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## ECMI Kosovo Project Updates

### **The municipal assemblies of Fushë - Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Obiliq/Obilić have approved their municipal action plans to increase access to education and retention in education**

On June 26, the municipal assembly of Fushë - Kosovë/Kosovo Polje unanimously approved the Municipal Action Plan to Increase Access to Education and Retention in Education, in order to allocate funds for its implementation. This action plan has been developed under the leadership of the Municipal Directorate of Education based on situation analysis, that helped to identify main objectives of this action plan: (1) to integrate out-of-school children through the provision of non-formal education and their subsequent transition to mainstream education; and (2) to promote and to improve access to pre-school and pre-primary education.

Following this success, on July 31, the municipal assembly of Obiliq/Obilić also unanimously approved their Municipal Action Plan to Increase Access to Education and Retention in Education. Based on the situation in Obiliq/Obilić, their Municipal Directorate of Education has chosen the following objectives: (1) the integration of children who have never been to school and those who dropped out by providing non-formal education at primary and lower secondary levels; (2) the integration, return and retention in education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians at all levels of compulsory education; (3) the inclusion of children with disabilities at all levels through raising parental awareness and ensuring an adequate environment in schools.

The situation analyses and municipal action plans of both municipalities were developed under the leadership of their Municipal Directorates of Education with the support of ECMI Kosovo and UNICEF Office in Kosovo as a part of the project "Enhancing Access to and Retention in Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged

Children”, funded by UNICEF, which is implemented in six municipalities (also in Pejë/Peć, Klinë/Klina, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Istog/Istok). The municipalities of Fushë-Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Obiliq/Obilić, which previously cooperated with ECMI Kosovo on various projects focusing on education and out-of-school children, thus became the first of the target municipalities to approve such action plans.

During the month of August, both municipalities prepared and established working groups for implementation and monitoring of the action plans and will start implementation of their activities at the beginning of the new school year.

ECMI Kosovo and UNICEF Office in Kosovo will continue to support these municipalities in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these action plans.

### **Official languages training courses at the Office of the Prime Minister**

In August, ECMI Kosovo organised training courses of official languages at the Office of the Prime Minister. Civil servants working in different departments of the Office of the Prime Minister will undergo a 5 month Albanian or Serbian language training course. The aim of these courses is to facilitate the communication and cooperation between central and local level institutions.

This project is funded by the Office of the Language Commissioner within the Office of the Prime Minister.

### **Launch of website ‘Combating Discrimination’**

ECMI Kosovo launched a new website under the title ‘Combating Discrimination’. This website accompanies the project ‘How to breathe life into anti-discrimination policy in Kosovo?’, which ECMI is carrying out in cooperation with Poradna pro občanství/Občanská a lidská práva, a Czech non-governmental organisation. The aim of the project is to raise awareness among human rights activists in Kosovo about the methods that are available for combating the discrimination of different vulnerable groups, in particular the experimental method of situation testing.

The website complements the project by providing information on the following points:

- What do we understand as the definition of discrimination?
- What is the legislative framework for anti-discrimination measures and policy in Kosovo?
- What measures can we take against discrimination?

- What is the added value of situation testing?
- Which initiatives has ECMI Kosovo taken to enhance the implementation of Kosovo Anti-Discrimination legislation?
- What to do and where to go to in cases of discrimination?

Finally, the website presents a resource hub which brings together valuable information on discrimination and anti-discrimination measures in Kosovo and useful international anti-discrimination handbooks and manuals. The website is available in English, Albanian and Serbian.

### **Development of the two websites for the Serb and Gorani Community Networks**

ECMI Kosovo hired a web design company to develop two minority website for the newly established networks of Serb and Gorani communities. The websites contain detailed information about Serb and Gorani CSOs, part of the networks, their mandate and their engagement on the protection and promotion of minority rights. To find more information on the Serb and Gorani networks, please visit the following

websites <http://serbcommunitynetwork.com> and <http://goranicommunitynetwork.com>.

The development of the websites is part of the ECMI Kosovo 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.

### **Implementation of the economic empowerment component: Organizing skills trainings for minority women**

During August, ECMI Kosovo began the implementation of the economic empowerment component through organizing three months skills trainings for minority women in the targeted municipalities. This component aims to empower Serb, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women socio-economically and thus reduce their vulnerability to gender based violence. The respective skills trainings have been identified through Needs Assessment results gathered by way of focus group discussions with around one hundred potential skills training participants. The results have determined the following trainings according to municipalities: Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje - literacy training; Ferizaj/Uroševac - hairdresser and make-up training; Gračanica/Gračanicë and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North (including Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, Leposavić/Leposaviq) - training on decision-making, public speaking and confidence-building for women. The most successful participants

of skills training will qualify for free grant-application support, to be provided by an external consultant. Considering the possibility of winning a micro/small grant, groups of these women can transform their business idea into practice and earn for themselves and their families, significantly contributing to their 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.

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## **Political Developments**

### **The Constitutional Court of Kosovo rules on a motion filed by PDK to annul Mustafa’s election as Assembly Speaker**

On August 21st, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo delivered its verdict on a motion filed by PDK on the constitutionality of Isa Mustafa’s election as Assembly Speaker. PDK had filed a motion on July 18th asking the court to issue an order of stay on Mustafa’s election, and to then rule on the constitutionality of his election. The court agreed to issue an order of stay—thereby temporarily suspending the Assembly plenary session that led Mustafa’s election—until it could issue a final verdict. This decision came on August 21st, with the Court broadly in agreement with the motion filed by PDK that the Assembly plenary session—and Mustafa’s subsequent election—was unconstitutional. The Court ruled that the Constitution of Kosovo and Assembly Rules of Procedure define as the “largest parliamentary group” the parliamentary group that has the largest number of MPs as a result of elections; that is, in this case, it should be PDK and not LDK-AAK-Nisma. As such, the Court clarified that legally the Assembly of Kosovo did not hold its constitutive session, and must do so again at a convenient time for the MPs. The Constitutional Court decision does not clarify the next steps to be taken should the candidate proposed by PDK fail to receive enough votes for Assembly Speaker, only stating that the failure to elect an Assembly Speaker does not necessarily lead to early elections.

## **Berlin Conference gathers leaders from the Western Balkans; Kosovo represented by outgoing Prime Minister Thaçi**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel organized a conference in Berlin attended by high-level leaders from all the Balkan countries aspiring to become European Union members. The conference was organized in order to facilitate discussion between EU candidate countries/potential candidate countries and Germany; it focused on the reforms necessary for EU membership, good governance, the fight against organized corruption, good neighborly relations, etc. The conference was attended by leaders of, among others, Kosovo, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia. Kosovo was represented by outgoing Prime Minister Thaçi for whom this was the first visit to Germany in an official capacity. The conference is also notable for featuring both Kosovo and Serbia—complete with their insignia and flags—as represented by Kosovo PM Thaçi and Serbian PM Vučić.

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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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