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Press Release on Day of Bosniaks

On the occasion of the Day of Bosniaks (28 September), ECMI Kosovo issued a [press release](#) (also available in [Serbian](#)) to celebrate Kosovo's multi-ethnicity, reflect on the particular issues the Bosniak community faces, and 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.

ECMI in the Media

Kosovo Sot: [Workshop on Minority Rights at Prishtina High School in Matičan/Matičan](#)

TV PULS: [Preliminary Findings of ECMI Kosovo's Assessment of the Ministry for Communities and Returns' 2009-2013 Strategy](#) (from min. 5)

Staff

In Focus

Presentation of Findings of the Assessment of the Ministry for Communities and Returns' 2009-2013 Strategy

On 13 September, ECMI Kosovo, in co-operation with the [Ministry for Communities and Returns](#) (MCR), organised a workshop in Lipjan/Lipljan to present the preliminary findings of its assessment of the current level of implementation of the 2009-2013 Strategy for Communities and Returns. It was attended by representatives of various ministries and other public institutions, as well as representatives from international organisations. The research presented at the workshop aimed to provide the basis for an evidence-based approach to the development of a new strategy for communities and returns for the 2014-2018 period. The activity was funded by the Norwegian and British Embassies in Kosovo.

In this newsletter, you will find information on:

- [ECMI Kosovo's Work](#)
- [Institutional Developments](#)
- [Political Developments](#)

ECMI Kosovo's Work

Mainstreaming Human and Minority Rights in Kosovo: Workshops for High School Students in Prishtinë/Priština

On 24 September, ECMI Kosovo provided two workshops on minority rights at Prishtina High School in Matičan/Matičan. During the workshops, a total of around twenty pupils from the 10th grade (aged 15-16 years) learned and actively discussed about human and minority rights, and their relevance for the Kosovo context. ECMI Kosovo strongly believes in the importance of raising awareness and knowledge on these issues among different groups in Kosovo, particularly among youth. This was shown, for example, through the project 'Youth of Mitrovica/ë for a Democratic Society', implemented with support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Prishtinë/Priština in 2012/2013. Further, ECMI Kosovo is currently working on mainstreaming minority rights among other groups, namely civil servants and minority civil society, with support from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). ECMI Kosovo would like to thank Prishtina High School for facilitating the workshops and looks forward to further co-operation in activities targeting youth.

Albanian and Serbian Language Classes Launched in 10 Municipalities

In September, ECMI Kosovo started providing Albanian and Serbian classes to municipal officials in the 10 municipalities of Dragash/Dragaš, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Gjiilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Lipjan/Lipljan, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, Obiliq/Obilić, Prizren, Shtërpçë/Štrpce and

In September, we welcomed Emsid Ameti, our new Administrative Assistant, to our team. Also, we are pleased to welcome three new interns, Linda Perlaska, Ann Madsen and Dijana Hasani.

We express our gratitude to Naida Hadžiomerović who completed her internship at ECMI Kosovo for her valuable contribution and we her well in her future endeavours.

Vushtrri/Vučitrn. Altogether, around 300 municipal officials attend classes two times per week specifically tailored to their needs. This project is supported by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) and the Office of the Language Commissioner (OLC)/Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

Training for Civil Society Organisations on Advocacy and Media and Social Networks

ECMI Kosovo conducted the next training sessions of its Advocacy Skills & Community Rights Programme for Kosovo Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Struga, Macedonia from 27-29 September. The main objectives of these training sessions were to inform civil society members on advocacy strategies and on the use of media and social networks to address an issue that their communities face. Also, representatives of the civil society organisation were informed about institutions at the local and central level to which they can address their specific problems. During the three-day training sessions, selected CSOs and CSOs' coalitions had a chance to present their advocacy plans and strategies how they will advocate for the issues they proposed to raise with the local and central level institutions. These training sessions are part of two ECMI Kosovo projects, funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). For more information about the European Union project and its activities, please visit the [project website](#).



