

Box 4.10.1 The EU in Macedonia

While expanding its role in BiH and continuing its involvement in Kosovo within the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the EU has also maintained a police mission (the EU Police Mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [EUPOL Proxima]) in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Launched in 2003 to operate until December 2004, its mandate was extended for one year as tensions grew around the country's Albanian minority. But these tensions have dissipated, and the EU mission has concentrated on police and border service reforms in a largely stable environment.

The situation in FYROM has been a source of concern to the international community since it withdrew from Yugoslavia in 1991. Separatist aspirations among segments of the Albanian community (25 percent of the population) were exacerbated by limitations on their minority rights. From 1992 to 1999 the UN maintained a preventive deployment force there, complemented by an OSCE "spill-over mission" from Kosovo, which is still in place. Tensions mounted after Yugoslavia's withdrawal from Kosovo, which encouraged ethnic Albanian radicals to become increasingly assertive in FYROM, taking control of the northwestern region of the country in 2001.

With Kosovo Albanians contributing to this insurgency, NATO deployed 3,500 troops to FYROM at the government's request in August 2001. NATO maintained operations there until March 2003, when it was replaced by the EU's first military mission—known as Concordia. This ran until December 2003

and its departure coincided with the deployment of Proxima. NATO has retained a headquarters in the capital, Skopje, a rear base for its Kosovo force. It also provides security sector assistance, as FYROM had the advantage of

to promote police reform throughout the country.

The year in review began with questions about FYROM's commitment to minority rights. In November 2004 the decentralization process received popular

EU Police Mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (EUPOL Proxima)

• Authorization date	29 September 2003 (EU Council Joint Action 2003/681/CFSP)
• Start date	December 2003
• Head of mission	Brigadier-General Jürgen Scholtz (Germany)
• Budget as of 30 September 2005	\$13.2 million (2005)
• Strength as of 30 September 2005	Civilian police: 128 Civilian staff: 28

joining NATO's Partnership for Peace program as early as 1995.

Like the EUPM in Bosnia, EUPOL Proxima has no executive authority, but prioritizes training activities. These center on border security, public order, and organized crime. They also contribute to FYROM's overall policy of decentralization, intended to give the Albanian community increased autonomy. In police terms, this involves a considerable devolution of authority to regional centers, and EUPOL personnel are located in both these and smaller stations, while four teams work alongside border police and within the interior ministry. While the mission originally focused on Albanian-majority areas, it has expanded its activities

approval through a referendum, but disputes over the rights issue within the governing coalition led to the prime minister's resignation. While elections in February 2005 saw minor violence, this did not escalate and the government has remained relatively stable since.

In this improved political environment, EU Ministers offered Macedonia membership talks in December 2005, and decided to replace Proxima with a security sector reform mission of approximately 30 staff. Additionally, the OSCE mission has been and will remain involved in police affairs. Nonetheless, critics have suggested that EUPOL has not had time institute a new police culture, especially within the border police.