



LANGUAGE

COMPLIANCE IN KOSOVO POLICE

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GLOSSARY

DSR	Daily Situation Report
ECHR	European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
KAPS	Kosovo Academy for Public Safety
KP	Kosovo Police
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OMiK	OSCE Mission in Kosovo
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo has continuously monitored and shared recommendations with the Kosovo Police (KP) on the use of the official languages in line with the legal framework in Kosovo and the relevant international human rights standards.

This is the fourth OSCE analysis that assesses the issue of language compliance of the KP. The first assessment, issued in June 2008, concluded that the KP did not fully comply with relevant international human rights standards and laws in Kosovo concerning the use of languages and made several recommendations towards accomplishing full language compliance. In July 2009, the OSCE issued the second assessment and noted some improvements, in particular, an increase in the number of interpreters employed by the KP, which subsequently led to an improvement of KP's language compliance. The third assessment of KP's language compliance was issued in January 2011. Although limited improvement such as verbal communication between KP officers, and more documents available in both languages on the KP intranet was noted, however the provisions regulating the use of official languages were still not fully implemented by the KP. The fourth assessment, presented in the chapters below, present the latest findings of the OSCE with regards to KP language compliance analyzed through verbal communication, written documents, quality of translation/interpretation and number of interpreters, building and door signs, content on the intranet and training.

During the research and data gathered, conducted from February to May 2017, due consideration was given to legislation and international human rights treaties directly applicable in Kosovo, of which language rights are an integral component. Equal use of official languages in Kosovo is a prerequisite for full and effective provision of services by KP and is a fundamental element of a democratic and multi-cultural society.

The main conclusions of the recent analyses reveal that the Law on the Use of Languages is still not fully implemented by the KP, in few areas. Namely, although majority of documents are available in two languages, there still remain few, such as operational plans for example, which due to time pressure and lack of effective translation system remain not translated in a timely manner, and police officers are obliged to rely on translation from their colleagues. Moreover, although the verbal communication within the regions has been assessed as effective, the communication between the KP regional directorates and the General Directorate is seen as challenging, particularly within the KP Region in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, which is predominantly staffed with Kosovo Serb officers as opposed to the KP General Directorate, staffed mainly with Kosovo Albanian officers. Therefore, introduction of local language classes at the KP would reduce the need for interpreters and avoid situations when police officers cannot communicate without their support.

Finally, the report outlines that the level of language compliance of KP has significantly improved, compared to previous assessments, with few areas in requiring further analysis and remedial action by the KP's management. Therefore, recommendations discussed include improvement of current written translation practices and procedures, organizing language courses in both Albanian and Serbian for new generation of officers, increase of funds to hire more interpreters, ensuring that internal door signs are available in official languages, and ensuring that all written documents are translated in official languages and distributed to its subordinate offices, creating a pool of interpreters to address translation needs more efficiently, and increasing the number of female interpreters.

2. INTRODUCTION

Language constitutes an essential dimension of individual and collective identity.¹ In the centre of the OSCE's mandate is the monitoring, promotion and protection of the human rights of diverse communities in Kosovo, of which language rights are an integral component. Equal use of official languages in Kosovo is a prerequisite for full and effective provision of services by KP to its own staff and to all individuals that interact with the KP. This is a fundamental element of a democratic and multi-cultural society.

The language compliance is regulated by Article 1 of the Law on the Use of Languages² which sets Albanian and Serbian as the two official languages in Kosovo. This Law also outlines the requirements for other languages such as Turkish, Bosnian and Romani, when it comes to their official use at both the municipal and governmental level.

The report analyses KP's language compliance in all eight KP regions. The report was prepared in the period from February to May 2017, and is based on a desk review of the relevant legislation, revision of existing instructions, regulations, mechanisms and practices. This was complemented with a survey with different respondents, which enquired their perceptions and assessment in relation to language compliance obligations and legal duties of KP. The first two chapters, which follow the introduction, outline the background and methodology used in compiling this report. Furthermore, the report presents the international standards and the legal framework in Kosovo, and highlights the requirements contained in the KP Policy and Procedure Manual. The final chapter provides key conclusions and series of recommendations to the KP, with the aim to ensure the protection of language rights for all communities.

The OSCE has noted significant progress of language compliance in the work of the KP. The positive developments include increased availability of written documents, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), administrative instructions, laws, custody records, complaint forms, incident reports, daily situation reports, and the KP Policy and Procedure Manual, in two languages. The OSCE has also noted positive developments in the exterior signage of all KP regional directorates, police stations and sub-stations, as they were all observed to be displaying their titles in both official languages. Furthermore, the KP has taken into consideration the ethnic composition of the residents in different areas and has undertaken measures to reduce the risk of misunderstanding between non-Albanian community residents and the KP, and has taken measures to improve the understanding between residents and police in their own language.³ Moreover, verbal communication has been assessed as effective within the regions.

