



Reconstruction Implementation Commission
for Serbian Orthodox Religious Sites in Kosovo

Press Statement - 7th December 2007

RECONSTRUCTION OF SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH SITES CONTINUES

During 2007, 17 projects have been successfully implemented by the Reconstruction Implementation Commission (RIC) for Serbian Orthodox Religious sites in Kosovo. Works will be completed to 4 sites by the end of the year, while the remaining 13 projects continue to be reconstructed into 2008. Additionally 2 projects have been implemented by the European Agency for Reconstruction.

An estimated 1.9 million euros have been spent on project works this year, and the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG) has confirmed its continued financial support in 2008 to a proposed value of 1.8 million euros. Since 2004, the PISG has committed nearly 6 million euros to the reconstruction of the 34 Serbian Orthodox Church sites damaged or destroyed, and the European Agency for Reconstruction, 2 million euros.

For 2008, the RIC is programming more specialist works in the field of wall paintings conservation, and the construction of new iconostasis and icon paintings.

The RIC acknowledges the continued strong support of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Culture of Serbia without whose support the projects would not have been successfully implemented.

Thanks to the recent efforts of the PISG Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS), the Kosovo Assembly has approved an additional 50,000 euros to increase security measures at the most vulnerable church sites in Kosovo which continue to be the target of lead thefts and vandalism. The task of implementing these actions will be managed by the MCYS.

18 professionals including architects, archaeologists and conservators from the institutions Kosovo and Belgrade attended a 5-day seminar at the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments (EKKBM) in Thessaloniki. The seminar attended by Kosovo Albanians and Serbians is a strong step towards continued and essential institutional capacity building both with and between professionals.

The RIC is strongly supported by the Council of Europe, European Commission, European Agency for Reconstruction and UNMIK and has recently received funding from the US Office to support the construction of a new iconostasis at St Nicholas Church in Pristina.

The RIC comprises five representatives from the Council of Europe, Serbian Orthodox Church, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (Kosovo/UNMIK), Institute for the Protection of Monuments (Kosovo/UNMIK) and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments (Belgrade).

