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Press release

COM KFOR informed Military Committee of NATO about the situation and prospect of KFOR

Commander KFOR, Maj.-General Erhard Bühler, on 26th of January 2011 in Brussels informed the Military Committee of NATO about the situation in Kosovo and KFOR's contribution and progress regarding the stability and safety in Kosovo.

The Military Committee of NATO (MC) is composed of the Chiefs of Defense of NATO member states and is the Alliance's senior military authority. It provides the North Atlantic Council with consensus-based military advice agreed to by all 28 NATO's Chiefs of Defense. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) also took part in the MC conference.

Commander KFOR pointed out that the overall situation in Kosovo is calm and stable, despite some minor clashes and the events in Mitrovica on 11th of September 2010. The Kosovo Police (KP), backed up by EULEX is in general capable to control the public order and to handle minor disturbances. Thus, even after the reorganization of KFOR and the reduction of the number of soldiers, KFOR will still have enough capacities to back up EULEX and KP in the unlikely event of a major disturbance. KFOR's cooperation with EULEX and with the KP is task oriented and reaches for common goals. Regular Crowd and Riot Control (CRC)-training for KFOR forces helps to keep capability at a high level as well as regular joint exercises with EULEX support mutual understanding and enhances common effectiveness. So, in the foreseeable future, KFOR's capability to counter major disturbances is ensured at a high level of professionalism.

In the North of Kosovo the security situation has improved due to the operation "Joint Commitment North" of KFOR, KP and EULEX since October 2010. There is an increase in overall security. The joint efforts have reduced the level of violence and criminality and are welcomed by the population.

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General Bühler also assessed the situation at the borders and the administrative boundary (ABL). The overall situation there is calm and stable as well. The border demarcation with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is complete and the monitoring task of the first part of this border was handed over to the KP. The demarcation process along the border with Montenegro could be completed by summer this year. KFOR is and will still be responsible for the ABL.

Commander KFOR outlined that due to the improved situation in Kosovo and the enhanced capabilities of KP it was possible to realize the plan to reorganize KFOR and to reduce the number of soldiers. At the same time flexibility, mobility and readiness of KFOR will be increased in order to further accomplish the mission. General Bühler especially pointed out that KFOR from 1st of March 2011 on will have an entirely new structure. The Headquarters of KFOR will take over more direct leadership in all former Battle Group regions. The two completely new Multinational Battle Groups are no longer regionally organized. They have no fixed areas of responsibility. Under the command of Commander KFOR and due to operational necessities troops from both Multinational Battle Groups can be deployed everywhere in Kosovo. The only KFOR organizations with regional responsibilities are the newly created Joint Regional Detachments (JRD). They have no operational tasks (such as CRC, vehicle check points or patrols). They are the point of contact for people in Kosovo and regional or local political, representatives of the different religions or administrative decision makers. Commander KFOR also reflected to the fact that it could necessary for KFOR's mission to keep some resources which have been available until now.

General Bühler summed up his briefing of the MC by stating that KFOR will still be able to accomplish its mission from 1st of March 2011 on after having been reorganized. He is optimistic that the overall situation in Kosovo will further improve and the responsibility for monitoring most of the borders and other tasks, as e.g. the guarding of heritage sites, can be handed over to the KP. Thus, in the future and with an increased political, social and economical stability, KFOR could be able to further reduce its presence.

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