



# KOSOVO

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## **EC believes there is a basis for compromise talks**

KosovoCompromise Staff

The first round of direct negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina in New York showed there was a “small basis for discussion on a compromise solution” for the future status of Kosovo, European Commission adviser on Kosovo issues Leopold Maurer told a panel in Brussels on Tuesday.

“This is why the troika expects from the two sides to elaborate on their ideas on October 14 in Brussels and a week later in Vienna”, Maurer said.

“There are some overlapping elements in the two proposals (...) it’s a small base to discuss a compromise solution”, the Austrian diplomat said.

Maurer, who participated in the preparations for the final communique in New York, said his main impression was that the goal of the Contact Group was to “achieve a negotiated settlement endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution”.

“It is necessary to have a clear legal basis for the status outcome”, he added.

The diplomat said Moscow particularly disagreed on two points in the draft declaration of the Contact Group: a reference to a December 10 deadline for the troika mission and a reference to the Euro-Atlantic future of the region.

“Condoleeza Rice took out immediately the reference to Euroatlantic integrations and the Russians then accepted December 10”, Maurer said, adding that the troika report will be presented by then to the UN Secretary-General, who will pass it to the UN Security Council.

He also said that Russia’s position in the process should not be underestimated.

“Russian president Vladimir Putin spoke on Kosovo much more than many other heads of state in the last few months (...) Russia also has a very cooperative role in the Balkans”, he added.

Maurer said that Germany’s role should not be underestimated either.

“The relation between Germany and Russia should be taken in consideration (...) both are trying to make sure there are no stones left unturned”, he said.

The EC officials said he had heard recently about several models for Kosovo, from Andorra and the Aland islands to some sort of confederation.



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“Let’s see if (confederation) is possible, but the Germans take it very seriously”, Maurer said.

The panel was organized by the International Crisis Group (ICG), a think-tank which has developed the concept of “supervised independence” presented by former UN envoy and former ICG director Martti Ahtisaari.

His successor Gareth Evans called on the EU countries to get ready to recognize a possible unilateral declaration of Kosovo’s independence outside of the UN framework.