



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – October 2012

### Political Developments:

#### Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue

EU High Representative Ashton has mediated historic official meeting in Brussels between PM of Kosovo Thaçi and PM of Serbia Dačić, the appointed heads of the negotiation teams. The topic of the meeting was the continuation of EU-mediated Serbia-Kosovo talks, and both sides agreed to continue the dialogue. The meeting was held just 24 hours after a resolution on the normalization of relations without conditions was passed by the Kosovo Assembly, aiming to legitimize the dialogue. Earlier in October the two negotiation teams met to recommence the technical dialogue for the implementation of the integrated border management agreement.

22 October, large protests in Pristina organised by Vetëvendosje in opposition to the direct talks with Serbia, escalated to violent clashes between protesters and police. Police arrested 63 protesters including several MPs and 30 people were injured. A further protest was organised the following day alleging excessive use of force and ill-treatment by police.

Ashton and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited both Pristina and Belgrade, urging Kosovo and Serbia to continue with negotiations to improve relations and achieve concrete results. Clinton said the U.S. would not allow Kosovo's independence to be questioned and opposed change to borders.

#### EU Accession

EU Commissioner Füle presented the Feasibility Study which concluded that Kosovo is "largely ready" for Stabilization-Association Agreement negotiations, which would allow participation in EU programmes, and that there was no legal obstacle to Kosovo concluding this agreement with the EU. Nonetheless, the European Commission (EC) identified 4 priority areas requiring action: protection of minorities, rule of law, public administration, and trade. Füle stressed talks could start beginning of 2013 dependent on Kosovo Institutions' efforts.

The EC also published the 'Strategy of

Enlargement 2012-2013' which announced that "visible and sustained improvement in relations between Serbia and Kosovo will be a condition for both countries to continue respective paths towards EU integration." Significantly, Serbia is explicitly requested to respect the "territorial integrity of Kosovo." This phrasing was badly received by Serbia, and Serbian President Nikolić requested its removal, which was denied by the EC.

#### Recognitions of Kosovo's Independence

Republic of Burundi became the latest UN member state to recognize Kosovo's independence, while Papua New Guinea officially confirmed the recognition made some time ago. The total number of recognitions now stands at 93.

#### ECMI Kosovo Project Updates:

##### Enhancing Minority Communities' Understanding of Kosovo's Electoral System

ECMI Kosovo began implementing the 2-month project 'Enhancing Minority Communities' Understanding of Kosovo's Electoral System' in partnership with IFES and 5 Kosovo NGOs.



Aiming to increase understanding of the electoral system and the importance of participation in the electoral process, an information leaflet was developed and several public information meetings were organised in a number of municipalities. Altogether, ECMI will organize 20 public information meetings, and 8 TV media activities.

This project is financed by International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES).

#### Integration through learning of official languages in Kosovo

Teachers continued providing regular Albanian and Serbian classes to municipal officials in Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë, Obiliq/ Obilić, and Štrpce/ Shtërpçë. A third evaluation was conducted to assess the participants' satisfaction. ECMI Kosovo also continued supporting the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in developing a school textbook for Albanian as second language, by reviewing and providing comments on selected material.

The project 'Integration through learning of official languages in Kosovo' is financed by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

#### Improving the Delivery of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Education

In October, ECMI Kosovo concluded the project supporting Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje municipality in improving the delivery of education to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. A conference 19 October reviewed best practice in implementation of the Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, focusing on education and the case of Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje. ECMI disseminated the lessons learned through its intervention in Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje through a manual for municipal officials on Improving the Delivery of Education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities (see <http://bit.ly/YJ0tDf>). The conference was attended by around 90 participants, including representatives from around 11 municipalities.





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16 October, a workshop organised with the OSCE was attended by 30 active stakeholders to discuss draft Terms of Reference developed by the OSCE for the ‘Teams for prevention and response toward abandonment and non-registration.’ Recommendations were provided based on the experience of Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje. ECMI also participated in the 7th meeting of the Task Force monitoring the implementation of the education component of the Municipal Action Plan, 31 October, in which the municipality presented the results of data collection on school dropouts.

ECMI Kosovo would like to thank UNICEF for its extraordinary cooperation and support.

### **Knowledge Increase of the Socioeconomic Situation in Northern Kosovo**

Thanks to hard work by our team of field researchers, ECMI Kosovo managed to collect around 800 filled questionnaires. Respondents are from diverse ethnical backgrounds from North Mitrovica/ Mitrovicë, Leposavić/ Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/ Zveqan, in compliance with the proposed methodology for the convenience sample. Now underway is the statistical treatment and qualitative analysis, with a draft report being produced before the end of the year.

This project ‘*Knowledge Increase of Socio-economic Issues in North Kosovo*’ is financed by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, complementing the project ‘*Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process*’ financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

### **Legal Aid to Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups**

Free legal assistance was provided to 107 beneficiaries. Moreover, on 11 and 12 October, ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the Kosovo Judicial Institute (KJI), organized 2 training workshops on international standards and local legislation regarding anti-discrimination, for selected judges from across Kosovo. The training was delivered in several sessions by

international and local trainers as well as working group discussions.



This project, ‘*Enhancing the Positive Impact of the Law for Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups in Kosovo*’ is funded by the EU and managed by the EU Office in Kosovo. For more information see [www.kosovo-legalaid.com](http://www.kosovo-legalaid.com).

### **Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process**

The 2-day training organised 4-6 October gathered over 50 participants from the 5 newly-established municipalities of Gračanica/ Graçanicë, Klokot/ Kllokot, Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë, Parteš/ Partesh and Ranilug/ Ranillug. It was an opportunity to steer discussions between municipal officials and representatives from local business communities as well as to deliver presentations about legal issues and about strategic planning to encourage local economic development.



The latest emissions of TV show ‘*Nešto... između*’ (‘Something... in-between’), co-produced by Radio KIM and ECMI Kosovo, were broadcasted 9 and 22 October. They respectively covered issues of healthcare and cultural heritage, with a focus on northern Kosovo. Podcasts are available at: <http://bit.ly/SN9hrX> and <http://bit.ly/PXgk35>. Next emissions will address other socio-economic issues such as rule of law, environment, and employment.

The project ‘Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process’ is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

### **Youth of Mitrovica/ë for Democratic Society**

ECMI Kosovo, with Association for Peace Kosovo (AFPK), began the project by establishing how to select up to 100 participants for the training on democracy, peace, human rights and reconciliation. This project aims to reach a range of youth with different levels of knowledge and with different perceptions. Potential participants are high school pupils, students, youth centre members, or any other young people in North Mitrovica/ë.

These activities are part of the project ‘*Youth of Mitrovica/ë for a Democratic Society*’ financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Pristina.

### **New Office in North Mitrovica/ë**

ECMI has the pleasure to announce the opening of a new permanent office in North Mitrovica/ë. The office is shared with NGO Aktiv which deals with democratization, civil rights protection, education, cultural development and media. Do not hesitate to visit us!

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