



Monthly Newsletter

October 2009

Political Developments

The European Commission published its Progress Report on the Western Balkan countries on 14 October. In its section on Kosovo, the report concludes that political stability has been maintained, but criticises certain areas, including the rule of law and organised crime. At the same time, in its report “Kosovo – Fulfilling the European Perspective”, the European Commission proposes to start a process that should lead to visa-free travel for Kosovo citizens and to begin preparations for a comprehensive trade agreement once Kosovo meets the requirements.

On 15 October, the election campaign period officially started for November 15th municipal elections, which will be held in 36 municipalities, excluding the municipalities of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North and Parteš/Partesh, where elections are going to be held once conditions on the ground allow for it. Serb officials have been calling on the Serb minority community in Kosovo to boycott the polls. In spite of that, there are several Serb parties and candidates among the ones competing, as well as other minority communities’ parties.

An agreement with Macedonia about demarcation was ratified by the parliaments of both states in 17 October.

During the reporting period, a few incidents of violence between the Albanian and Serb community were reported. The house of a Kosovo Serb returnee, Milorad Todorovic, who is an official of the democratic party of Serbia (DSS) was attacked with a hand grenade, while fortunately nobody was hurt.

ECMI Kosovo Project Activities

Consultative Council for Communities

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued to facilitate the CCC strategy development process, and to provide technical support to communities in advance of the upcoming nomination of community membership to the Council.



International expert Ms. Valentina Rigamonti held a special follow-up workshop on 7 October to focus on the issue of education, in collaboration with a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The results of the workshop were incorporated into the Working Plan, which was unanimously adopted at a Council plenary session on the 14 October.

In terms of the CCC nominations, international expert Ms. Katherine Nobbs held a series of introductory cross-community workshops on the 15, 16 and 19 October, in Gračanica/Gracanicë, Prizren/Prizren and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, respectively, to provide community civil society representatives with a broad overview of the work of the CCC and the nominations process. The next round of

workshop, which will take place throughout November, will be community-specific, and will present more detailed technical information on the procedures for accreditation of community representative organisations, and nomination of candidates.

Support to the Decentralisation Process

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo continued its activities on voter education in the new municipalities. ECMI Kosovo designed and printed leaflets, particular to each municipality, providing all essential information on the election and the voting process. ECMI Kosovo distributed these leaflet through its network of local information officers. These information officers also met with relevant representatives of communities and international organisations in the field to share relevant information and explain the voting process. Several round tables were also organised.

On 30 October ECMI Kosovo organised a dinner for all relevant representatives of communities and international organisations in Klokot/Vrbovac–Klllokot/Vërboc. At this meeting ECMI, ICO, USAID and municipal preparation team representatives all presented information on decentralisation and elections.

Municipal Education

During the reporting period, ECMI Kosovo conducted two workshops, one with municipal officials on the delivery of minority education and one with civil society members on education advocacy for minority communities. The workshops aimed to present the findings of ECMI Kosovo's research in Ferizaj/Uroševac,

Peja/Peć and Prizren/Prizren municipalities, to gain feedback for two upcoming publications, *'Manual for Municipal Officials: Actively Protecting and Promoting Community Education'* and *'Advocacy for Community Education: A Guidebook for Civil Society'* and enable representatives from different municipalities to compare experiences in community education.

Following these workshops, Project Manager Kelley Thompson and Local Expert Azemina Culum conducted field visits in the three municipalities, meeting with representatives of the Municipal Education Departments, Municipal Community Offices, International Civilian Office and civil society organisations active on education issues. Inputs from these field visits and workshops are now being included into the manual and guidebook, which will be published next month.



Other Developments

ECMI welcomed Ms. Zihnie Gurmani to its team, who started her position as a project assistant this month. Ms. Elizabeta Haziri completed her three-month internship. ECMI Kosovo would like to thank her for her contribution to its work and wishes her all the best for the future.