ECMI Kosovo and Radio Kontakt Plus Start Implementation of the Media Transparency Project in Northern Kosovo

ECMI Kosovo, together with its implementing partner [Radio Kontakt Plus](#), started with the implementation of their new project which aims to promote a more transparent and independent media environment in northern Kosovo. During the month of September, daily news as well as information programmes were produced and broadcasted, covering current political and social events in northern Kosovo. The audience was informed about major political events which took place in September, most important of which were the upcoming Kosovo elections and happenings such as the basketball tournament or construction of a water system. Moreover, four weekly interviews with relevant guests were produced and broadcasted, focusing on issues of the Kosovo elections, current political situation in Kosovo and security situation in northern Kosovo. The aim of these activities is to advance informing of the audience and provide them with objective and transparent review of the current situation and events in the region. The broadcast of daily news, information programmes and weekly interviews was implemented by Radio Kontakt Plus and monitored by ECMI Kosovo as part of the project 'Promotion of a Transparent Media Environment in Northern Kosovo' funded by the Embassy of Finland.

Workshop for the Consultative Council for Communities on its New Regulations

On 19 September 2013, ECMI Kosovo held a one-day workshop in Rečane/Reçan near Prizren with members of the Council, its Secretariat and members of the Accredited Organisations on the new Council's regulations on Rules of Procedures and Code of Conduct. During the workshop, the participants had the opportunity to deepen their understanding about their mandate, their duties and responsibilities. There was a lively debate on the Code of Conduct which regulates the relationship between the Council and its Accredited Organisations. The Code of Conduct foresees oversight by the Council's Secretariat of the internal governance of the Accredited Organisations, issues of political involvement and financial transparency. Both the Code of Conduct and Rules of Procedures were adopted by the Council and approved by the President for the Republic of Kosovo. Moreover, ECMI Kosovo hired an expert to help the Secretariat to prepare its budget proposal for the year 2014 to the Ministry of Finance with the aim of increasing the overall budget of the Council. The proposal contained itemised justification for each budget line and was proposed both to the Office of the President and to the Ministry Of Finance. The requested budget for the Council amounts to 240.000 Euros. Until now, the Council operated with an annual budget of 60.000 Euros. The Consultative Council for Communities is supported as part of the project funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

Strategic Advocacy Meetings and Individual Coaching for Economic Empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women

During the month of September, ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women Organizations of Kosovo ([NRAEWOK](#)), conducted strategic meetings with three key ministries (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development) in order to raise awareness and advocate greater action on the economic empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women. Additional meetings will be held with representatives of other central level government institutions. In addition to the above, ECMI and NRAEWOK, in cooperation with D&D Business Support Centre, have continued offering individual coaching and in-kind support to eight Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women and girls from the municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjakova/Đakovica, Peja/Peć and Prizren in the form of assistance with applying for available micro-grants, preparing business plans, purchase of equipment and raw materials needed for the proposed businesses. These activities are conducted in the framework of the project 'Promoting the Economic Empowerment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women,' supported by UN Women, UNDP and the EU.

Piloting Language Rights Indicators: Towards Improving Community Rights Monitoring & Evaluation in Kosovo

In the framework of the Swiss FDFA-funded project 'Supporting Effective Governance for Minority Communities in Kosovo', ECMI Kosovo has been conducting research on improving community rights monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in Kosovo through the use of indicators. Following the publication of a [Working Paper](#) (also available in [Serbian](#) and [Albanian](#)) and consultation with key stakeholders, in August/September it has been decided to implement a pilot phase on language rights indicators, in cooperation with the [Office of the Language Commissioner \(OLC\)](#). The next steps will be to develop indicators to monitor the implementation of language rights, conduct broad consultation with stakeholders, and collect and evaluate data, and assess the way forward after this pilot phase.

