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Publications

[Minority Entrepreneurship in Kosovo: Opportunities and Challenges](#)

ECMI Kosovo in Media

Radio KIM: [Asocijacija Srpskih Privrednika planira sajam male privrede u Gračanici](#)

Staff

We welcome the arrival of Elizabeta Haziri, Nejla Ayvazi and our new intern Dea Mulolli to the ECMI Kosovo team.

In Focus

Training for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women on Entrepreneurial Skills

Six training sessions on entrepreneurial skills were held during the month of May for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women and girls from the municipalities of Prizren, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Pejë/Peć. This concluded the 12 training sessions of the beneficiaries from the five targeted municipalities, which included also Ferizaj/Uroševac and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. Although the participants were of different educational background and age, many of them evaluated that the training was very beneficial to them. Eight of the 41 beneficiaries will be chosen to receive individual coaching for the next five months. The selected beneficiaries will be assisted to develop a business plan for innovative ideas in order to apply for available business grants provided by relevant stakeholders. Five roundtables will be held in the targeted municipalities in June and ECMI Kosovo, along with its implementing partner, [NRAEWOK](#), will distribute training certificates. These activities are part of a project on the economic empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women, jointly funded by UN Women/UNDP/EU.

In this newsletter, you will find information on:

- [ECMI Kosovo's Work](#)
- [Institutional Developments](#)
- [Political Developments](#)

ECMI Kosovo's Work

Minority Entrepreneurship: Opportunities and Challenges

On 29 May 2013, ECMI Kosovo organised an event in Gračanica/Gračanicë to officially present the newly-established Association of Serbian Businessmen (Asocijacija Srpskih Privrednika, ASP). The main objective of this business association is to represent and promote the interests of the local business community, constituting a more effective voice in addressing concerns to municipal officials. The event was opened by the

Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms. Mimoza Kusari-Lila. Her speech was followed by statements from Ms. Anne Meskanen, Finnish Ambassador; Mr. Igor Artonović, Deputy Mayor of Gračanica/Graçanicë; and Mr. Besim Mustafa, Head of Department of the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce. Finally, Mr. Ivan Todorović, President of the ASP, concluded the event. As outlined in its [Policy Paper on Minority Entrepreneurship in Kosovo: Opportunities and Challenges](#), ECMI Kosovo wishes the best to the newly-established association, and will continue its efforts in favour of creating new business opportunities for minority communities and vulnerable and marginalized groups in Kosovo. In particular, ECMI Kosovo is supporting a similar attempt of structuring the local business community of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. During a public meeting held on 28 May in the municipality, ECMI Kosovo and the Mayor, Mr. Bajrush Ymeri, met local business owners to take initial steps in this direction. These activities are supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.



Training Curriculum on Minority Rights for Kosovo Civil Servants

In May 2013, ECMI Kosovo concluded the development of a training curriculum on minority rights for Kosovo civil servants. The goal of this training is to enhance civil servants' knowledge and understanding of minority rights in Kosovo, their own corresponding roles and responsibilities, and minority rights' relevance for societal development. The next steps are to test the training curriculum through a series of pilot trainings, to conduct a training of trainers (ToT), and to ensure the handover of the training, in consultation with the Kosovo Institute of Public Administration (KIPA). The project '*Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo*' is financed by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

Selection of Six Advocacy Proposals and Advocacy Training Programme

In May, ECMI Kosovo closed the call for applications for the Advocacy Training Programme to increase the skills and capacities of civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage in public and decision-making processes and to interact more effectively with government institutions at the local and central level. Four CSOs and two CSO coalitions were selected to benefit from the project's activities for the duration of 1.5 years. The CSO coalitions will receive specialised training, technical and legal support, as well as advocacy sub-grants to realise concrete advocacy activities. For more information about the project and its activities, please visit the [project website](#). The European Union Office in Kosovo supported these activities under the project "*Empowering Civil Society to Participate in Policy and Decision-Making Processes*".

ECMI Kosovo Supports High-Level Conference with Council of Europe

On 22 May ECMI Kosovo supported the organisation of the Council of Europe high-level conference on 'Central Level Institutions: Main Challenges and Opportunities in the Effective Protection and Promotion of Community Rights in Kosovo'. The conference brought together representatives of all relevant public agencies and civil society organisations dealing with minority communities in order to jointly identify the main challenges in the implementation of community rights and provide suggestions for the improvement of community rights implementation. The conference saw a lively discussion with valuable contributions from key stakeholders in Kosovo dealing with community rights, including: Mr. Dalibor Jevtić, Minister for Communities and Returns; Mr. Oliver Vujović, Chairperson of the Consultative Council for Communities; the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Prishtinë/Priština, Mr. Tim Cartwright; and Mr. Stefano Gnocchi, Representative of the European Union Office in Kosovo.



Key issues raised included: the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems; the need for civil society involvement in policy making on community issues; the necessity to increase the awareness of both minority and majority communities on

community rights; and, the inadequate coordination between government agencies, particularly between municipalities and ministries. The conference was organised in the framework of the Joint Project of the European Union and the Council of Europe entitled "*Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South East Europe*".

