KODI’s RELEASES REPORT CRITICIZING KOSOVO GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

Pristina, 18 Nov. — The Kosovo Research and Documentation Institute (KODI), a Pristina-based think-tank, presented their policy analysis report entitled Kosovo Assembly: For the People or for the Party at an ATRC public discussion. Funded by Kosovo NGO Advocacy Project (KNAP) / Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI), the report analyzed how a policy/law is drafted and implemented and the key governing institutions and players involved in the drafting process.

According to the study, some difficulties related to drafting laws include little if any legislativa experience exemplified by the lack of debate on draft laws in the Assembly; lack of cooperation among and between assembly leaders; and, lack of working relationship between the Assembly and the UNMIK Office of the Legal Advisor.

KODI’s report examined how the current government functions by analyzing the work of four parliamentary committees and their counterpart Ministries: (i) Trade and Industry, (ii) Labor and Social Welfare, (iii) Environment and Spatial Planning, and (iv) Education and Science. In addition to the respective ministers and committee chairs, the authors interviewed the respective advisors, International Secretaries, the OSCE Assembly Monitor and Coordinator of the Assembly Support Initiatives.

At the discussion, KODI representatives commented that the Parliament’s slow approval process for laws in the assembly could be due to the UNMIK legal office. “The myth around them is true; they are completely inaccessible and [...] quite uncooperative,” a KODI representative said in reference to the legal office, which Kosovars have described as a phantom-like secret agency, out of the media and behind closed doors.

Fron Nazi, KNAP Chief of Party, said that not only civil society but also the press and other institutions should demand more responsibility from the Assembly and UNMIK.

More than 50 participants comprised of journalists, academics, NGO representatives and local and international governing authorities attended the lively discussion, which received wide media coverage from three national television stations and five daily newspapers.

MUNICIPALITIES ASK: WHOSE HOUSE IS IT?

reference is to the ATRC/Gjilan municipality joint project “Our House, Our Colors” campaign that challenged Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) control of municipal land and development.

ATRC, with a small grant from the State Development and Assistance Act (FDI), in cooperation with the Gjilan Municipality implemenatation group (EWMi), in the process opened the way for municipalities to establish economic development programs. Second, it outlined the responsibilities of the two levels of government in Kosovo: the UN and Kosovo-elected bodies.

The project also initiated debate regarding the division of local and central government and tested the willingness of municipal representatives and the central government to address decentralization issues.

The limited experience of municipal leaders and civil servants means they have only begun to understand their role in the economic development. Decentralizing municipalities further at this time would entail redistricting the current 28 municipalities to over 100, which would put a strain on already limited human resources. Such a move would also discount the municipality’s already-initiated economic plans.

While Haziri noted that working groups from local institutions had the opportunity to review the most recent recommendations, he voiced concern that the plan was based on ethnic foundations. “This makes possible the legalization of Serb enclaves and parallel structures,” Haziri said.

In forming KTA, international governing bodies violated previous decentralization plans, which gave more power to municipal actors than to a central governing authority such as KTA.

The central government has not responded to the decentralization plan or to the debate initiated by ATRC’s project. Furthermore, they have yet to take a position regarding local government reform or municipal property and KTA.
**News Brief**

**Government Starts Consultation Process for Basic Youth Law**

**PRISTINA, 22 Nov.** - The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports/Department of Youth (DoY) started the consultation process on the preliminary draft of the Basic Youth Law prepared in cooperation with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and UNICEF. The process includes hearings, working groups, group discussions, seminars, etc. with different stakeholders, including local youth NGOs. The draft will be submitted to the Ministry by 15 Dec. 2003.

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**FDI/KNAP Grantee Projects**

**Euroecologists Advocate for Forest Protection**

**PEJA Sept.** - Euroecologists, an NGO based in Radavc, a village by the mountains in Peja and funded by FDI, initiated a new project "Protection of forests, planting new trees and advocacy in practice".

Through interviews with the Regional Directorate of Forests and the Forest Institute and public discussions, the project aims to identify all factors influencing the preservation, management, usage and cultivation of forests. The project's goal is to conclude with a new regulation on forest preservation.

Euroecologists organized a public debate, covered by TV Dukagjini, on "The devastation of forests in the Peja region by the human factor", which was attended by representatives from the Directorate of Forests, the Forest Institute, Kosovo Protection Corps (TMK), Municipal Directorates for Agriculture and Forests, Forest Inspection Unit and other environmental NGOs and interested citizens. Discussants identified the following devastating factors:

- a small number of employees in the respective directorates;
- Event UN laws, inspectors lack protective weapons for inspecting forests;
- Lack of communication radios;
- a high level of devastation in forests bordering Albania, Serbia and Montenegro.

