



An EU funded project managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo



Report from Conference

“Citizens views on key security matters in Kosovo”

23 October 2013, Prishtinë/Priština, Hotel Emerald

Introduction

On 23 October 2013, FIQ and AKTIV, supported by Saferworld, within the frame of the Project “Strengthening Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo to contribute effectively in drafting security policies and decision-making”, held the conference entitled “**Citizens views on key security matters in Kosovo**”. This conference is part of a project financially supported by the EU, represented by the European Union Office in Kosovo, within the Civil Society Instrument for Kosovo.

During the period of June-July 2013, FIQ and AKTIV organizations, in collaboration with seven local CSOs, have organized community dialogues in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Shtërpcë/Štrpce, Klinë/Klina, Gjakova/Djakovica and Prizren/Prizren. These meetings gathered various society groups to discuss on key matters affective security and safety in Kosovo, thereby influencing the daily lives of citizens. These meetings, and 11 semi-structured interviews, were attended by over 135 people. The interviews were held by the IDK within the Prishtinë/Priština Security Forum, and the Conflict Prevention Forum in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica north. Information acquired from the process was processed through an office-based review.

The conference published the research paper called “Citizens views on key security and safety matters in Kosovo”, the findings of which were presented by Adem Gashi from the IDK.

The Conference was opened by Mrs. Dajana Berisha, FIQ Executive Director, while introductory words were given also by Mr. Melvin Asin, D/Director of EU Office Cooperation Department, under Kosovo Civil Society Program, and Mr. Astrit Istrefi, Chairman of Saferworld for Europe and Central Asia.

Mr. Melvin Asin stated that the project is rather direct, and by it, we want to deal with prevention and consequences. “We consider that the engagement of credible civil society is crucial for security policies, for the influence in creating a responsible and accountable security sectors. From the EU perspective, we want to see this participation of citizens and civil society, and therefore, we continue to support CSOs in this process of constructive dialogue with the government”, stated Mr. Asin.

Mr. Astrit Istrefi, on the other hand, focussed on two important matters: public trust in police, and EU-facilitated dialogue or agreements between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade. “On the first item, it is incredible that in the last two-three years, public trust in KP has continuously fallen,

while years before, it used to be the most trusted institution. One must be very diligent in interpreting this. It is an impression of the citizens that the KP must be fast and efficient in its actions. We must take these perceptions rather seriously, since the research has involved many communities in the meetings. Nevertheless, we have a key role in supporting the Police, and we appreciate the progress made in these years, and in practices established. They are open to civil society and public, and are very committed”, stated Mr. Istrefi, while in terms of dialogue, there is obvious progress in agreements, in closing a past chapter, and opening the chapter of future. Civil society has a key role in the process, and it must be seen as an asset in implementing agreements. “We must ensure that the civil society is part of any process in Kosovo, and not to be perceived as a non-contributing factor”.

*Conference was divided into two sessions, details provided below.



Summary of Conference

How to effectively address use of drugs, traffic accidents and citizens' concerns related to police work?

This session was moderated by Mrs. Dajana Berisha, FIQ Executive Director.

Panel members to the session:

Mr. Çlirim Hajdini, Kosovo Police

Mr. Ergin Mediq, D/Director of Regional Police in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, KP (missing)

Mr. Safet Blakaj, Director of Medical/Psycho-Therapy Centre “Labyrinth”

For the Kosovo Police, the declining trust in the institution is rather concerning, and according to them, they are treating this item seriously. The KP has proper strategies and documents to work upon, while cooperation with CSOs is also given attention. The KP stated that it has an Anti-Narcotics Strategy, though the problem of drugs is multi-faceted, and it does not only pertain to the Police, while drug trafficking is a transnational problem.

In terms of figures, in 2004, the starting of drug use by youth involved the average age of 21.6, while in 2012, this average age has fallen to 16.2. In



Kosovo, there are 3,000-5,000 problematic users of drugs. A concern is found with the presence of the so-called new designer drugs. Treatments, prevention, domestic violence, crimes, are very complicated matters.

The largest problem identified by the conference was non-implementation of laws and strategy, which are numerous.

How to effectively communicate agreements between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade to the citizens?

This session was moderated by Mrs. Jana Poljakova, Project Manager, AKTIV.

