



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – May 2010

Political Developments

Serbian elections were held in North Mitrovica and Novo Brdo on 30 May. The Government of Kosovo described polls in both areas as illegal. The elections were accompanied by Albanian protests in South Mitrovica and clashes between Serbs and Albanians, but KPS, KFOR and EULEX forces intervened to prevent the conflict from escalating. Turnout was estimated at approximately 25% and 75% in Mitrovica and Novo Brdo respectively, with preliminary results indicating that the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) won a close victory in Mitrovica, and the SPS-PUPS-JS coalition a landslide in Novo Brdo. The results will not be recognised by the Government of Kosovo.

After much discussion, Kosovo and Serbia decided to take part in the EU–Western Balkans summit held on 2 June in Sarajevo. Belgrade insisted that Serbia would only participate if Kosovo were represented under UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and accompanied by UNMIK representatives, while Prishtina was adamant that Kosovo appear as a sovereign country. Ultimately it was agreed that the conference would be conducted under the more informal ‘Gymnich model’: no state names or symbols were used, only the names of the delegates themselves.

After Serbian telecommunication transmitters and equipment were disabled by the Kosovo Government last month, and then restored during the first weeks of May, the second phase of disbanding operators Telekom Srbija, Telenor and VIP was announced by Prishtina on 23 May. The companies, which the Government claims are operating in the country illegally, are to be stripped of their antennae after 30 days.

Research on Language Competencies of Municipal Officials

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo concluded the data collection phase of its project ‘Research on Language Competencies among Municipal Officials’ with the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities. Self-assessment questionnaires were supplemented with interviews in each municipality, in order to assess the accuracy of the results. Over the coming month, data will be analysed to identify the potential limitations of communication within municipal authorities and between municipal officials and the general public. The data and analysis will be published in a final report later this month.

Support to the Decentralisation Process

During the reporting period ECMI Kosovo continued its support to the information campaign on local elections in Parteš/Partesh, including through the development and distribution of printed materials, and the broadcasting of radio spots on the local radio station ‘Laser FM’. ECMI Kosovo also designed two information boards in the municipality of Klokot/Klllokot, aimed at improving the communications capacities of the municipality, and keep its citizens adequately informed. On 18 May ECMI Kosovo and the OSCE organised a workshop for civil society actors in Gračanica/Graçanicë aimed at establishing a formal mechanism of cooperation between civil society actors and the new municipality. Two focus group discussions were also organised in Klokot/Klllokot.

Needs Assessment - Klokot/Klllokot



As part of its decentralisation project, ECMI Kosovo began a needs assessment exercise for the Albanian community in Klokot/Klllokot. On 25 and 29 May, two focus groups discussions were organised with Albanian community members, to discuss the main issues they faced.



The results of these focus group discussions will be used to develop a questionnaire for distribution among a representative sample of community members, and as the basis of a final report that will be presented to the municipality.





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Building Sensitivity to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Schools

On 1 May, ECMI Kosovo launched the project 'Building Sensitivity for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Schools', financed by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. This project aims to increase sensitivity to the rights, interests and needs of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities within the school learning environment, based on a grassroots approach that engages teachers, school directors, civil society organisations and parents from the RAE communities. The project will target three pilot municipalities, Prizren/Prizren, Fushë Kosova/Kosovo Polje, Gjakovë/Dakovica, and will adopt a tailored approach that reflects the specific context of each local community, to be determined in consultation with community civil society organisations. ECMI Kosovo has met with civil society and municipal officials in the relevant municipalities to obtain feedback on the programme design, and is currently working to identify participants and contributors.

Independent Commission

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued its support to the Independent Commission for the Review of Serbian Teaching Materials, providing the Commission with ongoing technical and administrative support.

CCC

May was a busy month for the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC). On 14 May, the Council convened its third plenary session, during which members nominated a Working Group on Legislative Strategy (WGLS), and were

briefed by the Working Group on Education on a meeting with the President of the National Curriculum Committee for Kosovo. On 18 May, members of the Council met with representatives of the Public International Law and Policy Group, a US-based law association of senior international legal experts, to discuss issues facing communities in Kosovo. On 21 May, members of the WGLS convened their first meeting, to discuss the Legislative Strategy 2010 of the Government of Kosovo and develop an action plan for commenting on laws of interest to communities. The meeting was attended by Lulzim Alijaj, Coordinator of the Office for Legal Support Services, who provided the group with technical advice. On 24 May, a second plenary session was convened at the request of the Minister of Internal Affairs, Bajram Rexhepi, during which CCC members were briefed on repatriations, identity documents, employment of the Egyptian community in Gjakovë/Dakovica, the sensitive border area near Gora, trilingual signs in Prizren, and other issues. Also on that day, CCC members and the Secretariat were invited to a ceremonial lunch with President Sejdiu, during which the latter expressed his ongoing commitment and support to the work of the Council, and looked forward to a productive and fruitful year.

Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government

During the month of May, ECMI Kosovo continued the update of its EthnoPolitical Map, and cross-checking information and collecting additional data. It is expected that the design of the Map will be completed in June.

ECMI Kosovo also began a new activity, to develop a policy database that will include all legislative and policy provisions of

relevance to communities. The database will be made available to the Office for Community Affairs in order to facilitate its activities on legislation and policy evaluation, and to the Legislative Working Group of the CCC.

