



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – July 2010

### Political Developments

On 22 July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its Advisory Opinion on the legality of Kosovo's unilateral Declaration of Independence, ruling that the Declaration 'did not violate any applicable rule of international law'. Officials in Belgrade said the Court had failed to address the key issue of whether Kosovo had the right to secede from Serbia, adding that the battle for Kosovo would now continue in the United Nations General Assembly. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon did not comment on the ICJ Opinion, saying it would be forwarded to the General Assembly. NATO's General Secretary also refused to comment, but made it clear that the ruling would have no impact on NATO's mission in Kosovo.

On 19 June, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) issued a warrant for the arrest of former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. Haradinaj, a former leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), stood trial before The Hague in 2008 for crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war, alleged to have been committed between March and September 1998. He was found not guilty, but the ICTY Appeals Chamber has announced that he will be partially retried after the prosecution complained of intimidation against key witnesses who, as a result, had been unable to present their testimony in full. Ramush was re-arrested on 21 July, the day before the ICJ delivered its Opinion on Kosovo, and transferred to the Netherlands where he is now awaiting retrial. The Government of Kosovo expressed concern over the process, and said that Haradinaj would succeed in proving his innocence, as he had in the previous trial. Haradinaj will be retried alongside two other former KLA leaders,

Lahi Brahimaj and Idriz Balaj, who also stood trial in 2008 for crimes against humanity. Unlike Haradinaj and Balaj, Brahimaj was found guilty and sentenced to six years in prison.

Also on the 21 July, the EULEX police arrested the Governor of the Kosovo Central Bank, Hashim Rexhepi, charging him with corruption, fiscal evasion and money laundering.

### Research on the Language Competencies of Municipal Officials

Between the 12 and 14 July 2010, ECMI Kosovo conducted a series of workshops on education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities in three municipalities: Prizren, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje.

These workshops, the first of three events foreseen under the project of building sensitivity to RAE in schools, have been designed in collaboration with local civil society representatives of RAE communities. These representatives delivered presentations on discrimination, which were then discussed by participants. The meetings were chaired by ECMI Project Manager Kelley Thompson, with the assistance of ECMI Project Officer Zihnie Gurmani.

ECMI Kosovo will now organise two further events per municipality. The first will be a visit by teachers to RAE families at the beginning of the coming school year. The second will be a workshop to promote communication and cooperation between teachers and parents. Civil society will remain central to the design and conduct of these events. Throughout the project, ECMI Kosovo will also continue to work on an Informational Booklet for each municipality, based on information gathered at the events, which will be distributed in schools in October.

### Needs Assessment



*ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with civil society in the new Serb-majority municipalities, strengthening their role through training focused on the development of the project proposals*

### Support to the Decentralisation Process

On 15 July 2010, ECMI Kosovo organised a training session on project development and project management for participants from new Serb-majority municipalities. ECMI Kosovo representatives Katherine Nobbs and Lars Burema delivered presentations and invited questions. Afterwards, participants formed working groups and developed their own ideas for project proposals. ECMI Kosovo representatives then provided feedback on the proposals, and have offered ongoing technical support upon request.

Furthermore, ECMI Kosovo continued to publish information bulletins, and reached an agreement with the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to begin production of a similar bulletin. Finally, ECMI Kosovo, in cooperation with the Gračanica /Graçanicë-based NGO CSD, finished a draft version of a newsletter detailing the work of the municipality during its first months.



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### Consultative Council for Communities

During the reporting period, the President of Kosovo appointed a member of the Croat community, Mr Nikola Rodić, to the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC). At his first Plenary Session on 5 August, Mr Rodić thanked everyone for their support and looked forward to serving the interests of the Croat community in the Council.



*Nikola Rodić, the newest member of the CCC, representing the Croat community*

Sadly, Mr Petar Miletić, the Chairman of the CCC, was unable to attend the session due to ongoing injuries from last month's attack. Council members were unanimous in condemning the violence and expressing their support for Mr Miletić. During his absence, the role of Chairman will be assumed by Mr Ćerim Bajrami.

Mr Bajrami then presented the work and recommendations of the Working Group on Education which related, inter alia, to language of instruction, staff representativeness and enhanced consultation with minority communities. All members agreed to an additional recommendation to include religious education within the Kosovo Framework Curriculum. The Recommendations will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education.

In line with the recommendations of the Working Group on Budgetary Issues, the Council voted to request increasing the Council budget for the remainder of 2010, and to secure a separate budget line for the CCC within the Office of the President of Kosovo for 2011. The Working Group has raised these issues directly with the President of Kosovo.

According to the Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of the RAE Communities, the CCC is entitled to one member on the Inter-Institutional Steering Committee, a political body that will play a role in monitoring implementation of the Strategy. A proposal was made to form a Working Group on RAE Issues, to support that member and allow greater input from representatives of all three communities. However, concern over the selection procedure for other members of the Committee led to the issue being postponed, pending clarification by the Office of Good Governance. The Council also voted against selecting a CCC representative to the Steering Committee.

At the end of the session, ECMI Director Adrian Zeqiri informed CCC members about the launch of a new initiative in support of the Council, funded by the government of Germany. Mr Zeqiri gave a brief outline of the project, which is scheduled to take place during the remainder of 2010, and requested feedback on proposed activities and suitable dates.



*CCC Plenary Session, 5 August 2010*

### Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns within the Work of the Government

During the reporting period, implementation of the project 'Enhance and Integrate Community Concerns with the Work of the Government' continued, with the update of the EthnoPolitical Map, and a study on the use of languages, and the development of a legislation and policy database.

In July 2010, ECMI Kosovo began a study on the role of the Consultative Council for Communities (CCC) and the Parliamentary Committee on the Rights and Interests of Communities (CRIC) within the legislative process. The main goal of this activity is to create a practical guide for members of the two bodies, to facilitate their work and enhance the effectiveness of their engagement within the legislative process of Kosovo. The research is currently ongoing, and due to be completed by the end of September.

