



Humanitarian Law Center
Documentation and Memory

Kosovo Institutions Applying the Law on the Use of Languages

**HLC – Kosovo Report
October 2007**

Introductory Note

In the period from July to October 2007, the Humanitarian Law Center – Kosovo (HLC – Kosovo) researched and analyzed the extent to which local Kosovo institutions, Kosovo Assembly, District and Municipal Court in Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo Property Agency, and Health Care Centre IV apply the Law on the Use of Languages. HLC-Kosovo conducted research in the following multiethnic municipalities: (Prizren/Prizren, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Klinë/Klina, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja/Peć, and Dragaš/Dragash). It was also conducted in the municipalities with a predominantly Albanian population (Skenderaj/Srbica, Deçan/Deçane, Glogovc/Glogovac, Malishevë/Mališevo, Podujevë/Podujevo/), and in the municipalities with predominantly Serb population (Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zveçan). HLC-Kosovo treated Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica as special cases.

With this report, HLC – Kosovo wants to provide a documented account of the protection of minorities' rights in the field of language use, which is in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages. HLC – Kosovo conducted the research by directly moni-

toring the application of this law. On this basis, HLC – Kosovo is preparing recommendations for Kosovo institutions and UNMIK in order for them to improve the position of minorities and their complete integration into Kosovo society.

Summary

Article 4.4 of the Constitutional Framework for Self-Government in Kosovo¹ and the Law on the Use of Languages² guarantee minority communities the right to use their languages before public bodies, to obtain documents in the language in which they submit the request, and to receive information at least in languages that are official in certain institutions.

Kosovo institutions do not entirely respect the Law on the Use of Languages. In general, the law is respected most in the multiethnic municipalities. Prizren/Prizren, for example, is a municipality in which this law is fully implemented, while Gjilan/Gnjilane is an example of a municipality in which implementation is incomplete.

Concerning mono-national municipalities, the Law on the Use of Languages' provisions are respected more in areas with a predominantly Albanian population than in predominantly Serb areas. When it comes to the Albanian mono-national municipalities, the municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica implements the Law on the Use of Languages is the most, while in the municipalities of Glogovc/Glogovac, Malishevë/

1 Constitutional Framework for Self-Government in Kosovo

www.unmikonline.org/pub/misc/FrameworkPocket_SRB_Dec2002.pdf

2 http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2006_02-L37_sr.pdf On 27 July, 2006, the Assembly of Kosovo passed the Law on the Use of Languages. It came in power in October 2006.



Mališevo, and Deçan/Deçane it is least respected. All exclusively Albanian municipalities, except for Glogovac/Gllogovc, have translated the statute into Serbian and English. It is only in Skenderaj/Srbica, however, that the statute has been amended according to the law and Serbian language has been proclaimed one of the official languages in this municipality.

The Law on the Use of Languages is more respected in some Albanian mono-national municipalities, such as Srbica /Skenderaj, than in some multiethnic municipalities, such as Gjilan/Gnjilane. Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality has not amended the Statute in accordance to the Law on the Use of Languages because, even though Turkish is one of the official languages in the municipality, the Statute defines Albanian and Serbian to be the only two official languages.

Predominantly Serb municipalities do not generally abide by the Law on the Use of Languages. Štrpce/Shtërpçë, which has a significant Albanian population, is the only municipality that has shown some improvements in this respect. Serb municipalities in the north of Kosovo, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zvečan/Zveçan, and Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok, do not respect the Law on the Use of Languages at all and municipal administration clerks are not taking any steps to provide conditions for the application of the law. Officers in all of these municipalities state that they operate as part of the Serbian Government and that they have stopped communicating with the Kosovo Government. This represents an additional obstacle to the application of this law. Even though official languages in Kosovo are Serbian and Albanian, these municipalities have not amended their statutes according to the law. Therefore, they are defining Serbian as the only official language. The exception to this rule is the Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipality.

The signboards on the municipal buildings, names of municipal authorities, and names of employees in the multiethnic municipalities are written in languages that are official in these municipalities. The exception to this rule is Gjilan/Gnjilane: even though Turkish is one of the official languages, neither signs nor official documents, except for the Statute, have been translated into the Turkish language. There are no signs in Serbian language either. According to one of the officers, they used to have signs in these languages, but their clients either tore them down or graffitied them.

