EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

# Annual Report

# 2025

**ECMI Kosovo**

ecmikosova.org

# Preface

*Florina Berisha, Chairperson of the Senior Oversight Board*

It is a pleasure to present ECMI Kosovo's Annual Activity Report for 2025. During the year, ECMI Kosovo continued to advance its mission of promoting inclusion, accountability, equal access to rights, and meaningful participation for communities and vulnerable groups in Kosovo. Through a diverse range of projects and partnerships, the organisation remained engaged in areas of strong public relevance, including access to rights, institutional support, civil society empowerment, environmental protection, and cross-border cooperation.

The work implemented in 2025 once again reflected ECMI Kosovo's long-standing commitment to combining institutional engagement with practical support at community level. Across its programme portfolio, the organisation contributed to strengthening institutional responsiveness, improving access to information and services, and creating opportunities for more effective participation of communities and vulnerable groups in social and public life.

This year's activities demonstrate the breadth and consistency of ECMI Kosovo's work. They also show the value of an approach that links policy and institutional processes with direct engagement, local partnerships, and practical outcomes. Whether through supporting access to diploma verification, strengthening labour migration governance, increasing legal awareness among youth, or improving environmental infrastructure and cooperation, ECMI Kosovo continued to contribute in ways that are concrete, relevant, and community-sensitive.

From the perspective of the Senior Oversight Board, 2025 confirmed the organisation's continued professionalism and strategic relevance. ECMI Kosovo maintained a clear focus on quality, accountability, and purposeful implementation, while also ensuring that its interventions remained grounded in the realities and needs of those they are intended to serve.

On behalf of the Senior Oversight Board, I would like to express sincere appreciation to the staff of ECMI Kosovo, to the Executive Director, and to all partners, donors, institutions, and community representatives who contributed to the organisation's work during the year. Their cooperation and trust remain essential to the continued advancement of ECMI Kosovo's mission.

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## The year in review

In 2025, ECMI Kosovo helped applicants use the diploma verification mechanism, worked with Kosovo institutions and civil society on migrant workers' rights, and provided practical information on property and inheritance rights in Serbian-speaking communities. Its environmental work included delivering waste-management equipment and completing the Cross-border Green Deal project in April. The USAID-funded Recycling Matters Activity ended early, and ECMI Kosovo documented the work completed and settled the final voucher in June.

ECMI Kosovo began work in Kosovo in 2001 as the Kosovo office of the European Centre for Minority Issues. It registered as a Kosovo NGO on 24 April 2009. Its work is overseen by the Senior Oversight Board and implemented with public institutions, local organisations, donors and communities.

| Programme | Result recorded in 2025 |
|---|---|
| Diploma verification | 113 applications received and 21 diplomas verified by the Independent Commission in the documented July–September period |
| Labour migration | Four institutional training sessions, with 79 attendances, and four civil-society organisations supported through microgrants |
| Property and inheritance rights | 17 community discussions in 15 locations and three university workshops, recording 468 participations in total |
| Cross-border Green Deal | The annual report records 380 containers and other equipment handed over to Kosovo utilities, three green islands installed |
| Recycling Matters | Green Fund proposals advanced to co-creation and revision before the award ended. The final voucher was settled in June. |

Each row uses the reporting unit for that programme.

## Verification of diplomas

Through its cooperation with IOM, ECMI Kosovo supported the Independent Commission and its Secretariat in processing applications, maintaining the e-Kosova service and advising applicants. ECMI Kosovo helped users assemble documentation and provided follow-up through its helpdesk. It also supported coordination with the institutions involved in administering the mechanism. In the first half of the year, ECMI Kosovo worked with the responsible institutions to connect the existing platform to their systems and finalised an updated study of Serbian-language education. The Commission made the verification decisions.

The annual report records **113 applications**, including 90 physical and 23 online applications, and **21 verifications**. The underlying project report dates these figures to **July–September 2025**. Intake and verification decisions describe different stages of the process.

A follow-up survey included **19 respondents**. Fifteen reported at least some improvement in their prospects after verification. The sample provides evidence of how some applicants used their verified qualifications for employment or professional examinations. Respondents also described barriers involving access to information in Serbian, additional institutional requirements and limited local employment opportunities. An information session in North Mitrovica on 29 December covered the

verification procedure and use of the online platform.

## Labour migration and migrant workers' rights

With GIZ support, ECMI Kosovo organised four trainings for the Labour Inspectorate and Employment Agency in April, May, June and August. The sessions examined fair recruitment, employment contracts and institutional responses to problems that migrant workers face. The programme recorded **79 attendances**, including **40 women and 39 men**. Review sessions with institutional and civil-society participants in September and November contributed to the Handbook for Foreign Workers, which brings together information on employment procedures and rights.

