



Advocacy Training & Resource Center

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Supporting the
NGO community



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ATRC web site:
www.advocacy-center.org

NGO funding opportunities

IREX and ATRC Launch Second Year of Kosovo Civil Society Grants Program

IREX and ATRC representatives held an informational meeting with local NGOs on Oct. 17 to introduce the second year of the Kosovo Civil Society Grants Program, funded by USAID.

IREX and ATRC informed NGO representatives about this year's program, the types of grants available for Kosovo NGOs, application procedures, selection criteria,

the review process and the timeline for applying for the third round of Partnership and Networking grants.

Grants from the Kosovo Civil Society Program (KCSP) fall into three categories: Partnership and Networking Grants; Grassroots Advocacy Grants; and Central-Level Advocacy Campaign Grants.

For detailed and updated

information on KCSP grants program visit www.advocacy-center.org.

The goal of KCSP is the further development of Kosovo civil society and the NGO community in becoming a vibrant and viable sector that plays a significant role in representing Kosovo's diverse citizenry and shaping public policy.

NGO announcement

Kosovo Youth Network Demands the Authorities Reopen Its Office

The Kosovo Youth Network (KYN) demands the authorities reopen its office at the Youth Center in Prishtina, which was closed by the management of the Youth and Sports Palace on Oct. 20.

"The management of the Youth and Sports Palace in Prishtina closed the KYN office arbitrarily and without warning," a KYN announcement released on Oct. 26 said.

According to KYN, this act signifies the lack of commitment among local and international institutions for supporting youth in Kosovo.

The Youth Network has approached local and inter-



The management of the Youth and Sports Palace in Prishtina closed the KYN office on October 20

national institutions in an attempt to reopen its office. The network is attempting to continue its activities to the best of its abilities, despite the situation.

KYN urged youth organizations in Kosovo to follow developments closely and

consider different democratic mechanisms through which youth could raise their voice "against the ongoing injustices aimed at youth organizations in Kosovo."

The Kosovo Youth Network is an independent, multiethnic network that represents 124 youth centers and youth organizations throughout Kosovo. It aims to develop the capacity of youth to better address their needs and become effective actors in a free, open, democratic society in Kosovo.

For more information, see www.kosyouth.net.

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Multiparty public dialogue event

"Making Better Cities Together"



More than 200 representatives of government, civil society and the general public from Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia gathered at the Grand Hotel in Prishtina to discuss good urban governance.

They met from 27 to 28 Sept. at a two-day regional conference, which was a joint initiative of the Office for Good Governance in the Office of the Prime Minister, UN Habitat and ATRC.

The conference focused on partnering to create a strategic approach to urban development planning and management. It provided an opportunity for people from Kosovo and other countries of South-Eastern Europe to share experiences and examples of good practices of urban governance.

Presentations and discussions during the conference concentrated on principles of good urban governance in relation to local development, space use, public involvement, the engagement of civil society in decision-making and transparency in decision-making processes.

Participants agreed that local and central level authorities can use principles of good governance towards more effectively exercising their powers for the benefit of citizens.

Current VAT and Customs Regulations Inhibit Humanitarian Aid in Kosovo, NGOs Say

Representatives of non-government organizations, government institutions and international agencies discussed the rationale for, and impact of, removing value added tax (VAT) and customs and excise duty exemptions for public benefit NGOs during a conference on October 5 at Hotel Victory in Prishtina. The conference was organized by IREX and the Advocacy Training and Resource Center through the Kosovo Civil Society Program, in cooperation with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law.

Until January 1, 2006, NGOs with public benefit status were exempt from value added, customs and excise duty taxes. The current VAT and customs regulations have reinstated taxes for public benefit NGOs. Representatives of public benefit NGOs called for the immediate removal of these taxes. "The current situation has stopped the work of public benefit NGOs, and decreased humanita-



Representatives of NGOs with public benefit status call for removal of value added tax and customs and excise duty exemptions on Oct. 5, Prishtina

rian aid for poor communities in Kosovo," Zef Shala, chairman of the Mother Teresa Association said.