Multiethnic municipalities have a rule that says that documentation must be issued in the language in

which the client submitted the request. Public documentation in these municipalities is written in the official languages of the municipality. One of the problems that occur in such cases is that documents issued to clients, members of minority communities, are not drafted in accordance with the grammar and spelling rules of their languages. Even though there are problems in view of respecting the grammar and spelling rules, not a single municipality has organized training for translators or Albanian, Serbian, or Turkish language courses for the employees in municipal administrations. Information posted on bulletin boards in multiethnic municipalities is mainly written in Albanian and Serbian languages.

Names of municipalities and municipal services, the names of employees in Albanian mono-national municipalities are mainly written in Albanian language, while in Serb municipalities they are exclusively written in Serbian.

Names of villages in multiethnic and mono-national Albanian municipalities are written in both Albanian and Serbian. Names of streets are even written in English. In municipalities like Prizren/Prizren, all signs are also written in Turkish. This is not the case in Gjilan/Gnjilane, even though Turkish is one of the municipality's official languages. In Serb municipalities, except for Štrpce/Shtërpçë, all streets names are written solely in Serbian.

Civil registration forms are unified for the entire territory of Kosovo and they are written in Serbian, Albanian, and English, while in Prizren/Prizren, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and South Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, they are also written in Turkish.

In all multiethnic and almost all mono-national municipalities in predominantly Albanian municipalities, there are translation services and simultaneous interpretation equipment. While in Serb mono-national municipalities, with the exception of Štrpce/Shtërpçë there are no such services or equipment. Mono-national municipalities with predominantly Serb population mostly use the services of UNMIK administration interpreters or Albanian colleagues from Offices of Communities.

The number of translators is insufficient. Translation services have a large volume of material that needs to be translated. Municipal officers do not have all necessary working conditions and because of this clients do not receive requested documents on time.

Most municipalities have a municipal website. In multiethnic and Albanian municipalities, such websites are mainly in Albanian and Serbian languages. However, web pages in Serbian are not regularly updated, except for the Prizren/Prizren Municipality, in which web pages in Serbian, Albanian, English, and Turkish are all updated. The majority of municipalities with a predominantly Serb population do not have municipal websites.

Central Kosovo institutions, the Assembly of Kosovo, Prishtinë/Priština District Court, or Kosovo Property Agency, entirely apply the Law on the Use of Languages. Every person is free to use any of the official languages in the municipal and district courts. Simultaneous interpretation into the parties' languages is provided during the court hearings. Subpoenas are issued in both Albanian and Serbian languages. The only exceptions are health care centres in Prishtinë/Priština, in which the Law on the Use of Languages is not applied at all. Employees have not been introduced to the provisions of this law.

In the Mitrovica/Mitrovicë Municipality, there are two municipal administrations operating. One is in the south while the other one is in the northern part of the town. The municipal officers in the southern part of the town have attempted to implement the Law on the Use of Languages. However, generally, it is not implemented. All the information is in Albanian, while signs in the Serbian language are usually torn down or scrawled over. The northern part of this municipality does not generally apply this law, and its officers do not have any communication with the colleagues from the southern part of the town.

1. Relevant Constitutional and Legal Provisions

1.1. Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government

Rights of Communities and Their Members

4.4 Communities and their members shall have the right to:

- (a) Use their language and alphabets freely, including before the courts, agencies, and other public bodies in Kosovo;
- (c) Enjoy access to information in their own language;

(d) Enjoy equal opportunity with respect to employment in public bodies at all levels and with respect to access to public services at all levels;

(f) Use and display Community symbols, subject to the law;

(h) Enjoy unhindered contacts with, and participate in, local, regional and international non-governmental organizations in accordance with the procedures of such organizations;

(i) Provide information in the language and alphabet of their Community, including by establishing and maintaining their own media;

(m) Receive and provide public health and social services, on a non-discriminatory basis, in accordance with applicable standards;

1.2. Law on the Use of Languages

General Provisions

Article 1

1.1. The purpose of this law is to ensure:

- i. The use of the official languages, as well as languages of communities whose mother tongue is not an official language, in Kosovo institutions and other organizations and enterprises who carry out public functions and services;
- ii. The equal status of Albanian and Serbian as official languages of Kosovo and the equal rights as to their use in all Kosovo institutions;
- iii. The right of all communities in Kosovo to preserve, maintain and promote their linguistic identity;
- iv. The multilingual character of Kosovo society, which represents its unique spiritual, intellectual, historical and cultural values.

