



26 May 2000

IAC Discusses Sport and Environment

The Interim Administrative Council today discussed the status of the administrative Departments of Sport and Environmental Protection.

Regarding the environment, IAC members raised questions on the prevalence and health risks of depleted uranium in ammunition cartridges left in areas of Kosovo by NATO air strikes. KFOR Commander General Joun Ortuno told the IAC that the projectiles containing depleted uranium were dangerous only if opened, and that the danger of mines and cluster bombs was much higher than any possible radiation effect from depleted uranium. However, Gen. Ortuno stressed that greater awareness was needed among the population on mines, cluster bombs and projectiles, and that any such munitions found should be reported immediately to KFOR.

Department of Sport co-heads Jean-Selim Kanaan and Zenun Pajaziti reported that financial resources have been obtained to re-open the Pristina swimming pool, and that work is about to begin on repairs which could be finished during the month of July.

Located in the Boro e Ramiz sports complex, the Department currently has five international and seven local staff, with 50 percent parity between genders and two positions committed to minority representatives. It has been allocated 700,000 DM from the Kosovo Consolidated Budget in grants-in-aid to sports federations and associations. Funds will be disbursed through programs aimed at maximizing the access to sports by all the population of Kosovo. Most immediate projects are summer coaching camps for young people and a review of the state of sports medicine currently underway by a team of experts..

The co-heads also explained the Department's policies to develop and rehabilitate the sports infrastructure and to support competitions and other activities. They are currently seeking donors to assist with infrastructure costs which are projected to be quite high.

The Department is in the process of transforming the existing organized sports structures from a highly centralized, state-patronized system to a one of federations in which the various players will themselves create and uphold ethical and professional standards.

The co-heads appealed to the IAC to help to engage all communities in the sports reform, and particularly to involve minorities in reviving sports activities around Kosovo.

Finally the IAC issued a statement on returnees to Kosovo from Europe and other countries. See UNMIK press release # 252.