The analysis of practices at the KP reveals that the Law on the Use of Languages is still not fully implemented in few areas. Although majority of documents are available in two languages, there still remain few, such as operational plans, which due to time pressure and lack of effective translation system remain not translated in a timely manner, and police officers are obliged to rely on translation from their colleagues. Additionally, although the verbal communication within the regions has been assessed as effective, the communication between the regional directorates and the General Directorate is seen as

¹ Office of the Prime Minister/Office of the Language Commissioner, Monitoring and Evaluation of Language Rights in Kosovo, 2015.

² Law No. 02/L-37 on The Use of Languages, 20 October 2006.

³ For example, mixed patrols were introduced in KP regions such as Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Klokot/Klllokot, Ranilug/Ranillug, Parteš/Partesh, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North police stations, where the officers assigned have working language skills to perform daily police duties.

challenging because Kosovo Serb officers who lack knowledge of the Albanian language have difficulties in communicating with their Kosovo Albanian colleagues, particularly in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North KP Region.⁴ Furthermore, OSCE noted that there has been a decrease in the number of translators since its last assessment conducted in 2015, which further prevents the KP in meeting the language requirements. In addition, there is also a small number of female translators, only four female interpreters out of fifteen in total in all eight police regions. This does not always allow taking a gender sensitive approach in dealing with cases of domestic violence, or other gender sensitive cases.

The Law on the Use of Languages obliges Kosovo institutions to ensure equal use of Albanian and Serbian as official languages in Kosovo. The Law on the Use of Languages is in line with the Anti-discrimination Law and international instruments for the protection of non-majority communities and regional or minority languages applicable in Kosovo, including the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Furthermore, the Law on the Use of Languages requires all institutions to respect the equal status of the official languages, and requires equal rights in their use in all Kosovo institutions. However, this assessment still notes lack of availability of official documents and forms in KP stations, KP intranet⁵ and signage on KP facilities in all official languages, as well as the use of all official languages is not fully respected. Failure to comply with the applicable Law can negatively impact the work of the KP that might potentially contribute to marginalisation of certain communities, and might create a risk of misinformation or misunderstanding of communities in their interactions with the KP. As an institution that promotes fair and equal treatment of all individuals, the KP should continue its efforts to ensure full language compliance within the institution, thus promoting a more inclusive and professional police service.

⁴ Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region is a new KP region and is predominantly staffed with Kosovo Serb officers, including 285 integrated former Serbian police officers.

⁵ Internal police network containing wide range of relevant police information.

3. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Issues of language compliance remain significant for two important reasons. Firstly, by ensuring language compliance for all, the residents in Kosovo will have equal employment rights, thus preventing potential discriminations which violate basic human rights and principles. Secondly, communication between the KP and non-Albanian communities creates greater trust between those tasked with policing, and those being policed. This in turn contributes to improvement of inter-ethnic relations and increases the operational effectiveness of KP.

Between 2008 and 2015, the OSCE conducted four assessments on the KP compliance with the Law on the Use of Languages. In each of these assessments, shared with the General Director of the KP, the OSCE highlighted that the KP did not comply fully with this Law and international standards related to language rights. Since the initial assessment in 2008, the OSCE has observed significant improvement, mainly related to an increase in the number of translated written documents and some additional resources provided in the Serbian language posted on the KP intranet. This report focuses on priority areas where the OSCE has identified shortcomings in KP's compliance with the legal framework, thereby providing the KP with a tool to systematically enhance its compliance with its duties and hold itself accountable to linguistic communities in Kosovo.

Based on the KP Annual Report 2016⁶, the KP has 8,914 employees, out of which 7,833 are police officers and 1,081 civilian staff. Further, 86.13 per cent of KP personnel are male and 13.87 per cent are female. A total of 84 per cent are Kosovo Albanian and 16 per cent are of other ethnicities.

During February and March 2017, the OSCE conducted the research and data gathering part for its fifth assessment and interviewed 84 police officers from all eight KP regional directorates, most of whom come from non-majority communities.⁷ In order to reflect a representative sample of opinions from diverse perspectives, officers/respondents were selected from different ranks, ranging from police officers to majors. As declared by respondents, their ethnic origin was: 16 Kosovo Albanians, 42 Kosovo Serbs, 18 Kosovo Bosniaks, six Kosovo Turks, one Kosovo Gorani, and one Kosovo Ashkali. The number of officers from non-majority communities that were interviewed for the purpose of this analysis make approximately five per cent of the total non-Albanian officers in the KP. From 84 police officers interviewed, 17 stated that their first language was Albanian, 42 Serbian, 19 Bosnian and six the Turkish language.

At least ten KP officers of different ranks and communities from all regional KP directorates, as well as regional KP stations were interviewed. At least three out of ten interviewees were women and at least seven were non-Albanian speakers. The monitoring part included inspection of KP intranet, KP notice boards, door and building signs, as well as the available translated written documents, in order to check whether they were provided by the KP in both official languages.

⁶ Ministry of Internal Affairs/Kosovo Police, *Kosovo Police Annual Report 2016*, 2017, p. 13.

⁷ The OSCE interviewed a minimum of ten KP officers from each of the eight KP regions (Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South, Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Pejë/Peć).