Article 2

2.1. Albanian and Serbian and their alphabets are official languages of Kosovo and have equal status in Kosovo institutions.

2.2. All persons have equal rights with regard to use of the official languages in Kosovo institutions.

2.3. In municipalities inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not an official language, and which constitutes at least five (5) percent of the total population of the municipality, the language of the community shall have the status of an official language in the municipality and shall be in equal use with the official



languages. Notwithstanding the foregoing, exceptionally, in Prizren Municipality the Turkish language shall have the status of an official language.

2.4. In municipalities inhabited by a community whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of Kosovo and which represents above 3 (three) percent of the total population of the municipality, the language of the community shall have the status of a language in official use in the municipality in accordance with the provisions specified in Article 8. In addition, community whose language has been traditionally spoken in a municipality shall also have the status a language in official use within that municipality. Pursuant to Article 35, municipalities shall adopt detailed regulations on this issue within six months of the promulgation of this law.

2.5. Kosovo institutions will ensure the language rights of persons belonging to communities whose mother tongue is not the official language, in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

Article 3

3.1. Every person shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to receive, seek and impart information and ideas in the language of one's choice without interference. Free receiving of the cross-boarder broadcasting, whether directly or through the repeated broadcasting or retransmission is not prohibited on the basis of language. The exercise of this freedom may be subject to such limitations as are compatible with binding international human rights treaties.

Use of Languages in the Central Institutions

Article 4

4.1. In the central institutions of Kosovo the equality of the official languages applies.

4.2. Every person has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services and public documents from, the central institutions of Kosovo in any of the official languages. All central institutions have a duty to ensure that every person can communicate with, and can obtain available services and public documents from, their organs and institutions in any official language.

4.3. The official languages are used on an equal basis in the meetings and work of the central institutions.

The central institutions shall make interpretation available from one official language into another, if such interpretation is requested, for meetings of central institutions, as well as in public meetings organized by these institutions.

4.4. Members of the Government whose mother tongue is not an official language have the right to use their mother tongue in the meetings of the central institutions, and in public meetings organized by these institutions. If requested, the central institutions shall ensure interpretation.

4.5. Official records and official documents shall be kept and issued in the official languages.

4.6. The official names of central institutions shall be displayed in the official languages as well as in the official languages of the municipality.

4.7. The central institutions must ensure that their work environments are conducive to the effective use of the official languages and accommodate the use of any official language by their officers and employees.

Article 5

5.1. The official languages are used on an equal basis in the work, debates or other proceedings of the Assembly of Kosovo and its Committees. Facilities shall be made available for simultaneous interpretation from one official language into the others of the debates and other proceedings of the Assembly and its committees.

5.2. Members of the Assembly of Kosovo whose mother tongue is not an official language have the right to use their mother tongue in the work, debates or other proceedings of the Assembly of Kosovo and its Committees, as well as in public meetings organized by the Assembly of Kosovo. Facilities shall be made available to ensure interpretation from and into the member's language, if requested. Any document submitted by such members shall be translated into the official languages and all responses requested by the member shall be made to the member in the original language used by that member.

5.3. Official documents as well as official records of the debates or other proceedings of the Assembly of Kosovo and its Committees shall be kept and issued in official languages.

5.4. All laws adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo shall be issued and published in the official languages. The official language versions are equally authoritative. All promulgated laws shall be published into the Bosnian and Turkish languages.

Article 6

Persons belonging to a community whose mother tongue is not the official language shall have the right to present oral or written submissions to Ombudsperson Institution, and to receive a reply in their mother tongue by the respective Institution.

Use of Languages in Municipal Institutions

Article 7

7.1. In municipal institutions applies the equality of the official languages of the municipality.

7.2. Every person has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services and public documents from, municipal institutions and officials in any of the official languages. Every municipal representative and executive body has a duty to ensure that every person can communicate with, and can obtain available services and public documents from, any municipal institution or organ in any official language.

7.3. The official languages are used on an equal basis in the meetings and work of the municipal representative and executive bodies. Municipal institutions shall make interpretation available from one official language into another, if such interpretation is requested, for meetings of the representative and executive bodies of the municipality, as well as in public meetings organized by the municipality.

7.4. Records of meetings and official records of municipal representative and executive bodies, public registers and other official documents shall be kept and issued in all official languages of the municipality.

7.5. Municipal institutions must ensure that their work environments are conducive to the effective use of the official languages and accommodate the use of any official language by their officers and employees.