Public benefit status no longer helps NGOs meet the needs of communities in Kosovo, according to Shala.

Artur Krasniqi, representative of the organization "House of Hope," added, "The current situation precludes charity activities of NGOs and this is not fair."

Representatives from UNMIK Pillar IV, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Tax Administration argued that the

emergency phase has ended and taxation would contribute to the Kosovo Consolidated Budget.

Non-government organizations responded that taxing public benefit NGOs would result in more negative consequences than positive benefits for Kosovo's population. The current VAT and Customs regulations preclude humanitarian aid for many poor people, they said, referring to World Bank statistics that show 15% of Kosovars live in destitution.

Edgargo Ruggiero, director of the International Monetary Fund for Kosovo, stressed the importance of setting a system that would enable the work of public benefit NGOs and also avoid possibilities for abuse.

The conference participants concluded that the people of Kosovo suffer more from the current laws than non-government organizations and the dialogue to resolve this critical issue should continue.

NGOs with public benefit status including the Mother Teresa Association, Team Kosova, House of Hope and Loyola Gymnasium held a press conference on Oct. 15 to inform the public about the impact that exemptions from value added, customs and excise duty taxes have on their work. They demanded the removal of these taxes for public benefit NGOs.



NGO Flash News**Anticorruption Agency to Prevent Spread of Corruption in Kosovo**

ATRC organized a roundtable meeting between Hasan Preteni, director of the Agency for Anticorruption and local NGOs on Sept. 22.

Preteni briefed NGO representatives about the work and future activities of this agency and discussed the role and contribution of civil society in fighting corruption in Kosovo.

"The Agency for Anticorruption does not solve the issue of corruption," he said. "It is a service citizens can use to fight this phenomenon. Therefore the agency is transparent and open to cooperation."

Participants urged this agency to focus its work on preventing the spread of corruption in Kosovo.

Youth from Kosovo and Serbia Discuss Future Relations

Young people from Kosovo and Serbia debated future relations during a public discussion organized by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights on Nov. 3 at ATRC.

They shared similar opinions on future bilateral relations. They agreed that regardless of Kosovo's future political status, these two countries should establish "good neighbor" relations, which would contribute to regional stability.

For more information contact: ksoffice@yih.org.

NGO funding opportunities**REC SECTOR Program Supports Environmental Civil Society Organizations in South Eastern Europe**

Merita Fazliu Mehmed, project manager at the Regional Environmental Center

(REC) Field Office in Kosovo, informed local NGO representatives about a call for SECTOR Program national and regional grants at a meeting organized by ATRC and REC on Oct. 11. She presented REC's funding objectives, priorities, application guidelines and grant timeline. She also answered NGO representatives' questions.

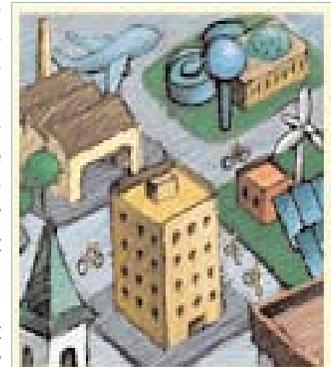
"The SECTOR grant program aims to enable civil society actors to address

urban environmental and sustainable urban development issues in South Eastern Europe," Mehmed stated. "The support should result in strengthening civil society to increase community awareness about conditions and possible solutions to problems in the environmental sector (particularly environmental and health issues)," she added. With support from REC, organizations should promote changes through environmental lobbying, advocacy and acting as government and industry watchdogs, she said.

The REC SECTOR grant program is supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

Details about the program can be found at: <http://kos.rec.org>.

Donor presentations are part of an ATRC program that seeks to link NGOs with funding opportunities and donors with NGOs that have similar interests.



Details about REC SECTOR program can be found at: <http://kos.rec.org>

Introducing a local NGO**Kosovar Stability Initiative Researches Prishtina's Past, Future Prospects**

The Kosovar Stability Initiative (IKS) is an independent, non profit, think tank that conducts socio-economic research and analyzes a variety of socio-economic phenomena in Kosovo and the region.

