

Monthly Newsletter May 2009

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

During the reporting period, the Comoros Union and the Kingdom of Bahrain officially recognised the Republic of Kosovo, which brings the number of recognitions to 60. On 6 May, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) confirmed officially the membership of the Republic of Kosovo in the IMF, meaning that Kosovo will become the 186th member of the IMF, as soon as Kosovo authorities conclude the official agreement in Washington.

During the reporting period, Kosovo Customs have returned to Gate 1 and 31, which were set on fire by members of the Kosovo Serb community shortly after the declaration of independence. The border crossings have been improved, as EULEX started to register the goods and photocopy the documents of the drivers, which are crossing the gates.

On 15 May, the Kosovo Assembly elected six Constitutional Court judges, four from the Albanian community and two from Serb and Turkish communities. An international trio of judges, appointed by the president of the European Court of Human Rights upon consultation with the International Civilian Representative in Kosovo, is expected to be appointed soon to complete the Constitutional Court's membership.

The Ministry of Local Governance Administration (MLGA) and the International Civilian Office (ICO) will soon launch the Municipal Preparatory Teams (MPTs) in Gračanica, Partesh, Ranillug, Klllokot, North Mitrovica and Novobrdó, the new municipalities established with the implementation of the decentralisation process. In addition to preparing the municipal structures, the MPTs are responsible for raising awareness of members of the Serb community on the importance of participation in upcoming local elections.

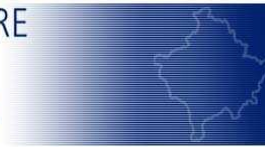
ECMI PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Support to the Office of the Prime Minister

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued to advise the Office for Community Affairs on ways to establish cooperation with the institutions having overlapping responsibilities and to avoid duplication in the scope of work, through the establishment of mechanisms of regular coordination with governmental bodies on implementation of legislation and fund allocation.

ECMI Kosovo has been jointly developing with the Office for Community Affairs the concept for a conference aiming at seeking comments from governmental partners on the Office Strategy to ensure engagement of all partners and establishing the coordination mechanism on implementation of legislation.

Regarding the operationalisation of the Office fund, a meeting was facilitated by ECMI Kosovo to coordinate with governmental bodies providing support to minority pupils and students and collaborate with organisations offering or administering scholarships. The outcomes of the meeting were the need to develop a short term strategy for 2009-2010 to allocate the Office scholarship fund, which is currently developed with the assistance of ECMI Kosovo, and the creation of a Working Group on Minority Scholarships to achieve long-term coordination. In addition, steps have been taken to establish the Advisory Board, which will administrate the Office fund for large-scale cooperative projects and community needs projects. Discussions are ongoing with the Ministry of Communities and Returns to jointly establish this body.



Since the establishment of this body will require time, ECMI Kosovo recommended the development of short-term strategy, which will enable the Office to articulate its funding priorities and present it to donor organisations.

ECMI Kosovo completed the gathering of information for the study on the employment of minority communities' members in public institutions and publicly owned enterprises and is starting to draft the report.

Support to the Decentralisation Process

During the reporting period ECMI Kosovo organised round tables for Serb Women's NGOs in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje and in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo. These round tables were intended to increase the awareness of Serb women about the decentralisation process and the establishment of the Municipal Preparatory Teams. ECMI Kosovo also continued its support to the creation of Municipal Preparatory Teams, by distributing application forms and providing information regarding the application procedure to community members. Finally, ECMI Kosovo attended several meetings of the Information Campaign Group in which the final version of its action plan was agreed on.



Round table on decentralisation in Novo Brdo

UNICEF

During the reporting period, the reports assessing the awareness of education minority rights at the municipal and civil society levels were reviewed by UNICEF. The reports will now serve as the basis for a training guide and manual on how to improve the delivery of minority education at the municipal level.

Consultative Council for Communities

On 21 May 2009, ECMI Kosovo organised a three-day induction training workshop for members of the CCC in Ohrid – Macedonia. The aim of this workshop was to prepare the CCC members to fully assume their roles on the council, by strengthening their understanding of its mandate and mechanisms for the exercise of mandate, while initiating the development of its annual strategy. CCC members from both political parties and civil society participated in the workshop, including Serb, Montenegrin, Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Ashkali and Turk communities, as well as representatives from the CCC Secretariat, Ministry for Communities and Returns, the Office of the President and the International Civilian Office.

Other Developments

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo said goodbye to our dear colleague, Ester Kosova. We thank her for her hard work and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.