7.6. Regulations and subsidiary acts adopted by municipal institutions shall be printed and published in the official languages of the municipality. All official language versions are equally authoritative.

Article 8

8.1. In municipalities, persons belonging to communities whose language is in official use in accordance with Article 2.4, have the right to present oral or

written submissions and documents, and to receive a reply in their own language, from municipal institutions and officials, if they so request.

8.2. Every municipal representative and executive body has a duty to ensure that such persons can present oral or written submissions and documents, and to receive a reply in their own languages.

8.3. Municipal regulations and subsidiary acts shall be issued and published in the languages of such communities, if they so request.

8.4. Members of municipal representative bodies, and their committees, belonging to communities whose mother tongue is not an official language of the municipality, have the right to use their languages in the work and meetings of the municipal representative bodies, and their committees as well as in public meetings organized by the municipality. Facilities shall be made available to ensure interpretation from and into the members' language, if requested. Any document submitted by such members shall be translated into the official languages and all responses requested by the member shall be made to the member in the original language used by that member.

Article 9

9.1. The official names of municipal institutions and organs shall be displayed in the official languages and in the languages that have the status of official language in the municipality in accordance with Article 2.3.

9.2. Official signs indicating or including the names of municipalities, villages, roads, streets and other public places shall be displayed in the official languages and in the languages that have the status of official language in the municipality in accordance with Article 2.3.

2. Multiethnic Municipalities – Application of the Law

2.1. Prizren/Prizren Municipal Assembly

Besides Albanian and Serbian, Turkish is also an official language in Prizren/Prizren. It is an example of a municipality in which the Law on the Use of Languages is being applied in its entirety. In this municipality, all the signs are orthographically and grammatically correct. The Statute, all municipal documents, Assembly decisions, resolutions, and



6 | decisions of the collegium of directors, the municipal stamp, as well as the municipal bulletin issued once a month are written in all three official languages. The municipal bulletin contains all municipal documents. The sign with the name of the municipality placed at the entrance of the municipal building, names of municipal bodies, and names of employees are written in Albanian, Serbian, and Turkish.³ Municipal officers are obliged to reply in the language in which the client is speaking to them and documents should be issued in the language in which the request has been submitted. Information in the municipality is also issued in three official languages. A translation service in the municipality is operational and it employs three translators. The municipality has a need for an additional three translators because of the volume of material that needs to be translated into all three official languages. Documents forwarded from the central level institutions are written exclusively in Albanian, which makes the translators' work even more difficult. The municipality owns fully functional equipment for simultaneous interpretation. No Serbian, Albanian, or Turkish language courses have been organized for the employees of the municipality administration. The municipality's website is accessible in the three languages and it is regularly updated. Names of streets and neighbourhoods are written in Turkish, Albanian, and Serbian.

The Statute, all forms, and requests are prepared in the three languages. For example, two days ago I received a leave request from one of the municipal employees, who is Turkish. This colleague completed a form, printed in Albanian, in Turkish. I went to the administration office and asked if we had these forms prepared in all three languages. They gave me all three samples of the leave request.

**M.S.M. Prizren/Prizren Municipal Assembly
President of the Executive Board**
HLC Interview, 11 July 2007

2.2. Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje Municipal Assembly

Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje is a municipality in which the Law on the Use of Languages is applied almost in its entirety. All public and internal documentation such as the collegium of directors' decisions, resolu-

tions and conclusions, administrative guidelines, rule-books and regulations are prepared and published in Serbian and Albanian. Certain documents, such as the Statute, are also published in English. The municipality has a translation service and it employs two translators. However, because of the volume of documentation that needs to be translated, the municipality has a need for two more translators. Equipment for simultaneous interpretation is installed and operational. As a result, the sessions of the Municipal Assembly are interpreted into Serbian and Albanian. Signs placed at the entrance of the municipal building, names of municipal services and employees, information, classified ads inside the municipal building are written in Albanian and Serbian. All the documents are issued in the languages in which clients submit requests. Citizens, who are members of minority communities, however, complain because these documents are not written in accordance with the rules of their language. This is mainly related to the way in which Serb names are spelled. For example, instead of the name *Snežana*, which would be correct according to Serbian orthographic rules, the officers write *Snezhana*, which is in accordance with Albanian orthography. No Serbian or Albanian language courses have been organized for the employees of the municipal administration.

