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MINORITY ISSUES



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES – ECMI KOSOVO

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Monthly Newsletter **NOVEMBER 2008**

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

I. Internal and International Political Developments

I-1 United Nations Security Council endorsed UNSG Ban Ki-moon's report

During the reporting period, precisely on Wednesday, 26 Nov, the UNSC approved Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's report on Kosovo, at a session dedicated to the reconfiguration of UNMIK and the deployment of EULEX. The report endorsed *the six-point plan* as agreed with Belgrade, highlighting that EULEX will operate under the overall authority of the United Nations and that each of the arrangements on *the six-points plan* will only temporarily apply until the relevant follow-up mechanisms have been put in place. With this, the UNSC has given a green light to UNMIK reconfiguration and EULEX deployment.

In his report, the Secretary General pointed out that the reconfiguration of UNMIK will continue within the framework of *Resolution 1244*, in a transparent manner, and in line with UN's position of neutrality on Kosovo's status. EULEX, the report says, will respect the *UN Security Council Resolution 1244* and act under the jurisdiction and through the UN framework of neutrality on status. The report has four annexes, the first of which contains a statement made by the Kosovo leadership in Prishtina, dated 18 Nov, with which Kosovo institutions rejected the *six-point plan*, but strongly supported prompt EULEX deployment, along with the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan and respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo".

EULEX spokesman Victor Reuter said that the EU's mission in Kosovo will present reports on its work to Brussels and it will be operating in keeping with UN *Security Council Resolution 1244*.

Kosovo Reactions to UNSG Report on Kosovo

Addressing the UNSC session, Kosovo Foreign Minister Skender Hyseni said Prishtina supports EULEX's deployment, but not as a status-neutral mission as envisaged in the UNSG report. "Kosovo supports a prompt deployment of EULEX in line with the mandate of Ahtisaari plan, the Constitution of Kosovo, the action plan, and the invitation by the Kosovo institution to EULEX to deploy," Minister Hyseni continued.

Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi, at the Kosovo Assembly session held on Tuesday, 25 Nov, reiterated Prishtina's position that the *six-point plan* is and will remain unacceptable, adding that it could not be applied in Kosovo. "Status of Kosovo has been resolved since 17 February 2008 when Kosovo became independent and sovereign," said Prime Minister Thaçi, adding that Kosovo institutions have supported EULEX as is foreseen with Kosovo Constitution and the Ahtisaari Plan. "Kosovo has presented four points which represent Kosovo's official position in rapport with the six-point plan. Kosovo has its constitution and its courts, therefore the Kosovo institutions will abide and practice them," said Prime Minister Thaçi, guaranteeing that the government will not accept any plan incompatible with the Kosovo laws.

Serbia's Official position on UNSG Report

On the other hand, Serbia's Foreign Minister Jeremić said that UNSG report precisely defines the EU mission's neutral status in Kosovo, adding that it would operate under UN and in full compliance with *Security Council Resolution 1244*.

US Reaction to latest developments on Kosovo

At the same time, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that Washington is closely monitoring the issue of the EULEX deployment in Kosovo. Asked about the concerns raised in Kosovo, McCormack said, "Nobody is turning back the clock. Kosovo is sovereign state." Adding, "The US will continue to assist Kosovo to develop its sovereign and democratic institutions."

I-2 British Foreign Minister Visit in Kosovo

During the Reporting period British Foreign Minister David Miliband visited Kosovo. Addressing Kosovo's Parliament Mr. Miliband said "I feel very privileged to visit the independent Kosovo, the newest country in the world,". "The next step is full deployment of EULEX throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo in order to protect the citizens of Kosovo and that will happen," he said. Stressing his strong support for Kosovo's sovereign territory and Ahtisaari Plan. During his address to the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo, Miliband said, "Your Constitution clearly reveals that all communities should live together in the newest country. The fact that your Parliament is home to deputies other than Albanian is an indication of this fact." The British Foreign Minister said that Kosovo has a bright future within the European Union "Certainly, the Republic of Kosovo has its seat in the European Union family," concluded British Foreign Minister David Miliband.

I-3 Kosovo President and Prime Minister visit in United Kingdom

The President of the Republic of Kosovo **Fatmir Sejdiu** and Prime Minister **Hashim Thaçi** were invited by the UK Government to visit the UK from Wednesday, 19 November until Friday 21 November. During the program the two leaders met the UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Foreign Secretary David Miliband. In addition, President Sejdiu gave a lecture at the London School of Economics on the essential role that Kosovo can play in peace and security in the region. This visit reinforced UK support for Kosovo and its future European perspective.

I-4 6th Meeting of the International Steering Group - ISG

The International Steering Group-(ISG) met on Friday, 21 November. Kosovo's Foreign Minister Mr. Skender Hyseni and Minister of Finance and Economy Mr. Ahmet Shala, addressed the meeting.

