



Advocacy Training & Resource Center

# The ADVOCATE



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can be found on  
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## ATRC community roundtables

### Experts Give Explanations to Kosovo Citizens over Ahtisaari's Package

*International and local experts on Ahtisaari's proposal called citizens to maintain peace and stability at the time when status for the future of Kosovo is in its final phase*

Representatives of local and central government, NGO, media and business sector in 25 towns of Kosovo had the opportunity to gather information, make their concerns heard, and ask questions about the content of the Kosovo settlement proposal, through 26 community roundtables organized by ATRC in March.

These roundtables were held in Pristina, Mitrovicë/a, Prizren, Gjakova/Djakovica, Peja/Pec, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Novobërd/o, Kaçanik, Obiliq/c, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje, Shtime/ Stimlje, Klinë/a, Kamenicë/a, Graçanica/Graçanica, Podujevë/o, Lipjan/ Lipljan, Shtërpçe/Shtërpçe, Istog/k, Suhareka/Suvareka, Rahovec/Orahovac, Viti/Vitina, Skenderaj/Srbica, Malishevë/o, Partesh/s, and Zveçan/Zveçan, in an attempt to inform civil society organizations and citizens about the proposal of Martti Ahtisaari, UN Secretary General Envoy in Charge of the Negotiations on the future status of Kosovo.



*Experts give explanations to citizens of Rahovec about Ahtisaari's proposal on March 27*

"Ahtisaari's package consists of general principles that set the pace towards independent state of Kosovo", Blerim Shala, coordinator of Kosovo negotiation team said on Mar. 7 at the roundtable in Prishtina. "The package preserves our borders and enables Kosovo to become a success story."

The Head of British Office in Kosovo, David Blunt, stated that Ahtisaari's package is the result of compromise and divergent views. According to Blunt, the package represents the views of majority and the need for protection of minorities. "Decentralization in Kosovo is

a process same as it is in the entire Europe" he said. Decentralization process was one of the issues of concern raised mostly by participants.

Seven regional town hall meetings scheduled for April will follow the community roundtable meetings to further and widely inform the opinion about the content of Ahtisaari's package.

UN Secretary General Envoy unveiled his package proposal on February 2, after a year of negotiations between Prishtina and Belgrade in Vienna, Austria.

*For the full status proposal, visit [www.unosek.org](http://www.unosek.org)*

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### Urban development of Prishtina

#### Civil Society Criticizes Government for "Urban Chaos"



Civil society representatives gathered on Mar. 15 at ATRC to discuss urban development of Prishtina. Participants focused the discussion on public participation in decision making about important urban issues of Prishtina. They criticized local and central government for, as they said, "destruction of Prishtina".

"Prishtina faces urban chaos. This situation according to architectural terminology is called urban stress," architect Xhelal Llonqari said.

Representatives of the "Initiative for Protection of the Town of Prishtina" expressed their concerns about "participation of municipal officials in illegal constrictions instead of taking care of urban development of Prishtina".

Participants also complained that cultural heritage sites are being destroyed. "Citizens are more aware for the protection of these sites than the government itself," Baki Svirca, Director of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments said.

Twenty one cultural heritage monuments exist in Prishtina, according to a research conducted by Kosovo Institute for Stability.

## ATRC Trains Municipal Officials and NGOs on Social Conflict Resolution

ATRC trainers conducted six training workshops on conflict management in Prishtina, Gjilan and Peja regions during March. "Multilevel Social Conflict Resolution" training workshops, attended by municipal officials and NGOs, aim to assist local government and civil society in fostering and strengthening their relationships in order to foresee and better respond to the needs of their communities through conflict resolution tools and techniques.

ATRC believes that building and strengthening the relationships between



A training session in Istog on March 27

these two sectors would also act as a supportive base for other projects linked to democracy and peace preservation in Kosovo. This is being imple-

mented through training workshops on conflict resolution to local government and NGO representatives.

"Multilevel Social Conflict Resolution" training workshops include sessions on understanding and working with conflict, communication, social conflict, change and democracy, development cooperation, etc.