This assessment was prepared on the basis of interviews with KP officers, and monitoring of official languages used in intranet, KP notice boards, door and building signs, as well as the available translated written documents. The scope of the report focuses on assessing the level the official languages are used at the KP. The research for this report was limited to examining verbal communication between officers of different ethnicities during their daily interactions, the availability of written documents, display of building and door signs, material published on the official KP website, and the availability of material for training purposes within the KP. Due to limited resources, the criminal investigations, operational planning, promotion procedures and routine interactions with the public, were not explored.

The information contained in this report was also supplemented by regular OSCE observations, monitoring and interactions with KP officers throughout Kosovo in February and March 2017.

4. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN KOSOVO

With the aim to ensure a democratic and pluralistic multi-ethnic society, the legal framework in Kosovo provides crucial safeguards for extensive language rights of different communities, and obliges all public institutions and service providers to respect the equal use and status of official languages. All communities have the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of the language they speak and write. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that *"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."*⁸

In addition, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁹ and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR)¹⁰ assert that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set out in those human rights instruments without discrimination on any basis, including language.

Further, the ECHR¹¹ states that *"the enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status."* Moreover, Paragraph 2 of the same Article states that *"no one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground such as those mentioned in Paragraph 1."*

⁸ Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), ratified 10 December 1948.

⁹ Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI), 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976.

¹⁰ Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), European Court of Human Rights, Council of Europe, entered into force 1 October 1994.

¹¹ Article 1 - Protocol No. 12 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 177), adopted on 4 November 2000, and entered into force 1 April 2005.

The Council of Europe Resolution on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Kosovo¹² states that "growing language barriers exacerbate the situation as newer generations grow up learning only one of the official languages." Furthermore, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers stresses in their Resolution, that "the lack of proficiency in both official languages among civil servants must be addressed urgently and comprehensively, including through adequate measures in the education sphere."

In Kosovo, constitutional provisions stipulate that the official languages in Kosovo are Albanian and Serbian, and that Turkish, Bosnian and Romani are official languages at the municipal level, or languages in official use at all levels as provided by the Law. This article is actioned by Article 2.1 of the Law on the Use of Languages which provides that "Albanian and Serbian and their alphabets are official languages of Kosovo and have equal status in Kosovo institutions."¹³ Article 2.2 further provides that "all persons have equal rights with regard to use of the official languages in Kosovo institutions".¹⁴ Article 31 of the same Law requires Kosovo institutions to "... adopt measures promoting the use and equal status of the official languages, as well as ensuring the protection, preservation and promotion of the languages of communities whose mother tongue is not an official language."

Article 2.3 of the Law on the Use of Languages also provides "where at least five percent of the total population of the municipality is inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not an official, that language shall have the status of an official language in the municipality and it shall be in equal use with the official languages."¹⁵ Currently, the Turkish language is an official language at the municipal level in Prizren and Mamuša/Mamushë/Mamuša, while Bosnian is an official language at the municipal level in Prizren, Dragash/Dragaš and Pejë/Peć. Furthermore, where a linguistic community represents above three per cent of the total municipal population, Article 2.4 of this Law stipulates that it shall have the status of a language in official use in the municipality.

Also, Article 4.5 of this respective Law requires that "official records and official documents shall be kept and issued in official languages", while Article 4.6 requires that "the official names of central institutions shall be displayed in the official languages as well as in the official languages of the municipality." In addition, Article 4.7 requires that "work environments are conducive to the effective use of the official languages and accommodate the use of any official language by their officers and employees."

The KP Policy and Procedure Manual (the Manual) prohibits discrimination on the basis of language.¹⁶ In its scope part (II), the Manual also states that "all Kosovo Police employees, enjoy equally and without discrimination of any kind all human right[s] and freedoms."¹⁷

Therefore, the legal framework in Kosovo requires the KP to ensure the equal use of official languages within the police.

¹² Section b) Issues of concern of the Resolution on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Kosovo, CM/Res CMN(2014)13, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 26 November 2014. The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is directly applicable in the constitutional provisions.

¹³ Law No. 02/L-37 on The Use of Languages, 27 July 2006.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Ministry of Internal Affairs/Kosovo Police, *Policy and Procedure Manual, Non-discrimination, I. Policy*, 2009, pages 1-23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

5. OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

In order to assess KP's adherence to requirements related to language compliance, which are contained in the legislation in Kosovo and KP internal administrative instructions, the OSCE looked at a number of areas, including verbal communication between officers, access to written documents in official languages, use of official languages on the KP intranet, availability of trainings in official languages, and the use of official languages in signage within KP facilities. The report also assessed the availability of interpreters and the quality of translation provided, as crucial to ensuring effective language compliance within the KP.

5.1. Verbal communication between officers

All KP officers interviewed for this report stated that they can communicate easily with colleagues who do not speak the same official language. On many occasions, during its regular monitoring activities, the OSCE also observed the KP officers communicating in their own languages which did not appear to create any misunderstandings or obstacles in the police work. Presently, there are many officers who speak both official languages and are willing to translate for their colleagues when necessary.

