



Monthly Newsletter November 2009

Political Developments

Municipal elections were held in Kosovo on 15 November. The inhabitants of 36 municipalities, except for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North and Parteš/Partesh, voted for the municipal assembly and the mayor. The elections were generally seen as a success for integration in Kosovo, as the turnout was above 45%, and Serbs overall participated in large numbers. However, in some villages Serb inhabitants were reported to have boycotted the elections.

“Democracy in Action”, a coalition of NGOs, said afterwards that the electoral process has been correct and has fulfilled the required standards, though some cases of irregularities and incidents were observed. Some difficulties were encountered during the count of votes. The Central Election Commission did not manage to publish the final results until more than a week later. The results of a few polling stations were annulled by the Election Complaints and Appeals Commission.

Before elections, calls for boycotts by Serb officials continued, including threats against Kosovo Serbs that ran for positions in the new municipal governments. Violent incidents also marred the last week of campaigning, including the stoning of the Prime Minister's car and an attack on a mayoral candidate.

A few days after the municipal election, it was reported that the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PTK) had decided to end its coalition with the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) at the central level, due to alleged breaches of the coalition agreement by the LDK during the local elections. However, these reports were contradicted shortly afterwards, and the coalition is maintained.

ECMI Kosovo Project Activities

Support to the Decentralisation Process

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued its activities on voter education in the new municipalities. Several round tables and informal dinners were organised. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo continued to distribute printed materials with the latest information on the elections. A press conference was organised for local Serb media, on which representatives of the ICO and Central Election Commission spoke on the 15 November municipal elections. Finally, radio spots announcing the opening time and locations of polling stations were broadcasted on local Serb media in the new municipalities.



After receiving indications that community members would not be able to vote due to the great distance between their place of residence and the polling station, ECMI Kosovo provided transport to polling stations for several remote villages.

15 November local elections

On 15 November ECMI Kosovo monitored the municipal elections in the new Serb majority municipalities: Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Klokot-Vrbovac/Klllokot-Vërboc and Ranilug/Ranillug. No serious incidents were reported, although a few voters in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë were not allowed to



vote after identifying themselves using Serbian Identification Documents, even though the law states that all valid identification documents are allowed. The Serb turnout in all new municipalities, except Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, was higher than expected and Kosovo Serb mayors were elected in Gračanica/Gračanicë, Klokot-Vrbovac/ Klllokot-Vërboc and Ranilug/Ranillug.

In Novo Brdo/Novobërdë Kosovo Albanian political entities received 71.9% of the vote, despite being the minority in the municipality. The candidate for mayor of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë will be decided in a run off between a Kosovo Serb and the Kosovo Albanian candidate.

Consultative Council for Communities

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo held a public conference to present the Working Plan of the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) to core stakeholders and local media. The process of providing technical support to communities in advance of the upcoming nominations for community membership to the Council is also ongoing.



The CCC Working Plan, which was unanimously adopted at a Council plenary session on the 14 October, was presented to core stakeholders at a public conference on the 9 November. The conference was chaired by the President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sejdiu, and publicised in local newspapers and television.

International expert Ms Valentina Rigamonti convened a training session for CCC members on decentralisation. After a presentation by ECMI Expert Mr Lars Burema, a discussion was facilitated in which CCC members raised issues of particular interest to their communities.

International expert Ms Katherine Nobbs continued to facilitate the nominations process for community membership of the CCC. After the first round of cross-community introductory sessions that took place in October, a second round of community-specific workshop were held throughout November which aimed to provide representatives with more detailed technical information on the procedures for accreditation of community representative organisations (CROs), and nomination of candidates.

Municipal Education

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo Project Manager Kelley Thompson completed an expanded final draft of the guidebook *'Advocacy for Community Education: A Guidebook for Civil Society'*. The guidebook now includes concrete information on minority education to increase its utility for civil society actors, reflecting the needs identified during field visits. This draft will now be internally reviewed and distributed externally for comments before finalisation and distribution. Ms. Thompson continued meetings with relevant stakeholders in minority education, completing further field visits to Ferizaj/Uroševac, Peja/Peć and Prizren/Prizren municipalities. Additional meetings were conducted with other organisations involved in education to build coordination and cooperation, including OSCE, ICO and education experts. Ms. Thompson further participated in workshops on the Kosovo Framework Curriculum and on the European Commission's project to develop a Sector-Wide Approach in Kosovo's education sector.