Panel members to the session:

Mr. Stojan Pelko, EU Office in Kosovo

Mr. Rexhep Selimi, D/Chair of Parliamentary Committee on Security and Internal Affairs

Mrs. Jeta Xharra, BIRN Director

Mr. Zeljko Virijevic, Conflict Prevention Forum

There is full lack of transparency in terms of dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia; lack of



communication on the dialogue with all society levels is perceived as a strategy to get to the end of the process, without elaborating on the agreements reached, and only when the agreement is reached, the people are informed on the process. A common stance is that the dialogue between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade must occur not only between politicians,

but it must be recognized also by the civil society, the people, since it ultimately affects lives of all citizens in Kosovo.

Mr. Stojan Pelko, from the EU Office in Kosovo, presented several views on the report, thereby stating that the lack of vision on the dialogue is not true, while it is not true either that the public is misinformed. Mr. Pelko also stated that the paradox of the dialogue is that at the end, the outcome determines the beginning, while in terms of political reality, although he did not state this in the capacity of an EU official, “People in the north are not represented yet”.

According to Mr. Rexhep Selimi, the agreement was not communicated to the Assembly either, and when transparency is not provided to the Assembly, it cannot be offered to the public.



Conclusions

- **Non-implementation of laws and strategies, and lack of institutional cohesion** continue to be key problems;
- **Traffic safety** – punitive mechanisms, such as avoidance of driving points, are not being implemented, while driving culture is also seen as a problem;
- **Trust in police** – there are different perceptions, though the increased criminality rates are amongst factors affecting trust in the institution, which previously used to rule the top positions of credible institutions;
- **Drugs** – a concerning occurrence is the increasing numbers of users, and declining ages of users, while challenges remain in treatment, prevention and investment in the triangle school-parent-student;
- **Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia:** there is full lack of transparency; lack of communication on the dialogue with societal levels, is perceived as a strategy to get to the end of the process, without elaborating on the agreements reached, and only when the agreement is reached, the people are informed on the process. A common stance is that the dialogue between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade must occur not only between politicians, but it must be recognized also by the civil society, the people, since it ultimately affects lives of all citizens in Kosovo.

Participants

1. Mr. Adem Gashi, IDK
2. Mr. Agim Musliu, SEES
3. Mr. Alain Lapon, UNDP Kossac
4. Ms.. Albana Merja, GLPS
5. Mr. Albion Sherifi, NGO "NA"
6. Mr. Amir Zeqiri, NGO "Change"
7. Mr. Arben Gecaj, Lëvizja Vetëvendosje
8. Ms. Arieta Dragusha, FIQ
9. Mr. Astrit Istrefi, Saferworld
10. Mr. Avdi Kamerolli, Ministry of Infrastructure
11. Mr. Avni Rexha, MASHT
12. Mr. Bedri Uka, NGO "Shpëtimtari"
13. Mr. Behxhet Shala, KLMDNJ
14. Mr. Clirim Hajdini, PK
15. Ms. Dajana Berisha, FIQ
16. Ms. Dee Dee Rodriguez, ICITAP
17. Ms. Diellza Kryeziu, NGO "ETNIKA"
18. Ms. Dragana Djukic, RTK2
19. Ms. Drita Perezic, ICITAP
20. Mr. Edis Prapashtica, PYC
21. Mr. Enver Dugolli, MFSK
22. Mr. Fatlum Kryeziu, KVRL
23. Mr. Ferdinand Nikolla, Saferworld
24. Mr. Ibrahim Arslan, Ombudsperson
25. Mr. Ilir Selmanaj, CITS-translation
26. Mr. Imer Thaci, MPB
27. Mr. Ivo Gjokiq, MDNZ
28. Mr. Jakup Hoti, Ministry of Infrastructure

29. Ms. Jana Poljakova, AKTIV
30. Ms. Jeta Xharra, BIRN
31. Ms. Kaqusha Kamberi, RTV21
32. Ms. Leutrim Novosella, FIQ
33. Mr. Lulzim Fushtica, ICITAP
34. Ms. Lumnije Kika, CITS
35. Mr. Melvin Asin, EU
36. Mr. Michael Marsden, EULEX
37. Mr. Nazim Haliti, FIQ
38. Ms.. Reusser Denise, KFOR LMT
39. Mr. Rexhep Selimi, KPSPB
40. Mr. Rifat Marmullaku, OSCE
41. Mr. Safet Blakaj, Labyrinth
42. Mr. Sasa Viric, CITS
43. Mr. Scheiwiller Thomas, KFOR LMT
44. Mr. Stojan Pelko, EUCR
45. Ms. Suzana Emini, NGO "Ruka+Ruci"
46. Mr. Zeljko Virijevec, DSF
47. Mr. Zorica Bulatovic, RKS



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