



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – May 2012

Political Developments:

Serbian Elections

Presidential, parliamentary and local elections were held in Serbia on May 6th. In the second round of the presidential election, that took place on May 20th, Tomislav Nikolić was elected as the new Serbian President. The OSCE organised the elections in Kosovo so that Kosovar Serb dual citizens could cast their vote in the parliamentary and presidential elections. Security was bolstered so as to ensure a peaceful democratic process. All the votes casted in Kosovo were then transported to Serbia and counted in Vranje and Raška. While no local elections were organized in Kosovo, the Serb leaders of the two municipalities of Zvečan/Zveçan and Zubin Potok in the North of Kosovo, whose legal mandate had expired, organised the local elections regardless of the disapproval expressed by the authorities in Belgrade. Later in May, municipal assemblies were constituted in these two municipalities. However, neither Pristina nor Belgrade recognize the local elections. Instead, Belgrade announced that temporary councils would be formed in northern Kosovo.

Ferizaj/Uroševac Elections

The second round of extraordinary municipal elections took place on May 27th in the Ferizaj/Uroševac municipality to elect a new mayor. The PDK's Agem Aliu won with 58% of the votes over the LDK's Adem Salihaj. ECMI Kosovo's special report on the Ferizaj/Uroševac elections is available upon request.

Cultural Heritage Laws Sent to Constitutional Court

The laws on Prizren's historic centre and the village of Velika Hoča/Hoça e Madhe were sent to the Constitutional Court by a group of deputies to assess their constitutionality. These laws, adopted as part of the Ahtisaari Package, foresee the creation of councils that will include religious representatives with decision-making powers and have been adopted to help Kosovo conclude the supervisory phase of independence.

Office in North Mitrovica

Several countries supporting Kosovo's independence and the government in Prishtina have asked UNMIK to incorporate its operations in the North within the Kosovo Government Administrative Office in North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica that is expected to open up shortly. UNMIK has not yet provided its decision on this matter. The Office will provide up to 80 new jobs and will maintain a budget of some €4 million a year for basic community services and infrastructure projects in north Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

Visa Liberalisation

The EU member states approved the final version of the visa liberalization roadmap for Kosovo. The adoption of the roadmap with the criteria that Kosovo has to fulfill, due by mid-June, is the first step toward visa liberalisation for Kosovo people.

ECMI Kosovo Project Updates:

Integration Through Learning of Official Languages in Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is pleased to announce that on 15 May, it launched the new project "Integration through learning of official languages in Kosovo". This project aims to promote the integration of Kosovo's community members into a wider society by improving their knowledge of both official languages through working with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) on the development of a new textbook of Albanian language for non-Albanian communities, and training of teachers on how to improve their methodology of teaching Albanian to non-majority communities. At the same time, ECMI Kosovo will strengthen the linguistic capacities of municipal officials through facilitating five-month courses on both Kosovo's official languages in the three municipalities of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Obilić/Obilic, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Besides that, ECMI Kosovo will also engage at the policy level,

where it will work on developing a language teaching programme that can later serve as basis for a curricula for language teaching of municipal civil servants, as well as provide policy recommendations on how to enhance the knowledge of the two official languages at the municipal level. During the second half of May, ECMI Kosovo provided support to MEST to develop the tender for authors to submit material for the textbook which is available at <http://bit.ly/KxVAR6>. Also, ECMI Kosovo held initial meetings with the mayors of the three target municipalities and started with the recruitment of Albanian and Serbian language teachers. The project "Integration through learning of official languages in Kosovo" is financed by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

Institutional Support to the Kosovo Consultative Council for Communities

In May 2012, ECMI Kosovo assisted the communication officer in developing a press release which is available at ccc-president-ksgov.net. After the Office of the President issued a public announcement inviting registered non-governmental organizations of the different communities to submit a request for accreditation, the Secretariat of the Council in cooperation with ECMI Kosovo advised relevant organizations on the submission of written applications and reviewed the received applications. ECMI Kosovo in cooperation with the Secretariat organized outreach meetings of the working group of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Peja/Peć, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok, Graçanicë/Gračanica and Plementina/Plementinë. The return process and poor living and economic conditions were the main problems listed by the three communities living in the five municipalities. Members of the working





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group will prepare recommendations and send them to the local and central government officials.

In May, ECMI Kosovo concluded its project aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the Council as an institution, through the provision of technical and organisational support to the Council, its Steering Committee, Secretariat and the permanent Working Groups. This project has been funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Legal Aid to Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups

In May 2012, legal aid lawyers provided free legal assistance to 125 beneficiaries. Moreover, on 10 May, Mr. Lars Burema spoke at a regional workshop organised by the OSCE on segregation in Education in Prishtinë/Priština. On 21 May, a complaint was submitted to the municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane regarding the threatened demolition of a historic house in the centre of the town owned by a minority community member. On 25 May, a disciplinary procedure was started against a judge for violating ethical standards in a domestic violence case. On 29 May, a request for clarification was submitted to the Municipality of Pejë/Peć regarding an alleged case of segregation in education. 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

ECMI Kosovo has prepared a report analysing municipalities' approach to managing the local economy in their territory, which will be published in the coming days. This report is based on the findings of the quantitative and analytical

studies on Small and Medium Enterprise in the newly established municipalities. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo has started with the development of community profiles of the newly established municipalities, which will provide stakeholders with a valuable source of information with regard to the local economy.

On 17 May, ECMI Kosovo organised a workshop with the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT) for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica on outreach activities. In this meeting ECMI Kosovo and MPT discussed possible ways through which the MPT could increase its visibility. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo supported the production of informational materials for the MPT.



These activities were 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

ECMI Kosovo continued assisting the municipal officials of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje with the implementation of activities from the Municipal Action Plan (MAP) for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The technical advisor assigned to the municipality guided the responsible municipal officials through the preparation of a report on the research of pre-school and pre-primary education needs of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children and supported them

with collecting data on school drop-outs into a consolidated list. The municipality has also been assisted in the preparations for supplementary classes for children with learning difficulties and language courses for children with limited knowledge of the Albanian language (particularly returnees). In addition, ECMI Kosovo assisted the officials in organising the third meeting of the Task Force for monitoring the implementation of the MAP education component. ECMI Kosovo has also been preparing the second training workshop for municipal officials due to take place from 5 to 8 June 2012. The aim of the training will be to increase the capacity of municipal officials to address the issue of school drop-outs. This project is supported by UNICEF.

ECMI participation in conferences

In late April Lars Burema participated in the "Reconciliation and peacebuilding in postwar societies: a European Challenge" seminar held at ECMI Flensburg (Germany) sharing his insights on reconciliation in Kosovo. On May 7th, Adrian Zeqiri, Director of ECMI, presented the work of ECMI Kosovo at the ECMI Advisory Council Conference in Berlin, Germany. On May 29th, Adrian Zeqiri delivered a speech on the situation in Kosovo at a Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly session in Paris, France.

Vacancy

ECMI Kosovo is currently recruiting a local legal expert. For more information please visit: <http://bit.ly/KU6v2U>. We are also looking for an intern to assist us in the period of August-October.

Personnel Changes

David Quill has completed his work at ECMI Kosovo; we thank him for his valuable contribution to ECMI Kosovo and wish him well in his further endeavors in Ireland.