Names of streets and suburbs written in Serbian and Albanian. The municipal stamp is in Albanian, English, and Serbian, while the logo is in the Albanian language. A municipal website has not yet been built.

Each one of us working in the municipal administration is trying to communicate with colleagues and clients in their languages.

**S. Z. President of the Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje
Municipal Assembly**
HLC Interview, 11 July 2007

2.3. Klinë/Klina Municipal Assembly

Members of minority communities in the municipality of Klinë/Klina receive documents through the Office of Communities located in the municipal building. Representatives of this office participate in different municipal commissions, such as Commission for Naming Villages, Suburbs, and Streets or Commission for Budget and Finances. In this view, they have direct

3 Even though citizens of Prizren/prizren can obtain any document from the Cadastre Office in all three official languages, the name of the Cadastre Office is written in Albanian only.

impact on the decisions relating to different minority rights. Simultaneous interpretation in Albanian and Serbian is organized in order for them to follow the commissions' sessions and all working materials and transcripts from sessions are translated into Serbian. Municipal Assembly sessions are also covered by simultaneous interpretation. The Municipal Statute, work plan, and forms are in Albanian and Serbian, while some documents are also translated into English. All documents are issued in the language in which the request was submitted, in line with grammar and orthographic rules. The municipality administration has a Translation Service, which employs two translators. However, because of the volume of work, municipal administration employees say they need at least one more translator. The sign with the name of the municipality on the municipal building is written in Albanian and Serbian, and so are the plates with the names of municipal bodies and employees. The plates with the street names are also in Albanian and Serbian. The municipal logo and stamp are in Albanian, Serbian, and English.

All municipal services issue documents to Serbs in their language. Sometimes, when a translator is not able to do a certain translation, I insist that it be done as soon as possible so that we would not bother the citizens to come twice in order to obtain a certain document.

R.K. Klinë/Klina Municipality Office of Communities Officer
HLC Interview, 19 July 2007

2.4. Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipal Assembly

Besides Albanian and Serbian, the Turkish language is also an official language, in the Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality. However, it was only implemented at the level of decision making, since no additional measures have been undertaken to implement this decision in practice. The municipal administration does not have an official translator for Turkish language because the municipality has insufficient funding to hire one. Thus, there are five translators in the Translation Service, who translate documents into Serbian and Albanian. Institutions at the central level forward their documents written exclusively in Albanian, which makes the translators' work even more difficult. Municipal public documents, decisions, conclusions, internal rulebooks and regulations, and resolutions are in Albanian and Serbian.

The Statute is in Albanian, Serbian, and English. However, most of the information posted on the bulletin board is in Albanian alone. If information is posted in Serbian, it is defaced. The Municipal Registrar Office issues documents to citizens in Albanian, Serbian, and English, according to the form, which is the same in all municipal administrations in Kosovo. This office issues documents in Turkish only on request. Documents issued to citizens in the Turkish language do not respect Turkish grammar and orthographic rules. Generally, the Registrar Office issues documents in the language in which clients submit their requests. Signs placed on the Municipal building, as well as names of municipal services and employees are in Albanian and Serbian, but not in Turkish, which is also an official language. Simultaneous interpretation equipment has been installed. During the Municipal Assembly sessions, interpretation into Serbian is provided. The municipal stamp is in Albanian, Serbian, and English, and so is the website. Even though the part of the web page written in Serbian is regularly updated, documents posted in this place are not written in line with Serbian orthographic rules since letters like “Š, Č, Ć, Đ, Ž” are not used. The reason for this is that the necessary software is not budgeted. Names of streets are in Albanian and Serbian. No Serbian, Albanian, or Turkish language courses have been organized for the municipal administration employees.

Numerous municipal Directorates' classifieds, informational posters, brochures, as well as the Kosovo Property Agency Magazine are exclusively in Albanian because they deliver them to us only in this language. We did not ask any Municipal institutions or Directorates to send all information in the future in Serbian and Turkish language.

F. H. Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality Head of Office for Relations with Citizens
HLC interview, 27 July 2007

There are certain irregularities regarding the correct spelling of Turkish names in personal identification documents, which, if they are not identical to documents in which the names were spelled correctly, need to be changed. The process of changing documents costs 20 Euros and citizens bear these expenses even though it is not their fault.