Institutional Developments

Working Group on Employment of Non-majority Communities

On 26 September, the [Office for Community Affairs \(OCA\)](#) organised a meeting with a small team of members and observers of the Working Group on Employment of Non-majority Community Members (WG), whose final aim is to provide recommendations to the government to address the situation of employment of minority communities in civil service and publicly-owned enterprises (POEs). Participants included representatives from OCA, the Ministry for Communities and Returns (MCR), the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), ECMI Kosovo, the Swiss and US embassies in Kosovo, and UNDP. During the meeting, OCA presented a series of proposed recommendations (see also OCA's [news](#)). Some of the issues highlighted were the non-recognition of tertiary education from the University in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica operating according to Serbian curriculum; the provision of training on official languages and non-discrimination for civil servants; in addition, some of the recommendations put forward by ECMI Kosovo were mentioned. ECMI Kosovo monitors and provides inputs to the work of the WG in the framework of its Swiss-FDFA-funded project on community governance. Furthermore, it is currently supporting the Consultative Council for Communities to address the issue of communities' employment through a project funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo.

Political Developments

Preparations Advancing for the November Municipal Elections

The Central Election Commission (CEC) has certified 103 political subjects, consisting of 33 political parties, 2 coalitions, 53 citizen's initiatives and 15 independent candidates, for the upcoming municipal elections to be held on 3 November. Besides the single Serb list Civic Serb Initiative (Građanska Inicijativa "Srpska"), which is the only Serb subject supported by the government of Serbia, the Serb community will be represented by an additional 31 political subjects, nine of which will be competing in northern Kosovo. Lists with candidates were also submitted by all other Kosovo non-majority communities, namely Bosniaks, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Montenegrins, Croats and Gorani. Previously, the CEC requested the word "Serbia" to be removed from the names of all Serb lists running for the November elections, resulting in the respective Serb lists amending their names. The CEC also reported that it has received around 39 000 applications from Serb voters outside of Kosovo to be included in the electoral lists; however, during the verification process, only about 6.500 were accepted as valid. The elections will be monitored by an EU Election Observation Mission, tasked with observing the electoral process in order to ensure its transparency and compliance with international standards for democratic elections and domestic law. Roberto Gaultieri has been appointed as the head of the Mission. In the meantime, the Government of Serbia adopted the decision to dissolve the assemblies of the four municipalities in northern Kosovo and appointed heads of interim bodies. The upcoming local elections are accompanied by tensions especially within the Serb community as demonstrated by a number of incidents, including an attack on Oliver Ivanović's family on the 12 September in Mitrovicë/a.

EULEX Staff Member Killed in Northern Kosovo

On 19 September EULEX staff members came under attack in Zvečan/Zveçan. The incident resulted in the death of one Lithuanian customs officer and the injury of his colleagues. The investigation is still ongoing. The attack was strongly condemned by both Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia, Hashim Thaçi and Ivica Dačić, as well as the international authorities. ECMI Kosovo strongly joins the condemnation while

extending its sincere condolences to the family of the deceased and hoping the perpetrators will be identified and swiftly brought to justice.

Kosovo and Serbia Reach Agreement on Telecoms and Energy

The meeting between Prime Ministers Thaçi and Dačić held in Brussels on the 8 September in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue resulted in the achievement of a first agreement on telecommunications and energy. As for the telecommunication sector, according to the deal, Kosovo was enabled to apply for its own international dialing code, expected to be +383, while Serbian mobile phone companies were granted the permission to work within the territory of Kosovo until the announcement of a new tender for a third mobile operator in January 2015.

Disputed Amnesty Law Enters into Force

On 3 September, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo declared the Law on Amnesty (see also our [July newsletter](#)) in general accordance with the Constitution of Kosovo, with the exception of several articles. The text underwent a second revision by the Assembly and the parts held as anti-constitutional were removed. Subsequently, President Jahjaga signed the law on the 18 September. The Law, which was one of the requirements resulting from the April agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, entered immediately into force.

New Recognitions of Kosovo

In September, Libya, Grenada and Thailand officially recognised Kosovo as an independent country. As a result, Kosovo now has 104 recognitions.

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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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