entered the building of the Municipal and District Court in northern Kosovska Mitrovica and the mission's border police units arrived at the administrative crossings with central Serbia at Brnjak and Jarinje.

Members of the French Gendarmerie have positioned outside the Court's building and the main entrance gate of the police station in northern Mitrovica.

Eulex judges and prosecutors also arrived in Kosovska Mitrovica.

Ruter said on Monday that Eulex police officers would be assigned to four police stations in northern Kosovo - in Leposavic, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Kosovska Mitrovica.

According to him, a total of approximately 100 EULEX members should be deployed in northern Kosovo today.

The mission has reached its "initial operational capability" with 1,300 policemen, judges, prosecutors and custom officials, and it plans to reach full capability of some 1,900 staff by the end of the winter.

Under the UN SC agreement, Eulex will be working within the status-neutral framework of the UN.

The agreement has allowed for Belgrade to give its go-ahead to the mission, while it has infuriated the Kosovo Albanian leadership in Pristina, which want Eulex to supervise its unilateral secession from Serbia.