Relying on the willingness of bi-lingual KP officers as a means to ensure communication within the KP is not a conducive working environment to accommodate the use of official languages. The draft Law on Early Retirement of Police Officers has not yet been enacted, and one of the biggest challenges to the human resources management within the KP related to its language compliance is the pending early retirement and recruitment of new police officers. Currently, the KP is considered among the 'oldest' police forces in the region and according to the KP statistics at the end of 2016, there were 7,833 police officers on active duty. As the older generations of KP officers retire, there might be fewer officers who speak both official languages, and the KP may face serious difficulties with verbal communication until remedial actions are taken. This conclusion is mainly because during various meetings and roundtables, the OSCE observed that there is a notable difference in knowledge of official languages between older police generation and officers deployed recently. The recently deployed young police officers speak either Serbian or Albanian languages.

While current practices have proven to be adequate in assisting members of the KP to communicate, this is not a sustainable solution. During the monitoring activities, the OSCE in several meetings received the KP concerns on communication difficulties with younger generations of officers who only speak one official language. This issue was raised at police stations of Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Pejë/Peć and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North. For example, the 2016 KP Annual Report in Štrpce/Shtërpçë Police Station was presented by the Station Commander in the Serbian language, which in the absence of an interpreter led to confusion and misunderstanding among some members of the audience. Therefore, a number of officers present requested translation into the Albanian language.

Occasionally, Kosovo Serb officers who lack knowledge of the Albanian language have difficulties in communicating with their Kosovo Albanian colleagues. It is important to note the concern expressed by non-Albanian speaking KP officers from Pejë/Peć regarding the lack of translation during KP meetings. In such cases, assistance is often requested from Kosovo Albanian officers. Also, a concern related to an e-mail correspondence was expressed by Kosovo Bosniak officers who claimed that they always need to seek translation assistance from Kosovo Albanian colleagues.¹⁸ Taking into consideration the ethnic composition of the population and the security situation in mixed community areas, in particular, the KP has undertaken measures to prevent the risk of any misunderstanding between non-Albanian community residents and the KP. Measures have been taken in order to ensure that residents interacting with police are able to communicate in their own language. For example, mixed patrols were introduced in KP regions such as Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Klokot/Kllokot, Ranilug/Ranillug, Parteš/Partesh, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North police stations, where the assigned officers have working language skills to perform daily police duties.

In general, following the assessment of interviews with KP officers, verbal communication has been assessed as appropriate within regions. However, the communication between the regional directorates and the KP General Directorate has remained challenging, in particular with Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North KP Region.¹⁹ The fact that this region is predominantly staffed with Kosovo Serb officers as opposed to the KP General Directorate which is staffed mainly with Kosovo Albanian officers, poses a major written communication challenge. The officers have been able to overcome the language barrier successfully, primarily due to the Kosovo Albanian officers from the KP headquarters, most of whom are bilingual and willing to use their Serbian language knowledge.

5.2. Written documents

The OSCE has observed that the availability of written documents in both Albanian and Serbian has improved since its 2015 assessment. Forms related to custody, investigation, rights of arrested persons, and many other official forms used for daily communication and processing are available in both official languages.

Since its last report in 2015, although the OSCE has noted progress in the availability of documents such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), administrative instructions, laws, policies and procedures in both official languages, there is still room for improvement, since some documents mentioned were available in the Albanian language only. The OSCE assessment and interaction with Serbian speaking officers indicates that most documents such as memoranda, operational orders, operational plans, instructions, statistics, arrest warrants, warrants on missing persons, stolen vehicles, lost documents, and requests for escorts are received from the KP headquarters level on daily basis in Albanian language only. Very often such documents, which are not clear to these officers, also require them to act upon.

¹⁸ Two officers from Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region raised the issue of the use of Cyrillic alphabet in official communication. The officers understand that the use of Cyrillic in correspondence creates additional problems (the Kosovo Police headquarters returned such documents as they did not understand them), however emphasized that the Cyrillic is the official alphabet of Serbian language and their right to use it should be respected.

¹⁹ Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region is a new KP region and is predominantly staffed with Kosovo Serb officers, including 285 integrated former Serbian police officers.

As stated by the interviewed representatives of the KP, the situation regarding the availability of written documents in all official languages varies among regions:

- **Pejë/Peć region:** the forms used by the KP officers related to operational, investigation and administration duties are not readily available in all official languages. Additionally, the interviewed KP officers expressed their concern that official documents are not received in their respective languages (Serbian or Bosnian), and instead, they are usually received in the Albanian language only.
- **Prishtinë/Priština region:** written documents are available in both Albanian and Serbian languages. All applicable laws, SOPs and administrative instructions, are distributed to Prishtinë/Priština stations in both official languages. However, there is a problem in some operational plans or instructions that are available in Albanian language only. Shared feature of these documents is that they are created in a very short period, and because of the need to distribute them fast, sometimes they are sent in Albanian language only. Therefore, the versions in Serbian language are delayed and not provided in a timely manner, which creates difficulties for non-Albanian speakers, since the officers may be required to implement orders they do not understand.
- **Prizren region:** generic official documents or memoranda received by stations from the KP General Directorate and the KP regional directorate are in most cases available in the Albanian language. Policies, laws, administrative instructions and press releases are available in both official languages, and translated into English as well. Daily, monthly or annual reports and operational plans are drafted in the Albanian language with the possibility of translation by the translators at the regional or local level upon a request made by the station. Documents posted on notice boards, such as notifications and vacancies are available in both official languages.
- **Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South region:** custody records, investigation and daily situation report forms, complaint forms, operational plans, orders and memoranda are available in the official languages. According to the interviewed KP officers, there are no major problems with regards to written documents, although sometimes due to the lack of interpreters, some documents are provided with a delay to Serbian speaking officers. Reports (daily, monthly and annual) are typically received in both official languages, albeit instances where such reports are received in Albanian only were noted.
- **Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region:** forms related to custody, investigation, rights of arrested persons, and many other official forms used for daily communication and processing are available in both official languages. Whereas, as stated by the Serbian speaking interviewed officers, nearly all documents such as memoranda, operational orders, operational plans, instructions, statistics, arrest warrants, warrants on missing persons, stolen vehicles, lost documents, requests for escorts, which are received from the KP headquarters level on daily basis with a requirement to act upon, are still available in Albanian language only. The regional operation room receives several such documents on daily basis.

