

Box 4.11.1 Macedonia

While planning to reorient its roles in Kosovo and Bosnia, the European Union also reshaped its presence in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in 2006. December 2005 saw the replacement of a two-year police mission, the EU Police Mission Proxima (EUPOL Proxima), with a smaller mission, the EU Police Advisory Team (EUPAT), having a six-month mandate. Police reform was a significant element of the 2001 Ohrid Agreement, which averted civil war between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. The agreement envisaged decentralization of authority to the local level on issues including policing. EUPOL Proxima was required to balance this political priority with helping the domestic police develop a professional culture and tackle cross-border crime. EUPAT was mandated to support

these reforms, emphasizing police relations with the judiciary, and internal control mechanisms.

EUPAT was scheduled to be replaced by a European Commission monitoring team in June 2006. Its operations coincided with the run-up to national elections on 5 July, which were accompanied by low-level but frequent violence in the second quarter of the year. Nonetheless, EUPAT judged that the domestic police were advancing in initiating investigations, working with public prosecutors on organized crime, and coordinating border control. Less progress was made on the decentralization issue, due to both delays in necessary legislation and the resistance of some senior police officers. On concluding its operations in June, EUPAT drafted a series of recommendations for further improvements. While the European

Commission duly took over monitoring duties, the July elections failed to produce a majority government, and political attention was temporarily focused on coalition building. In September, the parliament finally passed a police reform law, which had been drafted by the previous government and supported by the EU.

EUPAT thus contributed to real, if slow, progress on implementing the Ohrid Agreement, but events in FYROM may be affected by disputes over Kosovo's status. The current government excludes former Albanian guerrillas who were backed by Kosovar radicals during the 2001 conflict. While FYROM's leaders remain committed to moving toward EU and NATO membership, renewed violence in Kosovo could unsettle their plans.