Founded in 2004, IKS offers innovative and policy-relevant research aiming to initiate debates on issues of importance for Kosovo's future development. It combines European Stability Initiative (ESI) research methods with a Kosovar approach



Prishtina's first cultural heritage map

to research.

Currently, IKS in partnership with ESI is uncovering the story of Prishtina: its socio-economic development in the recent past and its prospects for the future.

As part of this project, IKS published a discussion paper on Prishtina's Cultural Heritage this year which can be read at www.iksweb.org.

For more information visit this website or contact: info@iksweb.org



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New publications

"Our Bodies, Ourselves - For the New Century" A Book by and for Women

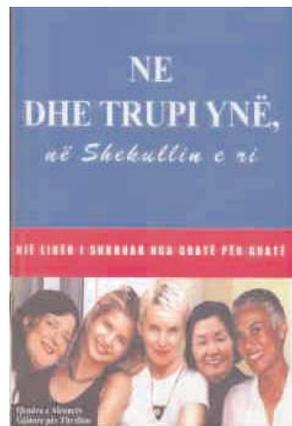
"Our Bodies, Ourselves - For the New Century" is now available for Kosovar women through an initiative of the Kosovar Gender Studies Center (KGSC).

"This book is known as a bible for women's health," Luljeta Vuniqi, director of KGSC, said at the public release of the book on Sept. 22 at ATRC.

Published for the first time in 1984 by the Center for Women's Health in Boston, USA, "Our Bodies, Ourselves" was written by and for women. Since then, four million copies of the book have been sold around the world.

"The book serves as a guide to women's health, regardless of their ethnicity, race, religion or geographic background," Vuniqi said.

The initiative to publish this book in Kosovo was funded by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society and supported by UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNFPA.



For more information
contact: info@kgscenter.org.

Minority Rights Advocacy in the European Union: A Guide for NGOs in South East Europe

This unique guide on minority rights advocacy in the European Union aims to empower minority and human rights activists from South East Europe (SEE) to advocate successfully for the inclusion of minority issues in their country's EU accession process and improved protection of minority rights.

It is a publication of the NGO "Minority Rights Group International" (www.minority-rights.org) and addresses issues which are crucial for a thorough understanding of minority rights advocacy opportunities within the EU, including those issues which will be applicable once SEE states become EU members.

The first chapter introduces the EU, its evolution from an economic association to an ever-growing political union, its institutional structure and the relevant decision-making processes. The second chapter discusses the EU policy toward the region and the nature of its engagement ranging from conflict management, the provision of reconstruction and development aid, to the enlargement process. The third chapter describes the EU standards for minority protection in the context of the enlargement process, as well as the instruments and mechanisms for minority protection available to member states.

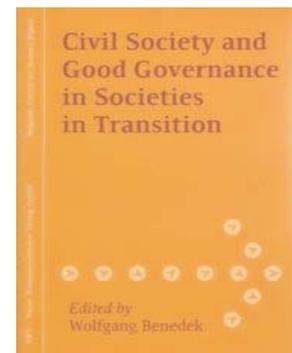
This article is taken from Balkan Academic News. The full text of the guide is available at: http://www.minorityrights.org/admin/Download/pdf/MRG_EUguide.pdf.

For further information contact: MRG.Europe@mr@gmail.org.

Civil Society and Good Governance in Societies in Transition

What is the impact of civil society on good governance in societies in transition?

A new book sets out to find the answers.



In this collection, scholars and practitioners from seven South East European countries describe the role of civil society and clarify its relationship to the promotion of good governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Describing the past challenges and future prospects of civil society, the contributors reflect on issues such as the legal framework of NGOs, their funding situation and the institutionalization of cooperation between governments and civil society. The book concludes that civil society plays an essential role for societal development and the rule of law, in particular in post-conflict situations. Governments are encouraged to seize this potential of civil society.

This article is taken from Balkan Academic News.

For more information contact: office@nww.at or visit www.nww.at