Other documents mainly coming from the KP headquarters level and displayed inside the regional premises, such as notice boards where vacancy notices, press releases and various forms of internal instructions are posted, are typically provided in both official languages.

- **Gjilan/Gnjilane region:** the KP General Directorate and the region continue to distribute documents to the Gjilan/Gnjilane KP stations in Albanian language. Generally, the translation is provided by regional interpreters with delay due to the availability of interpreters. Respondents indicated lack of translation, mainly of operational plans

which are received in Albanian language, which due to the unavailability of interpreters at police stations, are verbally conveyed to colleagues for immediate actions by the Kosovo Serb colleagues that have knowledge of both languages. The daily situation reports are also issued in Albanian.

Direct observations of the region and visits to police stations showed that posts involving job vacancies, memoranda and schedules posted on notice boards, were available in both official languages. There were, however, cases where such documents were posted only in Albanian language, for example in Viti/Vitina police station.

- **Ferizaj/Uroševac region:** the KP General Directorate and the region continue to distribute documents in the Albanian language only. This was particularly evident in Štrpce/Shtërpçë Police Station, where in cases when operational plans require immediate actions, the deputy station commander provides the translation to the KP Kosovo Serb officers on given tasks. Translation of other documents is provided by regional interpreters depending on their availability, and often with a delay. The operational plans are similarly translated verbally to the KP Serb officers working at the Ferizaj/Uroševac station.
- Respondents also noted that operational plans are received only in Albanian, and there is lack of interpreters at police stations, or poor translation of certain forms which are not clear in terms of what exactly is required from them to complete it. The daily situation reports are issued in the Albanian language, with exceptional cases when inputs are provided by Štrpce/Shtërpçë Police Station in the Serbian language. During the visits to police stations, the OSCE observed that several notice boards in this region communicated information both in Albanian and Serbian languages (job vacancies, various shift schedules, and memoranda).
- **Gjakovë/Đakovica region:** all forms related to operational, investigation and administration duties used by the KP officers are available in the official languages, and used in accordance with the needs of the officers.

5.3. Building and door signs

As stated by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities²⁰, “...the authorities should take the necessary measures to comply with their obligation to display bi- and multilingual public signs in all relevant official languages. Damages to signs should be officially condemned, adequately sanctioned and should be repaired without delay.” In this regard, the display of multilingual signs, notices, and bulletin boards in offices providing services to both KP officers and residents, is particularly beneficial to those who only speak one language. Such signage is a good practice for the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, which requires that services are provided in all official languages, and that the work environment is conducive to the effective use of official languages, and that names of official institutions are displayed in all official languages. For this report, the OSCE looked at both interior and exterior signage in the KP facilities and police stations throughout Kosovo.

²⁰ See Council of Europe: Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, *Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Advisory Opinion on Kosovo*, ACFC/OP/IV(2017)001, 8 March 2017, Article 11, point 79.

The OSCE noted positive developments in the exterior of all KP regional directorates, police stations and sub-stations, as they were all observed to be displaying their titles in both official languages.²¹ However, similar progress was not observed in the internal signage within the majority of KP stations and facilities. These issues have been highlighted in previous assessments.

The assessment of the use of signs in both official languages revealed a wide variation between police regions, for example:

