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ATRC Upcoming Events

April 19-20: Training on Project Proposal Writing

May 3: Training on Good Governance

"Women's Participation in Negotiations is a Necessity, Not a Wish"

Civil society representatives debated the issue of women's participation in negotiations for Kosovo's final status during a public discussion organized by ATRC and the Gender Training and Research Center on March 10. Kosovo women activists have written letters to local and international decision-makers requesting that women be included on the negotiating

team for Kosovo's final status, but to date the negotiating team does not include a single woman.

Women's role in negotiations, advocacy for women's participation in this process, and gender equality and legislation in Kosovo were explained by the panelists: Edita Tahiri - Kosovo Women's Lobby, Igballe Rogova - Kosovo Women's Network and Besim

Kajtazi - board member of Kosovo Women's Network.

"Kosovo women must be involved in negotiations because of their political capacity and courage, and the contribution they made towards freedom," Tahiri stated.

Participants continuously stressed that status is a matter of the whole society, regardless of gender, religion or ethnic background.

International Women's Day

"No More Flowers, We Want Power," Women Demand Role in Negotiations

At noon on March 8, dozens of women gathered in front of the Prishtina National Theater to demand that women participate in the negotiation team, appointed for the Kosovo final status talks.

The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) organized this public event under the motto "No More Flowers, We Want Power," referring to International Women's Day when women usually get flowers, but this year Kosovo's women want a role in status talks instead.

"UN Resolution 1325 sup-

ports democracy where the role of women is an essential component, and it also supports equal participation of women in peaceful processes at a time when Kosovo negotiations are taking place," the media announcement issued by KWN said.

KWN is one of the main women's networks in Kosovo with more than 80 member organizations of different ethnic groups,



Women at the protest demand participation in negotiations concerning Kosovo's final status

which work in different fields towards the achievement of gender equality.

For more information, please contact:

info@womensnetwork.org

Gender Gap Still Wide Open in the EU

Statistics released by the EU to mark International Women's Day showed that although European women do better in school than men, they get lower pay and fewer top jobs.

Eighty per cent of women complete secondary edu-

cation compared to 75% of men, and more than half the university students are women.

Despite this, women's salaries are 15% lower than men's and women hold only a third of managerial jobs.

In early March, the European Commission adopted a policy roadmap designed to address gender inequality.

Source: BBC News World Edition

Local NGOs Discuss the Environment and Waste Management

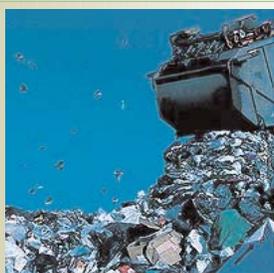
ATRC organized on February 21 a roundtable discussion entitled "Environment and Waste Management in Kosovo," led by environmental engineer Jim McGill, who has been in the environmental business for 25 years designing cost effective environmental solutions.

"The goal of waste management is to protect human health and the environment," McGill noted.

The roundtable discussion, attended by representatives of local environmental NGOs, addressed sensitive issues and concerns related to the environment in Kosovo.

The discussion focused on solving environmental problems at the local level, preparing Kosovo businesses for compliance with environmental regulations, and minimizing the amount of waste generated.

Participants commented that potential direct foreign investment will not be impressed by mismanagement of natural resources. Kosovo has the capacity to recycle waste, but there is a lack of proper management, they said.



Environmental NGOs say waste is not managed properly in Kosovo

ORA Leader Urges Civil Society to Say "Enough" to Negative Political Phenomena

ATRC organized on March 2 a public discussion between Veton Surroi, leader of the political party ORA and local non-governmental organizations, entitled "Kosovo and European Integration after Status."

ORA leader and civil society representatives linked Kosovo EU integration with efficient governance, functional democracy and respect for majority-minority relations.

It is civil society's role to say "enough" to negative phenomena that are occurring in the political scene, Surroi said, stressing the need for more active NGOs in Kosovo.

This was the first meeting in a series of debates, as part of an ATRC initiative to bring together members of the negotiation team and civil society representatives.



