



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – August 2012

Political Developments

Aftermath of Constitutional Court of Kosovo

Presidency Decision

There is presently a lack of institutional stability characterising the Kosovo government, in the aftermath of the Constitutional Court of Kosovo decision confirming the constitutional compatibility of President Atifete Jahjaga serving a full 5-year term. The demonstrable opposition of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), in endorsing a presidential resignation as allowed for by the court's decision, invariably undermines Kosovo's position in the forthcoming talks with Belgrade.

This resistance is largely due to the noncompliance with the political deal that paved the way for Jahjaga's presidency. Moreover, LDK has qualified its vote for the constitutional amendments regarding the competencies and election process for the President of Kosovo, making it contingent on Jahjaga's resignation. LDK has also withdrawn from the election reform process.

Continued preparation for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue

There has been a continuation of the provisional plans for high-level political dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, with an intended meeting between Kosovo President Atifete Jahjaga and Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić by October, under the auspice of the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton. The situation of the Kosovo government arguably constitutes an obstacle to the desire of the international community, for Kosovo to have a grand coalition government in the face of the aforementioned dialogue. Moreover, European Union Enlargement Commissioner, Štefan Füle, has reiterated that Serbian EU accession talks are largely contingent on significantly improved and sustainable relations with Kosovo, with significant emphasis being placed on tangible progress being made in the implementation of agreements reached in the dialogue. Additionally, the new Serbian government has approved that the required footnote regarding Kosovo's status displayed on Kosovo's

nameplate when participating in regional meetings, is no longer necessary and its use may be limited to all the documents issued at the meetings.

Discussion of UN SG's report on Kosovo at United Nations

In what constituted the first international meeting with the presence of both Kosovo and Serbia's leaders', Hashim Thaçi and Ivica Dačić attended a UN Security Council session regarding the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's report on Kosovo. The publication urges for a constructive approach in overcoming unresolved issues, specifically the north of Kosovo through the establishment of a political dialogue, led by the EU. Both Thaçi and Dačić pledged to "high level political talks" in order to reach a mutually acceptable and comprehensive solution on the final status of Kosovo, so as to contribute to normalisation and regional reconciliation. However, Serbia's Prime Minister reiterated Serbia's unwillingness to recognise Kosovo's independence.

End of Kosovo's supervised independence

The Assembly of Kosovo approved a draft package of 21 laws, pertaining to the conclusion of the international supervision of Kosovo's independence; with 63 votes for, no votes against and no abstentions. This arguably constitutes a significant step towards the end of the supervisory phase of Kosovo's independence, with an expected confirmation by the International Steering Group, occurring on 10 and 11 September.

New US Ambassador to Kosovo

Tracey Jacobson has succeeded Christopher Dell in the role of US Ambassador to Kosovo. Jacobson has stated that her priorities involve an engagement with political groups, businesses and civil society.

Germany offers EU Blue Card to highly qualified Kosovo citizens

Germany has offered an EU Blue Card to qualified Kosovars as an employment

initiative to attract qualified experts in IT, medicine and engineering. The German Ambassador to Kosovo has stated that he is convinced of the many "talented people" who will now benefit under this system. As of August 1, visa requirements have now been eased for Kosovo citizens who have been offered a job, with a threshold salary of €45,000 per annum.

Missing people from 1998-99 War

International Day of Missing Persons reiterates that there are 3,600 people still missing from the 1998-1999 war between the Serbian forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army, KLA. Families of missing persons in Kosovo accused both local and international institutions of not doing enough to provide information on the whereabouts of their family members missing for 13 years now.

ECMI Kosovo Project Updates:

Integration Through Learning of Official Languages in Kosovo

Following the summer break, teachers recommenced providing classes of Albanian and Serbian to municipal officials in the three municipalities of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Obiliq/Obilić, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Besides provision of language courses, ECMI Kosovo is assisting the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) with the development of a new textbook of Albanian language for the 4th grade. The tender for the submission of textbook materials closes on the 4th of September. 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 August 2012, legal aid lawyers provided free legal assistance to 71 beneficiaries. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo continued with the organisation of a series





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of round table discussions with the Roma community to discuss the issue of discrimination in Kosovo society.

At the same time, ECMI Kosovo started the first two weeks of a 4 week long outreach campaign to raise awareness of its legal aid provision. For this outreach campaign, ECMI Kosovo legal outreach officers will visit all regions of Kosovo to distribute leaflets and register cases.



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

Six local correspondents from Gračanica/Gračanice, Klokot/Kllokot, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Parteš/Partesh and Ranilug/Ranillug attended ECMI Kosovo's workshop in Pristina on 31 August. This was an opportunity for them to be trained on their role as local contact points and support providers to municipalities and SMEs.

ECMI Kosovo also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Radio KIM for the production and broadcast of a series of radio, TV and internet shows on socio-economic

issues, with a focus on northern Kosovo. The first programme of the show, entitled *Nešto... između* ("Something in-between") will cover the topic of the education system.



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.

Knowledge Increase of the Socioeconomic Situation in Northern Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is pleased to announce the signature of a Grant Agreement with the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the implementation of a 5-month project in northern Kosovo. The project aims at increasing the knowledge and awareness of institutional and civil society stakeholders involved in the implementation of community outreach, confidence-building and community stabilisation measures in northern Kosovo with regard to the concerns and needs of communities. In particular, the project will produce a robust and comprehensive basis for strategy and programming development to be used by international organisations and governments operating in northern Kosovo, as well as by local civil society organisations. A field survey will be conducted in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveqan. ECMI Kosovo already developed a sampling methodology and a questionnaire.

These activities are part of the project *'Knowledge Increase of Socioeconomic Issues in North Kosovo'* financed by the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office and complement 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 August, ECMI Kosovo and UNICEF continued to financially support intensive catch-up classes for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in the municipality of FushëKosovë/Kosovo Polje. As a result, 30 children were integrated into regular classes at the Selman Rizaschool. ECMI Kosovo has also started with preparations of the final project conference that will be held on October with a view of sharing and disseminating the achievements, best practices, lessons learned and practical recommendations emanating from the one-year support to the municipality with the implementation of the education component of the municipal action plan on integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. This project has been supported by UNICEF.

New Address

ECMI Kosovo would like to announce the contact details of its new offices: Str. Nëna Terezë; Nr. 41, Apt. 29, 10000 Prishtina, Kosovo. Our new phone number is: 038 224 473.

Staff Changes

ECMI Kosovo would like to welcome the arrival of Rebecca Darts to the team; we wish her a fruitful and productive stay.