*This initiative is supported by Olof Palme International Center.*

### Introducing a local NGO

#### "Partners Kosova" Serves as a Center for Conflict Management

"Partners-Kosova Center for Conflict Management" is a local non-government organization committed to advance civil society, culture of change and conflict management.

"Partners-Kosova" was founded in 2001 to foster a culture of peaceful conflict resolution in Kosovo. Since then, this center has worked with Kosovo citizens of all ethnicities to facilitate the resolution of disputes and build consensus on neighborhood, business, majority-minority, and citizen-government issues. The center provides services ranging from mediation to training courses in anti-discrimination and

ethnic integration. It has helped expand the acceptance of alternative and peaceful conflict resolution in the community.

Partners-Kosova's main areas of work are: mediation, local government reform, ethnic integration & conflict resolution. Its main programs include mediation service; local government program; and youth and woman leadership program.



*"Partners-Kosova" is a local NGO founded in 2001 to foster a culture of peaceful conflict resolution in Kosovo*

*For more information, visit: [www.partnerskosova.org](http://www.partnerskosova.org)*

## NGOs Unify Activities in Vitia to Advocate on Behalf of Citizens

### New publication

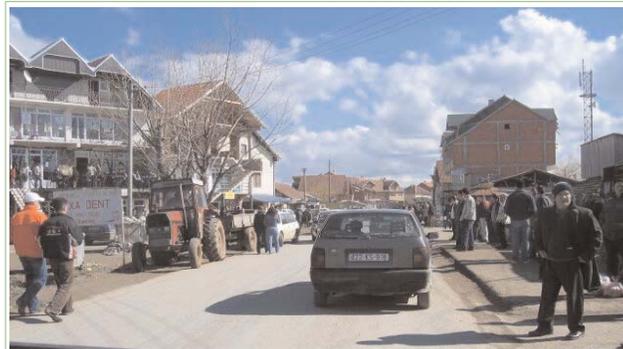
#### Research Study on Trafficking in Human Beings

Partnership Against Trafficking in Human Beings (PATH), a USAID supported project implemented by Catholic Relief Services and the Kosovo Population Foundation, published on Feb. 22 a report entitled "Research Study on Trafficking in Human Beings."

The research, conducted in Dec. 2006 and Jan. 2007, aimed to learn the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the different target audiences about the trafficking of human beings in Kosovo. The results of the survey will be used for the design and content of the PATH project's branded media campaign. This research will also serve as a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of efforts to improve public awareness, as part of Kosovo Government's Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. The research was conducted through two surveys, one with the public-at-large and the second with young girls aged 14-18, and it is based on interviews with 500 Kosovars.

The vast majority of respondents have heard about trafficking of human beings ....

For the full research, visit [www.kopfund.org](http://www.kopfund.org)



NGOs of Vitia 'Elita,' 'Legjenda,' 'Aster,' 'Independent Youth Organization,' 'Youth Network,' and 'Association of Environment' founded a coalition on March 7

NGOs in the Municipality of Vitia, an eastern town of Kosovo, believe that problems of citizens can be solved through extensive advocacy campaigns. They are aware that in order for civil society to have its impact in the decision making process, NGOs need to speak with one voice. Therefore, on March 7 NGOs of Vitia unified their activities under a coalition through which they aim to advocate on behalf of citizens.

NGO "Elita" initiated the

building of this coalition, supported by ATRC and IREX under Kosovo Civil Society Program. Emrush Azemi from Elita stated that this coalition will advocate for the solution of "many problems in Vitia/Vitina that need to be solved by local governing institutions".

"Different types of NGOs in Vitia have identified many problems that could be solved, if willingness would exist among institutions. We (NGOs) believe that an intensive advocacy campaign would pressure

municipal officials towards solution of these problems," Azemi said.

Implementation of the regulation of Municipality Assembly about traffic; implementation of the law on gender equality; function of law office of Municipality Assembly; a more active participation of youth in decision making process; improvement of hygiene conditions in the two high schools of the town; are the issues that the NGO coalition will advocate for, according to Azem.

