



Albanians and Their Neighbors

Soon after the violence that rocked Kosovo in March 2004, PER and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs organized the fourth regional roundtable on "Albanians and Their Neighbors," in Lucerne, Switzerland. The meeting, which was held in May, brought leaders from the entire political spectrum of the region's Albanian communities together with their neighbors from Albania, Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro, officials from international institutions (the EU, UN, NATO, and the Council of Europe), and from the United States.

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Left to right: Charles Brayshaw, Principal Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Kosovo; Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Allen Kassof, PER President; Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro; Reinhard Priebe, European Commission's Director for Western Balkans; Kathleen Stephens, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State; Radmila Sekerinska, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia; Livia Plaks, PER Executive Director.

PER Opens Regional Center in Bucharest

PER is pleased to announce that its offices in Romania (Bucharest and Tirgu Mures) have now become a PER Regional Center for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. The Regional Center, with its main office in Bucharest and a branch in Tirgu Mures, will help coordinate PER's activities in the region in cooperation with PER headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey, and other PER offices in Central-Southeastern Europe.

Women in Governance and Interethnic Relations

All too often, in the Balkans as elsewhere in the world, the discussion and negotiation of sensitive interethnic issues has been the exclusive domain of men. And while it would be naïve to presume that women politicians automatically bring

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Left to right: Liljana Popovska, Vice President of the Parliament of Macedonia; Vesna Perovic, President of the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro; Livia Plaks, PER Executive Director; Gordana Comic, Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Serbia; Ermelinda Meksi, Minister for Integration of Albania; Edita Tahiri, Member of the Kosovo Assembly.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In my last President's Report, I wrote about why it is so tough to resolve interethnic disputes.

How is it possible, despite these obstacles, to reduce interethnic conflicts?

The conflict resolution field offers a rich array of theories and approaches for practitioners. In PER's experience, a short list of common-sense rules has proven to be most effective when it comes to dealing with serious ethnic disputes at the national or international level.

That list includes:

- neutrality and persistence; working directly with the key political decision-makers
- dealing with substance (most ethnic disputes, however irrational, are *about* something); having interlocutors or mediators who are well-informed and up-to-date about that substance
- holding dialogues in a "protected" space where antagonists can discuss their differences without having to be always on guard against public criticism
- continuous communication with each side between their face-to-face encounters
- encouraging and enabling the sides to devise their own, authentic, solutions and compromises rather than providing them with outsiders' formulas

Our experience also underlines other desiderata, for example bringing power to the table—in PER's case, representatives of NATO, EU, the US and other western governments—to show that truly influential stakeholders are carefully monitoring the performance of the antagonists and are committed to solutions.

Still, while following these rules can create the conditions for success, they are no guarantee; most efforts to resolve or manage interethnic conflicts fall short or fail. But a few do succeed, and the rewards in avoiding human misery and material destruction more than compensate all of the efforts.

What is required for success?

The key lies in the psychology of political leaders: highly competitive and powerfully motivated individuals for whom considerations of self-interest—gaining and prolonging the hold on power for themselves or their parties and constituencies—are paramount. They rarely act from altruistic motives.

But leaders do not always fully or accurately understand the true dimensions of their self-interest. They may lack information, and, in the heat of competition, rarely pause to consider that it may be more to their advantage to cooperate with ethnic opponents on some issues than to struggle against them. If leaders on opposite sides of interethnic disputes can be persuaded to enlarge or shift their understanding of self-interest so that at least some of their interests are seen to overlap, then there is at least a chance to succeed.

This is the main purpose of PER's dialogues: to allow and to encourage opponents to talk directly and frankly with one another in the quest for overlapping interests. Although these dialogues sometimes invoke appeals to principle—fairness, tolerance, and the like—they work best when they are practical and concrete and lead to political deals that each side sees as advancing its self-interest.