ORA leader discusses EU integration following Kosovo's final status with civil society representatives

Kosovo Civil Society to Initiate Qualitative Public Debates

Local NGO representatives and Professor Muhamet Mustafa from Riinvest Institute discussed on March 10 the latest political

and economic developments in Kosovo, at a roundtable discussion organized by ATRC.

Mustafa outlined the need for constructive debates in Kosovo. "Civil society has initiated qualitative debates, but still Kosovo has not reached the proper level of debates on sensitive issues for society," he said.

Mustafa, an expert on economics, identified key areas where civil society could apply pressure: monitoring the implementation of laws and more actively fighting corruption.

He applauded prior NGO efforts to push forward the privatization process and change the election system.

Participants stressed that a lack of government accountability negatively affected political and economic developments in Kosovo.



Participants debate political and economical developments in Kosovo

Citizens Call for Faster Establishment of Independent Media Commission

Media, NGO representatives and actors responsible for the delayed establishment of an Independent Media Commission (IMC) gathered at ATRC on March 6 to clarify the reasons for this delay.

Bob Gillete, the Temporary Media Commissioner in Kosovo, explained that certain recent developments in Kosovo's political

scene obstructed the process of establishing this commission, such as the death of President Rugova and the appointment of new Prime Minister Agim Çeku.

Assembly members of the ad-hoc group for IMC: Fehmi Mujota, Mahir Jagxhilar and Gjergj Dedaj stressed the need to speed up the process

of establishing the IMC because of its great importance.

This commission should not be influenced by political parties. An independent media is a great value for a democratic society in Kosovo, the ad-hoc group members added.

NGO Flash News

Six Organizations Enter Student Parliament

Six student organizations will lead the student parliament, the Central Election Commission of the University of Prishtina announced on March 10. This comes after student elections, held on March 8.

The Independent Student Union of the University of Prishtina led with 25.6% of the overall votes. The other five organizations are the Independent Student Union of Kosovo, Student Peace, Student List - Reforma, New Student Organization and Albanian Student Union.



University of Prishtina students cast votes for their parliament on March 8

NGO "Hareja" Implements New Project

"Hareja" from Vushtrri started a new project on February 24, which will inform young people about human trafficking. The project aims to prevent trafficking in Kosovo.

Strengthening citizen political participation

Kosovo Democratic Institute Monitors Legislature's Work



KDI representatives announce scores for legislature's performance at a press conference in Prishtina

One key factor to democratic stability in Kosovo is good governance. In order to strengthen the legislative process, Kosovo's elected officials are facing increased pressure to govern effectively. The Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI) is a NGO that monitors the work of the legislature

and uses the information to advocate on specific issues.

On February 13, KDI published scorecards on the work of six municipal assemblies: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Gji-lan, Ferizaj and Obiliq for the period of July through December 2005. "The result

of scorecards is based on the direct monitoring of municipal assembly sessions, municipal documents and meetings with elected officials," KDI Executive Director Kushtrim Kaloshi said.

The scorecards evaluate the work of these legislative institutions and particularly the work

of each of the 236 municipal councilors.

The monitoring results show violations or disrespect of the local legal framework and inefficiency on behalf of some municipal assemblies.

According to Kaloshi, this institute aims, through the publication of scorecards, to inform objectively and impartially citizens about the work and commitment of legislators in including their interests in the institutional agenda.

In February, KDI started to monitor the work of the National Assembly and parliamentary commissions for the first time.

Kosovo Youth Network Vows to Improve Youth Conditions in Kosovo

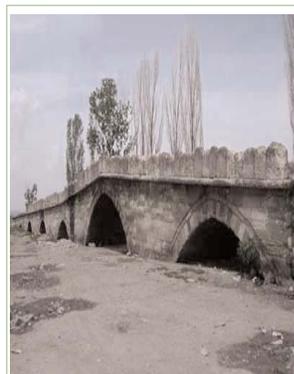
More than one hundred youth non-governmental organizations participated in the sixth "Youth Congress," organized by the Kosovo Youth Network on March 11 - 12 at the Kosovo Police Academy in Vushtrri.