- The signs displayed on the main KP **Pejë/Peć** Regional Directorate and its stations and sub-stations buildings are available in Albanian, Serbian and English languages. However, in most instances the majority of internal door signs were displayed in the Albanian language only, and some doors had no signs at all.
- The main KP **Prishtinë/Priština** Regional Directorate and its stations and sub-stations also have their building signs displayed in Albanian, Serbian and English languages. Many door signs in Prishtinë/Priština region are available in both official languages, while some door signs are missing in both languages. Out of the entire region, only the internal door signs in Glllogoc/Glllogovac KP station are displayed in the Albanian language only.
- The signs on the main KP **Prizren** Regional Directorate and its stations' building are displayed in all official languages, including English. Of note, the external building signs of Mamuša/Mamushë/Mamuša Police Station included the Turkish language, following the recommendation of the OSCE from 2015. Internally, the signs within the majority of police stations are predominantly in the Albanian language only. There is almost a complete absence of door signs at the police stations of Mamuša/Mamushë/Mamuša and Dragash/Dragaš, and very few are displayed in the Albanian language only.
- The signs on the main buildings of the KP **Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South** Regional Directorate and its stations and sub-stations are displayed in official languages, whereas the door signs inside the regional directorate building are displayed in Albanian language only. Additionally, the signs in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South Police Station are in both official languages, and there were only few door signs displayed in the buildings of both Skenderaj/Srbica and Vushtrri/Vučitrn police stations. A small number of signs in Vushtrri/Vučitrn Police Station might be a result of the ongoing refurbishing work within the building at the time of our visit.
- The main building of the KP **Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North** region, its stations, and sub-stations, have signs displayed in Albanian, Serbian and English languages. However, in the majority of cases the internal door signs are displayed in one language only.²² The regional directorate building is an exception to this practice, as majority of its door signs are displayed in three languages (Albanian, Serbian and English). Lack of consistency in the use of signage was observed in the signs of specialised police units, where in some cases signs were displayed in Serbian language only, and in others they were displayed in the two official languages, with a very small number of cases in the three languages.

²¹ Compared to the last assessment, the KP Prizren Regional Directorate and Mamuša/Mamushë/Mamuša Police Station signs are now displayed also in Turkish, which is an official language in those municipalities.

²² If the office is occupied by Kosovo Serb officers, the door sign is in Serbian language, and same is with Albanian officers. In case there is mixed composition in the office, the door sign is in three official languages.

Similar practices were also observed in a number of other stations and sub-stations. For example, the signs inside the police stations of Zubin Potok and Leposavić/Leposaviq are displayed in Serbian language only. It should be noted that all officers working in these stations are Kosovo Serbs.

- The signs on the KP **Gjilan/Gnjilane** regional and station buildings are displayed in all three languages. The internal door signs are mostly in the two official languages with the exception of door signs in Viti/Vitina and the sub-station in Pozharan/Požaranje, which are in Albanian language only.
- The signs on the KP **Ferizaj/Uroševac** regional and station buildings are displayed in Albanian, Serbian and English languages. The internal door signs in the KP Regional Directorate of Ferizaj/Uroševac and the Police Station of Štrpce/Shtërpçë are displayed in both official languages, while the door signs in Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Shtime/Štimlje and Han i Elezit/Elez Han are displayed in Albanian only.
- The building signs on the KP **Gjakovë/Đakovica** Regional Directorate and its police stations are displayed in both official languages. However, the majority of door signs in Gjakovë/Đakovica and Malishevë/Mališevo police stations are in Albanian language only, with some door signs missing. The internal door signs of the KP Station of Rahovec/Orahovac are in both Albanian and Serbian languages.

5.4. Intranet

The OSCE noted considerable progress of the use of both official languages in the availability of the material and documents published on the KP intranet in both languages compared to its last assessment in 2015. Most of laws, regulations and forms, such as custody records, complaint forms, incident reports, and daily situation reports are available on the KP intranet in both official languages, and officers may fill out the forms in either language.

The KP Policy and Procedure Manual, daily situation reports, KP vacancy notices, memoranda of understanding, KP annual reports and many other documents are available in both languages. However, there are still documents such as operational orders, operational plans, instructions, statistics, stolen vehicles and lost document forms, requests for escorts, which are posted in Albanian language only.

The links to intranet pages in Serbian are still the main concern in some cases. A lot of content in the Serbian version is still available under titles which are in Albanian, and some also in English languages. Therefore, an officer who is not familiar with the equivalent in the Albanian language will not be able to find the document.

5.5. Training

Materials related to trainings organized at the Kosovo Academy for Public Safety (KAPS) in Vushtrri/Vučitrn are available in both official languages, and the same are distributed to participants in both of these languages. However, some Serbian speaking interviewees from Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North highlighted the non-availability of training material in the Serbian language during some trainings, as well as deficiencies in the quality of interpretation provided during trainings. The quality of interpretation was assessed as rather poor according to the interviewed KP officers in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region.

Since there is no option of simultaneous translation using the respective equipment, Kosovo Serbs or other non-Albanian speaking participants are asked to gather around one interpreter who translates for them simultaneously (by 'whispering in the ear'). According to the interviewees, the interpreters do not have the necessary qualifications for the job and they often make mistakes in terms of grammar, use of adequate words or forms that do not exist in the Serbian language. Due to this, Kosovo Serb officers underlined that they often feel they do not have an equal treatment and equal access to knowledge compared to their Albanian speaking colleagues. Their biggest concern is the impact this has or may have on their future access to promotion opportunities, particularly when they take eligibility tests for higher ranks. An officer of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region gave an example of his colleague, whom he considers to be a skilled and knowledgeable professional, who failed what was considered to be an easy test because he could not understand the question in the test paper due to poor translation and grammar.

The KP in-house trainings organized frequently at the station and regional level were also highlighted. In most cases, the training and the training materials are provided in official languages. Also, usually, trainings are delivered in Albanian and instead of using simultaneous translation with equipment, the translation into Serbian is provided verbally by interpreters.