One of the best illustrations comes from PER's work in Romania, which began in 1991. During the first two or three years there were repeated arguments, accusations, and recriminations between Romanian and Hungarian minority political leaders. But with each successive encounter, both sides became increasingly aware that they might be better off working together to solve problems instead of winning arguments. Today there is a highly effective contract between Romania's ruling party and the Hungarian community that has provided many benefits to both Romanians and Hungarians—and is the most successful case in the region. But it became possible only when political leaders reassessed their self-interests, and found that more might be gained through cooperation than through conflict. Outsiders cannot force this understanding, but they can provide the setting where it becomes a reality.

We'll have more to say about the specifics of these and other efforts in future reports.



Allen H. Kassof

The Mavrovo Process

Can ethnic Macedonians and Albanians live side by side in Macedonia? In the summer of 2001 the answer to this question briefly—and tragically—appeared to be “no.” After a bloody, albeit short, ethnic conflict, Macedonia narrowly averted civil war by signing an internationally brokered peace agreement guaranteeing greater rights for ethnic minorities (the Ohrid Framework Agreement). With the stakes very high, implementing the provisions of this agreement continues to be a priority of the country’s interethnic governing coalition, and, beginning in Mavrovo in May 2003, PER and the Swiss Embassy in Macedonia have lent their support by hosting a series of roundtable discussions—the sixth took place in July 2004.

A key aspect of the “Mavrovo Process,” which is to continue through 2005, is that it facilitates communication

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Left to right: Radmila Sekerinska, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia; Allen Kassof, PER President; Stephan Nellen, Swiss Ambassador to Macedonia; Musa Xhaferi, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia.

Interethnic Accord in Montenegro

After several years of effort, in October 2001, PER brokered an agreement between leaders of Montenegro’s Albanian minority and leaders of the republic’s ruling coalition parties and the parliamentary opposition. The six-point package included the establishment of a maternity hospital in Ulcinj; restoring to Tuzi, a region of Podgorica with a predominantly Albanian population, municipal status; opening an Albanian-language faculty at the University of Montenegro; recognition of diplomas issued to Albanian graduates in Tirana and Pristina; opening a border crossing with Albania near Ulcinj; and holding consultations with local authorities to appoint ethnic Albanians as the chief of police and the head judge in Ulcinj.

Two years later, all these provisions had been put into effect—except for the establishment of an Albanian-language university faculty. While Montenegro’s government had agreed in principle to set up such a faculty, in practice it proved extremely difficult to find a location for the faculty acceptable to all parties. Albanians wanted the faculty to be set up in Ulcinj, a predominantly Albanian city, while the Montenegrin government proposed to place it in Niksic, where there was already a philology faculty.

PER recently helped the sides reach a compromise: the Albanian language faculty will be placed at the university in the capital city of Podgorica, with a liaison office in Ulcinj. At least half of the instruction will be in the Albanian language and the new faculty will become the basis for Albanian studies at the University of Montenegro, eventually to include studies in Albanian literature, history, and other subjects. The first students will begin attending classes in Podgorica in September 2004.



Left to right: Alex Grigor’ev, PER Senior Program Officer; Dragan Djurovic, Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro; Allen Kassof, PER President; Ranko Krivokapic, President of the Parliament of Montenegro; Gezim Hajdinaga, Minister for Ethnic Minorities of Montenegro; Csaba Tabajdi, Member of the Parliament of Hungary.

ROMANI NEWS

The Roma in Macedonia: Developing a National Strategy

As one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Central and Eastern Europe, the Romani community represents a special challenge to policy makers. In Macedonia, despite a record of tolerance toward the Roma, the government has yet to formulate a plan for improving their situation and integration into society, and there are still very few Roma included in the state administration.

