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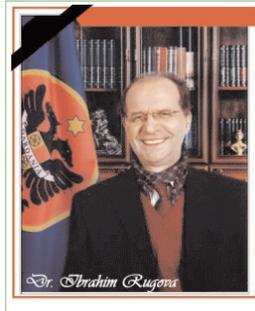
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New funding opportunities, news, events, trainings etc. can be found on ATRC web site:
<http://www.advocacy-center.org>



Kosovo Civil Society Expresses Condolences on the Death of President Rugova

Civil society representatives expressed their condolences in a letter that was sent to President Dr. Ibrahim Rugova's family, the Presidency and the people of Kosovo:



On the death of President Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, a united civil society expresses its vast grief to his family, the Presidency and the people of Kosovo.

The President left at a most important time, as the groundwork is being established for an independent Kosovo, a wish that all of us look forward to - the formal recognition of a sovereign Kosovo that is loved by us all.

Civil society has followed a common road towards the establishment of a democratic, independent and sovereign Kosovo since the beginning of the 1990s.

Civil society asks all political facets to be united with a sustainable, political maturity, just as we are, to realize together the desires of this visionary and missionary who dedicated his entire life to the building of an independent, democratic and sovereign state of Kosovo.

Kosovo Women's Network
Kosovo Women's Lobby
Foundation for Democratic Initiatives
Advocacy Training and Resource Center
Kosovo Institute for Research and Development Policies
Partners Kosovo, Center for Conflict Administration

President Dr. Ibrahim Rugova (1944 - 2006)

Ibrahim Rugova was born on 2 December 1944 in Cerrcë village, Istog municipality. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina and spent a year in Paris at Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. He earned his Ph.D. in literature in 1984 from the University of Prishtina. Dr. Rugova was elected president of the Kosovo Writers Association in 1988, which became a strong nucleus of the Albanian opposition movement to Serbian rule in Kosovo. On 23 December 1989 he was elected president of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). After parliamentary elections on 24 May 1992, which were not internationally recognized, Rugova was elected President of the Republic of Kosovo. Under his leadership, Kosovo Albanians built parallel administrative, health and education structures as part of a peaceful resistance movement.

After the war, Dr. Rugova was elected President in March 2002 and again in 2005. As President, he advocated for international recognition of an independent Kosovo. Following a battle with lung cancer, he passed away, age 61, on 21 January 2006. He received numerous international prizes, including the Sakharov Prize of the European Parliament, Prize European Senator of Honour, Peace Prize of Paul Litzer Foundation and Honorary Doctorate of Paris University VIII Sorbonne.

ATRC and KODI roundtable

NGOs call for Pension Reform

ATRC and the local think tank Kosovo Research and Documentation Institute (KODI) organized a roundtable discussion on 14 December at ATRC where pension system authorities and beneficiaries gathered together to address issues related to the quality of pension services in Kosovo.

Pensioners and representatives from NGOs, the government and media attended the

roundtable, moderated by Kushtrim Shaipi from KODI. Panelists included Naim Hoda - Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Abedin Kajtazi - Banking and Payments of Kosovo, Ramis Ahmetaj - Kosovo Pension Savings Trust, Shaban Kajtazi - Association of Pensioners of Kosovo and Fazli Kajtazi - Independent Syndicate of Pensioners and Work Invalids. Shaban Kajtazi from the Pen-

sioners' Association commented that UNMIK and the local authorities continue to violate the rights of pensioners. He stated that the €40 monthly payment for Kosovo citizens over the age of 65, regardless of their employment record, is discriminatory. "€40 is not a pension; it is just social support," he said.

(Continues on Page 2)

Flash News

Humanist Feride Dërvishi Passes Away



Feride Dërvishi, a humanist and activist in many local and international humanitarian organizations, passed away on 7 January in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Dërvishi was born in 1967 in Gradicë village, Drenica.

