

**EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES – ECMI KOSOVO**

**Monthly Newsletter**  
**March 2009**

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

During the reporting period, the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) opened the first trial held in Mitrovica North since Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008. The trial was initially postponed following a protest of Serb employees blocking entrance to the court. Tensions arose over the implementation of UNMIK laws by EULEX in Mitrovica North, engendering criticism from Pristina.

The Special Chamber of the Kosovo Supreme Court, which decides on cases of privatisation, was also transferred to EULEX. This is the second sector, after the war crimes sector, in which EULEX now has an executive mandate beyond its usual monitoring role.

The Government of Kosovo officially commenced the decentralisation process by establishing the Municipal Preparatory Teams in the six new municipalities with majority Serb populations. Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi invited the Serb community to cooperate and apply for new positions within the Municipal Preparatory Teams.

On 23 March, the UN Security Council discussed UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's latest report on Kosovo, in which he informed the Council that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is seen by a majority of Kosovars as an obstacle to the functioning of Kosovo as an independent state. Kosovo's foreign minister Skender Hyseni as well as Serbia President Boris Tadic were present at the meeting, in which Hyseni appealed to the Security Council to end UNMIK's mandate.

During the reporting period, the Republic of Palau recognised Kosovo as an independent state. Palau is the 56<sup>th</sup> state to do so since Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008.

**ECMI PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**Support to the Office of the Prime Minister**

During the reporting period, a first draft of the Office for Community Affairs strategy has been produced by the Office in cooperation with a consultant provided by ECMI. This draft will be discussed and amended, and then circulated to relevant institutions.

The study on the employment of minority communities' members in public institutions and publicly owned enterprises conducted by ECMI in partnership with the Office for Community Affairs is undergoing. Questionnaires have been sent to every central-level institution and municipality. Received questionnaires were analysed to identify where further research was needed.

In addition, ECMI has started to prepare for a conference on cooperation between the State institutions dealing with community issues. The content of this conference will be based on ECMI Report *Strengthening the Institutional System for Communities in Post-Independence Kosovo* and will aim at fostering cooperation between these institutions to avoid duplication of efforts.

**Support to the Decentralisation Process**

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo, in coordination with the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) and the International Civilian Office (ICO), organised round tables in Klokot/Kllokot and Novobërdë/Novo Brdo. Both meetings were attended by community representatives and ICO and MLGA representatives. The Klokot/Kllokot round table was also attended by MLGA Minister Mr. Sadri Ferati and Deputy International Civilian Representative, Mr.

Fletcher Burton. The aim of the meetings was to facilitate a dialogue between the MLGA and community members regarding the decentralisation process and the establishment of the Municipal Preparatory Teams in particular.

#### UNICEF

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued working with education consultant Natasa Markovska to revise and finalise two reports based on her field research in three municipalities: Ferizaj, Prizren and Peja. The reports assess the awareness of education minority rights at the municipal and civil society levels and provide recommendations to improve the delivery of minority education. The reports are currently being edited by ECMI Kosovo consultant Mi Zhou and will be provided to UNICEF in the next period. The reports will then be made available to relevant stakeholders.

#### Security

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo Director Adrian Zeqiri and Project Manager Kelley Thompson held a joint meeting with Ardian Spahiu from UNDP 3SD and Bashkim Ibishi, Deputy Director of the Office for Community Affairs. The meeting established a framework for future cooperation with the OCA, through the UNDP-ECMI Kosovo initiative.

#### Consultative Council for Communities

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo provided ongoing support to CCC Secretary Naxije Gas, especially in the organisation of the first meeting of the Council, when Bojan Stojanović from the Independent Liberal Party, representing the Serb community, was elected to the position of Chairperson of the CCC, and Kujtim Pacaku and Tahir Luma from the Roma and Turkish communities respectively were elected as Vice Chairpersons of the CCC.

#### Other Developments

At the end of March, Dana Landau completed her internship. ECMI Kosovo would like to thank her for her contributions.