The Advocate

CONTENTS

Page 2
ATRC Calls for NGO Proposals for Partnership and Networking Grants
Civil Society Calls for Credible and Transparent Investigation of the Protest
"Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in the Peja Region"
Albanian Journal of Politics

Page 3
Women’s Peace Coalition sends letter to Martti Ahtisaari
"Government Should Stimulate Citizens to Pay Taxes"
Pristina's International Summer University 2007

Page 4
European Adult Education Association Helps NGOs to Work Together
NGO Coalition Drafts Strategy for Cooperation with Montenegro Government
The State and NGOs in the EU Accession Process

ATRC Provides Opportunity for Kosovo Citizens to Gather Information about Ahtisaari’s Proposal

ATRC in cooperation with thirty local NGOs will organize community roundtables in 30 municipalities of Kosovo and seven regional town hall meetings during the next two months, in an attempt to inform civil society organizations and citizens about the content of the Kosovo settlement proposal.

These public events are an opportunity for citizens to gather information, make their concerns heard, and ask questions about the proposal of Martti Ahtisaari, UN Secretary General Envoy in Charge of the Negotiations on the future status of Kosovo.

Ahtisaari unveiled his package proposal on February 2, after a year of negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade in Vienna, Austria. The panelists participating in ATRC roundtable meetings will be individuals who have specific expertise on the proposal. Local and central government, NGO, media and business representatives, will participate the meetings, as well. “The aim of the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement is to define the provisions necessary for a future Kosovo that is viable, sustainable and stable. It includes detailed measures to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of communities and their members, the effective decentralization of government, and the preservation and protection of cultural and religious heritage”, the executive summary of Ahtisaari’s status proposal says.

For the full proposal, visit www.unosek.org

ATRC Trains NGOs on Project Proposal Writing

ATRC trainers conducted a proposal writing workshop on Feb. 26-27, participated by local NGO representatives interested to apply for the fifth round of Partnership and Networking Grants of IREX/Kosovo Civil Society Program. The workshop enabled participants to develop projects from initial ideas to establishing goals and objectives, proposal implementation plans and budgeting.

The training was part of this year’s workshop series, which is open to all registered Kosovo NGOs, as ATRC clients. NGOs that are not registered, but are interested in receiving ATRC services (free of charge for Kosovo NGOs), can fill in the registration form that is available on www.advocacy-center.org.

For more information, contact training@advocacy-center.org

This newsletter is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of ATRC and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.
NGO funding opportunities

ATRC Calls for NGO Proposals for Partnership and Networking Grants

ATRC announced on Feb. 17 a Request for Applications for the fifth round of the IREX/Kosovo Civil Society Program Partnership and Networking Grants for Kosovo NGOs.

Partnership and Networking Grants will be awarded to eligible NGOs whose proposals contain a strong partnership and networking component between NGOs and NGOs and other sectors (local or central government, private businesses).

Projects should also address critical issues in any of three grant target areas: transparency and anti-corruption, community development or ethnic reconciliation and conflict mitigation.

Duration of these grants is 6-9 months. NGOs are eligible to apply for grant funding up to $25,000. The deadline for submitting proposals is March 15, 2007.

A comprehensive and detailed RFA package (including program description, eligibility criteria, application timelines, selection criteria and review process, required application forms and proposal guidelines and format) may be obtained from ATRC at Agim Ramadani, Nr.15, Prishtina, or downloaded from ATRC's website: www.advocacy-center.org.

The Kosovo Civil Society Program (KCSP) is a three-year initiative funded by USAID and implemented by IREX. The goal of the program 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.

For more information, call 038 244 810 or e-mail grants@advocacy-center.org.

Kosovo civil society’s reaction to the violent protest in Prishtina on Feb.10

Civil Society Calls for Credible and Transparent Investigation of the Protest

Civil society representatives discussed aftermath of the protest organized on Feb. 10 in Prishtina by Self-Determination, a movement campaigning for immediate independence.

Two demonstrators died of injuries sustained in clashes after Kosovo and UN police fired teargas and rubber bullets to stop a crowd storming government buildings. The aftermath of this protest was discussed on Feb.14 at a roundtable meeting organized by "Civic Initiative."

The meeting aimed to initiate a public debate about the police violence against demonstrators. The discussion focused on the police’s reaction at the protest; transparency of the investigative committee; and who should take responsibility for the death of two demonstrators.

They demanded that representatives from Ombudsperson's Office and civil society to be included in the investigative committee in order to guarantee credibility of the report.

"These events are not facing the proper reaction, especially from the third sector, civil society", publicist Shkelzen Maliqi said.

