

Rahovec/Orahovac

September 2009

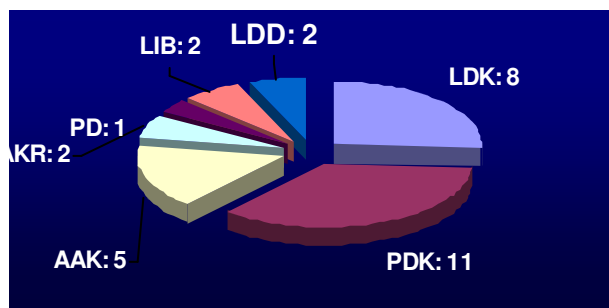
1. Area and population

The municipality of Rahovec/Orahovac is located in the south-western part of Kosovo and consists of the town of Rahovec/Orahovac and 35 villages. The estimated population is 73,700 people with the majority living in rural areas and approx. 23,200 in the town. Kosovo Serbs, roughly 1,300 people, live in the upper part of town (approx. 550-600) and in the village of Velika Hoca/Hoçë e Madhe (around 700). 500-550 Kosovo Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali reside in the upper part of Rahovec/Orahovac as well. A significant number of Kosovo Egyptians live around the villages of Ratkoc/Ratkovac and Xerxe/Zrze (around 400) and in Krushe e Madhe/Velika Krusa area (around 200). Until 1999 there were 9 settlements in the Rahovec/Orahovac municipality with mixed Kosovo Serb and Albanian population.

2. Governing structures

● Legislative

The municipal elections of 17 November 2007 altered the distribution of power within the municipal assembly. Previously run by LDK, the municipal assembly is now dominated by PDK. Out of 31 seats in the municipal assembly PDK gained 11; LDK eight; AAK five; LIB, AKR and LDD two seats each; and PD one. Although three Kosovo Serb parties: Serbian People's Party (SNS), New Democracy (ND) and Force of Serbia Movement (PSS) and two Roma parties: Roma Democratic Initiative of Kosovo (IRDK) and United Roma Party of Kosovo (PREBK) ran in the elections, none of them won enough vote to enter the assembly. Municipal assembly elected Mr. Xhemajli Haxhimustafa (PDK) as its chairperson.



PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo
LDK - Democratic League of Kosovo
AAK - Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
LIB - Movement for Integration and Unity
AKR - New Alliance for Kosovo
LDD - Democratic League of Dardania
PD - Justice Party

● Executive

The mayor of Rahovec/Orahovac is Mr. Qazim Qeska (PDK). The mayor appointed Mr. Xhevdet Duraku as a deputy mayor and municipal assembly elected Mr. Bojan Nakalamic (Independent Liberal Party – SLS) as the deputy mayor for communities. The executive council is composed of nine directorates including the municipal community office (MCO). There are 1,138 civil servants in municipality including education (841) and health staff (130). The municipal administration is composed of 164 civil servants out of which 152 are Kosovo Albanians (including 16 females), 11 Kosovo Serbs (including six females), and only one Kosovo Roma employed.

● Judiciary

In December 1999, the judges for the municipal court and the minor offences court were sworn in. There are a total of 10 judges in Rahovec/Orahovac, all of which are Kosovo Albanians, assisted by two lay judges. In late 2004, the court liaison office in the Kosovo Serb enclave of Velika Hoča/Hoçë e Madhe was established and following February 2008 it functions on ad hoc basis. Prizren's municipal public prosecutor's office covers the municipality.

● Security presence

The Kosovo police force in the area consist of 82 officers: 80 Kosovo Albanians and two Kosovo Serbs from upper Rahovec/Orahovac. In addition to the Kosovo police station in downtown Rahovec/Orahovac, there is a Kosovo police sub-office in Velika Hoca/Hoçë e Madhe operating in two shifts consisting of one Kosovo Albanian and one Kosovo Serb per each shift. There are also three EULEX police officers deployed in Rahovec. KFOR LMT is operating from their field house, and is very active in monitoring and supporting the municipality. In February 2009, KFOR removed their observation post from Velika Hoča/Hoçë e Madhe. On 30

April 2009, Rahovec/Orahovac Mayor appointed 15 members of the Municipal Community Safety Council (MCSC).

3. Political overview

Political Parties have begun their preparations for the elections in earnest and current mayor is likely to renew his candidacy. The deputy mayor for communities expressed confidence that more than 50 percent of Kosovo Serb there will take part in the upcoming November 2009 elections, while the current head of municipal communities office, also an active SLS member, said he would approach the parallel structures in order to invite the Kosovo Serb community to participate in the upcoming local elections. Freedom of movement has seen considerable progress over the last year; the new local supermarket and the central market place are regular destinations of the Kosovo Serb buyers, including members of the church. Nevertheless, the participation of Kosovo Serbs is still an ongoing issue; communities committee is not yet established due to their non-participation and the municipal working group on returns does not meet regularly.

4. Economy

The economy rests largely on agriculture; in particular on grape cultivation. There is low production of wheat and corn and limited cattle breeding. The sand and gravel business in the area is probably the second most important economic activity in the municipality. There are a total of eight major private companies dealing with agricultural production, production of plastics, heaters, freezers, and recycling.

5. Public services

● Health

The local health sector includes one health house in Rahovec/Orahovac town, two clinics, and seven health centres, also known as ambulanta, which provide basic medical treatment. The nearest well-equipped hospitals are located in Gjakovë/Đakovica and Prizren. There are two ambulantas providing basic medical services in the Kosovo Serb inhabited part of the municipality. Both ambulantas are financed by the Kosovo and Serbian authorities at the same time. In addition, the Kosovo Serb community is increasingly using the available health facilities in the town. The director of the centre for social welfare is concerned about the high number of mentally handicapped people in Rahovec/Orahovac and the lack of a proper institution to take care of them. A request has been made in the beginning of 2009 to the municipal assembly for the establishment of such an institution, which is also a requirement for a municipality of more than 50.000 inhabitants.

● Education

The education sector reflects the local ethnic divisions as almost all schools are ethnically segregated. Kosovo Albanian children are served by 19 primary schools and one secondary school with two branches in two villages. Kosovo Serbs attend two primary schools and one gymnasium, located in the Kosovo Serb inhabited areas. These schools receive financial support from Serbia and the Kosovo ministry of education. The Kosovo Serb community refuses to send their children to the multi-ethnic school, as there were fears from the community, that the acceptance of the Kosovo authority over education of Kosovo Serb pupils would exempt them from further education in Serbia proper.

6. Map of the region

