



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – November 2010

Political developments

General elections in sight

Kosovo is currently in the last days of campaigning before the general elections on Sunday 12 December.

It remains to be seen how voters will react on the events of the latest weeks, which included election promises by the outgoing Prime Minister Mr. Thaci (PDK), internal disagreements within the LDK and confused Serbian messages on voter participation.

Mr. Thaci promised that his re-election will lead to visa liberalisation in 15 months and the increase of the wages of teachers with 50 percent from January onwards.

Following an internal conflict within the LDK between newly elected chair, Isa Mustafa, and Uke Rugova (son of former President Rugova), the latter split of LDK and signed a pre-election agreement with the AAK.

Up to date, it is still unclear to what extent Kosovo Serbs will participate in the elections. Belgrade officially opposes participation, but did not explicitly spread this message of boycotting the elections. While some Serbian voices, like the "Serb National Council of Kosovo and Metohija" and the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church called for a boycott, other Kosovo Serbs, like the Mayor of Partesh/Parteš, explicitly urged Serbs to participate in the elections. There are eight Serb parties registered at the Central Election Commission.

Local elections Rahovec/Orahovac

On 21 November, mayoral elections took place in Rahovec/Orahovac. No absolute majority was reached, so a second round will follow on 19 December, where the LDK winner of the first round will run against the AAK runner up.

Kosovo and the EU

On 9 November, the European Commission (EC) presented the 2010 Progress Report on Kosovo. It mentions improvements on account of the successful implementation of the decentralisation process and the cooperation with EULEX. It, however, raises serious concerns about the weak capacity of the public administration and the rule of law. The report specifically mentions the challenges Kosovo still faces concerning organised crime, money laundering and corruption.

Moreover, European Commissioner Cecilia Malstrom stated that Kosovo did not fulfil the necessary requirements to start the dialogue on visa liberalisation. Contradictory, European Parliament Rapporteur for Kosovo, Ulrike Lunacek, announced that the dialogue will start soon.

Support to the Decentralisation Process

ECMI Kosovo continued its activities with regards to Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, working together with the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT) on designing information materials. These materials will then be distributed by the MPT.

ECMI Kosovo also continued publishing information bulletins for the municipalities of Klokot/Klokot, Ranilug/Ranillug and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. The information magazine for the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë was distributed in public places throughout the municipal territory.

At the same time, ECMI Kosovo carried on with the needs assessments for the Roma and Albanian communities in Gračanica/Graçanicë and started a needs assessment for the Albanian community in Ranilug/Ranillug. Surveys and focus group discussion were completed. Results will be presented to the citizens in December.

Trainings and Workshops

Training in Project Development

ECMI Kosovo organised a two-day training on Project Development for the members of the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) and representatives of communities' civil society organisations. The training aimed at enhancing capacities with regards to the approach and logic in the preparation of grant proposals based on EC procedures, application and evaluation processes. The training, delivered by the expert Fatmir Bytyqi, combined theory (plenary sessions) and exercises in work groups ("learning by doing").



CCC Regional Outreach Workshops

ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the CCC secretariat and the OSCE, supported the organisation of five regional outreach workshops for the CCC members. The goal of the workshops was to increase the CCC capacity in effectively representing interests of Kosovo's communities by raising awareness on the existence and the role of the CCC and by establishing a mechanism for direct consultation between the CCC and community representatives at the local level.





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Consultative Council for Communities

Plenary session

On 5 November, the CCC held its monthly plenary session at the Assembly building in Prishtinë/Priština.

During the meeting, the progresses of three CCC working groups were discussed: the Working Group on Education, on Legislation and on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities.

The recommendations of the Working Group on Education were approved with minor changes and will be sent to all relevant institutions. Recommendations of the Working Group on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities were also approved and addressed to the technical coordination mechanism responsible for the implementation of the governmental Action Plan.

Furthermore, a representative of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Mr. Xhavit Rexhaj, presented the draft textbook on civic education, prepared by the HCNM. The CCC was requested to establish a procedure to submit comments on the textbook.

Working Group on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities

The Working Group on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities adopted its work plan 2010-2011, which drafting was facilitated by ECMI Kosovo. According to the plan, the working group will undertake regular information meetings with civil society organisations of the three communities to keep them updated on governmental progresses and on activities of the working group. Furthermore, the community representative organisations (CROs) will conduct evaluations at the end of each year based on which they will develop recommendations. CROs will then seek recommendations' endorsement by the CCC.

In 2010, the conduct of the evaluation is facilitated by ECMI as part of the project '*Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government*'. The methodology, determined in collaboration with the CROs, provide that the evaluation will be conducted in three sectors of the Action Plan: (1) Education; (2) Health and Social Affairs; and (3) Employment and Economic Opportunities.

On implementation by central institutions, the data will be provided by the six-month report of the Action Plan Technical Working Group. Due to the absence of data collection on municipal level, ECMI Research Assistants from the three communities are currently carrying out interviews in five municipalities (Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjakovë/Dakovica, Graçanicë/Graçanica and Prizren). The data will then be compiled, supplemented with available publications, and presented to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian civil society organisations for inputs and design of recommendations.

Working Group on Education

On 26 November, the Working Group on Education met with representative of the HCNM, Ms. Stephanie Marsal, to discuss in detail and provide comments on the draft textbook on civic education prepared by the HCNM.

Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government

Study on the Use of Languages

A first draft of the Study on the Use of Languages has been produced by ECMI Kosovo and is currently under review. The report first introduces the significance of linguistic rights, rationale and objective of language policies. Second, the international and domestic legal frame-

work for the protection of linguistic rights is presented. In a third part, quantitative data gathered from the institutions and from the citizens are analysed, and final recommendations are provided.

Database and EthnoPolitical Map

The policy and legislation database was tested by ECMI Kosovo during the month of November and technical modifications were made in order to ensure maximal ease of its use. Next steps are the organisation of a training for the Office for Community Affairs (OCA) staff and relevant CCC staff and members and the handing over of that tool to the OCA.

ECMI Kosovo Research Assistants Team are finalising the collection of additional information for the update of the Ethno-Political Map. ECMI Kosovo will cross-check with information provided by community representatives through questionnaires which will be distributed at the occasion of awareness-raising workshops at the beginning of December 2010.

Staff changes

Project Manager Anne Blanksma left the ECMI Kosovo team and took up a new challenge in his career. ECMI Kosovo would like to thank him for the work delivered and wishes him good luck!

