



## Monthly Newsletter September 2009

### **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

At the beginning of September, tensions erupted in the northern part of Mitrovica, spilling over into the multiethnic 'Miners Valley'. On 5 September, a vehicle with four EULEX officers was attacked in northern Mitrovica. Furthermore, two EULEX Police vehicles were set on fire in Gjilan on 16 September and on 24 September one was attacked on the main road between Zubin Potok and Brnjak.

On 10 September Dragisa Milovic, the mayor of Zvecan, took a decision on the reconstruction of houses in the northern part of Mitrovica, a process which is now underway. Permission was initially given to four Albanians, and a few days later to a further sixteen, to reconstruct their houses in the Kroi I Vitakut neighbourhood. On 11 September, the widely debated Protocol on Police Cooperation between EULEX and Serbia's Ministry of Internal Affairs was finally signed.

At the beginning of September, six members of the organisation 'Mothers of the Missing' protested outside the Institute of Forensics, requesting identification of the remains of approximately 400 body parts which are still being held at the Institute. Later they began a hunger strike, which ended a few days later when President Sejdiu promised that the remains would be identified.

### **ECMI KOSOVO PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

#### **Consultative Council for Communities**

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued its support to the strategy development process and start-up operations of the CCC. On 17 September, the Centre organised a workshop in Gračanica/Gracanice to facilitate the nomination of two Serb representatives to the CCC, to replace the Serb members who recently resigned their positions. The participants put forward four nominees, whose names have been submitted to the President for final selection.



ECMI Kosovo has engaged Ms. Valentina Rigamonti to oversee implementation of capacity-building activities with members of the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC), and Ms. Katherine Nobbs to oversee support to community civil society organisations during the coming round of nominations to the Council. Ms. Rigamonti has conducted meetings with the Secretary-General of the CCC and its members to discuss training needs, and has planned a series of capacity-building workshops for

the coming months. Ms. Nobbs has drafted a publication entitled *Informational Booklet on the Nomination of Community Representatives to the Consultative Council for Communities*, which has been translated into all official community languages and will be presented to representatives of community civil society organisations during a series of training workshops. Ms. Nobbs has met with the Secretary-General of the CCC, current CCC members and a range of international and civil society organisations.

On 29 September ECMI Kosovo organised a workshop for CCC members in Rečanë/Rečane to finalise the CCC Working Plan. Participants reached an agreement on the majority of objectives, but decided to hold a special follow-up workshop on 7 October to focus on the issue of education, in collaboration with a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

### **Support to the Decentralisation Process**

In September, ECMI Kosovo continued its activities on the 'Support to Minority Communities in the Decentralisation Process' project, financed by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. On 10 September, it organised a conference on 'Decentralisation and Civil Society Involvement' at the Markov Konak restaurant in the future municipality of Gracanica/Graçanicë. The conference was aimed at facilitating dialogue on the decentralisation process, and particularly

the role of civil society within that process. The event was attended by civil society representatives operating in the new municipalities, representatives of the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), and representatives of international organisations engaged in, or interested in, the decentralisation process.



On 23-24 September, ECMI Kosovo organised a study visit to the municipality of Mamusha and a workshop on the Municipal Preparation Teams (MPTs), with special focus on elections. Participants included members of MPTs from Gracanica/Graçanicë, Ranillug/Ranilug, Klokott/Vrbovac–Kllokot/Vërboc, and Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, as well as representatives from the MLGA, the ICO and US Agency for International Development.

On 29 September, the Central Election Commission officially authorised ECMI Kosovo to execute a programme on 'Voter Education for the Serb and RAE Communities in the Municipalities of Gracanica/Graçanicë, Ranillug/Ranilug,



Klokott/Vrbovac–Kllokot/Vërboc, and Novobërdë/Novo Brdo'. ECMI Kosovo began its campaign immediately, with a series of posters and radio shorts to inform citizens of the 2 October deadline for reviewing voter lists and voter re-registration.

### **UNICEF**

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo published the two reports on minority education in the municipalities which were produced earlier this year, based on field research conducted in Peja/Peć, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Prizren/Prizren. The first report assesses the capacities and knowledge gaps of municipal officials to deliver minority education and ensure an equal and inclusive educational system. The second report considers the role played by NGOs in ensuring adequate delivery of minority education.

ECMI Kosovo further finalised drafts of a manual promoting minority educational rights for municipal officials and a guidebook for civil society aimed at lobbying local government to improve minority education, and provided these drafts to UNICEF for comment and review. In addition, ECMI Kosovo began to plan two training workshops, one for municipal officials and one for civil society members, to provide training on minority education and collect inputs for finalisation of the manual and guidebook. These are scheduled for 9-10 October. Local expert Ms. Azemina Culum has been engaged on

the project, to work in the field with project stakeholders. Ms. Culum has begun establishing contact with workshop invitees to ensure their participation, receiving a positive response from both civil society and municipal officials.

### **Education**

ECMI Kosovo recently published a report on education for minority communities. Building on the work undertaken by the CCC Working Group on Education Issues, ECMI Kosovo reviewed the current situation using input from an interview that ECMI Kosovo conducted on 31 August 2009 with Mr. Usmen Baldzi, the Deputy Prime Minister of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). This ECMI Kosovo report deals with the challenges faced by minority communities in education, progress in that area, and possibilities for future engagement by the Ministry. On this basis, ECMI Kosovo recommended a set of government priorities.

### **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

In mid-September, Alex Duncombe completed his internship; ECMI Kosovo would like to thank him for his contribution. ECMI Kosovo also welcomes Ms. Katherine Nobbs, as Project Associate on the CCC project, and Ms. Eva Linde for a three-month internship.