



GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS

Members of newly established Kosovo Judicial Council sworn-in

On April 3, nine of 11 members of newly established Kosovo Judicial Council were sworn in. Two additional members, international judge are yet to be named. The ceremony was chaired by Søren Jessen-Petersen, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), Jonuz Salihaj, Minister of Justice, Albert Moskowitz, Director of Justice, Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, representatives of diplomatic liaison offices, and many others.

Addressing the newly appointed council members, Ken Yamashita, USAID Director, said, "You, the members of the KJC, a new institution with a new and independent mandate, face a significant opportunity of success, and risk of failure as well. Therefore, your challenge is to bring your best to ensure the success of this great undertaking so Kosovo has the best judiciary available."

The Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) is a professional body under the authority of the SRSG and is the successor to the Kosovo Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (KJPC). In addition to the main competencies previously held by the KJPC - appointments of judges, prosecutors and lay-judges and disciplinary measures against judges, prosecutors and lay-judges in cases of misconduct - the KJC will take over a greater number of responsibilities such as court administration.

The council is composed of 11 members, including Albanian and Serbian Kosovars, of whom seven are judges and four are non-judges, as specified in the regulation for the establishment of KJC. For a period of one year, two of the judges on the council are to be international judges.

Judges and court administrators learn about internal auditing

The internal audit process in the justice sector was studied at a seminar on April 5 in Pristina organized by USAID's Justice System Reform Activity. The seminar was attended by Kosovo court presidents, court administrations and the Judicial Inspection Unit (JIU) Audit Section staff.

In addition to discussing auditing, findings of an audit report on the breach of statute of limitations were presented. This was a pilot project conducted by the JIU Audit Section on Vushtrri/Vucitrn, Podujeva/Podujevo and Gjilan/Gnjilane municipal courts.

Dan Deja, the Program Director for the Justice System Reform Activity, spoke about the role of president judges in improving the administration of courts. Issues such as independence, accountability and leadership were addressed during his presentation.

Following a panel discussion on the JIU audit section's approach to internal audit, participants were divided into seven working groups in order to discuss potential areas of focus for future audits. The groups offered suggestions for audit topics that could be useful for the courts and the justice system in general.

David Leong, USAID Deputy Mission Director, Annunziata Ciaravolo, UN Department of Justice Deputy Director and Rexhep Haxhimusa, President of the Kosovo Supreme Court and the chair of the recently established Kosovo Judicial Council, welcomed the participants to the seminar. USAID's Justice System Reform Activity is implemented by the National Center for State Courts.

Officials visit service centers

To familiarize Kosovo officials with how a 'universal service center' can serve the public, USAID's Local Government Initiative organized two study tours for host municipalities during March and April.

Both tours were designed to help the municipalities of Suharekë/Suva Reka, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Podujevë/Podujevo as they will soon start the "Citizens' Service Centers" (CSC), a one-stop shop for citizens needing any municipal service. Universal service centers, as operating in Bulgaria and Albania, combine many offerings found in 'Citizen and Business Service Centers' along with space for utility companies (electric, gas, water) to offer customer services - thus making them truly "one-stop-shops" for citizens.

The visits helped the mayors become acquainted with the Citizens' Service Center concept. The study tours included visits to existing centers as well as meetings with the mayors and ministers in charge of local government reform.

The participants visited Citizens' Service Centers in Sevlievo, Grabovo, and Blagojevgrad, Bulgaria, to evaluate the operation of existing computer programs, along with a center in Tirana, Albania. The group also met with Albania's Prime Minister Sali Berisha and Lulzim Basha, Minister of Public Works Transport and Telecommunications, to discuss local government infrastructure and reforms. USAID's Local Government Initiative is implemented by RTI.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Cheese promotion results in new sales

A cheese tasting event in Gjakove/Djakovica on April 6 resulted in immediate orders for two Kosovo dairy processors.



A possible buyer tastes locally produced cheeses.

The promotional event was for several processors, including Abi, Ajka, Rona, and Golaj, providing a chance for restaurant and hotel owners to taste the companies' cheeses.

Golaj received orders for white cheese and Lulja e Sharrit established purchasing agreements with two hotels in Gjakova/Djakovica. USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support project has been working closely with dairy processors to reach the highest quality standards for their dairy products, as well as helping processors produce new cheeses. The project is implemented by Chemonics International.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Development of sheep and lamb sector in Kosovo

Twelve representatives of the sheep and lamb sector participated in a 10-day training program designed to strengthen sheep and lamb production in Kosovo. The training was held March 10-15 at the American Farm School in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The participants were introduced to the production and marketing chain in a hands-on setting, including live-stock health and hygiene, genetic improvement and breeding, nutrition and feed rations, farm management and marketing, milk processing and products, and slaughter lines. As part of the training program, participants met with members of the Pasesges National Confederation of Farmers to discuss how Pasesges members lobby for farmers' interests.

Upon their return, participants began implementing new techniques they learned during the training. Vllaznim Canziba, a sheep farmer in Rahovec/Orahovac found the training sessions on improved lamb health and hygiene very useful and upon his arrival he vaccinated all his lambs. Canziba, who is also the president of the RAHOVA Association in Kosovo stated that development of market networks are crucial for his future work as he plans to work with other association members to set up refrigerated collection points for milk. The refrigerated collection points will allow farmers to avoid traveling long distances to market and as well as give longer shelf-life to their product.

The training was designed by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support in partnership with Participant Training Program, implemented by Chemonics International and World Learning.

Upcoming Events

April 14 - Dr. Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director will speak at Avian Influenza media briefing.

April 17 - Easter Monday



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