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ECMI Kosovo Project Updates

Focus Groups on Decision-Making Processes

On the 18th of July, ECMI Kosovo organised a focus group in the municipality of Leposavić/Leposaviq, with the aim of assessing problems and needs of young people living in the region, as well as their role and level of participation in decision-making processes. The focus group was attended by six participants, young people of various profiles (students, workers, unemployed people), who actively participated in discussion and contributed to identification of priorities and problems of youth which need to be addressed. The discussion resulted in identification of several areas in which ECMI Kosovo can provide its support, including support in the initiative for the continuation of work of Youth Assembly, support in opening an Office for Youth and organising training and education programmes on leadership skills, political activism, and decision-making processes.

The focus group was organised under the project "Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for all Newly-established municipalities in Kosovo," supported by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.



First Workshop with the representatives of the Government, Office for Community Affairs, Kosovo Agency for Accreditation and Ministries

ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the Office for Community Affairs of the Office of the Prime Minister, organized a three-day workshop in Durrës, Albania, from 16 through 19 July, 2014. The workshop was organized in order to offer participants the opportunity to discuss the next steps in the process of drafting and designing a concept paper in line with government regulations. Participants in the workshop included the Government Team in charge of drafting the concept paper, representatives from the Office for Community Affairs, representatives from the Kosovo Agency for Accreditation, as well as representatives

Staff

In July, ECMI Kosovo welcomed the arrival of Fisnik Dida as a Project Assistant and said goodbye to Mirjona Sadiku. We would like to sincerely thank Mirjona for her hard work and outstanding commitment and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

from various ministries.

The workshop was organized as part of the project on "Job application procedures in the public institutions of the Republic of Kosovo for members of non-majority communities that are in possession of diplomas issued by the 'University of Mitrovica North'" funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pristina, Kosovo.



The establishment of the Tourist Office of Klokot (TOK)

During the month of July, ECMI Kosovo supported the process for the establishment of the new tourist office in the Municipality of Klokot/Klllokot, named Tourist Office of Klokot/Klllokot (TOK). This office will work as a non-profit organization fostering the development of the tourism sector in the municipality. After holding various meetings with the municipality's authorities in order to advise them on the structure of the tourism office, ECMI Kosovo helped the newly appointed legal representative, the founders of the organisation, and the board of directors to find an agreement on the organisation's future statute and symbol.

Moreover, ECMI Kosovo supported the appointed representatives during the process of registering the organisation in Pristina. In the following weeks, ECMI Kosovo staff organized a workshop in Klokot/Klllokot on tourism that was attended by the new established Tourist Office of Klokot/Klllokot (TOK) staff members. The main topics of the workshop were: the general meaning and potential of tourism, different techniques of marketing and how to attract investments. This activity replied the positive one implemented previously by ECMI Kosovo staff in Gračanica/Graçanicë with the restructured Tourist Office of Gračanica/Graçanicë (TOG). Finally, ECMI Kosovo advised and financed the creation and printing of the first touristic leaflet made by TOK, which was first distributed in the municipality of Klokot/Klllokot during the Orthodox festivity 'Petrovdan'. In general, the touristic potential of Klokot/Klllokot is related to its mineral springs, which have an average water temperature of 38°C. This water has a beneficial effect on patients suffering from rheumatism, which has been the focal point of the development of spa tourism. In particular, the spa complex Nëna Naile is one of the biggest spas in Kosovo. It is rich in thermal-mineral water and fully equipped with modern medical and recreational facilities. This industry could be further developed through the establishment of cultural and rural tourism. Klokot/Klllokot as a municipality has a religious and cultural centre, and four Serbian Orthodox Churches, most of them being renovated. It is also known for the celebration of 'Petrovdan', which has interesting pagan rituals with similar characteristics to Carnival, such as masks, interpretation of characters and dancing.

The establishment of the TOK was conducted under the project

"Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for all Newly-established municipalities in Kosovo," supported by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Language training course established in the municipality of Parteš/Partesh.

In July, ECMI Kosovo organised an Albanian language course for the municipal officials in Parteš/Partesh. The aim of the training is to enable the municipal officials to communicate in the two official languages with the members of public, colleagues and Central government institutions. More than 25 participants are undergoing the beginner level training at the municipality of Parteš/Partesh that will last until December 2014.

The courses of Albanian and Serbian languages started from the end of February and will continue until the middle of November/December 2014 in 14 municipalities. This project, "Official Language Acquisition for Municipal Officials in Kosovo," is funded by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the Office of the Language Commissioner/Office of the Prime Minister.