K. Š. Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipality Head of the Office of Communities
HLC interview, 27 July 2007



2.5. Peja/Peć Municipal Assembly

Official languages in Peja/Peć Municipality are Albanian, Serbian, Bosniak, and English. Municipal Assembly sessions are simultaneously interpreted into Albanian and Serbian/Bosniak,⁴ while simultaneous interpretation is not needed for the collegium of directors' meeting because all participants speak Serbian/Bosniak and Albanian. The Peja/Peć Municipal Statute is in Albanian, Serbian, and English. Internal municipal documentation is mainly prepared in Albanian and Serbian. Administration Directorate Office composed the public invitation for citizens to the meeting in which municipal problems should be discussed (priorities, infrastructural problems, company registration process, safety, integration, taxes) in three languages, Albanian, Serbian, and Bosniak. Minority members can obtain all documents in the language in which the request was submitted. These documents respect the orthographic rules. Sometimes, even the municipal administration clerks translate some documents themselves in order to ease the pressure on the translators and to make sure they issue documents to citizens in time. Documentation coming from the Kosovo Government represents an additional problem. This documentation is usually in Albanian, and in English. Therefore, this documentation must also be translated. The municipal building sign is in Albanian, Serbian/Bosniak and English; names of municipal services and employees are in Albanian and Serbian/Bosniak languages. Information posted on the bulletin board is in Albanian and Serbian. Municipal logo and the stamp are in Albanian, Serbian, and English. Signs with the street names are in Albanian and Serbian. The Municipality has no website. At the time of writing, no Serbian, Bosniak, or Albanian language courses for the municipal administration employees had been organized.

Within the structure of the Peja municipal administration employees, we have organized a Commission for monitoring dual language use policy in Peja ... Job opening classifieds are announced in Kosovo dailies in Serbian and Albanian, as well as on the Hajat and Gorazhdec radio stations. Classifieds are also posted on the bulletin boards in the villages where minorities

live. Bosniaks respond to the classifieds more often than Serbs.

M.K. Peja/Peć Municipality Head of the Office for Administration and Legal Issues
HLC interview, 27 July 2007

2.6. Dragaš/Dragash Municipal Assembly

Albanian, Serbian, and Bosniak are official languages in the municipality of Dragaš/Dragash. All meetings organized by the Municipality have simultaneous interpretation into all languages. The municipal administration issues all documents in Albanian and Serbian/Bosniak along with the municipal stamp, classifieds, and job opening advertisements. The municipality employs two translators, but that does not satisfy municipal needs. Kosovo Government sends all documents exclusively in Albanian and that makes the translators' work even more difficult. Information within the Municipality is forwarded exclusively in Albanian. The municipal building sign with the and employee name plates are in Albanian and Serbian/Bosniak. Municipality issues all documents in the language in which the request was submitted and they are grammatically and orthographically correct. The Municipality has a website in Albanian and Serbian/Bosniak. However, information in Serbian/Bosniak is not regularly updated. Signs with the names of streets and villages are also made in Albanian and Serbian/Bosniak language. No Serbian, Bosniak, or Albanian language courses for employees have been organized.

3. Application of the Law in Predominantly Albanian Municipalities

3.1. Skenderaj/Srbica Municipal Assembly

The local government in the municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica has made decisions, which enable the complete application of the Law on the Use of Languages. The Municipal Statute is in Albanian, Serbian, and English. All decisions are translated into Serbian. The Municipality has a Translation Service which

4 Municipal officers, who are Albanians, Bosniaks, Roma, Ashkalies, Egyptians, and Serbs do not make any difference between Serbian and Bosniak languages. All forms are written in Serbian/Bosniak, besides Albanian, and they are composed following the spelling rules of Serbian or Bosniak language.

employs three translators. They also provide simultaneous interpretation services if needed; for example, meetings between the municipal representatives and representatives of the Office of Communities in which Serbs are employed. The municipal administration issues all documents in the language in which the request was submitted. The municipal building sign is in Albanian, Serbian, and English. Some name plates in the municipal building, including the General Administration Office and Office for Return, are written in three languages, Albanian, Serbian, and English, while other signs and names are written exclusively in Albanian because clients deface the signs in Serbian language. Information on the bulletin board and other information is posted exclusively in Albanian. The municipal stamp and the logo are in three languages, Albanian, Serbian, and English. Street name plates are also in Albanian, Serbian, and English. Skenderaj/Srbica does not have its web page.

There are five Serbs working in the Office of Communities. Two people who had worked in the Social Security Service quit because of the pressure coming from the Serbian institutions. Meetings with the employees of the Office of Communities, which I organize, are held in the Serbian language. I do not use interpretation services since I speak Serbian. Any other meetings, if Serbs take part in them, have interpretation.

