



## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, the completion of a draft protocol for cooperation between the Serbian Ministry of the Interior and the EU rule of law mission EULEX was announced. This drew criticism from the government of Kosovo, as they argued that EULEX has no mandate to sign international agreements. The Head of EULEX, Yves de Kermabon, met with both Fatmir Sejdiu and Hashim Thaci to clarify various issues surrounding the agreement, and the three men issued a joint statement after the meeting, outlining their full commitment to cooperation and partnership between Kosovo and EULEX.

The announcement of the protocol, however, drew demonstrations in Prishtinë/Priština, and 21 protesters were arrested after damaging EULEX vehicles. In a separate incident, several people were injured during a violent protest against the reconstruction of ethnic Albanian homes in Mitrovica North/Mitrovicë North.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, the new NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, made his first visit to Kosovo. Mr. Rasmussen stated his satisfaction with the progress that had been made in Kosovo in the past ten years. For the future, he outlined that NATO remains fully committed to enlarging membership, although he stressed that countries must be adequately ready and prepared to join. Mr. Rasmussen also spoke of future troop reductions by KFOR, but strictly in the context of an improved security situation.

The electricity supply to Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality was restored after an agreement was reached over payment issues between the local Serb community and the electricity supplier. Electricity had been cut off in the municipality since late June.

## ECMI KOSOVO PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### Consultative Council for Communities

The CCC held its regular plenary meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, attended by members of all communities and representatives from the Office of the President, Office of the Prime Minister and the Assembly of Kosovo.

The meeting announced four new members of the CCC, representing different line ministries of the government. Recommendations made in previous month's meeting concerning the Montenegrin community in Kosovo were approved by the CCC, with the aim of amending the Law on Communities to explicitly recognise the community, and to include their membership in the CCC.

The recommendations of the Working Group on Education Issues were also discussed, and a further meeting was agreed to incorporate the changes to the recommendations, as well as proposals to address the points raised directly to the relevant institutions where appropriate.

ECMI Kosovo met with representatives of the Egyptian community and Civil Society to continue the process of selecting a member from the community to sit on the CCC. The nomination of Mr. Bashkim Kurti was agreed, and will shortly be confirmed by the office of the President.

### Support to the Decentralisation Process

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo finished its activities with women's NGOs. In addition, ECMI Kosovo organised, in cooperation with local partners, one round table in Ranilug/Ranillug on local self government with youth. At the same time ECMI Kosovo conducted a computer training for the recently established municipal preparation team of Klokot-

Vrbovac/Klllokot-Vrbovc. Furthermore focus group discussions were also conducted in Gračanica/Gračanicë with a local partner, the Centre for Social Development.



Focus group discussions with the Centre for Social Development in Gračanica/Gračanicë

#### Support to the Office of the Prime Minister

The project in supporting the Office of the Prime Minister has finished the first cycle. During this phase two publications, the 'Guidebook for Professionals working with Communities in Kosovo' and 'Communities: Know your Rights', an advisory booklet for communities and their members, have been completed and are currently subject to review. They will be published in the near future, and are currently available on the 'Publications' section of ECMI Kosovo's website (see 'Other Activities').

#### UNICEF

During the reporting period, the manual on actively protecting minority educational rights through service delivery for minority officials and the guidebook for civil society on lobbying local government to protect minority education rights, produced by ECMI Kosovo consultant Virginia Stephens, were reviewed by ECMI Kosovo staff. This included fact-checking legislative references, as well as collecting contact details for key actors who will utilise these materials and participate in upcoming workshop events.



Both documents have been completed as working documents, which will be modified to include information gained during the workshops before being finalised, to ensure maximum utility for both municipal officials and civil society actors.

#### Education

ECMI Kosovo is continuing to conduct research with members of civil society and senior government officials before publishing recommendations on what the priorities of the government should be in this area. Building upon the work currently being undertaken by the CCC Working Group on Education Issues, ECMI Kosovo is reviewing the current situation with the help of input from interviews conducted with representatives from the Ministry for Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and will conclude this research shortly.

#### Other Activities

Our website has been redesigned to now include a 'Publications' section, in order to make updates regarding project activities and the general work of ECMI Kosovo more widely available, at more regular intervals. It includes the Monthly Newsletters that have been published, dating back to the beginning of 2008, information bulletins regarding the latest updates on project activities and special reports published by ECMI Kosovo. It is available at <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/fileadmin/ecmikosovo.tpl/publications.html>.