The ISG reaffirmed its commitment to fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo, while supporting the scheduled deployment of the EULEX mission throughout the entire territory of Kosovo, in accordance with the institutional and legal framework in force in Kosovo since 15 June 2008. Moreover, the ISG encouraged ongoing cooperation between the Republic of Kosovo and international actors to ensure the full implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan and stressed its continued support for the International Civilian Representative, Mr. Pieter Feith, and the International Civilian Office to support and supervise the implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan. The ISG also encouraged further efforts to obtain additional international recognitions and welcomed Kosovo's readiness to pursue dialogue with all its neighbors and to contribute to stability in the region.

II. Additional Recognitions of Independence

During the reporting period no countries recognized the independence of Kosovo. Kosovo has so far been recognized by 52 UN member states

ECMI PROJECT ACTIVITIES

During the reporting period, ECMI was engaged in advancing activities in four principal areas of its work in Kosovo.

I. Communities Consultative Council

I-1 After the consultative workshops organised last month for the Bosniak, RAE and Turkish communities, during November ECMI, in cooperation with the Office of the President, organised consultative workshops for the Serb and Gorani community and additional workshops for the Bosniak and Ashkali community. The workshops had two aims: first, to inform communities on the role and functions of the CCC, in particular on the nomination procedure for community representatives; and, second, to assist community members in establishing their own processes for selecting candidates for the CCC. The additional workshops had been requested by the three communities in order to give them more time for internal consultations on the nominations.

After the workshops of both this and last month ECMI collected all nominations, including statements of reason, put forth by each community and forwarded these to the President. The President, taking the representativeness of the candidates into consideration, will narrow the nominations down and appoint the appropriate number of representatives.

II. Support to the Office of the Prime Minister

II-1 During the reporting period ECMI has finished developing a 'Draft Policy Briefing Paper on Governmental Institutional Framework for Communities in Kosovo'. This report aims: (1) to assess the existing and developing institutional structures involved with communities, including their mandates, capacities and activities; (2) to identify potential overlaps and synergies between the mandates and activities of key institutions dealing with communities; (3) To provide soft recommendations to ensure that a comprehensive institutional structure is in place for communities' protection in post-status Kosovo. The draft is intended as a starting point for further discussion between all governmental community-related institutions, as well as relevant international actors. As a first step, ECMI is now collecting comment and suggestions on the Draft from concerned institutions. ECMI is also planning to hold a conference to present the findings and spark off a review of the institutional system for the protection and promotion of community rights.

II-2 During the reporting period ECMI's field researchers continued to gather information for the Ethno-political Map of Kosovo, which will provide a comprehensive overview of all issues faced by communities in Kosovo. Practically all municipalities have now been covered. Moreover, ECMI conducted several interviews with relevant community civil society representatives and will continue

to do so over the next month.

III. Support to the Decentralisation Process

III-1 A new project supporting minorities in the decentralisation process has now been approved by the Finish government and is due to start in December for a period of 3 years. The detailed planning of activities for this new project is currently underway.

III-2 ECMI's continued its support to the Ministry of Local Self-Government, by supporting the awareness-raising campaign. This campaign, led by the sub working group on the information campaign for decentralisation, has continued throughout November with TV and radio slots highlighting what decentralisation brings to all Kosovo citizens.

III-2 On 5 November ECMI attended the conference "Actual Challenges of Local Government in Kosovo" held by FES. The conference highlighted the challenges that Mayors of Kosovo face with regards to implementing the decentralisation process. The conference was held following an intensive week of visits to Kosovo municipalities by Frau Sabine Kaspereit of Germany.

IV. Education

IV-1 ECMI held several meetings with UNICEF Education Programme Officer, Ms. Aferdita Spahiu. The aims of these meetings were to discuss and establish a project that ECMI has developed with UNICEF. This project will entail working closely with civil society organisations in 3 pilot municipalities: Peja/Peć, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Prizren/Prizren. An agreement between UNICEF and ECMI was signed and the project will start in January 2009. Over a period of one year ECMI will work in conjunction with municipal officials and civil society groups to improve the education of minority groups.

IV-2 ECMI has held several meetings with key education stakeholders and donors. The aim of these meetings has been to understand the current situation of minority education in Kosovo and make an initial needs and gap analysis. This is also an attempt by ECMI to ensure that future ECMI projects do not overlap with other education projects in Kosovo.

V. Other Developments

V-1 During the reporting period, ECMI has welcomed different guests and has held a range of meetings, both internal and with relevant stakeholders, on issues of mutual interest. ECMI met with various key actors and community representatives to establish initial contact, open discussions on possible future co-operation, discuss the status of approved legislation and needs to move forward with projects, and to obtain general background information on current issues relating to minorities in Kosovo.

V-2 During November ECMI has been pleased to welcome Ms. Gaelle Cornuz to the ECMI team. Ms. Cornuz will be working on the project supporting the Office of the Prime Minister. She has been hired through the Swiss agency Syni, which supports Swiss professionals in obtaining extra valuable professional experience abroad for a period of six months.

Report Ends;