Finally, the KP does not deliver any language courses to its officers, which could have eventually contributed to the improvement of their communication with each other, as well as with the public.

5.6. Interpretation and Translation

5.6.1 Availability of interpreters

Interpreters constitute a fundamental component to ensure an equal use of official languages within the KP, as they provide both verbal and written translation for KP regions.

The number of interpreters employed by the KP has decreased since the last OSCE report on this issue in 2015. According to the information provided by the KP General Directorate, there are currently 28 interpreters at the KP throughout Kosovo. There are eight (3 female and 5 male) interpreters assigned to the KP General Directorate, one female interpreter in each, the Border Police Department and the Training Division, and three interpreters, one female and two males, at the Department of Operation.

The research conducted in 2015 indicated that there were 18 interpreters working for the KP regional directorates; whereas in 2017 the KP regional administration indicated that the number of interpreters available to these directorates is 15.

- The KP in **Pejë/Peć** region has 496 officers and operates with only one interpreter that translates upon the request of the regional directorate and its stations from Albanian to Serbian language and vice versa.
- The KP in **Prishtinë/Priština** region has 1,100 officers. The situation in this region has deteriorated with the number of interpreters decreasing from six to three from the last OSCE assessment of the language compliance. Out of these three interpreters, one is temporarily assigned to the KP General Directorate, with another two (one female and one male) in each, Lipjan/Lipljane and Prishtinë/Priština stations.

Considering the ethnic composition of the KP stations in the region, there is a strong need to have an interpreter assigned to Gračanica/Gračanicë, Obiliq/Obilič and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje²³ police stations.

- The KP in **Prizren** region has 482 officers and the situation with available interpreters remains the same since the last reporting. There are two official translators/interpreters at the regional level and an additional one assigned to Dragash/Dragaš police station. This is far less than the reasonable need of the police region. Additionally, there is a need for a translator for translation from the official languages into the Turkish language in stations where this is the official language at the municipal level.
- The KP in **Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South** region has 468 officers and operates with only two interpreters, who are utilized for all translation needs of the region, including the translation of documents, interpretation during meetings, and translation during in-house trainings.
- The KP in **Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North** region has 503 officers and only one interpreter. Due to the overwhelming number of translation requests, the interpreter is not able to efficiently cope with such workload. Therefore, the translation is often delayed, which according to the interviewed officers seriously affects their efficiency at times. Sometimes, due to short deadlines and lack of interpreters, they fail to respond to tasks given by the KP headquarters level in a timely manner. However, it is important to note that according to the interviewed officers from the region, the representatives of the KP headquarters are aware of the problem and extend the given deadlines whenever possible.
- The KP in **Gjilan/Gnjilane** region has 565 officers and operates with only three male translators assigned to provide verbal and written translation. Two translators work at the regional level and one in Kamenicë/Kamenica Police Station.
- The KP in **Ferizaj/Uroševac** region has 439 officers and only two (a male and a female) interpreters assigned for verbal and written translation. The new KP staffing structure does not foresee an interpreter post for Štrpce/Shtërpçë Police Station, although the need for one was continuously highlighted during interviews with respondents.

The Ferizaj/Uroševac KP regional translation pool has insufficient capacities to provide timely translation, taking into account the amount of verbal and written translations received from the KP General Directorate and the region. The two translators are mostly occupied with performing translation during trainings and investigations for the region and police stations, and are mostly unavailable for additional requirements. The appointment of a translator in Štrpce/Shtërpçë Police Station would at the same time ease the burden of the two existing translators, which could then focus on the regional directorate and provide timely translations.

- The KP in **Gjakovë/Đakovica** has 306 officers with no interpreters assigned to this region. Interviews revealed that in cases when interpreters are needed, the KP officers with good knowledge of Serbian language are used as interpreters.

²³ The interpreter of the police station in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje is temporarily assigned to the KP General Directorate.

5.6.2 Quality of written and verbal translations

During this assessment, the OSCE examined the quality of translation and reviewed a representative sample of translated documents. During the interviews with KP officers and assessment of different documents, and review of written materials and information posted on KP Intranet, the OSCE has observed that the quality of translation is not at a satisfactory level. Namely, most documents translated into Serbian have grammar and spelling mistakes, and at times, a wrong choice of words, a situation which the OSCE observed also during the assessment in 2015. Some Kosovo Serb respondents stated that at times there are problems in translation of different documents, which often are difficult to understand. In their responses to the questionnaire, some officers indicated that they mostly rely on their Albanian colleagues for translation. However, the latter cannot replace the official translation of written documents.