With the development of a comprehensive strategy for the Roma an important requirement in Macedonia's EU integration process, there is a clear need for improved policy-making cooperation between the Romani community and the government. In response to this need, PER at the request of the Government of Macedonia and with the support of the Government of Sweden, launched the project "Developing a Governmental Strategy for the Roma in Macedonia." The first roundtable under this project was held in Skopje on February 16, 2004, and a follow-up meeting was held on July 14.

The February roundtable was dedicated to achieving a consensus among participants regarding the priorities for

a Roma strategy and providing clear guidelines for the strategy's drafter. The centerpiece of this meeting was the presentation, "Government Strategies Toward the Roma in Comparative Perspective," by Andrzej Mirga, Chair of PER's Romani Advisory Council. Participants also discussed the role of Macedonia's several government ministries in the elaboration of an official strategy, and the World Bank's Decade for Roma Inclusion program.

PER currently plans two further meetings in this series over the course of the next year.



Left to right: Lawrence Butler, U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia; Jovan Manasijevski, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Labor and Social Policy of Macedonia; Livia Plaks, PER Executive Director; Andrzej Mirga, Chair, PER Romani Advisory Council; Nezdet Mustafa, President of the United Party of Roma in Macedonia.

European Union: Enhancing the Role of Elected and Appointed Romani Leaders



Romani officials with representatives of EU institutions at the European Parliament.

The dramatic eastward expansion of the European Union in May 2004 has lent new urgency to the issue of the Roma and the role of their leaders at home and in European institutions. In an effort to support the development of relations between Romani communities, their governments, and the European Union, in December 2003, the European Commission and PER organized a two-day program in Brussels dedicated to the role of Romani leaders in acceding and candidate countries. The roundtable discussion brought together Romani elected and appointed representatives from Bulgaria, the Czech

Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia as well as officials of the European Commission and members of the European Parliament. The meetings were followed by a special session in the European Parliament and individual consultations between Romani leaders and officials from the European Commission.

The event provided a forum for Romani MPs and public officers directly engaged in the policy formation and implementation process to give their assessment of the current situation of the Roma in their respective countries. Participants presented their views on the most serious problems faced by Romani communities and on how they might be tackled. They also had the opportunity to discuss the EU's approach with regard to Romani issues, including what kind of activities can be expected at the EU level and which responsibilities remain within the national, regional and local governments.

The Brussels meeting is the second of its kind organized by the European Commission and PER. The first, held in July 1999, focused on state policies toward the Roma in candidate countries to the EU and Romani participation in the policy-making process.

ROMANI PROJECTS IN ROMANIA

Civic Education Through the Romani Language

From November 2003 to August 2004, PER's office in Tirgu Mures, Romania together with the Resource Center for Romani Communities (Cluj), conducted a project on "Civic Education through the Romani Language." The aim of the project was to increase the capacity of thirty schools where the Romani language is taught, and to develop civic education activities in the schools and in Romani communities.

The project included a training program consisting of three modules for thirty Romani language teachers, giving them basic knowledge about civic education. The modules covered such areas as communication skills, parent counseling, human rights issues, interethnic relations, conflict management, intercultural education and electoral education.

Another result of the project will be the publication of a guide to civic education, written by a team of two Romani teachers, a psychologist, and a PER staff member. The guide will be launched at a workshop and tested with a group of children and Romani language teachers in August 2004.

Interethnic Tolerance Training for Journalists

On May 31, 2004, in Tirgu Mures, PER organized the first training session for journalists in the Interethnic Tolerance Training series. The Center for Independent Journalism Romania provided assistance in this project.

A journalism trainer spoke with Romani and non-Romani journalists from various national newspapers and radio-TV stations about the general rules of editorial management and how these can influence interethnic relations. In addition, the course covered the "Guide to Good Practices in Reporting about Ethnic Minorities" that was compiled in 2002 by sixty journalists. The workshop also covered reporting about ethnic relations and minority candidates during elections.

