



EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR MINORITY
ISSUES KOSOVO

POLICY BRIEF

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DECENTRALISATION IN THE DRAGAŠ/DRAGASH REGION

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.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the implementation of the project *Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions*, funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo, ECMI Kosovo, and with its partners **Communication with Social Development (CSD)** and **Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Womens' Organisation of Kosovo (NRAEWOK)**, supported the establishment of the **GORA Community Network**. The establishment of the GORA Community Network aims to foster a link between various CSOs from the region, and better advocate for their respective local government structures.

The Network is the first structure of its kind in Kosovo to bring together all CSOs from the Gorani community to advocate for the issues that are of central importance to the community as a whole. This is an important development for the Gorani community, considering that they are one of the most marginalised minority communities in Kosovo. The Network will substantially increase their ability to lobby and advocate across Kosovo institutions for issues that are of central importance to them.

One of the activities of the Network was to conduct a research on decentralisation amongst the Gorani community in Dragash/Dragaš. ECMI Kosovo, therefore, aided the network in writing and researching questionnaires focused on issues surround government transparency and accountability in the region. These questionnaires were published in Serbian language and distributed throughout the municipalities by our local correspondents, with the support of CSD and NRAEWOK.¹

Through the research gained by these questionnaires, ECMI Kosovo presents this Policy Brief, which will briefly outline the findings of the research, as well as recommendations for institutions and conclusions that can be drawn.

This research was conducted in the Municipality of Dragash/Dragaš in southern Kosovo. There were 66 respondents to the questionnaire.

¹ Please see Annex I for a copy of the questionnaire that was distributed to participants.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF DECENTRALISATION

The Ahtisaari Plan and the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo gave the possibility for the increased decentralisation of certain municipalities to give them more decision-making capabilities. This has mainly occurred for the Serbian community, but there have been questions within the Gorani community as to whether they should also be included in the newly decentralised municipalities.

Before the 1999 conflict, there existed a Municipality of Gora, but since the war this has been incorporated into the wider Municipality of Dragash/Dragaš in the Prizren/Prizren region. Within this new Municipality, the Gorani community is a minority, amounting to 26 per cent of the total population.²

Moreover, overall in Kosovo, as well as in the Municipality of Dragash/Dragaš, the Gorani community is one of the most under-represented of the minority communities, at both the central and local levels.

² Data taken from the Ethno-Political Map of Kosovo available at www.ethnopoliticalmap-ks.com

III. FINDINGS

LANGAUGES

Respondents from Dragash/Dragaš were, firstly, asked what languages they speak (Q.2). The largest proportion, as shown in Table 1, below, speaks both Gorani and Serbian, amounting to 42 per cent. The highest proportion of respondents (amounting to 42 per cent) said that they spoke Gorani and Serbian, while the next highest (but only 16 per cent) said that they also spoke Albanian.

Languages Spoken by Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
GORANI, SERBIAN	28	42.42%
ALBANIAN, GORANI, SERBIAN	11	16.67%
ENGLISH, GORANI, SERBIAN	7	10.61%
ALBANIAN, ENGLISH, GORANI, RUSSIAN, SERBIAN	4	6.06%
GORANI	3	4.55%
SERBIAN	2	3.03%
ALBANIAN, ENGLISH, GORANI, SERBIAN	2	3.03%
ALBANIAN, SERBIAN	2	3.03%
ALBANIAN, GORANI, SERBIAN, TURKISH	1	1.52%
ALBANIAN, GORANI, TURKISH	1	1.52%
ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, SERBIAN	1	1.52%
ENGLISH, SERBIAN	1	1.52%
GORANI, MACEDONIAN, SERBIAN	1	1.52%
GORANI, RUSSIAN, SERBIAN	1	1.52%
GORANI, SERBIAN, TURKISH	1	1.52%

Table 1: What languages do you speak?