5.7. Gender perspective

During this assessment, as stated above, a total number of 84 police officers were interviewed, out of whom 25 were women police officers. With regards to the ethnic representation there were three Kosovo Bosniaks in Pejë/Peć, four Kosovo Serbs in Prishtinë/Priština, three Kosovo Turkish in Prizren, one Kosovo Serb and one Kosovo Bosniak in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South, three Kosovo Serbs in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, three Kosovo Serbs and one Kosovo Albanian in Gjilan/Gnjilane, three Kosovo Serbs in Ferizaj/Uroševac and three Kosovo Albanians in Gjakovë/Đakovica regions. None of the officers interviewed highlighted any discriminatory issues regarding gender practices or procedures of the KP, although the OSCE has identified some cases in different internal KP written documents, which after the translation contained technical grammar mistakes related to gender. Furthermore, the OSCE noted that there is a very small number of female interpreters/translators employed by the KP. Based on the research conducted, there are only four female interpreters²⁴ in the eight KP regions. The KP representatives stated that in cases of domestic violence and other gender sensitive cases, they always use their female interpreters when they are available. Also, whenever possible and in the absence of a female interpreter, they engage female police officers from the same ethnicity that understands the language of the victim. While the gender perspective should be taken into account in the appointment of translators, however, lacking funds to hire higher number of female interpreters, the KP has addressed the issue by using alternative methods, and has ensured that the gender aspect is taken into account when interviewing female victims or witnesses. In spite of this, an increased number of female interpreters that would deal with different female sensitive issues would enhance KP's effectiveness at both operational and administrative level.

²⁴ Two each in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica South and Ferizaj/Uroševac, and an additional two in Prishtinë/Priština regions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The OSCE has observed that verbal communication between the KP officers has improved in all KP regions, and in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North region in particular. As previously noted by the OSCE, the KP officers routinely overcome problems which they encounter when communicating with each other. A significant number of officers possess the basic knowledge and understanding of the other official language. However, introduction of local language classes in the KP would reduce the need for interpreters and avoid situations when police officers cannot communicate without them.

The OSCE is aware that because of time constraints, the nature of some documents that need to be distributed immediately, and the relatively low number of interpreters, it is not currently possible to translate all documents. However, the KP should build upon good practices developed in verbal communication and achieve full language compliance by providing all documents in both languages.

The KP regions still lack enough interpreters that could cope with the high demand for translation at various briefings, trainings and other events, as well as with the volume of documents that need translation in order to achieve full language compliance of the KP. However, the OSCE observed that interpreters could be utilized more efficiently at the stations level if the documents produced by the KP General Directorate and regional directorates were distributed in both languages. Efforts should be made to streamline the work of interpreters in order to improve their efficiency and avoid duplication of work. This way, the KP's language compliance could significantly improve with regards to written documents.

Although some improvement was noted, compared to the assessment report of 2015, an issue which requires further attention involves the numerous door signs at the KP stations and other facilities that are still displayed in one language only. Placement of door signs indicating the name(s) rank(s) and section or unit of office occupants is a relatively inexpensive effort. A systematic approach and senior KP managers' accountability would quickly resolve this issue.

Intranet content has improved and more documents are available in both official languages. However, the research revealed that many important documents are already translated into Serbian language but are posted on Intranet only in Albanian. In order to achieve full language compliance in this area, the KP should ensure that links to pages which contain documents in the Serbian language are functional and that intranet pages which contain the same information in the Serbian language are tested to ensure their functionality.

Finally, the research indicated that the KP still needs to improve the availability of the translation during trainings. It should be noted that the research also indicates that training materials are not always available in the Serbian language at the time of the training, and that more efforts are required to solve this matter.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above, the OSCE recommends the following:

- In the implementation of the language compliance, Kosovo Police should liaise and co-operate closely with the Office of the Language Commissioner;
- Kosovo Police General Directorate is encouraged to review the current written translation practices and procedures in order to enhance the current translation system and reduce the occurrence of translation mistakes;
- Kosovo Police General Directorate should organize language courses in both Albanian and Serbian for new generation of officers and for the serving officers throughout Kosovo, so that each police region has sufficient personnel able to communicate in both official languages. Additionally, in those municipalities where other languages have the status of an official language (e.g. Bosnian and Turkish), consideration should also be given to providing courses in those languages;
- Kosovo Police should consider increasing their funds to hire more interpreters at both regional and station levels in accordance with their specific needs. They should also consider the possibility of creating a pool of interpreters that would be utilized to continuously update online content and ensure that all pages and documents are available in official languages;
- Kosovo Police should consider increasing the number of female interpreters to assist in dealing with women victims. Women police officers should be encouraged to attend language classes, in order to increase the number of language proficient women officers in all regions.
- Kosovo Police, specifically the Department for Administration, should encourage all KP Regional Directorates to put all internal door signs within its stations and facilities in official languages, respecting the legal and regulatory framework in place;
- Kosovo Police should ensure that all written documents such as, operational plans, orders, court orders, memoranda, press releases and other relevant documents produced by the KP General Directorate or regional directorates, are timely translated into official languages and distributed to its subordinate offices prior to engaging in any activity or operation. Specific attention should be paid to information of public interest;
- Kosovo Police should upload all documents in Serbian language under the link in Serbian on the intranet;
- Kosovo Police should take steps to ensure that for all official trainings, notably that of KAPS where there is at least one Serbian or Albanian speaking participant, simultaneous translation with the use of translation equipment is offered and training materials in both Albanian and Serbian languages are distributed in a timely manner;
- Consideration should also be given to setting as a requirement the knowledge of both official languages for further promotion within the organization.

