



EUROPEAN CENTRE
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MINORITY ISSUES



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES – ECMI KOSOVO

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

I. Internal and International Political Developments

I-1 EULEX Deployment

On 9 December 2008 the EU rule of law mission, EULEX, officially deployed its mission of 1400 international staff taking over from the UN mission to Kosovo, UNMIK, which will be significantly downsized and only deal with political monitoring and reporting. Over the next few months the mission will increase its size to 1900 international and 1100 local staff. EULEX is the largest ever EU civilian mission and, although it has some executive powers, it is primarily at monitoring and advising Kosovo in the areas of police, judiciary and customs.

The mission, which will work in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, was deployed in all of Kosovo, including sensitive Serb-majority areas. Significantly, 100 EULEX staff were deployed in the North of Kosovo. To this date the deployment has been cautiously described as successful by most commentators and no significant incidents with regard to EULEX have been reported so far. However, it is also stressed that EULEX will still face many tough challenges as numerous sensitive issues (law, police and customs) still have to be tackled, particularly in the North.

I-2 Reactions to EULEX Deployment

There were many positive reactions from representatives from the EU. The mission was welcomed by EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Chief Javier Solana. French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bernard Kouchner, described the deployment as “a considerable turning point for Kosovo and Serbia”. EULEX Chief, Yves de Kermabon warned not to expect miracles, but was confident: “Our goals will not be achieved overnight. People will have to be patient. But I assure you, we are focused, we are determined and we will make a difference”.

Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu said that EULEX’s deployment throughout Kosovo was testimony

to the commitment to Kosovo's integrity and joint efforts to establish the rule of law.

Serbia has promised to cooperate with the EULEX, but has warned that the mission should remain a tactical rule of law mission and remain status-neutral.

II. Additional Recognitions of Independence

During the reporting period the Federated States of Micronesia recognized the independence of Kosovo. Kosovo has so far been recognized by 53 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 During the reporting period ECMI held several meetings with the Office of the President, in order to provide support with regard to the nomination of the CCC candidates. On 19 December the President announced his appointments to the CCC. On 22 December the inaugural meeting was held to officially establish the CCC. The meeting was chaired by the President of Kosovo, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu and attended by representatives from community political parties and non governmental organisations, including representatives from Serb, Bosniak, Turk, Gorani, Montenegrin, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

II. Support to the Office of the Prime Minister

II-1 During the reporting period ECMI continued and finished the collection of comments and suggestions on the content and recommendations of the Policy Briefing Paper on Governmental Institutional Framework for Communities in Kosovo. The document is now being finalised and will be published and circulated by ECMI. Afterwards, a conference will be organised to discuss the recommendations.

II-2 In light of the EthnoPolitical Map of Kosovo, ECMI contacted civil society organisations representing different communities throughout Kosovo in order to acquire second opinions on the information already gathered.

III. Support to the Decentralisation Process

III-1 The decentralisation project will start at the end of December 2008.

III-2 ECMI's expert to the Ministry of Local Self-Government, Mr Burim Ramadan is continuing his work within the Ministry by supporting the awareness-raising campaign. This campaign, led by the sub working group on the information campaign for decentralisation, has continued throughout December with TV and radio slots aired on: RTK, TV Most, TV Herz, TV Vali, Radio Herz, Radio KIM, Radio Most, Radio Kamenica, Radio Max, Radio Index, Radio Kontakt +, Radio Victoria, and Radio Klokot

III-3 During the reporting period Ms. Virginia Stephens met with Ms. Paivi Nikander of the ICO, to discuss the decentralisation process and progress in the working groups. The ICO showed strong support for ECMI's involvement in this area.

IV. Education

IV-1 The UNICEF project was delayed and will start on 1 January due to funding issues.

IV-2 On 10-11 December Ms. Kelley Thompson attended a two day workshop organised by the

Kosovo Ministry on Education Science and Technology (MEST) in order for ECMI to stay informed on developments with regard to education. The workshop discussed the development of the national curriculum.

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.