



# KOSOVO

## COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

---

May 23, 2008

## Kosovo does not function yet

By Ramon Lobo, El Pais

[http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Kosovo/funciona/elpepiint/20080521elpiint\\_12/Tes](http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Kosovo/funciona/elpepiint/20080521elpiint_12/Tes)

The new Kosovo has not brought any miracles to the Mexhuanis' home in front of the Obilic thermoelectric power plant. The chimneys keep spitting out lung cancer and millions of black ash particles that cover the yards, smudge chickens and ruin the crops.

"Reaching 62 years of age with all this pollution around is tantamount to a miracle. The situation with the electric current has improved a little, but we still have to face cuts of up to three or four hours a day. It hasn't just been three months since the independence, it's been nine years since the end of the war - and nothing's changed."

The price of bread has almost doubled and 75% of the young people are unemployed.

When the northern wind blows, the soot from the Obilic Power Plant flies over Priština like a reminder. But there are so many problems in the emergency room of the new country that the Government does not know where to start.

The prices, caught up by the turmoil of the global crisis, keep on climbing. In three months, the price of bread has increased from 0,25 EUR to 0,45 EUR, milk from 0.50 EUR to 0.75 EUR while the unemployment rate is huge: 75% of young people, from 15 to 24 years of age, are jobless - a situation that could explode as early as next autumn, when the Kosovo Albanian workers' remittances will be exhausted.

During the last three months, the only important foreign investment has been the one of the IPCO telecommunication company of Slovenia, which has thus broken the monopoly of Monacell. Others are waiting for the legal chaos, in which Kosovo is currently plunged, to be dissipated, but the chaos might get worse after June 15th when the Constitution comes into effect.

On that day, there will be four parallel power structures in a territory of the size of Spain's province of Asturias - the Kosovo Government, the United Nations Mission for Kosovo (UNMIK) and EULEX, the European mission whose job will be to help reinforce the rule of law with 2,000 judges, public prosecutors and police officers.

EULEX, the star mission, approved by the Twenty-Seven (including those who do not recognize Kosovo, such as Spain) has not yet been deployed because it is not covered by a legal shield: it is not supported by the Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council and is being fiercely opposed by Serbia and its ally Russia.



# KOSOVO

## COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

---

"High level negotiations are underway in order to find a solution. One of them could be that EULEX stays under UNMIK authority, another one might include a division of the territory: the north for the ONU, where the Serbs refuse the EU, and the rest for the new European mission", western sources suggest. But this is unacceptable for the Kosovo government.

"What is at stake here, is either finding a solution to the problem or maintaining for years a situation likely to plunge the region into a conflict", assures Lulzim Peci, director of the Kosovan Investigation and Political Development Institute.

"Russia is achieving its goals without investing a single ruble", he adds.

A tense atmosphere pervades Northern Mitrovica. It is now time to show some muscles and make another step toward separation sought since 1999, in the wake of the NATO bombings.

Milan Ivanović is vice-director of the local hospital and one of the radical leaders. They all risk arrest because of their role in the March incidents.

"The EU mission is not welcome here and we will do all we can to stop it", he says.

Further up North there is Jerinje, which some call the administrative line, while others call it border. It is not more than a rumble of iron now after the border post had been burnt down by a crowd of impetuous Serbs the day after the unilateral independence of Kosovo had been declared. No one will ask for your passport now - a symbol of the difficulties the new State is experiencing.

"We have independence on paper, but no substance", affirms Alvin Kurti, leader of the Self-determination Movement. "We have no defence minister but we do have an interior minister who does not control the police, a transport minister who does not control the airport and the borders, and we have an energy minister who does not control energy", says he.

Meanwhile the Mexhuani family keeps inhaling ash from the Obilic Power Plant and in Northern Mitrovica there are other losers, like the Gypsies who survive in shanty towns, or the displaced Serbs, locked in between boxes in abandoned schools.

Ljubisa, the man in charge to help them, complains: "It seems that Belgrade does not care for its people, that it just uses them. Patriotism cannot fill an empty stomach".