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Publications

Information

Bulletin: [General Elections in Kosovo: A View of Issues, Challenges and the Political Scene ahead of Voting on June 8th](#)

Information Bulletin: [New Round of Accreditation of Community Civil Society Organizations and Appointments of New Members to the Consultative Council for Communities](#)

ECMI in the Media

The Executive Director of ECMI Kosovo was interviewed by the Kosovo public broadcaster in Serbian language, RTK 1, on 15 May 2014. The interview focused on the work of ECMI Kosovo on establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for language rights through indicators, a work done jointly with the Office

In Focus

ECMI Kosovo Board Meeting

On 7 May, the new board of ECMI Kosovo met for the second time. We are happy to report that the board elected its new Chairperson, Mr. Srećko Bogajčević. The new Chairperson holds extensive knowledge on minority issues in Kosovo at both the local and national level, as demonstrated through his experience. Mr. Srećko Bogajčević is currently working as a Chief of Cabinet in the Ministry for Communities and Return and is also a member of the Board for Language Policies. Previously, he worked as an officer in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. Additionally, he held a position of Head of Administration in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and prior to that, he served as a teacher for several years in the same municipality. The Board also approved the Regulation on the Work Procedures of the Board as well as ECMI Kosovo Organigramme. The next ECMI Kosovo Board meeting will be held in June 2014.

New Project: 'Improving Minority Communities' Access to Higher Education in Serbian Language and Public Employment'

Towards the end of May, the Norwegian Embassy in Prishtina approved the new project 'Improving Minority Communities' Access to Higher Education in Serbian Language and Public Employment'. The project aims to set the necessary conditions for ensuring equal access to higher education and public employment for Serbian-speaking minority communities in Kosovo.

The University of North Mitrovica is the only Serbian language university in Kosovo, serving all Serbian speaking communities (Serbs, Gorani, Bosniaks and Roma). The University operates under the legal framework of the Republic of Serbia as part of the Serbian higher education system, run and financed directly by the Serbian MESTD. The MU is therefore neither licensed by MEST nor accredited by KAA, and the diplomas issued by it are not recognized by Kosovo Authorities. Consequently, the graduates are facing persistent obstacles in accessing employment opportunities in the public sector. The current situation represents a major obstacle for the full and effective integration of Kosovo communities in the public sector of

of Language Commissioner of Kosovo, and on the representation and protection mechanism for communities in the Assembly of Kosovo, especially the difference between reserved and guaranteed seats, and the results that they will produce in the upcoming central elections in Kosovo. We invite you to watch the entire interview in Serbian language on the [ECMI Kosovo Youtube Channel](#).

On Thursday, the 29th of May, ECMI Kosovo staff held the meeting with businessmen of municipality of Ranilug. The meeting resulted in foundation of "Businessmen Association of Municipality of Ranilug" which would work as a non-profit organization aiming the development of local economy in Ranilug municipality. Please visit [ECMI Kosovo Youtube Channel](#) to watch the video of the event in Ranilug.

Staff

In April, ECMI Kosovo welcomed the arrival of Rakella Kransiqi as a Project Assistant and Pieter Troch and Marija Krstic to be the ECMI Kosovo intern for a period of three (3) months.

Kosovo. Thus, the project aims to create an environment in which graduates from the MU have equal opportunity to employment on the same level as graduates from other universities in Kosovo, as well as pave the way for full and lasting integration of the MU within Kosovo's legal and constitutional system.

The project will focus on the following factors:

1. Developing transition mechanisms that will seek to address the obstacles for employment of members of communities who hold diplomas from UM at the Kosovo public institutions.
2. Prepare the foundation and building capacities for the gradual recognition, accreditation and subsequent licensing of the MU by the Kosovo Government and its full integration within Kosovo's system of Higher Education.
3. Promoting trust and dialogue between universities to enhance the linkages among higher education institutions in Kosovo.

