



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – November 2010

### Political developments

On 27 September, Fatmir Sejdiu, Kosovo's first president since the 2008 declaration of independence and head of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), resigned from the presidency following the decision by the Constitutional Court that Mr. Sejdiu violated the constitution by holding at the same time the position of President of Kosovo and President of the LDK. Jakup Krasniqi (PDK), president of the Assembly, currently serves as Acting President, until a new president can be elected following the organization of general elections.

On 16 October, the national government fell, after the LDK decided to quit the ruling coalition. The LDK motivated their decision by stating that their ideas were ignored by the Democratic Party (PDK), the party of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci.

Following the acceptance of a motion of no-confidence by the Kosovo Assembly on 2 November, elections are planned to take place on 12 December.

The Central Election Commission has already expressed its concern regarding the proper organization of the elections within such a short period, stressing the difficulty of ensuring effective technical preparations and a comprehensive international monitoring process. This concern is shared by ECMI Kosovo.

Due to the early elections, the start of the talks between Belgrade and Pristina about technical issues has been postponed and will probably not be held before the new government has been formed.

On October 13, US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton paid an official visit to Kosovo, where she expressed the wish to renew talks between Kosovo and Serbia, while reiterating America's commitment to supporting Kosovo's economic development.

### Support to the Decentralization Process

During the last month, ECMI Kosovo intensified its activities with regards to Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, including the organization of a training to the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT) on community outreach.

Concerning outreach activities in the new municipalities, ECMI Kosovo continued publishing information bulletins for the municipalities of Klokot/Klllokot, Ranilug/Ranillug and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. Moreover, the information magazine for the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë was finalized and presented, in cooperation with NGO 'CSD' and the Municipality. Furthermore, ECMI Kosovo representatives were interviewed on their views on the decentralization process on 'KIM Radio'. Finally, support was provided to the municipality of Parteš/Partesh, in announcing the open contest for developing a Municipal logo.

ECMI Kosovo continued to support minority communities in the new municipalities. A final round table discussion was organized with representatives from the Albanian community in Klokot/Klllokot on the draft needs assessment report. The participants were positive about the findings and the final report will be presented to the Municipal Committee for Communities during the next month. At the same time, ECMI Kosovo started conducting needs assessments for the Roma and Albanian communities in Gračanica/Graçanicë, by conducting a survey and organizing meetings with both communities.

### Consultative Council for Communities

On 8 and 9 October ECMI Kosovo organized a training for CCC members, described in more detail in the textbox.

### Trainings and workshops



#### **Support to the Decentralization process:**

ECMI training on 13 October in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North to the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT) on community outreach.



#### **Support to the CCC:**

ECMI Kosovo organized a two-day training for the members of the CCC, as part of the "Institutionalization of the Consultative Council for Communities in Kosovo" project, funded by the UK. The event took place in the municipality of Prizren. The training aimed to enhance the capacity of CCC members to carry out their mandate of representing minority communities at the central government. Sessions were organized on: Kosovo's Institutional Framework; Project Management; International Standards for Minority Representative Bodies; and, Advocacy.





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### **CCC (Continuation)**

The CCC working group on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities had a meeting in order to exchange ideas on the actions to be undertaken by the group, and by the Community Representative Organisations (CROs) of the three communities. Pending the finalisation of a plan of action, the working group will: (1) provide support to the CCC representative to the political coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan on the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities (AP); (2) contribute to mobilising Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities; (3) as well as lobby in different fora for increased implementation of the AP. ECMI Kosovo will support the formulation of a working plan for the CCC working group expected to be adopted in November.

On 21 October, the Working Group on Education, with ECMI Kosovo's support, finalized the recommendations on education issues facing minority communities in Kosovo. Following the presentation of the recommendations in the plenary session, they will be made public and form the basis of subsequent actions by the CCC on education issues.

### **Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government**

The assessment on the training-needs of the Office for Community Affairs (OCA) civil servant staff has been completed, and a report highlighting priorities for improving capacities produced. The proposed training program will enable OCA staff to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to increase its performances. Further, the first chapter of a manual designed to conduct further assessments, including all outcomes of the training program, has also been drafted.

A first version of the Legislation and Policy Database, developed by ECMI Kosovo to facilitate the work of the OCA in conducting monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation, has been completed. The database includes provisions for community rights of more than 200 laws, sub-legislative acts and policy documents, sorted by area of community rights protection and responsible institutions. ECMI Kosovo is currently testing the features of the database before arranging the transfer of the database to OCA, and is updating the EthnoPolitical Map –which is another tool in assisting the OCA.

Concerning the study on the use of languages, focus group discussions were held to corroborate the information provided by institutions and identifying further issues faced by community members. Three workshops were held respectively in Pristina, Gjiilan and Prizren aimed to raise community awareness on their rights, but also remedies for violation.

### **Improve education for pupils from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities**

ECMI Kosovo organized workshops with school directors, teachers and parents to draw practical lessons on how to improve education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in schools.

These workshops formed the last phase of the pilot project '*building sensitivity to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in schools*'. The workshops were organized in three Municipalities: Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Prizren and Gjakovë/Dakovica. This project started in July 2010 with a workshop on living conditions and educational challenges of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo.

This was followed in September by a series of house visits of teachers to discuss these educational challenges with parents. The last workshop in October focused on practical tips and ideas on how to overcome these challenges in the time ahead. Each of the workshops was organized by ECMI Kosovo and moderated by local civil society representatives from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. This project is supported by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM).

### **ECMI Kosovo in Prishtina Insight**

In the last issue of Prishtina Insight (N°50), the work of ECMI Kosovo was presented, together with an interview with Director Adrian Zeqiri. The interview mentioned the need for better implementation of the protecting laws and mechanisms for minorities.

### **Staff Changes**

During the last few months, ECMI Kosovo has undergone some staff changes. Kelley Thompson and Katherine Nobbs have left our team for new opportunities and we would like to thank them for their dedication, commitment and hard work for the organisation, and wish them all the best in their new jobs. At the same time, ECMI Kosovo welcomed five new team members in the last months: Venera Kusari, Anne Blanksma, Andrea Najvirtova, Jeta Bakija and our new intern Eline Joukes.

