

Enhancing Minority Integration through Improved Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo

Objectives

The objectives of the project are to: 1) facilitate communication between representatives of the minority communities, representatives of the municipal governments of Prizren and Pejë/Peć and representatives of the Language Commission; 2) instruct each individual on the content of the Law on the Use of Languages and its meaning for their respective municipality; 3) develop regulations on the use of languages within each target municipality so that the express rights of the communities are clearly stated and understood by each group responsible for the implementation of the legislation; 4) disseminate information about and the content of the aforementioned regulations and linguistic rights of the minority communities.

Background

In 2006, the Assembly of Kosovo passed a comprehensive legislation known as the Law on the Use of Languages, which aimed to promote the multi-ethnic nature of the province and protect the linguistic identities of Kosovo's minority groups. The text of the law provides for extensive language rights for Kosovo's various minority communities. It first and foremost establishes both Albanian and Serbian as official languages, equal in all capacities. Furthermore, the law makes detailed provisions for language rights in the realms of, among others, education, judicial proceedings and media. To ensure the proper execution of the law, it establishes a Language Commission for oversight and requires each municipality to adopt thorough regulations regarding language use. However, despite the six-month time frame given for the adoption of the regulations required by Articles 2.4 and 35, three years later, only one municipality (Klinë/Klina) has finished the process successfully so far. The effective implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages is essential in order to develop and ensure a multi-ethnic, integrated society. The violations of the law must be corrected in order to improve the situation and enhance integration of Kosovo's minority communities.

Project

The project is the first phase of a complex approach. The objectives of the first phase are reached by facilitating cooperation and communication between minority leaders, municipal government leaders and Language Commission representatives; and mentoring of the representatives of Prizren and Pejë/Peć by a selected group of local and international specialists over the course of three workshops. Each group needs to ensure that its municipality has developed and publicized regulations on language use, and then follow up the passage of these regulations to guarantee that words are translated into actions.