Despite her own personal struggle to overcome polio, she devoted her life to helping others - mentally, spiritually and physically. She concentrated especially on building relations between people with disabilities and the rest of society. Throughout the 1990s she cooperated with many local and international humanitarian organizations, including UNICEF, Save the Children, the SOROS Foundation, Motrat Qiriazzi (Kosovo), OXFAM and Catholic Charities (USA).

Since 1999, she lived and worked in Nashville, Tennessee where she finished post-graduate studies on child development at Middle Tennessee State University. In August 2005, she published the Albanian translation of Leo Buscaglia's monumental work "The Fall of Freddie the Leaf," which deals with life and death. She was buried on 17 January at her birthplace in Gradica village, Drenica, where more than 100 civil society representatives, activists, artists, politicians and citizens gathered to pay their respects.

Safete Rogova, an activist from Motrat Qiriazzi reflected upon her life during the ceremony. "Feride was like the sun, providing warmth to others", she said.

(Continues from Page 1)

Representative of the Reformist Party ORA and the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Health, Work and Social Welfare, Fatmir Kollçaku, discussed about five recommendations that came out of the committee's work in cooperation with the Pensioners' Syndicate.

Fatmir Fehmiu from the Independent Syndicate of Pensioners raised the issue of the need for a more active civil society, particularly the NGO sector, in pressuring decision-makers to pay attention to the needs and rights of

pensioners. Participants suggested continuing efforts to form a NGO coalition that would advocate on behalf of pensioners. They believed that the pension system is a total failure and the position of pensioners in society should be significantly improved.

ATRC and KODI will continue to assist pensioners in advocating for pension system reform in Kosovo.

This was the first public discussion in a series of ATRC



Participants discuss Pension System in Kosovo

and KODI debates on social protection issues and also the first opportunity for representatives from different sectors to debate pension issues.

Index Kosova and Gallup International Voice of the People Survey

Kosovo among Most Optimistic Countries in the World, Again

Almost half of the citizens who were interviewed in a Gallup International Voice of the People Survey in 62 countries across the world think that 2006 will be a better year than 2005. The survey was conducted in November and December and asked "So far as you are concerned, do you think that 2006 will be better, or worse than 2005?"

The survey in Kosovo was conducted by Index Kosova in November with 1,020 respondents aged 15+ years, representing Kosovo Albanians and minorities, excluding Serbs. *Optimists and pessimists*

Despite bird flu, Vietnam is the most optimistic place in the world, along with Beijing, China. UN administered Kosovo comes in as the 3rd most

optimistic country in the survey.

These results are remarkably consistent - Vietnam has been at the head of the optimists' league for the last 3 years. Similarly, Kosovo has occupied one of the top places for the last 5 years, suggesting that the peacekeeping operation here brings both stability and continued optimism for the future.

Economic Prospects

When looking at Kosovo and its neighbors, the optimism of Kosovo citizens with respect to economic prosperity in Kosovo is quite high (54%), compared to views in Macedonia (34%), Albania (33%). Serbia is one of the most pessimistic countries in the world with respect to economic

prosperity with only 8% expressing a positive view.

In Kosovo, 36% of citizens believe that unemployment will increase next year, whereas in neighboring countries the percentage is higher. Kosovo is also optimistic on the issue of declining industrial unrest - 36% of respondents in Kosovo feel that strikes and industrial disputes will decrease in 2006.

A peaceful or a troubled year?

Finally, respondents were asked about prospects for international peace - whether they thought 2006 would be a peaceful year more or less free of international disputes, a troubled year with much international discord, or remain the same.

In Kosovo, only 19% of respondents believe that 2006 will be a troubling year.

Top Optimists	
2006 will be <i>better</i> than 2005	
Vietnam/Beijing	75%
UN Kosovo	73%
Afghanistan	69%
India/Venezuela/Nigeria	61%
Senegal/South Africa	60%
New Zealand	59%
Canada/Equatorial Guinea	57%
Hong Kong	56%

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A Joint European Vision

Free Movement for Goods and People in Kosovo and Serbia

Contributed by KIPRED

The Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED) published a report on 19 December that compared trade and movement data for the first time. The report highlights a number of clear areas of concern for authorities in the region and the international community.

