EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

PRESS RELEASE

31 January 2013

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN KOSOVO



On 31 January 2013, The European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) Kosovo organised a Conference in Prishtinë/Priština to present its report on '*Socioeconomic Condi□ons in Northern Kosovo*'. Read the Northern Kosovo research reports

This report is based on a questionnaire administered to 721 respondents in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveqan to identify the population's perceptions, needs and concerns on the following socioeconomic issues: Healthcare, Education, Social Welfare and Employment.

Nearly 100 people attended the conference, including 20 representatives of various organisations from northern Kosovo, high-level representatives of international organisations. During the conference, Ambassador Ian Cliff recalled UK Embassy's support to ECMI's efforts to voice "*ordinary citizens' concerns, which are all too rarely heard*" and pointed out the "*overwhelming lack of leadership and certainty on what to do in northern Kosovo*". Ms Anne Meskanen, Chargée d'Affaires of the Embassy of Finland, welcomed the report as "*very timely*", acknowledging that "*we all agree that the situation in northern Kosovo needs more attention, interest and commitment*".



ECMI Kosovo is calling all relevant stakeholders (civil society organisations, international organisations, local public authorities) to take their responsibilities and to propose concrete solutions to the concerns expressed by the communities in northern Kosovo and the problems they face in their daily lives.

Dealing and addressing such issues in a constructive manner is the only way forward to long-term stability and development of northern Kosovo.

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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.

Annex - Recommendations

Education

- Maintain efforts to invest in and enhance the capacity of the education system.
- Conduct additional research to assess strengths and weaknesses of each distinct level and type of formal education, including vocational education.
- Make significant efforts to adapt the educational system to matching the requirements of professional life.
- Further develop and intensify informal education as a means to help people integrate into employment by extending their knowledge and know-how base.
- Enhance the capacities of local NGOs to provide high quality informal education in various domains.
- Improve hard and soft infrastructure to better accommodate people with disabilities and fight discrimination.

Healthcare

- Invest in better medical equipment and deliver appropriate training to personnel.
- Raise awareness about reproductive health and substance abuse (in particular the dangers related to nicotine) by intensifying public campaigns.
- Improve treatment of people affected by substance addictions through educating the public, training medical personnel, and providing treatment facilities and/or programmes.

Social Welfare

- Conduct further research with beneficiaries of social welfare.
- Increase efforts to provide adequate social development for people with disabilities and for older people.
- Increase efforts to match local desires (especially of young people) with cultural events.

Economic Situation

- Intensify efforts to improve socioeconomic security, skills and training opportunities for young people.
- Increase abilities of the private sector to generate income through conditions encouraging entrepreneurship.
- Improve infrastructures across municipalities to build a more conducive business environment.