

ECMI Launches the Project “Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government”
20 January 2010

In December 2009, ECMI Kosovo initiated the project “Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government” supported by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. This project is a continuation of the previous projects of support to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Two events, a workshop on “Parliamentary Best Practices” and a ceremonial conference entitled “Office of the Prime Minister’s Work for the Protection and Promotion of Community Rights”, were held respectively on the 14 and 15 January in order to launch the project.

The project “Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government” builds on the previous project of support to the Office of the Prime Minister. The main accomplishments of this previous initiatives were the creation of the [EthnoPolitical Map of Kosovo](#); the publication of “Communities in Kosovo”, a comprehensive guidebook including all relevant information on Kosovo communities, the legal and institutional framework for community rights protection, the decentralisation process and its impact on communities, as well as an overview of the mechanisms available to community members to address violation of their rights; the production of a booklet for members of communities, “Communities: Know your Rights”, presenting the legal framework in an accessible manner, designed as a tool for communities to advocate for their rights; the facilitation of the drafting of the Office for Community Affairs (OCA/OPM) operational strategy; as well as the production of a study on the employment of non-majority communities within the civil service and publicly owned enterprises in collaboration with the OCA/OPM.

The overall objective of the current project is to enhance and integrate community concerns within the work of the Government, especially in relation to implementation of legislation and development of policies, through building the capacities of the OCA/OPM and facilitating the participation of community-based civil society organisations in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of legislation and policies.

The activities, which will be conducted by ECMI Kosovo, include the development and delivery of a training programme, based on an in-depth capacity-assessment, including training on OCA/OPM Terms of Reference, operational strategy and task management system; the production of a best-practices manual including long-lasting procedures for staff development and induction, as well as outcomes of the training programme; the development and transfer of policy-making tools, the EthnoPolitical Map and a legislation and policy database; the assistance and capacity-building of the OCA/OPM with regards to policy-making and coordination activities, in particular in the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities and the development of a second policy study; and awareness-raising of communities to enhance their capacities to advocate for the respect of their rights.



On 14 January 2010, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Switzerland and ECMI Kosovo organised a workshop on “Parliamentary Best Practices” in Villa Germia.

The workshop aimed at sharing parliamentary experience from Switzerland with members of Assembly Committee for the Rights and Interests of Communities (CRIC) and the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) in preparation for the CRIC upcoming study visit in Switzerland. A documentary film “Corn in the Parliament” was screened followed by a discussion, in which provided their perspectives from the experience in Kosovo.



On 15 January 2010, ECMI Kosovo supported the OCA/OPM in organising a ceremonial conference “Office of the Prime Minister’s Work for the Protection and Promotion of Community Rights” held at the Government Building.

The aims of the conference were to present the work of the OCA/OPM in 2009 and its objectives for 2010, to provide an overview of Switzerland’s engagement in Kosovo with regards to community rights and acknowledge its support to the OCA/OPM, as well as to launch the project “Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government”.

The conference included discourses and presentations by the Deputy Prime Minister, Ramë Manaj, the Ambassador of Switzerland, Lukas Beglinger, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Nenad Rasić, the Director of the Office for Community Affairs, Srđan Sentić, the Director of the Office for Good Governance, Habit Hajredini, the First Vice Chairman of the CRIC, Sanije Alija, the Director of ECMI Kosovo, Adrian Zeqiri, and Armin Rieser, Peacebuilding Advisor with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

The conference was attended by more than 70 representatives of governmental institutions, members of the Assembly, representatives of foreign embassies, international and non-governmental organisations and community members.

The Deputy Prime Minister stated that “the rights of communities are among the fundamental principles upon which the Republic of Kosovo is founded” and outlined the achievements of Kosovo in terms of legislative and institutional developments.

The Ambassador of Switzerland declared that “the promotion and protection of communities’ rights and interests constitute a major concern and focus of Switzerland’s assistance to Kosovo”. The Ambassador recalled Switzerland’s support to upholding community rights “through various channels, ways and means, inter alia through ECMI”. The Ambassador commended the efforts of the Kosovo Government and stated that “it is time to enter a new phase which will be crucial in terms of passing from visions, legal texts, strategies and action plans to concrete action and tangible results.”

The Director of the OCA/OPM presented the achievements of the Office in 2009, including the drafting of its operational strategy, the involvement into the drafting of primary legislation, such as the draft Law on Health, the conduct of its first policy study on the employment of non-majority communities within the civil service and publicly owned enterprises, the development of the OCA/OPM website, as well as the support to more than 35 projects ranging from housing and infrastructure construction, to access to education and promotion of community cultures. The objectives of the OCA/OPM in 2010 encompass the continuous involvement in the process of development of legislation, both primary and secondary, the conduct of the second policy study dedicated to the use of languages, the follow-up on the recommendations developed as part of the employment study, in particular in the context of the reform of the public administration, the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy on the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities, with a particular focus on supporting the participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian civil society, the finalisation of the OCA/OPM website, which will include information about and for communities, the conduct of awareness-raising activities and the continuous support to projects aiming at addressing the needs of communities.

ECMI Kosovo would like to thank the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland for its continued support.