The congress members elected a new management board and reappointed the network president, Alban Krasniqi from Malisheva Youth Center.

Krasniqi said that he is committed to working harder to improve conditions for youth in Kosovo.

Representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Organization for Security

and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other local and international organizations operating in the country attended the Congress.



Youth Congress is held in the town of Vushtrri

Kosovo Businesswomen's Network Supports Balkan Businesswomen

Women from Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in a three-day conference in Prishtina on March 13, organized by the Kosovo Businesswomen's Network.

This regional conference entitled "Support for Balkan Businesswomen" aimed to support businesswomen and foster regional cooperation among them. During the conference, Balkan businesswomen exchanged experiences and discussed areas for future cooperation.

The network's vision is to support, protect and promote the interests of businesswomen in Kosovo through information and experience exchange, networking and partnership, research and lobbying.



Executive Director
RREZE DULI
rreze@advocacy-center.org

**Training & Consultancy
Services Manager**
ILIR HOXHA
ilir@advocacy-center.org

Trainer & Consultant
MERITA BARILEVA
merita@advocacy-center.org

Trainer & Consultant
DONIKA SALIHU
donika@advocacy-center.org

Program Associate
NATYRA ZHJEQI
natyra@advocacy-center.org

**Financial & Administration
Manager**
GANI ASLLANI
gani@advocacy-center.org

**IT and Database
Manager**
ARMEND SUSURI
armend@advocacy-center.org

**Communication & Outreach
Manager**
ARJETA DOROCI
arjeta@advocacy-center.org

St. Agim Ramadani Nr. 15
2nd Floor Prishtina, Kosovo
Phone/Fax: +381 (0) 38 244
810

Journalists Feel Alone in the Fight against Corruption

"Organization for Democracy, Anticorruption and Dignity - Çohu" organized a public debate on February 19 entitled "The Kosovo Media's Reporting on Corrup-



tion." Local journalists gathered at ATRC to discuss this sensitive issue.

High level governing structures should not use the negotiation process for Kosovo's final status as a pretext for turning a blind eye on reports of corruption, media representatives stated during the debate. According to them, one challenge to reporting about corruption is that political leaders hide behind the motto, "independence for Kosovo," diverting attention from reports on corruption within the government.

Participants stressed that journalists reporting on cor-

ruption are neither supported institutionally, nor by Kosovo society.

Representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister for Good Governance and the Prosecutor's Office were invited to attend this debate, but their seats were empty. Participating journalists noted that their absence reflects officials' attitude towards the work of journalists on issues related to corruption. They also criticized the government's lack of cooperation with journalists.

*For more information, please contact:
organizatacohu@yahoo.com*

Regional civil society network

Balkan Civil Society Development Network to Strengthen Peace and Stability in the Balkans

The Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) is a network of 12 civil society organizations from 7 countries and territories in South East Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo.

The main goal of the network is to strengthen coordination, cooperation and capacity-building efforts between civil society organizations in South East Europe.

BCSDN is committed to sustainable peace and stability, prosperity and harmony in the Balkans. Its objectives are to increase communication between civil society actors in the region as a basis for multilateral coope-

ration, to mobilize resources and support, to increase knowledge and skills, and to promote intercultural exchange and a culture of resource-sharing as a basis for an efficient network.

Activities

From 2003 to 2004, BCSDN activities were directed at strengthening individual/staff and organizational capacities and skills of partner organi-

zations through tailor-made packages of trainings, exchange and consultancies.

While maintaining focus on individual/staff and organizational strengthening, the network's activities for 2004-2006 are to focus on thematic cooperation through three common priority themes: EU funding, lobbying and advocacy; training and consultancy standards and ethics, resource mobilization and specific themes (e.g. women and anti-trafficking; corporate social responsibility and anti-corruption; decentralization).

For more information, please visit: www.balkancsdn.net

Source: Balkan Civil Society Development Network



Map of South East Europe

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