



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – May 2011

### Political developments

#### **Visit of EU representatives**

The visit of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, to Kosovo came at the end of her Balkans tour, in which she backed the continuation of technical dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and reaffirmed Brussels' role as mediator. The president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, had confirmed European support of Kosovo's decentralisation process in his visit to Kosovo the previous week, although the issue of visa liberalisation remains pending.

#### **EU provisional representative appointed**

Fernando Gentilini was appointed on 6 May as EU Special Representative in Kosovo for a 3-month period. The Italian diplomat takes over from Pieter Feith, whose contract expired in April, although he is continuing in his role as head of the International Civilian Office (ICO) in Kosovo.

#### **Census in the north of Kosovo**

An outreach campaign was conducted in the north, focusing on providing general information and educating the public about the census. UNOPS, who has been given the mandate to implement the census in the north, met with municipal officials to discuss the census, with a definitive response regarding their support expected after the Municipal Assembly meetings take place.

#### **Unrest over visit of Serbian delegation**

Activists from the Kosovo Albanian group Vetëvendosje protested over the visit of Serbian negotiator Borko Stefanović, who arrived in Prishtina on 13 May for talks with the Deputy Prime Minister's office and the US ambassador. Stefanović, who is leading the Serbian team in Kosovo-Serbia talks in Brussels, had spoken with local press ahead of his visit in which he emphasised the importance of focusing on the north of Kosovo in continuing dialogue.

### **Statements on partition**

Following Serbia's Minister of Interior statement on Kosovo's partition, the EU representative Gentilini reaffirmed that partition was not under discussion. Kosovo Serbs' political representatives also said the statement was not serious.

#### **Arrest of policemen in the north**

Six police officers from the Mitrovica region were arrested in May on suspicion of smuggling in the north. EULEX has also expressed concern over the limited powers of police in northern regions, following the recent arrest of organised crime suspect Jevrosie Pantelic.

#### **Kosovo loses IMF funding**

The International Monetary Fund has suspended its Kosovo programme, suggesting a loss of more than 130 million Euros in donations and low interest rate loans from the IMF, World Bank and European Commission in 2011. The IMF's action comes after earlier expressing concern over increased budget expenditure following Prime Minister Thaqi's election promise to increase state wages, which was outside the terms of the lender's agreement, alongside investment in infrastructure.

#### **Arrest of Mladić**

The former Bosnian-Serb military commander, Ratko Mladić, was arrested in northern Serbia on 26 May and later extradited to The Hague to face a war crimes tribunal in connection to his role in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, as well as the 44-month siege of Sarajevo during the 1992-1995 Bosnian war. Following the 2008 arrest of Radovan Karadžić, the wartime political leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Serbia argued that together with the arrest of Mladić the main barriers to their eventual EU membership have been removed.

### 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 Commission Liaison Office to Kosovo.



During May ECMI Kosovo organised six civil society workshops on 'Taking Action Against Human Rights Violations' in Istog/Istok, Prizren, Dragash/Dragaš, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. These workshops were aimed at increasing the awareness of vulnerable and marginalised groups in Kosovo of the legal aid services offered through this project.

Moreover, legal aid lawyers provided free legal assistance to 105 beneficiaries in eight municipalities: Gjilan/ Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/ Mitrovica, Skenderaj/ Srbica, Prishtinë/Priština, Klinë/ Klina, Suharekë/ Suva Reka, Leposavić/ Leposaviq and Gračanica/ Graçanicë.





## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – May 2011

### Consultative Council for Communities (CCC)

ECMI Kosovo is pleased to announce that in May it started a new project on providing 'Institutional Support to the Kosovo Consultative Council for Communities 2011', financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project will aim to support the development of the CCC into an institution able to effectively influence policy, with strong links to local community representatives and government institutions.

To achieve this goal it has three main objectives; first to institutionalize and formalise the CCC's engagement with governmental institutions; second, to improve the capacity of the CCC to follow up on advisory opinions, particularly the ability of working groups and the secretariat to plan, implement and evaluate their actions; and, finally, to improve the visibility, transparency and accountability of the CCC in relation to other institutions and local community representatives.

### Language training for municipal officials in Kosovo

In the month of May, ECMI Kosovo started providing regular Serbian and Albanian language courses to municipal officials in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Firstly, ECMI Kosovo organised a meeting with the interested municipal officials in order to assess their level of knowledge of the languages and to gather information necessary for the development of a language teaching programme. Subsequently, the teachers developed courses that are specially tailored to the needs of the participants. The project, which foresees a provision of

language courses during a period of six months, is financed by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

### Census in Kosovo

During the month of May ECMI Kosovo continued with its outreach campaign in the north of Kosovo, focusing on providing information to and educating its residents about the methodology and benefits of a census.

To this end, two round-tables were conducted targeting the Serb community in Žerovnica/Zherovnicë and Kodra e Minatoreve/Mikronaselje, as well as one round-table for the Roma community in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.



ECMI Kosovo also held a training session for the members of the Municipal Preparation Team of North Mitrovica, during which the technicalities of the census were explained with a special focus on the north.

Information campaigns were also intensified in the media. An informational radio spot was broadcast by a local radio station and an ECMI representative also participated in a debate for media Kosovo-wide on the census in the north, which was hosted by Media Centre Čaglavica. The project, which finishes by the end of May, has been financed by UNOPS.

### ECMI Kosovo in the media

The director of ECMI Kosovo, Mr. Adrian Zeqiri, took part in the TV debate "Slobodno srpski" broadcasted by Serbian language media in Kosovo, where he spoke about the census and commented on current political developments. The discussion can be retrieved at <http://bit.ly/mPARKC>.