As the European Union (EU) focuses its efforts on streamlining the four freedoms of its single market, its neighbors to the southeast conversely experience the daily reality of further restrictions on movement, even as the region edges closer to EU integration processes. These restrictions are the product of years of unclear policies between and vis-à-vis Belgrade and Prishtina and have resulted in an increasingly ghettoized Balkans within the western Balkans.

The freedom of movement of goods and people in Serbia and Kosovo is not harmonized, transparent or sustainable in its current arrangement. Irrespective of the outcomes of the Kosovo status talks, a clearer and more coordinated approach on the freedom of movement of goods and people by the respective administrations in Prishtina and Belgrade and from the EU is urgently needed in order to ensure that economic and social considerations support rather than undermine the ongoing political negotiations.

This report was developed jointly by two think tanks: KIPRED in Prishtina and the European Movement in Belgrade, Serbia (EMinS). The full text is available at <http://www.kipred.net/UserFiles/File/Free%20movement%20for%20goods%20and%20people.pdf> For more information, please contact: info@kipred.net



Violence against Journalists on the Rise in Kosovo

ATRC, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) and the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK) organized a public discussion at ATRC on 13 January to discuss the rise of incidences involving violence against journalists in Kosovo. Police response to such cases, journalists' working conditions and institutional pressure for independent media were the focus of the debate, in which the media, NGOs and police representatives participated. Jeta Xharra, BIRN Country Director, moderated the discussion.

Panelists included Fatos Bytyçi - Chairman of APJK, Sabit Rustemi - Spokesperson for the Gjilan Municipal Assembly, Fatmire Tërdevci - Koha Ditore newspaper journalist, Refki Morina - Spokes-

person for the Kosovo Police Service, Afrim Ahmeti - Prishtina Regional Police Commander and Petrit Selimi - Express newspaper director. Panelists identified three ty-



pes of pressures journalists that face in their daily work: physical pressure, lack of access to information and financial pressure.

Participants were shown filmed material of two cases of violence against journalists. The discussion that followed focused on the behavior of police and other authorities towards journalists, journalists'

behavior and disciplinary measures for responsible individuals.

"There were 20 cases of violence against journalists in 2005. The worst incidents were caused by the police," Bytyçi said.

According to APJK, two major problems contributing to police behavior with journalists are a lack of training for police on how they should interact with the media and KPS police refusals to be shown on television.

Refki Morina, spokesperson for the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) said that KPS had taken disciplinary measures against police officers who overstepped their boundaries.

KPS representatives urged journalists to maintain continuous contact with the police.

Building NGO Networks

RAE Women NGOs Formalize Network

Low levels of education (an estimated 90% illiteracy rate among girls according to one survey), early marriage, economic hardships within their families and social norms that discourage women from entering into public discourse has meant that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women have had little opportunity to participate in decision-making.

Over the past five years, women activists from the RAE community have worked to address these issues. In the beginning of 2000, these activists started efforts towards the establishment of a Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) women's network. They wanted to open a center in Prishtina that would support Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, and especially women, to realize their rights.

The network was registered and began functioning, but by the end of 2000 it was already facing difficulties. The lack of security made it difficult for women members to travel to

meetings, and the network struggled financially.

"Limited freedom of movement affected our meetings and cooperation, but fortunately not any longer," Emsale Mergjollari, Manager of the Roma Women's Center in Prizren and the new leader of RAE Women's Network said.

On 9 December, the RAE Women's Network was restructured and formalized with support from the Kosovo Women's Network and facilitated by ATRC.

The network consists of 12 RAE women NGOs, led by a new governing body, which Emsale Mergjollari heads.

The network's objectives include integrating RAE women into Kosovo society and increasing their involvement in decision-making processes. To achieve this, representatives from the RAE Women's Network intend to increase cooperation among NGOs in their communities and coordinate activities to jointly address issues concerning the

RAE community. Strategically, they will focus on education, women's rights and cooperation with other NGOs in Kosovo and the region.