Workshop Series "Public Administration and Interethnic Relations"

PER's Tirgu Mures office organized five workshops between May and November 2003 with the goal of combating discrimination against the Roma by increasing their participation in public administration and enhancing the level of understanding among civil servants for the special problems that the Roma face. The workshops were conducted as pilot training courses for twenty local Romani and non-Romani public administration officials from Transylvania.

Topics discussed included the importance of increasing Romani participation in the fields of public administration, human rights, education, human resources and data management, and public policy planning.

Building a Partnership Between the Roma and Political Parties in Romania

In May 2004, PER organized a seminar in Bucharest, Romania dedicated to the topic of political protocols between mainstream parties and national minority organizations, and their consequences for the Romani community. The meeting was also an effort to assess the cooperation between the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Roma Party, and build on any achievements of the political protocols that were signed in 2003. Four Romani political parties attended the seminar, along with PSD officials and representatives of other interested Romani and non-Romani nongovernmental organizations. Romani leaders attending the seminar affirmed that the protocols to be established this year during the pre-election period are meant to strengthen governmental anti-discrimination policy and promote public programs designed to address the problems of the Romani community.

Romania's 2004 Elections: Campaigning without Nationalism

During an election season, the hard work of building harmonious interethnic relations can all too easily be undone by political candidates who resort to extreme nationalist rhetoric. With presidential and parliamentary elections just over the horizon in Romania, the temptation to exploit divisive ethnic issues for political advantage will be strong—and the consequences of doing so could be disastrous.

To help Romania's political parties maintain an atmosphere of positive majority-minority relations, in March 2004, PER organized a seminar dedicated to "Romania before EU Integration and the 2004 Elections: Interethnic Relations, Nationalist Rhetoric and Autonomist Demands." The meeting, held in Sinaia, was attended by leading officials of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Democratic Party (PD), the Social Democratic Roma Party (PRSD), the Romanian Humanist Party (PUR), the National Peasant Christian Democratic Party (PNTCD), the Popular Action (AP), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for European Integration, and the



Bela Marko, UDMR President, makes a point as (left to right) UDMR's Toni Niculescu, PUR's Constantin Dudu Ionescu, and Gyorgy Tokay, Member of the Parliament of Romania, listen.

Department for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as representatives from the European Commission from Brussels and Bucharest and representatives of the American and other foreign embassies.

Two days of discussions focused on such issues as the political criteria for EU integration, the relations between Romania and Hungary, the role of moderates and radicals in mainstream political parties, and nationalist rhetoric in election campaigns. Following the meetings, participants published a statement affirming the importance of maintaining a peaceful coexistence of ethnic majority and minorities in Romania. They also made a commitment to avoid extremist nationalist discourse in the upcoming local elections, and approved of intervention by the National Council for Audio-Visual Media to monitor and sanction parties that do resort to appeals of extreme ethnic nationalism.

The March 2004 meetings were an effort to continue and extend the progress made at a similar PER seminar held in 2000 in Poiana Brasov, where attendees agreed to refrain from using nationalist rhetoric in the election campaigns of that year. This historic agreement was honored by the political parties in their campaigns, and represented a significant success in the effort to reduce ethnic hostility in Romania.



Left to right: Mona Musca, PNL Vice President; Ilie Dinca, Head of the Romanian Government's National Office for the Roma; Victor Ciorbea, PNTCD President.

Hungarian Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe

Of the many ethnic minority communities spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the ethnic Hungarians have arguably had the most success in managing their relations with their neighbors. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, this success was far from assured. It was only through the deliberate negotiation of settlements and compromises that the region's Hungarian minorities have arrived at various formulas for peaceful coexistence in their home countries.

PER has been deeply involved in these negotiations from the very beginning, and helped to broker several key agreements between Romanians and Hungarians in Romania that are credited with preventing violent conflict.

