



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – July 2012

Political Developments:

Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia

Preparations are being made for a high-level political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, to begin, provisionally, in September. The EU Special Representative in Kosovo, Samuel Žbogar has stated that there is a need to initiate such discourse now, with the countries respective leaders taking responsibility to resolve “all open issues regarding the north”, which currently exacerbate tensions and hamper development. Both the USA and EU have adopted a joint stance regarding such action, and are eager to have issues pertaining to Kosovo resolved within the year.

Meanwhile, Serbia has replaced the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija with an office, headed by Aleksandar Vulin. The Kosovo Office is commissioned with coordinating the work of the specialist sectors of the 17 ministries of the new Serbian government on issues concerning Kosovo.

In early July, the Croatia Summit in Dubrovnik marked the first meeting of Kosovo Prime Minister, Hashim Thaçi, and former Serbian President Boris Tadić. Serbia has, thus far, adopted a policy of not attending any meeting, international or otherwise, where Kosovo officials were present.

President Atifete Jahjaga to serve full term

Kosovo's Constitutional Court has held that President Atifete Jahjaga should serve a full 5-year term, until 2016, and not until 2013, when the electoral reform and new national and Presidential election would have taken place, as agreed to in a political deal between PDK, LDK and AAK that paved the way for her candidacy back in 2011.

There has been resistance on behalf of LDK to accept the issued opinion, with the LDK leader emphasizing that “Jahjaga will not have any legitimacy and will not be a unity factor”.

It is worth noting that such sentiments coming from the largest opposition party, the LDK, will invariably impede any attempt to have either a unity government, or an ad-hoc body comprised of all political parties, in the face of

the upcoming political dialogue with Serbia.

Request for inclusion of Muslim Macedonians in Kosovo Constitution

Gjorge Ivanov, the Macedonian President, has made an official request for the inclusion of Muslim Macedonians, approximately 30,000 citizens who live in Gora, in the Kosovo Constitution as a constitutional category. President Atifete Jahjaga, has rejected the request on the basis of not having obtained the final results of a recent population census. The Muslim Macedonians are not recognised as a minority community according to the Kosovo Constitution. The President Ivanov's request refers to the Gorani community, located in the south-west region of Kosovo, with some of the villages bordering the Republic of Macedonia and many of whom have Macedonian citizenship. In the Kosovo Constitution, the Gorani community has the status of a constitutional category and enjoys the provisions for community protection as other communities in Kosovo.

There is general opposition to the move to identifying the Gorani community as “Muslim Macedonians”, emanating from both political parties representing the Gorani community in Kosovo, the SDSG and GIG, as well as most of the Gorani civil society organisations. According to ECMI Kosovo contacts, the request is supported by Mr. Ismail Bojda, from the village of Brod, who heads the Association of Muslim Macedonians in Kosovo. Brod shares a border with Macedonia, where most of the villagers have relatives on the other side of the boundary.

EULEX issues corruption charges and reports on ‘political’ killings of LDK

On 31st July, an EULEX prosecutor from the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo filed an indictment against ten defendants, regarding charges of corruption. The defendants include the former president of the Pristina municipal court and other judges. The defendants specific charges vary, with the former President of the

Municipal Court of Pristina being indicted for the criminal offences of abusing official power and assisting in issuing unlawful judicial decisions, specifically related to transforming socially-owned land into private property.

Moreover, a recent leaking of an EULEX report suggests that murders that occurred in post-war Kosovo, can be attributed to political motives, with dozens of members of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) having been murdered. LDK leader, Isa Mustafa, has called on the EU Rule of Law Mission to resolve all the killings committed after the war.

Ban Ki-moon visits Kosovo

In what was the first visit of the United Nations Secretary-General, since Kosovo's Declaration of Independence, Ban Ki-moon communicated his concern about continuing and escalating tensions in northern Kosovo, particularly during the last year. He emphasised the need for the sensitive issues at play to be resolved through peaceful dialogue, engagement and serious efforts by Kosovo and Serbia.

