



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – March 2012

Political Developments:

Serbian Elections in Kosovo

This month Serbia has sought to organise general elections within Kosovo, due to take place 6 May. The Government of Kosovo reacted by stating that this represents a violation of international laws and standards, and is in contradiction with Resolution 1244. Prime Minister Thaçi stated that 'The Government of the Republic of Kosovo is working together with all international authorities to ensure that Serbia's plan to organise local elections in the Republic of Kosovo fails completely'. The government requested that UNMIK pass on these concerns to the UN Secretary General and that UNMIK not play any role in the organisation of these elections. However on April 6 it was reported that the Governments of Kosovo and Serbia will request the OSCE mission organise Serbian parliamentary and presidential elections in areas of Kosovo where the population is largely Serb. The Kosovo Government gave consent with the condition that the OSCE must also organise Kosovo local elections in Mitrovica /Mitrovicë North, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zveqan.

Recent arrests in border regions

There have been a series of reciprocal arrests in the border regions with Serbia. Following the arrest of nine Serbs by Kosovar authorities on the grounds of allegedly transporting election materials into Kosovo, Hasan Abazi, head of the Kosovo Metal Union was arrested by Serbian police during a trip to Croatia. Days later two members of the Kosovo Police were arrested by Serb Gendarmerie close to the Merdare border region. The Kosovo Government reacted strongly against the arrests stating they are in contradiction to European values and calling on the international community to prevent arbitrary reciprocal arrests. The policemen were released and had not been mistreated. They claim to have been arrested 130 meters inside Kosovo territory, however

the Serbian police dispute this.

Fatmir Limaj trial

At the beginning of March the judge in the case of Fatmir Limaj lifted the house arrest measures against him. On 21 March the Pristina District Court then freed all ten defendants after the diaries of Agim Zogaj, a key witness who committed suicide in Germany last year, were ruled inadmissible as evidence. Reacting to this the KLA war veterans organization, OVLUCK, said that Wednesday's decision proved that the Kleçka case was politically motivated. However on 30 March the panel of judges at Pristina's district court decided that there is sufficient evidence to pursue a separate trial against Fatmir Limaj and three other defendants.

EU feasibility study launched

The EU has launched a feasibility study which could lead to Kosovo signing the Stabilization Association Agreement (SAA), the first step to EU membership. To meet the criteria Kosovo must make progress in public administration, the wider political consensus for the European agenda, the implementation of the rule of law, the integration of minorities, the development of trade, electoral reform, and the integration of the north.

São Tomé and Príncipe Recognises Kosovo

On 17 March the Council of Ministers of São Tomé and Príncipe decided to recognize Kosovo as a full member of the international community.

ECMI Kosovo Project Updates:

Improving the Delivery of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Education

ECMI Kosovo, within the project funded by UNICEF on 'Improving the Delivery of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Education in the

Municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje', continued to offer support to municipal officials of this municipality.



Between 1 and 4 March, ECMI Kosovo organised a training workshop in Durrës, Albania for municipal officials of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje. The workshop addressed selected areas that affect the implementation of the Municipal Action Plan (MAP) and particularly the education component, such as: the legislative framework relating to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian education; data collection; monitoring and reporting; coordination with the central level; conducting research and operationalising an action plan. During the workshops, the participants discussed the gaps and challenges in implementing the MAP and identified recommendations for improving the delivery of education to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Detailed information about the training workshop can be found in an information bulletin attached.

As a follow-up to the training workshop, during March ECMI Kosovo helped the municipal officials to implement activities agreed on by the Task Force, including the collection of information on children who dropped-out and the preparation of a small scale research plan to identify preschool and pre-primary education needs. Also, ECMI Kosovo assisted municipal officials to organise the second Task Force meeting, where progress on





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activities was reported. In the meeting, the Task Force members agreed to further detail the list of drop-outs in coordination with civil society organisations, to perform research activity to identify needs for preschool and pre-primary education, as well as to identify the needs for supplementary courses for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children.

Legal Aid to Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued with the implementation 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.

During March 2012, legal aid lawyers provided free legal assistance to 164 beneficiaries. At the same time, ECMI Kosovo received a number of complaints from Roma community members reporting that they were refused the possibility to exchange their Serbian driving license for a Kosovo license on the grounds of their ethnicity. ECMI Kosovo has filed a complaint regarding this discriminatory practice.

On 28 March, ECMI Kosovo started its participation in a series of five regional workshops organised by OSCE Kosovo. These workshops are aimed at teachers, school directors and relevant municipal officials and explore the topic of inclusive education. ECMI Kosovo is responsible for presenting and discussing segregation in education in the European context. For more information on this project please visit www.kosovo-legalaid.com.

Support to Minority Communities during and after the Decentralisation Process

This month ECMI Kosovo has carried out CSO mapping in the municipalities of Mitrovica /Mitrovicë North, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zveqan, in order to produce a socioeconomic analysis of these areas. Using information from the CSOs operating in the area ECMI Kosovo have produced a socioeconomic analysis of the problems people face with regard to education, healthcare, social welfare, employment, and local economic development.

This month ECMI Kosovo have produced a comprehensive report on the legislation and conditions for local economic development in decentralised municipalities, specifically related to the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which characterise the majority of economic activity in the area. This report addresses legislation and the extent to which local economic development policies are carried out by municipalities within this legislation. This analysis will be used to produce several documents in order to support local economic development through SMEs in decentralised municipalities.

Institutional Support to the Kosovo Consultative Council for Communities (CCC)

In March, after several meetings that were organized with the CCC Secretariat (legal and communication officers), in which legal officers of the Office of the President and Office of Prime Minister, representatives of the ICO and ECMI Kosovo discussed proposed amendments to the CCC Statute, the decree

was sent to the President to sign. The Comments and recommendations of the Office of the President were discussed in a meeting organised with stakeholders and were incorporated by the Secretariat. The final draft of the amended Statute is in the Office of the President and it is going to be signed at the beginning of the next month.

After the President signs the Statute, ECMI Kosovo is going to support the CCC Secretariat in organising the Nomination and Accreditation process according to the new Statute. Also, a meeting with the CCC members is going to be organized. Members of the CCC are going to be informed about the extension of their mandate. Also, ECMI Kosovo will support the Secretariat to organise a meeting with the members of the CCC and introduce them to the amendments of the CCC Statute.

ECMI HQ researchers visit Kosovo

Researchers from ECMI headquarters have visited Kosovo in March, and as a consequence closer ties of cooperation have been agreed upon in order to utilise one another's strengths.

Personnel Changes

Artan Çollaku, project manager on ECMI Kosovo's activities on decentralisation, has left the organisation and we thank him for his excellent contribution.

Ran Cao has completed her internship at ECMI Kosovo, we thank her for all of her hard work and wish her well for her new job in Beijing.

ECMI welcomes Ross Wain who begins an internship this month.

