Dear all,

Thanks to Vincent Janssens who replaced me while I was away for the last two weeks concerning Kosovo operations. Now that I'm back, I just wanted to specify few information concerning this emergency, in the same spirit of trying to satisfy everybody, but with the clear bottom line of operational feasibility.

First of all I could read that quite some points of views had been discussed and written about the operations in Kosovo. I understand the will to help the populations and the support from the other sections towards this crisis. We also try to keep in mind what actions are the best for the victims and therefore what organizational structure the most efficient for our MSF team on the field.

As the mission has to be daily followed, and with no other scheme decided up to now, we proceed the way the mission has been defined (without minimizing the improvements on certain matters (such as communication issues)).

That means Brussels is the operational center where is centralised the information from the field or the outside world (including MSF). Paris is receiving as well as us operational information allowing them to be a critical partner helping decision making, defining better strategies, pointing out shadow areas, giving suggestions or other critics etc...

As you all experienced within MSF, unless you have a tremendous great luck, these kind of relations between two sections on a hot context with international pressure are not always easy, generates tensions and sometimes can slide towards more structural problems. However, if the result is a better output for the operations and the field and the people, well it is a small price to pay. I can assure you that we try hard to find the best solutions for the people of Kosovo.

OPERATIONAL DECISION MAKING

I know the other sections are logically interested into participating more actively in the crisis. I know the Dutch section is very interested in the matter (we worked with Ellen this summer), the Swiss section too as wrote thierry Durand (MSF Greece proposed to sent some logistical material in Kosovo, Jean Plettings OCS logistician in Brussels is looking after this matter). Also the Spanish one as I received several phone calls along the last months concerning advocacy.

Not to mention other sections, like MSF USA with Joelle who came visit Kosovo this summer and made a debriefing in Paris, Brussels and New York.

What does "participate actively" means? If it means been decision maker as well on this context, well... I guess it might be a good solution in order to better feel the crisis, give information to our respective donors, for public awareness, internal communication etc... But very unefficient in terms of operationality and management issues. It is already quite difficult to do it the way it is with two sections (but always fun...), that it would not be appropriate. However, there is no problem for receiving comments ("l'effet mirroir") from the others. As already mentioned in few emails, we can open to other sections:

HR PARTICIPATION

To emphasize international participation, we open the IT philosophy to other sections. That means although there is up to now a potential for 15 expats (right now only 9 because of VISA's authorization = major current problem), we have no problem to open these profiles.

So we ask Thierry Tenret (HR for Kosovo) who receives all job descriptions, to open the posts and try to find among the sections the best and available candidate. He only remind you that there are not many expats for a big interest. So frustration will appear anyway. Also that we all are facing increasing problems for VISA issues (up to denying the VISA for MSF).
Visits on the field
Some people from Holland, board member of Paris and Greece have showed their interest to go to Kosovo. These visits can be combined and better "appropriation" of the context. Debates can be organized after these visits occurred when expats come back. Comments are welcome, this will give input, new ideas, know-how sharing etc...
We (guillaume and I ..) are OK to go to other sections and give a presentation of what's going on etc... (I'll go for the next board meeting in Geneva).

Financial Situation
Concerning money, we received an agreement from the DFID for 240.000 £ which makes the program comfortable, bringing the total to 1.200.000 Ecu for 6 months. Luxembourg seems very positive (150.000 ecu) and we are also in contact with BUZA and MSF G through MSFH. It seems we're ok on this side until February.

Communication Events
Some press release, press conference, special events and lobbying have been organized in some sections and proposed to other sections concerning:
- The Western European immigration issues in general and as a consequence of the war in Kosovo.
- The situation and exactions the population is facing in Kosovo.
There could be a much better coordination work among all sections to realize public events or lobby issues.

... Well, these were the few things I wanted to share with you today, as the operations are going on in Kosovo and as we have to give daily answers to the field.

Best regards to all,
Bastien Vigneau
Operational Context Officer