



KOSOVO

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Botsan-Kharchenko: Troika's document is not a draft for status resolution

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The Russian envoy in the Contact Group's mediating troika, Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko, said on Tuesday that the troika has offered a list of 14 points aimed at encouraging discussion, and is neither an official document nor a draft resolution of the future status of Kosovo that would be imposed.

According to Botsan-Kharchenko, the troika did not present the list "as a framework for an imposed solution", but made it with the intention of taking "an active approach, to speed up the discussion, make it more dynamic and meaningful."

The Russian official went on to say that "the two sides' positions generally remain far apart," adding that the Vienna meeting was "a normal, working meeting."

Asked whether the mediators had dropped U.N. special envoy Martti Ahtisaari's plan, the Russian diplomat replied that the talks in Vienna "were based on the presented points, not on the Ahtisaari plan."

Botsan-Kharchenko also said that the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 "is not subject to discussion" and was "the foundation, framework and most important document in regulating the Kosovo issue."

He reiterated that he did not see December 10 as the end of the status talks. "The negotiations should last as long as necessary to reach a mutually acceptable solution. This is not a sporting contest, and there are no deadlines," he pointed out.

Commenting on the course of the talks between Belgrade and Pristina so far, EU representative in the troika Wolfgang Ischinger explained that as of October the troika was no longer just listening to what the two sides were saying, but was also trying to take initiative.

"It is not easy to present all plans at such a delicate stage. We presented the points which we believe the sides can agree on," the German diplomat said.

However, he also said that it would be dangerous to drag the status talks indefinitely, and added that a result could be reached by December 10 if the two sides had the political will to do it.