RAE Women Voice Their Needs to Decision-makers

Issues faced by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women were discussed at a 16 January debate entitled "Challenges and opportunities for RAE women to integrate into Kosovo society," organized by local NGO "Qeliza" and the Prime Minister's Office for Good Governance.

Participants from the government and civil society stressed that the government and other sectors should draft policies and programs to create basic preconditions for improving the position of RAE women in society. In addition, participants demanded institutional support for education, protection against violence and social welfare for Kosovo RAE women.

*Helping Civil Society Flourish***atrc**

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

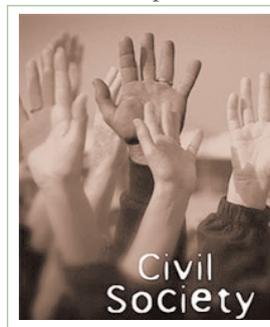
Toward an Enabling Legal Environment for Civil Society

Though they pursue public purposes, civil society organizations are fundamentally private organizations. Yet, the ability of these organizations to carry out their special functions depends importantly on the legal environment within which they operate, and this, in turn, depends on actions by the state. Indeed, establishment of an enabling legal environment is one of the most important contributions governments can make to the development of civil society organizations.

In many parts of the world, however, the legal framework for civil society activity is uncertain and incomplete at best, burdened with contradictions or out of date in light of current civil society needs. While some organizations have managed to thrive despite an unfavorable legal environment, improvement of the legal environment for civil society has become a growing priority around the world.

Clearly, there is no single "right" way to design civil society laws and regulations. Le-

gal traditions, as well as traditions of civil society activity, differ widely among countries. Significant variations can thus be expected in how



legal systems handle the crucial issues that civil society operations entail.

Despite such variations, however, it is possible to identify some general principles or rules of good practice that can usefully guide the development of civil society law around the world. The purpose of this Statement (full text part can be found on: http://www.icnl.org/journal/vol8iss1/special_1.htm) is to articulate these general principles or guidelines. The Statement emerged from the work of the

Sixteenth Annual Johns Hopkins International Fellows in Philanthropy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2004. Over 100 civil society activists and experts from East Africa and more than 30 other countries around the world took part in the deliberations that led to this Statement. The present Statement represents a synthesis of their work. More specifically, after articulating some fundamental caveats and assumptions, the Statement addresses four issues that are especially critical to the development of civil society organizations: first, the basic legal standing of civil society organizations and the registration procedures that help to define it; second, the tax treatment of civil society organizations and philanthropy; third, transparency, disclosure, and accountability standards for civil society organizations; and fourth, the involvement of civil society in advocacy and civic engagement.

Source: The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law.

Civil Society Development in Albania

Civil society in Albania is gradually re-emerging as a constructive force of the post-communist period. In the last 10 years Albania saw many pro-active Albanians establishing non-governmental organizations whose work was primarily based on personal relationships, mutual trust and informal consensus. Their enthusiasm about the new possibilities in Albanian society was a strong motivation for their actions and this was supported by legislative framework for NGOs.

Despite the emergence of NGOs as an influencing factor in Albanian life they still suffer obstacles to their development. Lack of office space and logistic set-up, a clear de-

finition of their mission and duties of their staff, as well as operating procedures which guide employees in their daily work and assure transparency and control are all issues which affect their operation. In addition, NGOs need support in their internal management, in doing needs assessments and writing project proposals. NGOs and community-based groups need a forum in which to meet with local government and to receive training.

Civil society institutions demonstrate a number of advantages compared with existing State institutions; they are more flexible and adaptable to fast changing conditions, they are more creative and at the



Tirana, the capital city of Albania

same time more successful in reaching people at the grass roots level as they use participatory approaches. Given these benefits it is important that a professional and structured link is developed between Albanian civil society organizations and international organization and donors.

Source: www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/CivilSociet%20DevelopmentinAlbania.doc.