There were only four (4) respondents who did not say that they speak Serbian, meaning that 93 per cent of respondents speak at least one of the official languages of the Republic of Kosovo. However, only 32 per cent said that they spoke Albanian, the other official, and dominant, language of Kosovo. Meanwhile 23 per cent of respondents said that they speak English, only six (6) few respondents than said the speak Albanian.

CURRENT POSITION

ECMI Kosovo, in this questionnaire, first wished to establish the current representation of the Gorani community within the Municipality of Dragash/Dragaš and across Kosovo. Respondents were asked whether they feel that the Gorani community are discriminated against across the whole of Kosovo (Q.4). In answer to this 98 per cent of respondents agreed, saying that they were under-represented across the whole State, with only one (1) respondent saying that they were not.

Respondents were then asked to go into more detail about the areas in which they feel that the Gorani community is the most under-represented in the Republic of Kosovo (Q.5). Respondents were asked to choose all categories that apply, and could select from: Municipal level institutions, Central level institutions, political positions, publically owned enterprises, and private businesses. The responses are presented in Table 2, below.

Area	Number of Respondents
Municipal Level	60
Central Level	63
Political Positions	50
Publically Owned Enterprises	52
Private Businesses	14

Table 2: In what areas do you feel that the Gorani community are the most under-represented?

According to the results of the research, Gorani representatives feel that their community is most under-represented in the government institutions, with the central level being the one where they most feel this.³ The Gorani community makes up 0.58 per cent of the population of the whole of Kosovo, yet it only makes up 0.1 per cent of employees in the municipal and central levels; a statistic that shows that this perception of under-representation might be justified.⁴ It is the private sector where the respondents feel that they are the least under-represented, potentially showing that these respondents feel they face less discrimination in the private sphere as opposed to the public.

DECENTRALISATION PROCESSES

According to the result of the research, eighty-eight (88) per cent of respondents said that they were aware of the decentralisation process and felt that it is possible to create a Gorani-majority municipality within Kosovo, while 12 were not aware of the proposals for Gora. Moreover, all respondents said that they feel that this process would be legal under the current framework of Kosovo law (Q.3).

Furthermore, the establishment of Gora municipality according to the respondents would solve all the problems currently faced by the Gorani community in Dragash/Dragaš. Others suggested that it would bring economic stability and growth, while some argued that the community should get the right to make decisions for itself. Moreover, several respondents mentioned that Gora was a municipality before the 1999 conflict, and that they should have this right again in the post-conflict

³ For more details about public employment figures in the Gorani community, please see ECMI Kosovo's Policy Brief "Employment in the Dragash/Dragaš Region" (2014).

⁴ Office of Community Affairs, 'Assessment on the employment of members of non-majority communities in the Kosovo civil service and publically owned enterprises', May 2013, p. 22.

structures, especially as other decentralised municipalities have been created across the territory of Kosovo.

All respondents agreed that the creation of the Municipality of Gora would increase the representation of the Gorani community within the Republic of Kosovo (Q.9). Moreover, none of the respondents could suggest any other processes or ideas that they feel would better address the issue of a lack of representation for the Gorani community within Kosovo (Q.10).

Respondents were also asked to indicate what areas they think that the creation of a Gorani-majority will have the most impact (Q.11). Respondents were asked to choose all categories that apply, and they could select from: Agriculture, Economical, Municipal, Publically Owned Enterprises, Industry, Hospitality, or Culture. Table 3, below, present their responses.

	Number of Respondents
Agriculture	60
Economical Developments	63
Municipal Level	61
Publically Owned Enterprises	50
Industry	48
Hospitality	52
Culture	58

Table 3: In what areas do you think that the creation of a Gorani-majority municipality will have the most impact?

