

THE ADVOCATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Euroecologists Restore Forests</i>	2
<i>"Women in Politics"</i>	2
<i>Election "Reform 2004"</i>	2
<i>"Corruption is a Cancer"</i>	3
<i>Handikos Rallies for Rights</i>	3
<i>Citizen's Govern the Schools</i>	3
<i>All About FDI</i>	3
<i>ATRC Joins New Online Library Database!</i>	4
<i>Guest Article: UNMIK Anti-Corruption Task Force</i>	4
<i>ATRC Calendar</i>	4

Upcoming Events

- "Public Participation Regulation at the Local Level" Public Discussion, **2 Dec.**
- "Lessons Learned: Slovakia" Public Discussion, **17 Dec.**
- AvoKo bimonthly meeting, TBA
- NGO Taxes in Kosovo and Albania Conference **4-7 Dec.**, Tirana, Albania.

KODI'S RELEASES REPORT CRITICIZING KOSOVO GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

PRISHTINA, 18 Nov. — The Kosovar Research and Documentation Institute (KODI), a Prishtina-based think-tank, presented their policy analysis report entitled *Kosovar 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 study 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 legislative 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) Environ-

ment 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.



"Nothing for us, without us", citizens demand a role in the drafting of public access/construction laws at a rally in Mother Teresa Square. For the full story, "Handikos Rallies for Access..." see page 3.



Shpend Ahmeti (left), Lutfi Haziri Mayor of Gjiilan, Gani Asilani and Dafina Zherka display the poster and billboard created by ATRC during the "Our House, Our Colors" campaign.

MUNICIPALITIES ASK: WHOSE HOUSE IS IT?

reference is to the ATRC/Gjiilan 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 East-West Management Institute (EWMi), in cooperation with the Gjiilan Municipality implemented the Our House, Our Colors campaign to initiate and stimulate dialogue between the municipality, citizens and central governing institutions.

ATRC created three billboards and 3000 fliers with a multi-colored map that illustrated if property was municipally, socially or privately owned, as defined by KTA, UNMIK and the municipality. The fliers provided contact information for each governing agency. The maps assisted businesses, potential investors, municipal officials and citizens in

identifying potential areas of development.

The project accomplished two major goals. First, it improved the process of local government reform by including all stakeholders in the process and opening 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 functions and powers in governing and 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

PRISHTINA, 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.



"The goal of life is living in agreement with nature." —Zeno

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 Directorate 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;
- due to UN laws, inspectors lack protective weapons for inspecting forests;
- lack of communication radios;



Myftar Lokaj, Technical Director for the Directorate of Forests works with youth to plant trees in Peja as a part of Euroecologists' project.

—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, transportation vehicles and training.

Euroecologists also assisted the Directorate of Forests in

planting 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.

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 asked: 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.

"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 involves citizens in the debate on electoral reform and that will communicate recommenda-

tions 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 current Kosovar 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 ac-

countability 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 advertisements 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 this effort 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 and credibility on 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 citizens to continually expand the network of participating actors.

Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.

—George Bernard Shaw

NGO TREATS "CANCEROUS" CORRUPTION



PEJA, Sept.—

With a grant from the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI), N G O Century 21 recently completed its project, "Corruption is a Cancer in Society", which addressed corruption issues in Kosovar society. The project aimed to establish transparency and to address corruption by educating the public and allowing citizens to report corrupt practices.

Century 21's final project involved publishing a magazine called "Voice of Citizen", which provided information on corruption and ways to fight it. They

also established an anti-corruption commission in Peja's health center, developed an anti-corruption hotline and installed anti-corruption boxes in front of Post Telecom of Kosovo (PTK) and Kosovo Electric Corporation (KEK) in Peja.

They distributed posters that focused on corruption issues and widely publicized their hotline and anti-corruption boxes in the media.

After researching citizen opinion to identify the social sectors where corruption is most present and also in what forms corruption is manifested in everyday life, Century 21 wrote a report, which included citizen's complaints from the anti-corruption boxes and hotlines.

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, governing institutions and public services.

After each discussion they collected citizen suggestions and organized a press conference.



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 KTA 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.

HANDIKOS RALLIES FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC PREMISES

PRISHTINA, 20 Nov. - With funding and support from FDI, USAID and East-West Management Institute, HANDIKOS held a dem-

onstration in "Mother Teresa" square as part of their project "Free Access for Everyone". It aims to advocate for laws and regulations with standards that create a physical environment without barriers.



A citizen tries the newly opened ramp by Mother Teresa square, displaying his sign "access for us also."

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 that are not accessible; and signal new paths for disabled persons near the Grand Hotel Prishtina and Kosovo Electric Corporation (KEK) in Mother Teresa square.

The campaign is aimed at the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and other institutions dealing with construction in public areas.

At an upcoming roundtable with representatives from the Ministry, Directorate, Faculty of Architecture, students and disabled persons, participants will provide suggestions for a brochure with international standards for better handicap access to public premises.

NGO INVOLVES PARENTS IN GOVERNING SCHOOLS

GJAKOVA - With funds from FDI, the "Woman Association" in Gjakova completed a

project entitled "The school is public - let's all govern it".

The project aimed to



establish cooperation between schools, parents, students and the local administration to change laws, or to create laws where none currently exist, regarding primary and secondary education. The project involved parent and citizen participation in school governance.

Parents, teachers and educators gathered at ATRC to discuss the project's goals and progress. Subsequent advocacy activities included a local and Kosovo-wide media campaign.

Finally, a regulation on public use of school grounds, drafted by lawyers from the Woman Association and legal experts from the municipality, was presented to the municipal authorities and sent to the Assembly for approval.

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.



FUNDACIONI PËR INICIATIVË DEMOKRATIKE
FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES



Is the ATRC library missing a book you want? Let Dafina know what books you'd like added to the ATRC collection.



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WHAT'S NEW AT ATRC?

**ATRC JOINS ONLINE LIBRARY NETWORK:
WWW.KOSVOLIBRARIESNETWORK.ORG**

PRISHTINA, 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 Prishtina'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.kosvolibrariesnetwork.org), which includes information in English, Albanian and Serbian 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 Prishtina 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

PRISHTINA 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 to 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," Niraxh Sing, a UN Pillar I/Police Service and Justice spokesperson said.

One of *Zeri's* sources said that another reason for Harry Holker to establish an anticorruption unit is that the country from which he comes, Finland, has the least amount of corruption, a fact proven by the latest research. Holker wanted to apply this practice in Kosovo, our source said.

Spokesperson Narula said that 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 Anticorruption 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, provisional institutions, independent offices established under the authority of the Constitutional

Framework, public enterprises, other entities operating with public assets and every institution conducting activities, which is formed completely or partially by the means of the Consolidated Budget of Kosova," Narula said.

"Members of this unit will have direct access to the premises, materials, recordings, equipment and information of all the enterprises or the institutions being investigated [and] the investigations shall conform to privacy/confidential rights as well as human rights standards," the spokesperson added. The unit shall report 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 14:00 Public Participation Discussion	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 9:00-17:00 ATRC and Star Network Training: Monitoring and Evaluation	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 14:00 Lessons Learned: Slovakia Discussion	18	19	20
21	22	23	24			
28	29	30	27			