Visit in Kosovo of the Finnish Under-Secretary of State for Development Cooperation and Development Policy

On 7 May 2013, ECMI Kosovo welcomed a Delegation from Helsinki, headed by Ms. Anne Sipiläinen, Under-Secretary of State for Development Cooperation and Development Policy. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss about the latest political developments in northern Kosovo and to visit the public services centre of the Mitrovica/ë North Administrative Office (MNAO). It was also an occasion for ECMI Kosovo to report about the results achieved under the project '*Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process*', funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Institutional Developments

Consultative Council for Communities (CCC)

During its Plenary Session on 14 May, various key issues were addressed and discussed by the CCC Working Groups. Key issues discussed included the validation of diplomas of students from the University based in North Mitrovica/ë, segregation in schools, and the problem of teaching plans in all community languages at the municipal level. At the meeting held on 29 May, the Working Group on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities invited a representative from the Department for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons, recently established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), in order to obtain information regarding the re-integration of members from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

ECMI Kosovo is monitoring the work of the CCC and its Working Groups within the framework of the project funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities and Returns (CRICR)

On 14 May CRICR held a public hearing on the implementation of the *Law on Historic Centre of Prizren* and the *Law on the Village of Hoçë e Madhe/Velika Hoça*, which have reportedly not been fully implemented within the stipulated timeframes. The public hearing was also attended by a European Union representative and the Chairperson of the Implementation and Monitoring Council (IMC).

The IMC, mandated to monitor the implementation of these laws, has so far held three monthly meetings to address a variety of issues. The IMC Chairperson highlighted the constructive approach of the IMC members, which included both political and religious leaders.

Following the formation of the new parliamentary group Zajednička Budućnost or Common Future (see [Political Developments](#)) within the Kosovo Assembly resulting from the split within the Serbian Liberal Party (SLS), Jasmina Živković replaced Goran Marinković as chairperson of the CRICR.

Working Group on Employment of Non-majority Communities

On 15 May 2013, the Office for Community Affairs (OCA) convened a meeting of observers of the Working Group on Employment Policy of Non-majority Communities. The goal of the meeting was to present the preliminary findings of an assessment on the employment situation of minority communities in Kosovo civil service and publicly-owned enterprises (POEs), commissioned by OCA and UNDP. ECMI Kosovo attended the meeting in its capacity as observer, and will provide inputs for the development of policy recommendations..

ECMI Kosovo supports the work of this WG in the framework of the project '*Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo*', funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

Political Developments

Kosovo and Serbia agree on implementation plan for the Brussels agreement

On 22 May, the Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia, Thaçi and Dačić, agreed on a plan for the implementation of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations initialled in April 2013 over the next six months.

The [implementation plan](#) addresses six areas: the adjustment of both parties' legal frameworks, the association of Serb municipalities, police, judiciary, local elections and general provisions, including an amnesty to Kosovo Serbs involved in parallel structures.

The plan foresees that by the end of May both sides will present their legal changes required for the implementation, establish a management team for the creation of the association composed of representatives from the four northern municipalities that will be responsible for drafting its statute, set up working groups to plan

the integration of Serbian security personnel and judicial authorities into Kosovo system and set up the new structures required under the agreement, and Serbia to offer an overview of its funding of institutions in Kosovo.

The implementation plan has been adopted by the governments of Kosovo and Serbia, while the Kosovo Assembly is expected to ratify the agreement and its implementation plan during its June session. Serbia, on its part, has established its team for the Committee for the implementation, chaired by the Director of the Office for Kosovo Aleksandar Vulin, whose resignation earlier in April following the initialling of the agreement has been rejected by the government. Both sides have also established the working groups foreseen in the implementation agreement.

In the meantime, the Serbian government has undertaken efforts to persuade northern Kosovo Serbs to accept the agreement. On 12 May Serbia's First Deputy Prime Minister, Alexander Vučić, met with representatives from the four municipalities in northern Kosovo to discuss about the agreement and reach a consensus on its implementation.

Creation of new Serb Parliamentary Group 'Zajednička budućnost'

Recent tensions within the Serbian Liberal Party (SLS) have resulted in two fractions within the party. One fraction is led by the Mayor of Gračanica/Gračanice Bojan Stojanović, and the other by current SLS chairman and Deputy Prime Minister, Slobodan Petrović. In May, the current Minister of Labour and Social Welfare Nenad Rašić held a press conference where he announced the formation of a new parliamentary group, *Zajednička Budućnost* (Common Future), as a result of dissatisfaction with the way Serb members of Parliament operate and their intention to have a more active participation in the Kosovo Assembly.

Subsequent to the press conference, SLS Main Board held a vote to revoke Rašić's party membership on the grounds that he intended to destabilise the caucus and the SLS party. There were no votes opposing the measure.

The new parliamentary group comprised of seven MPs was officially established at the Assembly session on 13 May, whereas the SLS parliamentary group has been joined by two new members, Hamza Balije and Sreten Ivanović.

New Serb television station 'TV Centar' launched

On 28 May, Radio KIM officially launched its new television station 'TV Centar' to be broadcasted via cable distributors throughout



Kosovo. The station, based in Čaglavica, aims to cover the need of Kosovo Serbs for proper information, especially for those living in central Kosovo, which was until recently the only Serb-populated area without its own local television.

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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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