

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

Monthly Newsletter  
**April 2009**

**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

During the reporting period, the Republic of Gambia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia officially recognised the state of Kosovo, which brings the number of recognitions to 58. Kosovo applied for membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The process is expected to be finished by June this year or possibly even sooner, as IMF already decided on the quota of shares that Kosovo will have to contribute.

On 17 April, Kosovo and Serbia officially submitted their written contributions to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the Advisory Opinion requested by Serbia on the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo. Apart from Serbia and Kosovo, 33 states have sent written statements to the ICJ, of which 21 argue in favour of the accordance of Kosovo's declaration of independence with international law, and 12 against.

Following several refusals of entry on the Kosovo territory to Serbian officials, on 17 April, Serbian President Boris Tadic visited the orthodox monastery of Visoki Dečani (High Dečani) to participate to the celebrations of Good Friday, thus becoming first Serbian official to be granted entrance by the Kosovo Government after the declaration of independence.

In Mitrovica North, there have been several protests of local Serbs, who have opposed and hindered the rebuilding of houses for Albanians returnees in the mainly Serb “Kroi I Vitakut” neighbourhood. EULEX police and Kosovo Police had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd a couple of times, as a result of protests turning violent. EULEX called upon all parties involved to find a peaceful solution, but the situation remains uncertain.

**ECMI PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

Support to the Office of the Prime Minister

Consultations on the Office for Community Affairs' strategy among the Office's staff have continued during the reporting period and discussions about the organisation of consultations with governmental bodies are ongoing.

Regarding, 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, the collection of questionnaires has been almost achieved and, according to gaps identified in some questionnaires, further research is being conducted.

In addition, ECMI and the Office for Community Affairs reached an agreement on the placement of the Project Manager in the Office for Community Affairs, allowing her to supervise the finalisation of the Office's strategy, support the implementation of the strategy objectives and actions, as well as to transfer the competencies and knowledge acquired through the development of the strategy, Ethnopolitical Map and the study on employment to the future staff members.



#### Support to the Decentralisation Process

During the reporting period ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), organised a two day conference on decentralisation in Durres, Albania. The purpose of the conference was to identify problem areas with regard to the decentralisation process and to develop strategies for the future. The conference was attended by representatives of the ICO, UNDP, the Association of Kosovo Municipalities and the MLGA, including Minister Sadri Ferati. The Albanian Deputy Minister of the Interior and the Kosovo ambassador to Albania also made appearances.



Decentralisation conference in Durres, Albania

During the reporting period ECMI Kosovo actively worked to support the creation of Municipal Preparatory Teams, by distributing application forms and providing information regarding the application procedure to community members. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo provided input for the action plan of the sub-working group on the information campaign.

#### UNICEF

During the reporting period, the reports assessing the awareness of education minority rights at the municipal and civil society levels, prepared by ECMI Kosovo Education Consultant Nataša Markovska, were presented to UNICEF. The reports were discussed with the relevant stakeholders who commented on the reports. Based on these comments, ECMI Kosovo conducted additional research and finalised the reports.

#### Consultative Council for Communities

During the reporting period ECMI Kosovo has continued to give its support to the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC), which held its third meeting on 27 April 2009. Several important issues were discussed at this meeting such as the replacement of CCC members and the choice of the ministries who are to be permanently represented at the CCC. ECMI Kosovo Director, Mr. Adrian Zeqiri, attended this meeting and presented a draft version of the Rules of Procedures for the CCC meetings. The Rules of Procedures will be finalised with the participation and the input of all the CCC members at the training of the CCC, which ECMI Kosovo will organise on 22-24 May 2009.

#### Other Developments

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo welcomed Aljaž Šetinc as a new intern.