From these results we can see that, firstly, many of the respondents think that this Municipality would lead to great changes across all the areas mentioned. All but 10 respondents selected multiple categories, with most of them choosing 5 of the 7 options given. Moreover 39 respondents selected all areas listed as those that would benefit from the creation of Gora.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they feel that the creation of the Gora Municipality would be self-sustainable in Kosovo and ninety-four (94) per cent of them said that they feel that this municipality would be sustainable whereas many others said that they had the economic advantages to be sustainable because of the villages present and also the natural resources in the region. Several also pointed out that the municipality was sustainable before the 1999 conflict, and as such they have no reason to believe that it would not be sustainable now (Q.12).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the data collected in the questionnaires circulated in the Municipality of Dragash/Dragaš, ECMI Kosovo and its partners make the following recommendations.

In questioning the Gorani community's current position, the responses show the high level of discrimination and marginalisation that the members of the community feel that they regularly face. All but one (1) respondent said they were under-represented across the whole territory of Kosovo.

Moreover, many of the respondents said that they feel that the Kosovo Government itself discriminates against their community, with over 90 per cent of the respondents saying that the municipal and central government institutions are discriminating against them. Thus, ECMI Kosovo recommends that the government needs to increase efforts to employ and de-marginalise the Gorani community within Kosovo.

There was strong support from the respondents for the creation of a new Municipality of Gora. All respondents said that they support the creation of Gora, and also that this new municipality would be sustainable in the future. Thus, the Kosovo Government needs to seriously consider the process of creating a Gorani-majority municipality. This Municipality did exist before the 1999 conflict, and as such there is reason to believe that it can successfully exist again.

The creation of a Gora Municipality would work to limit the discrimination that the Gorani community currently face, and also promote their economic potential within Kosovo. The data shows an overwhelming support for the creation of this structure in the Gorani community, with all respondents supporting this initiative. Many of them saw it as the best solution for the problems they currently face with representation in the Republic of Kosovo.

V. ANNEX I

QUESTIONNAIRE –THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW MUNICIPALITY OF DRAGASH/DRAGAŠ

European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) Kosovo in partnership with Communication with Social Development (CSD) and Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Womens' Organisation of Kosovo (NRAEWOK) on behalf of the project *"Empowering Civil Society to Participate Effectively in Policy and Decision-Making Processes through Dialogue with Government Institutions"*, funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo supported the establishment of the **GORA Community Network**. The Gorani Community network is the first such structure to bring together all CSOs from the Gorani community to advocate for issues that are important for the community. Considering that the Gorani community is one of the most marginalised minority communities in Kosovo, this is a major development in terms of their ability to lobby and advocate for their issues. One of the activities of the Network is to conduct a research regarding the establishment of the new municipality of Dragash/Dragaš.

Thus, we would kindly ask you to spend five (5) minutes of your time to fulfil this questionnaire.

Thank you for your support!

Questions

1. In which municipality do you live?

2. What language/languages do you speak?

3. Do you think that it is possible to create a Gorani-majority municipality within Kosovo?
YES NO
4. Do you believe this is legal within the current legal framework of the Republic of Kosovo?
YES NO
5. Do you feel that the Gorani community is currently under-represented within the Republic of Kosovo?
YES NO

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6. In what areas do you feel that the Gorani community are the most under-represented?
- I. Municipal level institutions;
 - II. Central level institutions;
 - III. Political positions;
 - IV. Publicly owned enterprises;
 - V. Private businesses.

7. Are you aware of the process of decentralisation for the Gorani community, which would create a Gorani-majority municipality?

YES

NO

8. Do you support the creation of a Gorani-majority municipality?

YES

NO

Please, explain your answer.

9. Do you think that the creation of a Gorani-majority municipality will increase the representation of the Gorani community within the Republic of Kosovo?

YES

NO

10. If no, what other methods would you consider better to address the issue of representation in Kosovo?

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11. In what areas do you think that the creation of a Gorani-majority municipality will have the most impact? Please indicate all that apply.

- I. Agriculture;
- II. Economical development of Gorani;
- III. Municipal-level public employment;
- IV. Publicly owned enterprises;
- V. Industry;
- VI. Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, cafes);
- VII. Culture.

12. Do you believe that a Gorani-majority municipality would be self-sustainable?

YES

NO

Please, give further details