To review the changes of the last decade and a half and to take up still-unresolved issues, in June 2004, PER hosted a regional meeting devoted to "Central and East European Governments and Cooperation with the Hungarian Communities: Efforts, Failures, Accomplishments." The meeting, held in Sinaia, Romania, was organized by PER's regional center in Bucharest, and brought together senior political leaders from majority and minority communities in Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

Noting that pragmatism has so far been the key to interethnic problem-solving, the participants nevertheless pointed to the potential for future difficulties, especially the growing demands by some Hungarian minority leaders for "territorial autonomy." They requested that PER organize a follow-up dialogue on this issue and launch intra-community political discussions among ethnic Hungarian leaders.



Left to right: Bela Marko, President of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania; Livia Plaks, PER Executive Director; Pal Csaky, Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia; Adrian Severin, Member of the Parliament of Romania; Allen Kassof, PER President; Bogdan Aureescu, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Local Government and Decentralization in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, recent legislation on decentralization has extended protection from discrimination not only to individuals, but also to communities. The new law has important implications for the budgetary process: a community that feels it has received less than its fair share of funds from the local, regional, or national budget may take its case to court, arguing that ethnic discrimination played a role in the inequitable distribution of resources. To discuss the new legislation and its implications for local governments, PER organized a seminar in July 2004, attended by experts and elected officials from 19 predominantly Turkish Bulgarian municipalities, along with national government officials and legal advisors.

The seminar was made possible by a grant from the Council of Europe's Confidence-Building Measures Program. One conclusion of the meeting was that the new legislation reduces the need for the existing semi-official network of Turkish municipalities, since these towns now enjoy legal protection as ethnically based communities, and can take their grievances to court. At the same time, many attendees expressed concern over the implications of the new laws for their own local budgets, anticipating the demands which may now be voiced by other disadvantaged groups. The meeting gave local leaders a chance to better understand both the opportunities and the obligations that the new legislation will involve.

ALBANIANS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS: *continued from cover*

The regional roundtable focused primarily on the question of Kosovo. Encouragingly, key participants were willing to take a more constructive approach to the problem than in previous discussions. The Albanian political leaders in attendance largely agreed that the question of the final status of Kosovo must be decided in parallel with the implementation of the standards sought by the United Nations. At the same time, differences over the relative priority of status versus standards characterized much of the debate.

The Lucerne discussions underlined a growing contrast: the positive developments between Albanian minorities and majorities in Montenegro and Macedonia, and relations between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. Discussions organized by PER in Montenegro and by PER and the Swiss Embassy in Macedonia have contributed to the development of positive working relations between Albanians and Montenegrins, and Albanians and Macedonians. These experiences make it clear that future negotiations between Kosovo Albanians and Serb leaders need to focus on specifics and that direct agreements are likely to be more successful than formulas imposed from outside.

Kosovo Albanian participants at the roundtable issued a statement of principles to help guide them in the future, including commitment to dialogue, condemnation of the March events, a reform of local government to include minorities, and a continuing commitment to a society based on the principles of representative democracy. A report on this meeting is available at www.per-usa.org.



Left to right: Hashim Thaci, President of the Democratic Party of Kosova; Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro; Ferhat Dinosa, President of the Democratic Union of Albanians (Montenegro).



EU Special Envoy in Kosovo Fernando Gentilini and PER President Allen Kassof address Kosovo and international media after the meeting in Pristina.

PER and U.S. Office Host Meeting of Top Kosovo Leaders in Pristina

In Pristina on June 23, 2004, PER brought together Kosovo's senior Albanian leaders—the president, prime minister, and heads of the political parties—with the three principal leaders of the Kosovo Serbs. It marked the first time that Kosovo's top decision-makers had met since the bloody events of March 17. (That violence resulted in the destruction of many Serb homes

and churches and the flight of several thousand Serbs and Roma.) The head of the U.S. office and the Special Envoy of the High Representative of the European Union for Common Security and Foreign Policy also attended the meeting.