Discussants also recommended that better cooperation with TMK would also improve preservation. Following the discussion, Euroecologists began advocating for better conditions for forestry staff such as permission to bear guns, transport vehicles, and training.

Euroecologists also assisted the Directorate of Forests in planning new trees, and young ecologists organized an action in which primary and high school students from the village volunteered.

Euroecologists' next debate will be held with participants from the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), TMK, criminal and minor offence courts, municipal officials and representatives from Regional Directorate for Environment Preservation.

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**KWI Investigates Role of Women in Politics**

**GJAKOVA, The Kosovo Woman Initiative (KWI)** recently concluded their project, "Women in Politics", which analyzed the degree of female involvement in the political process, ways to involve them, and objective and subjective obstacles affecting their involvement.

The project identified steps for Kosovar women to have a more influential role in politics and not to serve as just a statistic," Leonora Kulludra, KWI representative said.

For the project KWI first analyzed the willingness of women to vote and their political views. KWI suggested: what factors influence the way women vote; what do they think about women in politics; and if they are prepared to become more involved in the political process. The results were published in How Would the Future Be If You Decide As Well.

The second part of KWI's project involved surveying 44 female candidates running for the position of advisor in the 2002 Municipal Assembly elections. The women surveyed included a diverse sample from seven Dukagjin region municipalities, which was intentionally chosen to obtain the most realistic picture possible.

After compiling the report, KWI worked with female councilors from the Municipal Assembly to draft "The Platform for a Woman in a Political Party". The platform was delivered to Aqif Shehu, President of Gjakova's Municipal Assembly as well as to the presidents of political party branches in Gjakova.

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**"Reform 2004" Coalition Unites for Election Reform**

**PRISHTINA 18 Nov.** - With funding from FDI, International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS), "Reform 2004" plans to involve a multi-ethnic coalition of more than 150 NGOs and citizen groups from every municipality in Kosovo to increase citizen participation in the reform of Kosovo's electoral system.

The coalition seeks to identify deficiencies in the current system and make specific recommendations for reform. The coalition has mounted a national grassroots education and advocacy campaign that involved citizens in the debate on electoral reform and that will communicate recommendations to decision-makers in the National Assembly, OSCE and UNMIK.

The coalition's objectives are:

1) to gather civil society and citizen input on deficiencies within Kosovo's electoral laws and systems and to develop a set of recommendations to overcome those deficiencies;
2) to increase citizen participation in the process of election law reform in Kosovo through citizen-based advocacy in support of those recommendations; and 3) to improve the election law to increase accountability of elected officials in Kosovo.

The project's ongoing activities include intensive lobbying, individual meetings of the network, expertise for voters with disabilities, brochures, television advertisement and debates, posters, the intensive collection of signatures and the publication of a final report. Kosovo's largest television station, RTK, has agreed to act as a partner in the project and to contribute to publicity efforts.

The program also plans to evaluate the advocacy campaign after completion to identify the challenges and successes, which would benefit civil society in future elections.

"Reform 2004", organized by Council for Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF), Kosovo Institute for Research and Development Policies (KIPRED) and The Forum, possesses much experience in electoral issues in Kosovo. KIPRED is engaged in the establishment of a working group and drafting of the law; The Forum plays a key role in advocacy and leading the campaign; and CDHRF is responsible for meeting with NGOs and Directors to continually expand the network of participating actors.
**NGO Treats “Cancerous” Corruption**

**PRISTINA, 20 Nov.** - With funding and support from FDI, USAID and East-West Management Institute, HANKIKOS held a demonstration in “Mother Teresa” square as part of their project entitled **“Free Access for Everyone”**. It aims to advocate for laws and regulations with standards that create a physical environment without barriers. The demonstration's objective was to raise awareness among institutions and citizens to meet international standards for handicap access; provide equal access to public premises for all; symbolically mark public places where corruption is manifest in everyday life; and help citizens to discuss ways to address the problem.

**Century 21** held roundtables to discuss ways to address the identified social fields hit by corruption, and the conclusions from their research were presented in four public discussions on corruption in education, healthcare, forests, government institutions and public services. After each discussion they collected citizen suggestions and organized a press conference.

**What is FDI and What Does It Do?**

Established in October 2001, the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI) is a Kosovo-based foundation that makes grants to NGOs and associations working to establish a prosperous, democratic and tolerant society in Kosovo through its programs, FDI supports:

- Accountability and transparency in government;
- Increased and more active participation of citizens in public life and decision-making at all levels;
- Inclusion of women, minorities and youth in all spheres of life;
- Training in organizational management; and
- Capacity building for Kosovo NGOs, particularly for those engaged in advocacy efforts.