The project will begin in June 2014 and will continue until June 2016.

New Project: Increasing Voter Education among Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups

On 9 May, ECMI Kosovo's project on "Increasing Voter Education among Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups" was approved by the US Embassy in Kosovo. The project aims to increase vulnerable groups' understanding of Kosovo's electoral framework in order to encourage participation in the elections and increase active citizen participation in political life. The chosen target groups will be young people and women from minority communities, given that they are two groups frequently marginalized in Kosovo society and generally less inclined to participate in the electoral process.

The project will aspire to engage youth and women from minority communities more in the electoral system to increase voter turnout among these groups. The planned focus groups will engage these communities, seeking to mobilize them to exercise their voting rights. Moreover, leaflets and sample ballots will provide the target groups with the resources to vote in an informed manner. The targetted municipalities are Ranilug/Ranillug, Parteš/Partesh, and Klokot/Kllokot, North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Leposavić/Leposaviq. The project will be implemented from May to June 2014.

In this newsletter, you will find information on:

- [ECMI Kosovo Project Updates](#)
- [Institutional Developments](#)
- [Political Developments](#)

ECMI Kosovo Project Updates

Representatives of ECMI Kosovo and the Office of the Language Commissioner visited the municipalities of of Fushe Kosove / Kosovo Polje, Rahovec / Orahovac, Prizren and Obiliq/Obilić

ECMI Kosovo in cooperation with the Office of the Language Commissioner (OLC), started to organise a series of municipal fact finding visits aimed at conducting field research, meetings and interviews to gain a clear picture of the situation on the ground and identify priorities on the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. The key findings of this visits served to guide the preparation of the indicators matrix and the set of questionnaires that ECMI Kosovo has elaborated to monitor the implementation of language rights at the municipal level. Furthermore, these visits served to raise awareness on the work and mandate of the OLC and to strengthen the OLC municipal network.

In this context, during May 2014, representatives of ECMI Kosovo and the OLC visited Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, Rahovec/Orahovac, Prizren and Obiliq/Obilić, where they met with the respective mayors and other relevant municipal representatives.



These visits were organised in the framework of the first phase of implementation of the project 'Monitoring and Evaluation of Language Rights in Kosovo: Towards Strengthening Institutional Compliance with the Kosovo Law on the Use of Languages', funded by the Office of the Language Commissioner of the Republic of Kosovo through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Strengthening the protection of Language Rights in Kosovo: A Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages

ECMI Kosovo in partnership with the Office of the Language Commissioner of the Republic of Kosovo (OLC) organised a three-day workshop within the framework of the project 'Strengthening the protection of Language Rights in Kosovo: A Guidebook on the Implementation of the Kosovo Law on the Use of Languages', funded by UNMIK. The workshop took place from May 30th until June 1st 2014 in Ohrid (Macedonia), and it was attended by key stakeholders in the field of the language rights implementation in Kosovo, including representatives of the Legal Department of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC), ECMI Kosovo language's team and the entire OLC team. The workshop served as a key consultation meeting aiming to discuss the structure and basic content of the Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in order to come to a final draft version and to determine the further work schedule.

The guidebook on the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages aims to increase awareness and strengthen the enforcement of the language rights legal framework in Kosovo, and it is targeted to the central and local institutions falling under the jurisdiction of the OLC as well as other organizations dealing with community issues and language rights in Kosovo. The guidebook will be published by the end of June 2014 in Albanian, Serbian (Cyrillic), Bosnian and Turkish Languages.

Training for members of civil society organisations and Mitrovica North Administration Office officials

ECMI Kosovo conducted a three-day training for members of civil society organisations operating in the Northern Kosovo and MNAO officials within the framework of project "Promotion of a Transparent Media Environment in Northern Kosovo", implemented in partnership with Radio Kontakt Plus and supported by Embassy of Finland. The training took place on 23rd, 24th and 25th of May in Strpce and covered topics related to public speaking, public relations, presentations, appearances in media, organisation of press conferences and preparation of press releases. The training was delivered by a journalist of Radio Kontakt Plus with relevant experience in this field and attended by thirteen members from seven civil society organizations, mostly young people who are in the beginning of their working career, who actively participated in discussion as well as in various practical activities and simulation games.