Appointment of Language Commissioner

On 19th July, Suzana Salaji was appointed to the position of Language Commissioner. The position has a mandate of six years, working towards the achievement of the aim of preserving, promoting and protecting the use of official languages and the languages of all communities in Kosovo.

ECMI Kosovo Project Updates: Integration Through Learning of Official Languages in Kosovo

In July, teachers continued providing regular classes of Albanian and Serbian to municipal officials in the three municipalities of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Obiliq/Obilić, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. A first month evaluation was also conducted in order to assess the participants' satisfaction. Besides strengthening the





MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – July 2012

linguistic capacities of municipal officials, the project also aims at promoting the learning of Albanian as second language in pre-university education through working with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) on the development of a new textbook of Albanian language for the 4th grade. The tender for the textbook is available at <http://bit.ly/KxVAR6>.

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

Legal Aid to Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups

During July 2012, legal aid lawyers provided free legal assistance to 85 beneficiaries. Moreover, four round table discussions were organised with the Roma community to discuss the issue of discrimination in Kosovo society. One of the main issues raised by the participants concerned access to civil registration.

On 30 July, ECMI Kosovo published a policy brief on the persistent failure of the Kosovo judicial system to issue protection orders within the set legal time limit and highlighting an ongoing case where over five months after a petition for a protection order was submitted, no court decision has yet been taken, regardless of the fact that according to Kosovo law such a decision should be issued within 15 days. The policy brief can be accessed [here](#).

These activities were part of the project: 'Enhancing the Positive Impact of the Law for Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups in Kosovo', funded by the European Union and managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo. For more information on this project please visit www.kosovo-legalaid.com.

Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process

The project's Steering Committee meeting took place on 10 July 2012 in Pristina. It gathered representatives from the Finnish Embassy as well as from all five municipalities

Gračanica/ Gračanice, Klokot/ Kllokot, Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë, Parteš/ Partesh and Ranilug/ Ranillug.

This meeting was the opportunity to discuss the findings of a report on Local Economic Development, available at <http://bit.ly/OxfvXx> and to agree of activities to improve the economic conditions in these municipalities.



Regarding the situation in North Kosovo, ECMI Kosovo has taken contacts with the newly-established Mitrovica North Administration Office (MNAO). We will support their successful launch as a follow-up of the activities previously carried out in partnership with the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT).

These activities are part of the project 'Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process', financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Improving the Delivery of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Education

In July, ECMI Kosovo assisted municipal officials of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje to organize the fifth meeting of the Task Force for monitoring the implementation of the education component of the Municipal Action Plan (MAP) that deals with the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The focus of the meeting was to discuss about the assignment of budget for the implementation of the MAP for the year 2013.

According to the municipal Director of education, the municipality pledges to assign a budget for the MAP in the amount of up to 30.000 EUR for the next year. The Task Force members also discussed the catch-up

classes for children from the three communities. Currently, there are around 27 children attending the classes. These children are expected to register to regular school at the beginning of the school year, subject to their minimum 50% attendance. The courses are being financially supported by ECMI Kosovo and UNICEF.



Moreover, in order to ensure good attendance of children, ECMI Kosovo facilitated visits to families of children attending these courses. Visits were conducted by school teachers and the school principal and accompanied by ECMI Kosovo and other local NGOs and resulted in increased attendance of children. Finally, ECMI Kosovo assisted the municipal officials in continuing to collect data of dropped-out and out-of-school children with the aim to enable drop-out monitoring and taking action at the beginning of the school year. This project has been supported by UNICEF.



Personnel Changes

Jeelan Syed has completed his work at ECMI Kosovo; we thank him for his valuable contribution to ECMI Kosovo and wish him well in his future endeavours. We welcome the arrival of Edita Memisi to the ECMI Kosovo team.

