

27 September 2013

DAY OF BOSNIAKS

Today, in advance to the Day of Bosniaks (28 September), ECMI Kosovo would like to reiterate its commitment to promoting equal opportunities and ensuring the rights of all communities in Kosovo. It also sees this as a day to celebrate Kosovo's multi-ethnicity and to reflect on the particular issues the Bosniak community faces.

Members from the Bosniak community are predominantly Muslim and speak a Slavic language (Bosnian) as mother tongue. In Kosovo today, Bosniaks can be divided into two groups. The first consists of those who migrated to Kosovo at various times from Bosnia, Montenegro and, mostly, from Sandžak region (Serbia), especially after the end of Ottoman rule in the region. The second group comprises those who traditionally lived predominantly in the regions of Prizren, Dragash/Dragaš and Zupa. The Bosniak community is most concentrated in Prizren/Prizren, where it makes up about 9.5% of the municipal population and in Dragash/Dragaš, where it makes up about 12% (according to Kosovo 2011 Census data). It is also present in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Pejë/Peć regions, among others.

The language of the Bosniak community is Bosnian and the community reports impeded access to certain services due to language barriers. In areas where the Bosniak community represents over 4% of the population, some Bosnian-language public education facilities are available. However, the lack of high quality secondary education in Bosnian is considered to be a problem. Furthermore, it has been reported that some face issues communicating with public officials, and medical staff. The Bosniak community faces other problems such as unemployment, though they are not isolated in this regard to the rest of the Kosovo population. Despite the specific and non-specific concerns of their community, Bosniaks are well integrated into Kosovo society.

ECMI Kosovo would like to call upon government institutions to increase and strengthen their work towards the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of the Bosniak community, as well as all non-majority communities in Kosovo.

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.