

Visit of Chris Patten and Javier Solana to Kosovo (28-29 October 1999)

Caption: Press release dated 31 October 1999, on the joint visit by Chris Patten, Commissioner for External Relations, and Javier Solana, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, to Kosovo on 28 and 29 October 1999.

Source: Visit of Chris Patten and Javier Solana to Kosovo. [ON-LINE]. [External Relations Website, News]: European Commission, External Relations Directorate-General, [10.09.2001]. Disponible sur http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/10_99/bio_99_412.htm.

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Visit of Chris Patten and Javier Solana to Kosovo

The first visit of Chris Patten, Commissioner responsible for External Relations, and of Javier Solana in his new capacity as EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy ended on Friday 29 October with a visit in Mitrovica. This joint visit underlined the EU's determination to live up to the commitments it has made in Kosovo, and Chris Patten's and Javier Solana's intention to work closely together in order to achieve that.

The two had arrived on Thursday 28th October and visited immediately the Kosovo A Power Station, which has been provisionally rehabilitated and is producing again energy, thanks to EU support, administered by the European Commission's Task Force Kosovo in Pristina. This is one project out of a total support programme for reconstruction in 1999 of 137 mln €. Other projects visited included a rubbish removal project, forming part of joint EC-UNDP Village Employment and Rehabilitation Programme addressing high unemployment and the effects of the war on the environment and infrastructure. In addition, the Abullah Shabani Primary School was visited, which had suffered heavily from the war, and is currently being restored as part of an ECHO programme on the rehabilitation of more than 70 primary and secondary schools. MM. Solana and Patten received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic welcome by the children of the school.

The very substantial early humanitarian assistance of 93.2 mln € provided by ECHO is focused on preparing Kosovo for the upcoming winter, notably by emergency rehabilitation of rural and urban dwellings (including the distribution of winterisation kits to provide 20,000 kits to beneficiary households, with UNHCR and the US bringing the total of families receiving shelter/winterisation kits up to 65,000).

The EC Task Force Kosovo will now focus its efforts on support for building up Local Administration, an infrastructure rehabilitation programme, the supply of ID cards, the provision of equipment and materials for the provision of the population with energy, water, transport and post and telecommunication services, credit support for the re-start of SMEs and rural business, as well as support to building up the Kosovo Protection Corps. Mr Patten informed his interlocutors of the intention of the EU to greatly expand its support to Kosovo next year by providing some 500 mln € in reconstruction assistance.

Very constructive talks were held with KFOR Commander General Reinhardt and KFOR Mitrovica Commander General Poncet on the security situation, and with Mr Bernard Kouchner, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and his four Deputies responsible for the different pillars of the UN Mission to Kosovo on the administration of Kosovo. Discussions with Mr Joly Dixon, UN Deputy Special Representative with responsibility for the UNMiK reconstruction programme, focused on the need to establish very soon a proper budget for Kosovo, how to promote the re-start of economic development and how to set-up administrations jointly with representatives of the Kosovar population. The latter was also the main item of discussion in talks held with Sir Martin Garrod, UNMiK Administrator for Mitrovica, which included also the representatives of the Albanian and of the Serb population of Mitrovica, Messrs. Rexhepi and Ivanovic, respectively. In addition, there was a very informative encounter over luncheon at KFOR with Mrs Carla Del Ponte, Chief Prosecutor at the International Tribunal for Crimes in former Yugoslavia.

A particular highlight of the visit were the meetings with the representatives of the Kosovar population. MM. Patten and Solana held intensive and very frank discussions with Mr Hashim Thaci (Chairman of the Party for Democratic Progress in Kosovo), Mr Ibrahim Rugova (Chairman of the Kosovo Democratic League), and Mr Momcilo Trajkovic (Leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement). MM. Patten and Solana underlined in their meetings the commitment of the EU to fully support the implementation UN Security Council Resolution No. 1244, the EU support for UNMiK as the only legitimate government in Kosovo, and the need for all parties to co-operate fully with UNMiK (notably by joining the Kosovo Transitional Council and working together with UNMiK in joint bodies at local level) if international support to Kosovo is to be sustained. They emphasized the international commitment to promote a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo with ethnically integrated Kosovar institutions, repeating the commitment to protect Serb Kosovars against any violence while rejecting any attempts at cantonisation.