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Staff

In June, we said goodbye to Ardian Dushi. We would like to sincerely thank Ardian for his hard work and outstanding commitment and wish him all the best in his future endeavors. ECMI Kosovo welcomed the arrival of Mirjona Sadiku and Jana Popadic to be the ECMI Kosovo interns.

In Focus

ECMI Kosovo Monitoring Elections

On Sunday 8 June, ECMI Kosovo staff took part in monitoring the Parliamentary Elections. Our staff visited various polling stations in 6 Serbian-majority municipalities: Gračanica, Klokot, Novo Brdo, Parteš, Ranilug, and Štrpce. During our activity, our staff testified that no major problems arose during the whole electoral day.



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ECMI Kosovo Project Updates

Last training sessions of the Advocacy Skills & Community Rights Programme for Kosovo Civil Society Organisations

ECMI Kosovo, in partnership with CSD and NRAEWOK, organized the last two day training sessions of its Advocacy Skills & Community Rights Programme for Kosovo Civil Society Organisations on 20-21 June in Hotel Gračanica in Gračanica/Gračanica. During the training sessions, representatives of minority community civil society organizations discussed the following topics:

- Project Development
- Writing and Presentation skills
- Networking

The training is part of the project “Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions”, an EU funded project managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo.



“Means of Community Mobilization” - a training session in North Mitrovica/ë

The second 2-day training on the topic “Means of Community Mobilization” took place on the 12th and 13th of June, in North Mitrovica/ë. The training was attended by twenty-five members of thirteen non-governmental organisations coming from each Northern Kosovo municipality, (North Mitrovica/ Mitrovicë, Zvečan/Zveçan, ZubinPotok/ZubinPotok and Leposavić/Leposaviq). The training mostly focused on practical activities with the purpose of preparing the participants for practical application of skills and knowledge which are foreseen to take place after the training. The training was conducted by a trainer from the Civic Initiatives TOT program, who possesses a decade of experience in activism. Topics covered during the training refer to the application of a variety of tools available for mobilization of the community, individuals and groups such as campaigning mechanisms public, door-to-door campaigns, petitions and motions. During the training, participants identified major problems of their municipalities, such as the absence of an Office for Youth, which is singled out as one of the biggest problem in each municipality. As a result of the training, participants will organise a petition, as a tool for obtaining wider community support for claims to local municipal authorities in order to promote community needs.



The training was organised within the project “Community Mobilization – Capacity Building Program for CSO’s in the North of Kosovo”, supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo and implemented in partnership with NGO Aktiv.

“Media and Transparent Reporting”-another training session in North Mitrovica/ë

On the 20th, 21st and 22nd of June, ECMI Kosovo held a training session for representatives of local media, radio and TV stations from Northern Kosovo. The training was delivered by two distinguished journalists, Mr. Mitko Jakovlevski and Ms. Danica Vučenić, with relevant working experience and attended by ten journalists from seven local media from each Northern Kosovo municipality North Mitrovica/ë, Zvečan/Zveqan, Leposavić/Leposaviq and ZubinPotok/ZubinPotok. The focus of the training was on media and transparent reporting. It covered topics and issues such as general and specific problems, challenges and pressures with which media in Northern Kosovo are facing and which hinder their work, the needs of local media, the importance of reporting about the relationship between majority and minority communities, censorship, journalism and propaganda. The participants were also actively involved in discussion and participated in practical activities which included the simulation of a press conference and the conduction of interviews.

The training was organised within the project “Promotion of a Transparent Media Environment in Northern Kosovo”, supported by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented in partnership with Radio Kontakt Plus.

Focus Groups – Voter Education for Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups

During the month of June, ECMI Kosovo conducted focus groups regarding voter education for vulnerable and marginalized groups in the municipalities of Gračanica/Graçanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë in continuation of the focus groups initiated in May. In addition to providing participants with information about the election process, lively discussions were held. For example, the participants stressed that the main disadvantage of Kosovo Serbs

is their inability to unite politically, while the Government in Belgrade contributes to this confusion for not calling explicitly for Serbs to partake in the elections.

Additionally, on 4 June, ECMI Kosovo organized a roundtable consisting of representatives of authorities and the civil society sector in North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. The roundtable covered various topics, such as the current political situation, the Brussels Agreement and its implementation, and expectations of the parliamentary elections. Overall, participants were disappointed with the Brussels Agreement and commented on the lack of transparency. According to participants, the Serbian community is in need of strategy, vision, intellectual capacity and the unity of political candidates.

On Sunday, 8 June, ECMI Kosovo staff took part in monitoring the Parliamentary Elections. Our staff visited various polling stations in 6 Serbian-majority municipalities: Ranilug/Ranillug, Parteš/Partesh, and Klokot/Kllokot, Gračanica/Gračanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. After conducting the visits, our staff reported that that no major problems arose throughout the day.



The focus groups and debate were held under the project 'Increasing Voter Education among Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups' funded by the US Embassy in Kosovo.