ECMI Kosovo supported four civil-society organisations through microgrants. OPEA Bardha provided psychosocial and adaptation support to Filipino migrant workers. Humanus Vita researched migrant women's experiences. Jesuit Refugee Service Kosovo mapped stakeholders and convened national dialogue. The Youth Association for Human Rights examined working conditions in Lipjan and presented its findings to municipal, police and civil-society representatives. The project continued into March 2026.

## Property and inheritance rights

ECMI Kosovo worked under the ATRC-led PIAKOS initiative, supported by the World Bank State and Peacebuilding Fund. Between April and June, it held **17 community discussions in 15 locations**, recording **412 youth participations**. Three case-based workshops at the Faculty of Law in North Mitrovica on 28 February, 30 April and 24 June recorded **56 student participations**.

The discussions examined practical barriers including outdated cadastral records, incomplete inheritance procedures and informal ownership arrangements. Trainers used examples to show what people can do when documents are missing or a family arrangement has never been registered. The project's indicator table records **468 participations**, including **177 female and 291 male participations**. The figure measures attendance across the two activities. A deduplicated count of individuals is unavailable.

## Cross-border waste management

The EU-supported Cross-border Green Deal was implemented with FORS Montenegro and the Municipality of Berane. For the April 2025 handover, the annual report records **380 containers** in three sizes and other equipment to utility companies serving Pejë/Peć, Deçan/Dečani, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok and Klinë/Klina. The equipment included 60 composters, tools, protective workwear and air-quality measuring devices. The project also installed **three green islands** with information boards in the Rugova area.

ECMI Kosovo published the Albanian-language guide on good European practice in waste management in March and the Pejë/Peć waste-composition study in April. It shared practical recommendations with stakeholders.

## Recycling Matters in Fushë Kosovë and Kosovo Polje

The USAID-funded activity supported municipal recycling and the participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian informal waste collectors. The Green Fund call opened in 2024 and received **54 complete applications**. On 20 and 21 January 2025, seven shortlisted organisations took part in co-creation to refine their proposals. The award ended before the subgrant agreements were signed.

ECMI Kosovo documented completed work on municipal waste planning, source separation, stakeholder training and the Green Fund's design as part of the close-out. A February training on operating procedures involved 15 Recycling Zone employees. The local stakeholder forum's board adopted a child-protection and safeguarding policy on 24 April and held an orientation that day. USAID certified and processed the final voucher in June. The project record distinguishes assets procured, handed over and physically distributed. A first lot of 943 containers was delivered in December 2024. The May 2025 close-out record identifies a separate second lot of 943 containers as manufactured and in transit at the time of the memo. The handover record determines when that second lot can be counted as delivered.

## Finance and workforce

ECMI Kosovo received **€566,827** in grants and recorded **€591,801** in expenditure in 2025. Its cash and bank balance at 31 December was **€282,076**. The audited financial statements use the cash receipts and disbursements basis. The Senior Oversight Board approved the statements on 31 March 2026.

| Audited measure | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Funds received | €822,567 | €566,827 |
| Personnel costs for staff and contracted contributors, including pensions | €267,905 | €227,573 |
| Other project activity costs | €299,752 | €226,292 |
| Administrative costs | €94,592 | €137,936 |
| Total expenditure | €662,249 | €591,801 |
| Funds received less expenditure | €160,318 | −€24,974 |
| Opening cash and bank balance | €146,732 | €307,050 |
| Closing cash and bank balance | €307,050 | €282,076 |

Personnel costs accounted for 38.5% of total expenditure. Other project activity costs accounted for 38.2%, and administration for 23.3%. The audit calls the personnel line **"Salary expenses"**. It includes regular and part-time staff and other contracted personnel for whom ECMI Kosovo declared and paid the applicable taxes and pension contributions. Depending on the assignment and how the payment was recorded, this can include external experts and associates, community paralegals, community leaders in paid project roles, facilitators, trainers and researchers. These roles support programme delivery in the office and in the field.

### Independent audit

Alb Audit L.L.C. expressed an unmodified opinion on ECMI Kosovo's 2025 financial statements in its report dated June 2026.

| Project activity costs | 2025 |
|---|---|
| Main project activities | €194,306 |
| Travel | €8,047 |
| Workshops | €20,686 |
| Training materials and facilities | €3,253 |
| **Total** | **€226,292** |

| Grant receipts by source | 2025 |
|---|---|
| USAID · Recycling Matters | €381,345 |
| IOM · Diploma verification | €82,800 |
| European Union · Cross-border Green Deal | €72,275 |
| GIZ · Two contracts combined | €29,637 |
| World Bank through ATRC · PIAKOS | €770 |
| **Total** | **€566,827** |

Grant receipts are cash received during the year. The GIZ line covers the socio-economic reintegration and migration governance contracts together. Programme contract values and payment schedules are reported separately where relevant.

The annual report records **35 people paid during 2025**, including 12 full-time staff and 23 other paid personnel. The audit reports a separate **average of 21 regular and other contracted personnel per month**, compared with 28 in 2024. The two measures describe different periods and populations.