



**EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES – ECMI KOSOVO**

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**President Sejdiu launches German Support for the Consultative Council for Communities in Kosovo**



On 17 Jul 2009, Dr. Fatmir Sejdiu, President of the Republic of Kosovo, met with German Ambassador Hans-Dieter Steinbach to thank the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its financial support to the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC), launching a project that aims to make the CCC fully operational by the end of the year. The project will be implemented by the European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo), which has provided support to the establishment of the CCC since the earliest stages.

During the meeting, President Sejdiu witnessed the signing of the project contract between Ambassador Steinbach and ECMI Kosovo Director Adrian Zeqiri. CCC Deputy Chairpersons Tahir Luma and Kujtim Paçaku and CCC General Secretary Nafiye Gaş also participated in the meeting, during which all parties agreed on the importance of the CCC to ensure inclusion and respect for all Kosovo's communities and pledged their support to the completion of the German-funded project to bring the CCC into full and lasting operations.

The CCC, mandated for in the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, is a consultative council with civil society and political representatives from all Kosovo's minority communities. It will be the key mechanism for community members to influence central-level decision making, legislation, policies and programming on community issues. Located within the Office of the President and including representatives of many state institutions, the CCC gives community representatives unique access to the institutions that most impact Kosovo's communities. Moreover, the strength of the CCC lies in the commitment of its members and its foundation in civil society. The German-funded project will strengthen both these vital components. Capacity-building will be conducted with CCC members based on their needs, focussing on practical skills that can be immediately utilised to increase the functioning of the council. Furthermore, Community Representative Organisations will be established for each community to act as civil society umbrella organisations, collecting the inputs on the needs of communities to inform their representatives, distributing information to communities on the work of the CCC and nominating members that truly represent the interests of their communities. As such, the project will ensure that the CCC is a sustainable institution that is meaningful for all Kosovo's communities and brings real and lasting improvements in the protection of human and minority rights in Kosovo.