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CANADA LEADS FACT-FINDING MISSION IN KOSOVO

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, announced today the departure of a Canadian-led Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) fact-finding mission to look into the military situation in Kosovo.

"The CSCE can play a crucial role in conflict prevention and resolution," Mrs. McDougall said. "Canada has long advocated developing the CSCE's conflict prevention abilities. Our participation in leading this mission, along with the Canadian contribution in providing an aircraft for and participating in other recent CSCE missions, underlines our real commitment to European security."

The CSCE's Committee of Senior Officials decided last week to mandate this mission in response to concerns about reports of a military build-up in this region of ethnic diversity, where ethnic Albanians comprise the majority of the population. The Consultative Committee of the CSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre is organizing this mission.

Canada's Ambassador to the Vienna-based CSCE arms control negotiations, Mr. David Peel, will head the mission. The Government of France is supplying an aircraft, and there will be military and civilian personnel from the United Kingdom, France, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (C.S.F.R.), Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands and the CSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre.

The mission plans to leave Vienna for the region on Wednesday, May 27 and expects to stay in Kosovo for three to five days.

The mission's report will be considered by the next meeting of the CSCE's Committee of Senior Officials.

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