Introductory meetings and awareness raising activities on GBV/DV with men leaders and other stakeholders

During May, ECMI Kosovo has conducted various introductory meetings with the relevant stakeholders with whom it aims to create a synergy of powers with the objective of combating gender-based violence/domestic violence (GBV/DV). The project team together with the paralegals has met with the police, center for social welfare and office for gender equality within all targeted municipalities (Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gračanica/Gračanicë, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North (including Zvečan/Zvečan, Zubin Potok, Leposavić/Leposaviq). All these stakeholders have expressed their willingness to future cooperation with ECMI Kosovo and partners.

Since the project also foresees the involvement of influential personalities such as religious, traditional and political leaders in fighting GBV/DV among members of minority communities in Kosovo, two awareness-raising meetings have been conducted with men leaders and other relevant stakeholders in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje. ECMI Kosovo has invited two religious leaders to these meetings to present on the topic “The role of men in preventing GBV/DV from Islamic perspective”. The meetings have been attended by fifteen participants each, including representatives of police and center for social welfare.



These activities have been conducted within the framework of the project “Empowering Minority Communities Against Gender-Based Violence” funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Meeting for the creation of the Agricultural Association of Businessmen of municipality of Ranilug

ECMI Kosovo staff met with informal group of businessmen and the mayor of the municipality of Ranilug in order to discuss about the

necessary activities and next steps required for the establishment of an Agricultural Association. This event was part of the cooperation between ECMI Kosovo and the municipality of Ranilug within the project Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for All Newly-established Municipalities in Kosovo (TSIGAN) funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, aiming to create the conditions of local economy development in Serb-majority municipalities.

The idea of creating an independent agricultural hub of businessmen in Ranilug came after various meetings held by ECMI Kosovo staff with the mayor and the local community, and follows the positive example already carried on by ECMI Kosovo with the establishment of the Business Association in Gračanica. During the meeting ECMI Kosovo staff reaffirmed its readiness to support the establishment of the association by providing administrative and technical support regarding, in particular, the following tasks: its registration, drafting its statute, delivering trainings to its members, and on possible applications for funds.

Organisation of focus groups targeting women and youth

During the last week, ECMI Kosovo staff had its first cycle of focus groups targeting women and youth in the municipalities of Gračanica, Novo Brdo, Klokot, Parteš , Ranilug and Štrpce within the project "Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for All Newly-established Municipalities in Kosovo (TSIGAN)" funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The ECMI Kosovo staff opened the debate on topic "Women/youth participation in decision making process in your municipality" and encouraged participants to actively participate in discussion about the importance of gender equality, youth activism, as well as the inclusion of both women and young people in all segments of the society. The participants of the focus groups listed the main problems and obstacles they encounter while trying to be more engaged in public affairs of their municipalities. They also expressed readiness to be more included in their local community and came out with possible solutions for better organization of their activities. ECMI staff offered support to women/youth informal groups of respective municipalities in financing and promoting their activities through media and social networks, providing assistance in project making, organizing workshops on communication with potential donors, as well as strengthening their cooperation with other women/youth organizations in Kosovo.

Awareness Raising and Trust-Building Workshops (second series)

ECMI Kosovo, in partnership with CSD and NRAEWOK, finalized the organisation of nine (9) awareness-raising and trust-building workshops with the representatives of minority Civil Society Organisations and municipal officials in different municipalities of Kosovo. The aim these workshops was to bring together

representatives of the minority CSOs and municipal officials and provide an opportunity to them to follow up on the issues discussed during the first series and discuss other relevant matters.