Meeting at the residence of the head of the U.S. Office in Kosovo, the leaders discussed whether the Serbs would be willing to end their boycott of governmental institutions that followed the March events, whether the Albanian leadership would commit

itself to devising a package, or “offer,” of guarantees concerning security and local governance that would be acceptable to the Serbs, and whether the Serbs would participate in its formulation. The three-hour discussion was declared by the participants to be a significant step forward in their relations.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Serb leaders agreed to enter the governmental commission on security formed by the Kosovo prime minister. They also said that they would consider sending an observer to take part in the Kosovo government's working group that is drafting the new decentralization program.

Participants agreed that this was the first positive meeting ever held between the Kosovo Albanian leadership and the leadership of the Kosovo Serbs. Both sides have asked PER to help continue their new dialogue.

WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE AND INTERETHNIC RELATIONS *continued from cover***Participants in the Tirana roundtable.**

moderation to the table, they no doubt can offer a different set of experiences and perspectives, and their very participation introduces a new dimension—gender—to the list of variables that the political system must take into account in reckoning with constituencies. By shifting the discussion from its exclusive and divisive focus on ethnicity to an arena where some overlapping concerns and interests may be found, women have the potential to move the contentious politics of ethnic relations a significant step forward.

Impressed over the years by the extraordinary ability of the women politicians with whom it has worked, on April 17-18, 2004, PER organized a regional roundtable on “Women in Governance and Interethnic Relations” in Tirana, Albania. Prominent women ministers and parliamentarians from Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina, Skopje, and Tirana were joined by represen-

tatives of the U.S. Government, the European Union, and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe for two days of dialogue. A smaller, follow-up meeting was held in July in Bled, Slovenia for selected participants from the first roundtable. The meetings were made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of State.

The discussions, moderated by PER’s Executive Director, covered such topics as women’s networking and interethnic dialogue, the expansion of women’s role in government, the promotion of the rule of law, the state of regional interethnic relations, and the search for a common vision among women of all ethnic groups of the region.

While constructive discussions of the region’s highly charged interethnic issues are never easily achieved, the meeting in Tirana was notable for the speed with which the participants were able to find common ground.

Indeed, the representatives from Macedonia played a key role as mediators between Serb and Kosovo Albanian politicians, and their positive example of interethnic cooperation and managing of an interethnic conflict through coalition building helped the rival groups make important progress in communication and appreciation of each other’s views.

At the conclusion of the Tirana roundtable meeting the participants produced a communiqué in which they affirmed their commitment to continuing their discussions and furthering a vision that rejects violence as a primary means to solve conflict. They also expressed their interest in establishing a regional network linking women politicians of all ethnicities, and asked that PER reconvene the group for continued work and dialogue.

At Lake Bled, in Slovenia, a smaller group of women politicians gathered to continue and deepen the discussions that they began in Tirana. Representatives from Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo), Macedonia, and Albania were present, and the attendees centered their discussion around policy papers that each had submitted on the theme of interethnic relations in their region.

Local Solutions to Ethnic Conflict in Kosovo

Even when progress on interethnic relations is stalled at the national level, there is sometimes better news in local communities. City and regional governments are often better attuned to the needs and problems of their constituents, and can be more creative than central authorities in finding ways to resolve the competing claims of different ethnic groups.

With the goal of highlighting some encouraging examples of interethnic relations and helping Kosovo’s leading politicians and international diplomats to learn from the approaches taken by several local governments across Kosovo, in November 2003, PER hosted a conference on “Interethnic Relations in Kosovo: Success Stories from

Municipalities.” The event was held in Pristina with financial support from the Council of Europe.

The meeting heard reports from the mayors and deputy mayors of four towns in Kosovo: Shterpce/Strpce, Skenderaj/Srbica, Prizren, and Gjilan/Gnjilane. These municipalities were chosen to reflect a representative sample of towns with different profiles of party control, ethnic diversity and levels of war damage.