Testing of the participants of the official language trainings before the summer break

In June, municipal officials attending Albanian and Serbian language trainings were tested by ECMI Kosovo on their progress in learning the second official language after 3.5 months of a six month training conducted in the municipalities of Prizren, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Lipjan/Lipljan, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Dragash/Dragaš, Klokot/Kllokot, Ranilug/Ranillug, Gračanica/Gračanicë and the Mitrovica North Administrative Office.

The Albanian and Serbian language trainings began the end of

February in 13 municipalities and will continue until the end of November with a summer break in July and August 2014. This project "Official Language Acquisition for Municipal Officials in Kosovo 2014" is funded by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the Office of the Language Commissioner/Office of the Prime Minister.



Public Announcement for the Accreditation and Nomination of the new Members of the Consultative Council for Communities

The Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) has issued a Public Announcement for the Accreditation and Nomination of New Members. The deadline for applications for new members to the CCC was 30 May, 2014. After receiving a considerable number of applications from all of Kosovo's communities, the CCC has begun the process of accreditation and nomination of the new members. This process, scheduled to be completed within one (1) month from the deadline for applications is currently ongoing. ECMI Kosovo has supported the CCC on attracting new and qualified members to the Council by organizing a workshop with community members in Shllivovë/Šllivovo in the Anamoravë/Pomoravlje region, publishing an [Information Bulletin](#) explaining the procedures and the requirements, as well as by using its broad reach and extensive network of contacts to distribute the applications and all relevant information to all interested community members. ECMI Kosovo has been supporting the secretariat of the CCC in developing and printing an Information Booklet on the CCC, its mandate, work, and its composition.

The support was provided within the framework of the project "Supporting Civil Society Members of the Consultative Council for Communities", funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Political Developments

Parliamentary elections held on 8 June give "Srpska Lista" a clear lead in the Kosovo Serb community vote

Kosovo held parliamentary elections on 8 June following the dissolution of the Assembly of Kosovo after the PDK-led governing

coalition lost its majority in the Assembly and was unable to muster opposition support for important legislation. The “Srpska Lista” (Serbian List), a conglomeration of parties representing the majority of the Serbian community—which includes the SLS, the largest Serb party in Kosovo until now—was the clear winner among parties representing the Serb community in Kosovo. The “Srpska Lista” netted some 5.22% of the vote, while their main rival, the “Progresivna demokratska stranka” led by current Minister for Labor and Social Welfare Nenad Rašić, won around 0.8% of the total votes.^[1]

Political entities representing Kosovo’s communities open to entering any coalition government that has the majority in the Assembly

The coalition agreement struck between LDK, AAK and “Nisma për Kosovën” (Movement for Kosovo), supported in principle by “Vetëvendosje!” has secured these parties the necessary votes to form a stable governing coalition. Kosovo legislation, however, foresees that Kosovo’s communities must be represented in the Government of Kosovo regardless of the makeup of the coalition in several cabinet positions. As such, political entities representing Kosovo’s various communities have signaled their desire to become part of the future governing coalition, leaving their door open for whoever has the necessary votes in the Assembly to form the next government. Minister for Labor and Social Welfare Nenad Rašić signaled his readiness to join the LDK-AAK-Nisma-VV coalition if they have the votes in the Assembly, and may be followed by several other political parties from Kosovo’s communities.

The removal of the barricade on the Ibër/Ibar Bridge diving the city of Mitrovica, and the immediate creation of a “Peace Park” serving as a new barricade, leads to tensions, clashes with police

The gravel barricade on the Ibër/Ibar Bridge that had been put up there several years ago by parallel structures in northern Kosovo was abruptly removed on 18 June around 01:00 hours. The removal of the barricade was not announced and the identity of the people seen removing it remains somewhat of a mystery. Its removal was followed almost immediately with the erection of a so-called “peace park” by people supervised by the mayor Mitrovica North, Goran Rakić, who was seen standing in the vicinity of the people erecting this “peace park”.

The mayor of Mitrovica South claimed that the barricade was removed as part of an agreement with the mayor of Mitrovica North, while the latter claimed the erection of the “peace park”

was done in agreement with the former. Following the erection of the “peace park”—complete with concrete structures which make it extremely difficult if not impossible to use a vehicle to cross the bridge—led to an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty both in the south and the north. The Government of Kosovo condemned the “peace park” and called for its immediate removal. A peaceful protest scheduled for 22 June escalated into clashes between the police and a number of protesters attempting to cross the bridge; the protesters threw rocks and attacked police vehicles. The situation was kept under control following an intervention from a special police unit which arrested at least 10 protestors and disbursed the rest of the crowd. On 25 June, the Ministry for Local Self-Governance Administration sent a letter to the municipal assembly and the mayor of Mitrovica North, asking them to remove the barricade as it was in violation of Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo guaranteeing freedom of movement.

[1] These are preliminary results as announced by the Central Election Commission. There may be slight changes in the total number of votes as conditional and out-of-Kosovo votes are counted.

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About ECMI Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo is the principal non-governmental organisation engaged with minority issues in Kosovo, with the overarching aim to develop inclusive, representative, community-sensitive institutions that support a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo. ECMI Kosovo contributes to the developing, strengthening and implementation of relevant legislation, supports the institutionalisation of communities-related governmental bodies, and enhances the capacity of civil society actors and the government to engage with one another in a constructive and sustainable way.

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