The organisation of these workshops is part of the project “Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions”, funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo.

Workshop on the CCC Annual Report

On 16 May, ECMI Kosovo organized a workshop with members of the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) and the CCC Secretariat on the draft of the CCC Annual Report. The drafting of this report was supported by ECMI Kosovo, and the workshop served as an opportunity for CCC members to provide the CCC Secretariat and ECMI Kosovo with their final input and comments. After a lively and fruitful discussion and exchange of ideas, CCC members gave their comments and input which were taken into consideration by all interested parties. CCC members and the Secretariat thanked ECMI Kosovo for its invaluable help and support in drafting a professional and full-featured Annual Report showcasing the work, the results, and challenges faced by the CCC in fulfilling its mandate.

On May 23, the CCC voted unanimously to adopt the Annual Report and to forward it to the office of the President of the Republic of Kosovo.

This workshop was organized within the framework of the project 'Supporting Civil Society Members of the Consultative Council for Communities', funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Political Developments

Upcoming general elections scheduled for 8 June, set to test the strength of the Srpska Lista-SLS unified list

The Assembly of Kosovo voted to dissolve itself on 7 May amid political gridlock and a weakened governing majority, opening the road for early general elections in Kosovo. These elections will test the strengths of both PDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo) and the “Sprska Lista” (Serbian List), newly-unified with the SLS (Independent Liberal Party), which won mayoral elections in the majority of Serbian-inhabited municipalities in local elections held in

November 2013. Founded and funded by the Republic of Serbia, “Srpska” is expected to do well in general elections. The previous leading Serb political party, SLS, decided to unify its candidates’ list with “Srpska” amid internal disagreements on the way forward. SLS lost to “Srpska” in all but one of the municipalities it held in 2013, but is expected to bring experience and connections to “Srpska”, a still-inexperienced political entity.

The four northern municipalities modify their statutes to bring them in line with Kosovo law

Following a series of back-and-forth exchanges of letters with the Ministry of Local Self-Government—and several attempts to pass municipal statutes that would be “neutral” towards Kosovo’s political status—the four northern municipalities modified their statutes to bring them in line with Kosovo law. The four northern municipalities—Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan, and Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut—attempted to pass “neutral” statutes that would avoid any mention of the Republic of Kosovo and its institutions, but those statutes were rejected by the Ministry of Local Self-Government which issued orders for new statutes to be adopted lest extraordinary elections be called. After a protracted exchange of letters and documents between the municipalities and the Ministry, the four northern municipalities decided to modify their statutes in a way deemed acceptable by the Ministry.

Political representatives from the north declare they’re suspending their election activities

The introduction of a new system of representation for minority communities in the Assembly of Kosovo has led the “Srpska Lista” and other political representatives of the Serb community to suspend their election activities for the upcoming early elections scheduled for 8 June. The new system—called the Guaranteed Seats system—is set to take effect automatically during these upcoming elections; it replaces the Reserved Seats system which was introduced during the international administration of Kosovo. The Guaranteed Seats system will guarantee 20 seats for minority communities in the Assembly of Kosovo, but any additional seats must be won in a head-to-head competition with Albanian political parties. This will, of course, make it slightly more difficult to gain more seats than those guaranteed to them, as they would need 5000-7000 votes for any additional seat.^[1] Community representatives have been lobbying hard for an extension of the Reserved Seats system, but were unable to effect any change in the Assembly of Kosovo. Following unsuccessful attempts to extend the Reserved Seats system, and the re-introduction of the Seal of Kosovo into voting ballots, political representatives from the north have announced the suspension of their election activities until and unless the Central Election Commission accepts their conditions for participation (chief among them, the removal of the Seal of Kosovo from the voting ballot).

[1] ECMI Kosovo has written extensively about the Guaranteed and Reserved Seats system, for more information please see here:
< <http://www.ecmikosovo.org/?p=4878>>

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About ECMI Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo. ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.

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