A document originating with the Democratic Party of Kosova (PDK) inviting Serb and Romani refugees from Kosovo to return was circulated at the meeting and signed by the heads of Kosovo’s major political parties and institutions.

PER 2003-2004 PUBLICATIONS

- *Roma and the Question of Self-Determination: Fiction and Reality (2003)*
- *Roma in Multiethnic Communities in Serbia (2003)*
- *The Romani “Mahalas” (Neighborhoods) of Southeastern Europe: Politics, Poverty and Ethnic Unrest (2003)*
- *Albanians and Their Neighbors: Is the Status Quo Acceptable? (2003)*
- *Macedonia’s Interethnic Coalition: The First Six Months (2003)*
- *Macedonia’s Interethnic Coalition: The First Year (2004)*
- *Albanians and Their Neighbors: Moving Toward Real Communication (2004)*
- *Women in Governance and Interethnic Relations (2004)*
- *Macedonia’s Interethnic Coalition: Solidifying Gains (2004) (forthcoming)*
- *Roma and EU Accession: Elected and Appointed Romani Representatives in an Enlarged Europe (2004) (forthcoming)*
- *Governments and Hungarian Communities in Central Europe: Achievements and Challenges (2004) (forthcoming)*

THE MAVROVO PROCESS: *continued from page 3*

not only between members of the government and the opposition, but also within the coalition itself. Macedonia’s government faces a unique double burden: its members are forced to reckon not only with the day-to-day obligations of governance and socio-economic reform, but also the inherent difficulties of maintaining a constructive dialogue on interethnic relations while building a genuine multiethnic state.

The Mavrovo meetings take up the toughest issues. The meeting held in June 2004 became the venue for intense negotiations between ethnic Albanian and Macedonian political parties over decentralization. The coalition’s plan to redraw and consolidate some regional and municipal boundaries in order to satisfy the requirements of the Framework Agreement could produce municipalities with new ethnic balances and is seen by some ethnic Macedonians as a threat to them. Some recent demonstrations have turned violent, and the redistricting proposals will be challenged in an upcoming referendum.

In Macedonia, as elsewhere in the region, a return to contentious politics and the breakdown of communication between ethnic groups remains a very real threat to stability. The consequences of failing to resolve differences through discussion and compromise can be serious

indeed. By creating a neutral forum where competing groups and outside observers can engage in honest and open dialogue, the Mavrovo Process offers a unique chance to resolve differences before they become conflicts. PER hopes that through this initiative, a tradition will be established in Macedonia whereby future competitors can meet without need for external mediation.



Left to right: Radmila Sekerinska, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia; Hari Kostov, Prime Minister of Macedonia; Ilinka Mitreva, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia; Aziz Pollozhani, Minister of Education and Science of Macedonia; Musa Xhaferi, Deputy Prime Minister of Macedonia; Agron Buxhaku, Minister of Transport and Communications of Macedonia; Teuta Arifi, Vice President of the Democratic Union of Integration; Roza Topuzovska-Karevska, Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party.

STAFF NEWS

In April 2004, Alan Moseley joined the PER office in Princeton as a Program Officer. Moseley was recently awarded the Master of International Affairs degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, where he concentrated in Economic and Political Development and received a Certificate from the Harriman Institute. Before studying at Columbia he spent four years living and working in Russia.

In September 2004, Nenad Djurdjevic rejoined PER as its representative in Serbia and Montenegro. Djurdjevic graduated from the law faculty of the University of Belgrade, and received a Master's Degree from Central European University in Budapest. He has been an elected member of a local municipal council in Belgrade and was the international affairs secretary of Otpor.

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**PROJECT ON
ETHNIC
RELATIONS**



The **PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS (PER)** was founded in 1991 in anticipation of the serious interethnic conflicts that were to erupt following the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. PER conducts programs of intervention and dialogue and has served as a neutral mediator in several major disputes in the region. PER also conducts programs of training, education, and research at international, national, and community levels.

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