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 July, 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.

Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on Languages

On Friday 27 June 2014, ECMI Kosovo and the Office of the Language Commissioner of the Republic of Kosovo (OLC) held an event to present the Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages (henceforth: Guidebook) at Hotel Sirius in Prishtinë/Priština. This Guidebook is the final result of the project 'Strengthening the Protection of Language Rights in Kosovo: A Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages', funded by UNMIK and co-implemented by the OLC and ECMI Kosovo. The event served as the public presentation of the Guidebook and it was attended by representatives of Kosovo media and major stakeholders in the domain of Kosovo language policy. The guidebook is available in both, hard copy and electronic versions and has been published in Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish and English.



Political Developments

The Assembly of Kosovo elects Isa Mustafa chairman of the Assembly but the Constitutional Court temporarily suspends his election after a complaint filed by PDK

On July 17th, the Assembly of Kosovo voted to elect Isa Mustafa of LDK-AAK-Nisma për Kosovën chairman of the Assembly by 65 votes out of 82 MPs present, including votes from community representatives. Vetëvendosje abstained and PDK did not attend the proceedings after it failed to garner enough support for its candidate for Assembly chairman due to lack of quorum. Shortly after Mustafa's election, PDK MPs—led by former Assembly deputy chairman Xhavit Haliti—lodged a complaint at the Constitutional Court arguing that Isa Mustafa's election was not procedurally valid. PDK also asked the Constitutional Court to temporarily suspend the constitutive session of the Assembly of Kosovo (thereby also suspending Mustafa's election), until the Constitutional Court issues its interpretation of the events and Assembly Rules of Procedures. On July 23rd, the Constitutional Court decided to temporarily suspend the constitutive session of the Assembly of Kosovo, prompting Isa Mustafa to leave the office of the Assembly chairman until a final interpretation is issued.

“Srpska lista” and other parties representing Kosovo’s communities ready to join any coalition government with the required majority

Political entities representing Kosovo’s various communities have kept their options open as they have been wooed by both LDK-AAK-Nisma and PDK, both of which need their votes in order to form the next government. Though appearing to favor LDK-AAK-Nisma when they voted for Isa Mustafa as Assembly Speaker and left the Assembly session triggering a lack of quorum when PDK attempted to propose its own candidate, both “Srpska lista” and other parties have made carefully worded public statements when it comes to them joining any future government.

Mitrovica South and Mitrovica North meet in Brussels to discuss removing barricades, freedom of movement

Following public statements by the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning Dardan Gashi that his ministry was planning on destroying the “Peace Park” put up on the Ibër/Ibar bridge by Mitrovica North municipality, mayors of Mitrovica South and North met to discuss the issue of barricades and “Peace Park.” Though the meeting was not fruitful, the parties continued their discussions in Brussels under the auspices of the Kosovo-Serbia Brussels Dialogue process, agreeing to remove barricades and enable freedom of movement for citizens. Officials from Mitrovica North were quick to point out, however, that the “Peace Park” was not a barricade—in their view—and therefore they did not agree to take it down. No actions have been taken thus far.

Institutional Developments

Consultative Council for Communities

Following a month-long process of accreditation and nomination of new members, the President of the Republic of Kosovo, Mrs. Atifete Jahjaga, on July 30th, 2014 appointed new members of the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC). The new members—coupled with re-appointed members who were part of the 2012-2014 mandate—are set to serve for the new, 2014-2016 mandate of the CCC. The new members are: Darko Dimitrijević, Saša Petrović, Jelena Kostić, Slobodan Mitić, Dušan Radaković (Serb community), Isak Meta, Arnela Radončić, Mejdin Saliji (Bosniak community), Esin Şişko, Taner Güçlütürk, Agim Rifat (Turkish community), Bashkim Ibishi, Avni Mustafa (Roma community), Lendrit Qeli, Adem Abazaj (Egyptian community), Bekim Sylaj, Belkize Islami (Ashkali community), Fergap Zaimi, Emrin Zurapi (Gorani community), Branka Stamenković, Radoman Doderović (Montenegrin community), Josip Blaško, Sebastijan Čolakić (Croatian community), as well as Srećko Bogajčević of the Ministry for Return and Communities.

The newly appointed members are expected to hold the inaugural meeting of the newly-appointed Consultative Council for Communities in early September 2014.

[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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