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Press Release

COMKFOR visits the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Skopje

On 1st of February 2011, the Commander of KFOR, Major General Erhard Bühler, continued his tour through South East Balkan with a short official visit to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

General Bühler exchanged views with the Chief of General Staff of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Miroslav Stojanovski who was accompanied by high ranking officers of the Macedonian General Staff. In the early afternoon Commander KFOR met police representatives of the Ministry of the Interior to be informed about border security issues.

In his meeting with the Chief of General Staff in the Ministry of Defense General Bühler presented a complete overview about the situation in Kosovo from the point of view of KFOR and informed the Macedonian military authorities about KFOR related issues and events. He explained that KFOR with a reduced number of soldiers will act Kosovo-wide with two Multinational Battle Groups, both of them not having specific regional areas of responsibility. They will operate under his direct command with increased flexibility, mobility and readiness.

For the regional tasks there will be five Joint Regional Detachments (JRD) with their Liaison and Monitoring Teams (LMT) to keep in touch with all the people in Kosovo. Commander KFOR made it clear that KFOR is still strong after the reorganization and it will do its tasks efficiently and successfully. Thus KFOR and NATO will contribute to the stability to the whole region in and around Kosovo.

During the conference with General Stojanovski both generals agreed that the overall security situation in the region and especially at the border has successfully been stabilized over the past years. There is no longer a severe security threat and



people can live in peace. This stability of the security situation is an appropriate and essential condition for the economic and political development in this area of the Balkans. But both delegations agreed that criminality and a certain potential of violence in some regions is still a challenge especially for police forces.

General Stojanovski especially praised the overarching role of The North Atlantic Alliance which over the last two decades has stabilized and is still stabilizing the security in the whole region. He emphasized that NATO should and will thus be a guarantor for an ongoing democratic development and for providing the framework for economic prosperity. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia assesses itself as a pillar of that security and its aim is to become member of NATO and the EU. The government, especially the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces are working hard to fulfill the conditions for such a membership. General Stojanovski further explained the willingness of his state and of the Ministry of Defense to support the formation of the KSF of Kosovo by training officers and members of the KSF.

They exchanged information about the performance of the Host Nation Support Coordination Centre, which was put in full operational readiness. Its main task is to coordinate with KFOR in customs and border procedures for transport, including other requirements by KFOR in the domain of logistics.

Later the representatives of the Police in the Ministry of the Interior informed the KFOR delegation about the security situation at the border with Kosovo and the cooperation regarding the monitoring of the areas at this border. They confirmed it as an appropriate decision that Kosovo Border and Boundary Police is now responsible for guarding one part of the common border since 22nd of January 2011. It was discussed that also the responsibility for the control and the monitoring of further parts of the border could be handed over from KFOR to Kosovo Border and Boundary Police. As these parts are challenging with regard to smuggling and illegal immigration both sides agreed to plan and monitor the process of handing over the responsibility very carefully and to further continue the cooperation in the context of the Joint Implementation Commission.