

Dragash/Dragaš

September 2009

1. Area and population

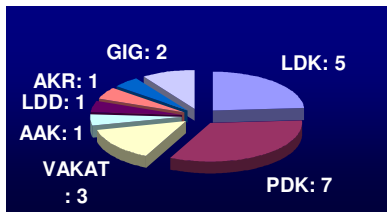
Dragash/Dragaš municipality is located in the southernmost part of Kosovo, approximately 22km southwest of Prizren at an altitude of 1,050 meters. The municipality includes town and 35 villages and spreads throughout the regions of Gora and Opojë/Opolje. The estimated population is over 41,000. About two-thirds of the inhabitants are Kosovo Albanian and one third are Kosovo Gorani and Bosniaks. Dragash/Dragaš municipality is probably unique in Kosovo for the tolerance between the communities living there. Incidents of ethnic violence occurred after the 1999 conflict but the situation has been calm since mid-2001.

Dragash/Dragaš town is the administrative centre of two geographically divided regions Opojë/Opolje and Gora. The Opojë/Opolje region is inhabited by Kosovo Albanians while Kosovo Gorani and Bosniaks reside in the Gora region. The Gorani community defines its spoken language as 'Našinski' ('Our Language'). It is a mixture of Macedonian, Turkish, Bosnian, and Serbian.

2. Governing structures

• Legislative

Municipal assembly, established in 2008, has 21 elected members: seven from PDK, five from LDK, three from VAKAT coalition, two from GIG, while AAK, AKR, LDD and SDA have one each. All three communities: Kosovo Albanian, Gorani and Bosniak, are represented in the municipal assembly. The municipal assembly elected a chairperson from PDK, and a deputy chairperson from VAKAT representing Gorani and Bosniak communities.



PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo
LDK - Democratic League of Kosovo
VAKAT - Coalition
GIG - Gora Citizens Initiative
AAK - Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
AKR - People's Movement of Kosovo
LDD - Democratic League of Dardania
SDA - Democratic Action Party

• Executive

The executive branch is led by the mayor, Mr. Salim Jenuzi (PDK), and includes eight directorates, municipal communities office, and chief of administration and personnel. In addition, the mayor is assisted by deputy mayor and deputy mayor for communities. Three of the directors, deputy mayor for communities and head of municipal communities office are Kosovo Gorani. In total, 98 civil servants work in the municipality out of which 34 are Kosovo Gorani and Bosniaks and one is Kosovo Turk. (Source: municipal personnel assistant)

• Judiciary

Dragash/Dragaš has a Municipal Court (only one judge, Kosovo Albanian) and a minor offences court (two Kosovo Albanian judges). The municipal court has five support staff, four Kosovo Albanians and one Kosovo Gorani. The minor offences court has four support staff. Four females work in the judiciary in Dragash/Dragaš. Since the war, there is no prosecutor based in the municipality.

• Security presence

Dragash/Dragaš police station has been handed over to Kosovo police in November 2004 and is currently headed by a Kosovo Albanian commander and a Kosovo Gorani deputy. Dragash/Dragaš police station has 76 police officers - 47 Kosovo Albanian and 33 Kosovo Gorani (including 6 police officers in Kruševo/Krusheve border police substation). EULEX assist the police with five international officers as monitors and advisers. Turkish battalion is based in Dragash/Dragaš as part of the German Multi-national KFOR Brigade (South).

3. Political overview

A local multiparty political system is showing signs of development marking a distinct change from the political culture that emerged after the conflict under which each party firmly stuck to the ethnic based policies. PDK has established a good support base - mainly former KLA members. Support for PDK remains high in the region. LDK has been active in Dragash/Dragaš since the 1990s as a part of the national movement. The vast majority of its supporters are drawn from the Kosovo Albanian population.

Kosovo Gorani and Bosniaks are represented in the municipal assembly by three political entities: VAKAT Coalition (coalescing partner of the ruling PDK) and the opposition parties: GIG and SDA. GIG and SDA represent the Kosovo Gorani community and favour the use of Serbian education curricula; GIG is perceived to have been supported by Gorani who wants to keep the contacts with Serbia.

Upon last local elections in 2007, the following parties received one seat in the municipal assembly:

- AAK (*it has not been able to gain much ground in Dragash/Dragaš, probably due to the fact that the resistance against Milošević in Dragash/Dragaš was led either by LDK members or PDK members close to the KLA*),
- New Kosovo Alliance (AKR) (*Dragash/Dragaš branch was established only in January 2007. The party members are coming from Kosovo Albanian, Gorani and Bosniak communities.*)
- Democratic League of Dardania (*It was established in 2007 following the split within LDK. The local party branch was established in April 2007*).

4. Economy

Due to poor agricultural resources and geographical isolation Dragash/Dragaš is among the most underdeveloped regions in Kosovo. The economic situation is dominated by a high rate of unemployment. The main employers in the area are the municipality, Kosovo police, several private companies and former socially owned enterprises.

5. Public Services

• Health

Besides the main family medical centre, there is one health centre in Dragash/Dragaš town. 13 other health centres are in Gora and Opojë/Opolje: 3 health centres and 5 health sub-centres in Gora, and 3 health centres and 2 health sub-centres in Opojë/Opolje. In total, 15 doctors and 5 dentists work in the health sector.

• Education

Dragash/Dragaš municipality has 12 primary schools with additional 23 satellite schools in remote villages – grades one to four. Out of 12 schools six are in Opojë/Opolje region, five in Gora region and one is located in Dragash/Dragaš town. The secondary school following Kosovo curriculum is located in Dragash/Dragaš town and is multi-ethnic, with lectures in Albanian and Bosnian languages. The majority of Kosovo Gorani students attend Serbian-curriculum secondary school located in village Mlike/Mlike.

During the 2008-2009 school year, 6.619 children were registered in all grades of primary and secondary education.

Problematic/pending issues

Since school year 2007/2008, teachers who have not had signed the contracts with Kosovo institutions were not allowed to access the school buildings. This had a direct impact on Kosovo Gorani pupils who were not able to access some of the schools premises closer to them; instead they attend classes in somewhat remote satellite schools. Different attempts involving the interlocutors from the Kosovo ministry of education, science and technology; OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities; Dragash/Dragaš municipality; Kosovo Gorani teachers and school principals in finding an acceptable solution, have failed, at least when it comes to Nezim Berati/Nebojša Jerković primary school in Dragash/Dragaš town. The Mission will continue to monitor the situation and seek solution.

6. Map of the region