FDI is a leader in the funding and promotion of programs in human rights, gender issues, ecology, public participation in government decision-making processes, and market economy reform. Strategically located in Gjakova, Kosovo, FDI reaches rural areas often neglected by other donor programs. In its effort to lead by example, FDI has successfully:

- Organized local leaders from various parties to participate in public debates;
- Established regional umbrella organizations, NGO Fora, as advocates on local and regional policy issues;
- Developed grant-giving programs to support the participation of youth, minorities and women in decision-making bodies; and
- Taken a pro-active approach to fight corruption and encourage transparency in local and central government institutions.

As a reliable, USAID-certified fiscally sound and reliable grant-making institution, FDI ensures that funds entrusted to it are handled properly by:

- Using grant-tracking and financial systems that meet international standards;
- Adhering to a conflict of interest policy and decision-making procedures designed to ensure transparency in the grant-making process; and
- Employing an experienced and qualified staff to oversee the process.

**News of the Month**

The long-awaited promulgation of the Law on Access to Official Documents took place on 6 Nov. The public is now permitted access to PISG, municipality and PISTA official documents in a timely manner.

ATRC, IKDO, NDI and IREX helped to draft the law and advocated for its passage.

For the complete text of the law, go to [www.unmikonline.org](http://www.unmikonline.org).
WHAT'S NEW AT ATRC?

ATRC JOINS ONLINE LIBRARY NETWORK:
WWW.KOSOVOLIBRARIESNETWORK.ORG

PRISTINA, 12 Nov. — Kosovo Law Centre (KLC) announced the launch of the first online library network in Kosovo at a press conference at the University of Pristina’s Human Rights Centre in the Law Faculty. The network provides the public with access to the library catalogues of several rule of law and advocacy organizations in Kosovo. The network substantially expands the legal community’s access to information and helps libraries better meet resource needs by allowing them to coordinate their collections.

The Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC) has already joined the network, which enables both KLC members and the general public to reserve materials at network members’ libraries. Anyone can access this service directly through the website (www.kosovolibrariesnetwork.org), which includes information in English, Albanian and Macedonian about each organization and its library schedule. From the website, people can select their desired book, check its availability and later obtain a copy by visiting the appropriate library. Individuals will be notified as to the rules and procedures of borrowing books at each location.

In addition to ATRC, initial network members include KLC, ABA/CEELI, University of Pristina Human Rights Centre and the Council of Europe. The American Bar Association and Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) assisted with the network’s development and it was supported by USAID.

KLC plans to continually expand network membership.

Do you have suggestions for ATRC?

Or for ATRC’s newsletter?

THE ADVOCATE

Please contact Dafina, dafina@advocacy-center.org.

GUEST ARTICLE: “ZËRI” DAILY NEWSPAPER UNMIK ESTABLISHES “TASK FORCE” TO DISCOVER AND COMBAT CORRUPTION

PRISTINA 7 Nov. - Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Harry Holker has made an executive decision to establish a “Joint Investigative Unit” against corruption and bribes, a move perceived by UN officials as “a great initiative in the war against corruption”.

The SRSG spokesperson Sunil Narula said that UNMIK believes in a “Zero Tolerance” policy for corruption. “We have always been concerned with statements in the media surrounding corruption” he stated explaining the reasons that led the establishment of the anticorruption unit.

The Prime Minister himself attacked the SRSG in a London newspaper saying that some officials from the UN are tolerating or are involving themselves in corruption. “It is our commitment to fighting a war against corruption that pushed the SRSG to sign this directive. Time after time we undertake initiatives against corruption. As you know, the Investigative Financial Unit was established in the beginning of this year. The police were also involved in combating corruption. This is all progress achieved by our mission. ”

Narula further said that UNMIK believes not only the UN administration will be a ‘possible target’ of this unit. He said that the anticorruption unit is designed to “increase coordination in discovering bribes and corruption within UNMIK and the Kosovar Self-Governing Institutions.”

The anticorruption unit shall consist of representatives from the Internal Office for Monitoring of UN services, the Anti-corruption European Office and the Financial Investigative Unit.

“The Anticorruption Unit has the authorization to initiate, run and coordinate administrative investigations in order to identify bribes and corruption in UNMIK, provincial institutions, independent offices established under the authority of the Constitutional Framework, public enterprises, other entities operating with public assets and every institution’s or institutions being investigated [and] the investigations shall conform to privacy/confidential rights as well as human rights standards,” the spokesperson added. The unit shall receive its findings and make recommendations to the head of UNMIK. “When necessary and possible the cases shall be submitted to the authorities for law enforcement.”

ADVOCACY CALENDAR

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat
1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20
21 22 23 24 25 26 27
28 29 30 31

Need a space for your event? Contact Dafina at dafina@advocacy-center.org to learn what ATRC has to offer!