In addition, participants concluded that:

The death of two citizens, injury of dozens of demonstrators and disproportional reaction of security forces damage efforts of building a democratic society that respects human rights.

Investigations initiated by governing institutions should identify responsibility of decision-makers responsible for security in Kosovo.

Government of Kosovo, UNMIK and other decision-makers responsible for security should immediately prohibit the use of rubber bullets by police...

For the full letter, contact: initiativeqytetare@gmail.com

Source: Balkan Academic News
The Women's Peace Coalition sent Martti Ahtisaari, UN Secretary General EnvoY in Charge of the Negotiations on the future status of Kosovo, a letter on February 12 supporting the independence of Kosovo.

The letter is signed by Kosovo Women's Network and the Women in Black Network of Serbia which launched the Women's Peace Coalition in March 2006 as an independent citizens' initiative.

The letter read:

Women from Kosovo and Serbia established the Women's Peace Coalition to monitor negotiations regarding Kosovo's final political status. As efforts to resolve the future status of Kosovo intensify, we believe it is necessary to remind you, the negotiation teams, and the international community of some very essential points.

First, the future status of Kosovo must be resolved taking into consideration the will of the Albanian majority population. Kosovo's path to European Integration must occur outside the borders of the Serbian state, and must include the full protection of individual and collective human rights for all citizens of Kosovo and Serbia.

Second, cultural sites should not be used as political tools toward the homogenization of communities in Kosovo. This will lead to the isolation and division of communities, which could contribute to future violence. Instead, cultural sites should be considered part of a heterogeneous history that involves all ethnic groups and be used to promote joint ownership in all communities' inter-ethnic heritage as well as their shared future...

For the full letter, visit: www.womensnetwork.org.

"Supporting a Just and Lasting Solution for Kosovo"

"Government Should Stimulate Citizens to Pay Taxes"

NGO, media and business representatives gathered at ATRC on February 16 to discuss the role of citizens towards public taxes at a cross-sector roundtable discussion, organized by the local NGO “New Millennium.”

The roundtable discussion focused on how citizens' taxes affect budget sustainability, overall development and improving the quality of public services.

"Kosovo citizens are not aware of the importance of paying taxes in order to have a sustainable and efficient budget system," Sakhîp Imeri, Deputy Director of Tax Administration of Kosovo said. He urged citizens to pay taxes “because capital investments are financed by public taxes”.

Lumir Abdixhiku from "Riinvest Institute" criticized the government for its wrong fiscal policies. “Government has not initiated any project that would stimulate citizens to pay taxes,” he said. Representatives from civil society stressed that better public services would encourage more people to pay taxes. According to them, compliance with taxes requires good governance.

For more information, contact: ojqmilieniumiiri@yahoo.com
Education

European Adult Education Association Helps NGOs to Work Together

European Adult Education Association (EAEA) is a European NGO with 114 member organizations from 41 countries working in the fields of adult learning. EAEA advocates for adult learning and for NGOs working in this field. It organizes information seminars to raise awareness about activities of EU programs and policy developments. EAEA also organizes training about sources of European funding for adult learning.

EAEA promotes the development of adult learning at European level and lobbies to international bodies so that they adopt plans and policies which respond to the needs of the adult population in Europe. It encourages co-operation in adult learning in Europe and helps NGOs to work together and play an active role in the international scene. The main roles of this association are policy advocacy for lifelong learning at a European level; publications and training; international co-operation; etc.

EAEA Eastern Europe Link Office: Katalin Varga (contact person); Budapest, Hungary; e-mail: mnt@neptoiska.hu

For more information, visit: www.eaea.org

Source: EAEA

NGO/government cooperation

NGO Coalition Drafts Strategy for Cooperation with Montenegro Government

The NGO Coalition "Co-operation for a Common Goal" prepared in December the draft Strategy of Relations between the Government and NGOs in Montenegro.

This coalition also prepared the "NGO Code of Conduct" and "Structure of Public Funding for NGOs". These papers can be read at the Coalition's web-site: http://www.koalicijanvo.cg.yu/

"Cooperation for a Common Goal" was founded in May 2006 to establish institutional mechanisms for cooperation between NGOs and the Government.

Source: One World Southeast Europe

New publication

The State and NGOs in the EU Accession Process

Alumni Association of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies in Sarajevo, Bosnia, published in February the results of a research on the role of NGO sector in EU integration processes in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia.

This publication is entitled "The State and NGOs in the EU Accession Process in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina: through partnership to success".

The link to download it is: http://www.acips.ba/TheStateandNGO.pdf

Source: Balkan Academic News