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Press release

Commander KFOR, General Erhard Bühler, hosts students from the Institute for Political and European Studies (ISPE)

Today, 18th July 2011, Commander KFOR, Major General Erhard Bühler welcomed a group of 26 students of the ISPE (Institute for European Political Studies) in Headquarters of KFOR in Film City, Pristina. This visit is the result of the good and close relationship between the ISPE Institute and KFOR. This famous academic institution was established to offer support in development of university education of the country through studies and scientific research, by promoting support in accomplishing the standards of the process of Kosovo's integration into EU, by actively participating in promoting the sectorial policies, known as standards for integrating into EU.

General Bühler was already invited by ISPE Director Dr. Avni Mazrreku several times to deliver lectures on the current security and political situation on the Western Balkans and the future development of KFOR mission in Kosovo for panels of scientists and student groups of this institution. The event is part of the academic program of Commander KFOR with which he wants to improve the scientific discussion and the knowledge about collective security systems and modern political and military peace keeping processes in general and for the Western Balkans and Kosovo in particular.

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The students were introduced into the organization and functions of KFOR Headquarters, and they had the chance to visit the infrastructure and installations of “Film City” Camp; after having seen some of the concrete side of a military peace keeping mission the participants of the ISPE program assisted a lecture by Commander of KFOR, General Bühler.

At first they got a feeling of the spirit of history when General Erhard Bühler hosted the students in a very historic place,: They assembled in the room where was the first meeting when NATO troops entered in Kosovo in 1999 and where talks were conducted between NATO/KFOR and representatives of the former UCK (KLA).

In his briefing Commander of KFOR, first introduced milestones of the historical developments in Kosovo covering the period from the late 1990ies until today: the peace process, the development of the political and economical framework, the tragic development of 2004 and the very positive improvements of the security and stability during the recent years. He especially described the developments impacting on KFOR: he provided a short assessment how his military organization deals with the current security situation compared with the beginning of the mission. COMKFOR explained how throughout the years KFOR have maintained its role as an impartial peacekeeping force, dedicated to ensure a Safe and Secure Environment in the entire territory of Kosovo. He also presented the actual situation, marked by improved security conditions all over Kosovo, apart some areas in the North. These massive improvements have had a positive impact on the people living in Kosovo, as well as on KFOR mission, which has adopted a new forces structure. Commander illustrated how KFOR is now based on the two multinational battle groups and the five Joint Regional Detachments, in addition to a strong Tactical Reserve Maneuver Battalion directly under his command as well as reserve forces

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stationed outside Kosovo, the latter being an indicator that NATO is prepared for all potential scenarios. It was scientifically interesting for the students to learn that a military organization is a living and ever changing organization adapting rapidly and flexibly to new situation and challenges. They learned about the challenges to efficiently organize a complex military system consisting of soldiers from 31 nations. Thus it was a surprise to them that such a military system functions very well.

Commander of KFOR during the briefing stressed the role that KFOR played over the years strengthening the security in Kosovo and stressed the proven fact that the stable security was the essential precondition for the development of this country.

He mentioned the commitment of KFOR in the stand up the Kosovo Security Force and in the development of its core capabilities such as Search and Rescue, Hazardous Materials Management, Fire Fighting and Humanitarian Demining. COMKFOR illustrated also the results achieved thanks to the great commitment of the Kosovo Police that is now fully in charge of policing the green border line between with Albania and with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

COMKFOR concluded his presentation reminding the students how important is the role of the security and finally how in such a way Kosovo will move forward. KFOR and Kosovo is an example of history how a military mission can restore peace and can contribute not only to nation building but to install a stable security system in a whole region. However the process is very complex and can not be reduced to military operations. Therefore the military leaders have to contribute to the civil peace process, to reconciliation and help to improve the political and economical framework. In that scenario KFOR role still remains committed to the deepest cooperation with the institutions, to establishing democratic institutions to the benefit of all people exactly that. Commander KFOR recommended doing a lot of scientific research in order to develop master plans for successful peace operations.

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