Melihate Osmani, coordinator of the women's association "Legjenda" noted that civil society was actively engaged in advocacy issues in Vitia/Vitina "but results were limited because these activities were not unified within civil society organizations. The new coalition is a big step ahead."

For more information, visit [www.elita-viti.org](http://www.elita-viti.org)

## Young Eastern Europeans Discuss Volunteer Innovations at an Athens Seminar

Fifty representatives of civil society organizations and volunteering movement from 26 countries in the Balkan and the broader area of Eastern Europe (including Kosovo representatives from ATRC and Avonet) gathered at Athens, Greece, to share the knowledge and practicing of the latest developments on volunteerism.

Participants met from 1 to 3 March at a seminar organized by Citizen in Deed, the state organization of Greece for volunteerism.

They had the opportunity to attend a series of lectures, exchange ideas, expe-

riences, and participate in workshops and role plays under the direction of academics and field experts. The seminar focused on state initiatives for the third sector; international relations: Eastern Europe and the third sector; history and theory of civil society; NGO management; voluntary work; etc.

"If you don't have partners, you simply do not exist", professor Pantelis



Participants' visit in Greek Parliament building on Mar.1

Sklias from Democritus University of Thrace said, referring to the importance of effective partnerships among civil society organizations.

For more information, visit [www.citizenindeed.org](http://www.citizenindeed.org)



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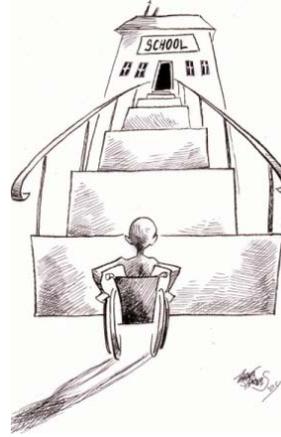
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## Disabled People Urge Local Governments to employ them

Organization of disabled people of Kosovo "Handikos" organized a seminar in the town of Suhareka/Suva-reka on March 6 entitled "Public awareness for hiring disabled persons within municipalities of Kosovo". The seminar also aimed to discuss possibilities of coalitions and networks building in order to increase activities in supporting disabled people.

Organizers stressed the importance of organizing training workshops for disa-



bled persons in order to advance them professionally, and also to build networks and coalitions among this layer of society for a better representation and demand of their rights. Participants urged local government institutions to be committed in improving environment for free movement of disabled people, in hiring and advancing them professionally. Handikos center in Suhareka/Suvareka has 520 members. *The seminar was supported by ATRC and IREX.*

### *New project*

## Nation-building in Southeastern Europe

"Nation-building Processes in Southeastern Europe" is a research project that examines four specific nation-building processes in Southeastern Europe after 1945: the Bosnian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Moldovan cases. The research focuses on popular perceptions of nation-building. How did 'ordinary' people in these four countries face with communist and post-communist na-

tion-building efforts; were rejected or modified official notions of (new) national identity? By what means was achieved identification with the new nation, such as nationalization of cultural practices, as well as symbols?

By providing historical and anthropological perspectives, this comparative study of recent nation-building processes intends to break new scientific ground.

The project is implemented by the Institute for East-European Studies at the FU Berlin and the Department for Southeast European History at the University of Graz

*For further information on this project, visit:*  
<http://www.oei.fuberlin.de/en/projekte/nation-building/>

## What is Civil Society?

In simple terms, civil society is an intermediate space between the citizen and the state, which is formed by voluntary organizations, clubs, professional unions, cultural establishments and religious bodies. It acts, thus, as a counterweight to political society. Civil society is a measure of cultural development and aptitude to democratic ways in any society: the greater the development of civil society, the better democracy functions. The modern concept of civil society was formed with the transition from traditional to modern society. It is therefore, intrinsically connected with the notion of modernity...

*ATRC would like to publish readers' views on this question, therefore your opinions are welcomed (please e-mail info@advocacy-center.org)*