N.Sh. Skenderaj/Srbica Municipality Head of the General Administration Directorate
HLC interview, 6 September 2007

3.2. Deçan/Deçani Municipal Assembly

The Deçan/Deçani Municipality Statute is in Albanian, Serbian, and English. However, names of streets, the municipality, municipal bodies, and all other relevant information posted on the bulletin board inside the municipality are solely in Albanian. The municipality has one translator, who translates all transcripts from the municipal authorities' sessions from Albanian to Serbian and vice versa. Equipment for simultaneous interpretation is installed in the Municipal Assembly room where sessions take place, but it is not used since all delegates speak Albanian. The municipality has no website.

The Coordination Council lead by the Mayor submitted a proposal in early August 2007 asking for the names of streets, municipality and its services to be in

the official languages of the municipality, which are Albanian, Serbian, and English. The Commissions for Finance and Policy and Municipal Assembly delegates are supposed to discuss this proposal.

I.G., Deçan/Deçani Municipal Information Office Clerk

HLC interview, 4 September 2007

3.3. Gllgovc/Glogovac Municipal Assembly

Gllgovc/Glogovac Municipality does not apply the Law on the Use of Languages at all. All municipal services issue documents in Albanian language only. The Assembly does not have Translation Service. The Municipality issues a bulletin on its activities every three months which is published solely in Albanian. The name of the municipality on the plate placed on the Municipal building, logo, names of all services and their employees, as well as information on the municipal bulletin boards are written exclusively in Albanian. The Municipality has no website.

The Office of Communities has not been established in our municipality since no members of minority communities lived here before the war or now. Our Municipality sends regular reports about the activities undertaken in view of meeting standards. One of the standards is the existence of the Office of Communities and the use of minority languages. However, since there are no members of minorities living in our municipality, we believe that there is no need to meet this standard.

I.H. Gllgovc/Glogovac Municipality Head of General Administration Directorate

HLC interview, 25 July 2007

3.4. Malishevë/Mališevo Municipal Assembly

According to the Malishevë/Mališevo Municipality Statute, the official languages are Albanian and English. The Statute has also been translated into Serbian. However, amendments according to the Law on the Use of Languages have not yet been made. As a result, Serbian is still not considered an official language. The Municipality has an official translator, but it does not receive requests for issuing documents in Serbian. Equipment for simultaneous interpretation has not been installed. All information provided in the Municipality is in Albanian. However, some decisions are now translated into Serbian language. The only minority members, who come to the Municipality, are Roma. They communicate in Albanian and are



issued documents in Albanian. The municipal stamp is in Albanian, English, and Serbian. The Municipal website is only in Albanian, and so are the names of the municipality, names of municipal services, their employees, and street names.

We have now translated the Municipal Statute and several municipal decisions into Serbian in order to meet the standards that are becoming part of our day-to-day life... We understand that we have an obligation originating from the Law on the Use of Languages. But, people, who trust us now, would start to react differently if they saw signs in Serbian language. Therefore, it is very difficult to apply this law in our municipality

H.K. Malishevë/Mališevo Municipality Head of General Administration Directorate

HLC interview, 3 August 2007

3.5. Podujevo/Podujevë Municipal Assembly

The official languages in the Podujevë/Podujevo Municipality are Albanian and English. The Municipal Statute has been translated into Serbian. However, it has not yet been amended according to the Law on the Use of Languages and the Law on Self-Government. As a result, Serbian is still not an official language. Forms for all necessary documents are available in Albanian, English, and Serbian. The Municipality issues documents in the language in which the request is submitted. Since a very small number of minority members live in this municipality, very rarely does anybody ask for documents to be issued in languages other than Albanian. There is one translator employed in this Municipality. Equipment for simultaneous interpretation has been installed in the Municipal Assembly. It is operational, but not in use since there are no delegates from Serb or any other minority communities. All brochures and leaflets placed on the Information Desk, including the ones issued by the OSCE for the Podujevë/Podujevo residents, are in Albanian. For example, Kosovo Ombudsman's leaflet "Stop Discrimination" is available only in Albanian. Street names are all in Albanian, Serbian, and English, while the names of villages on the territory of this municipality are written in Albanian and Serbian. The municipal logo is in Albanian, Serbian, and English, while the stamp is in Albanian and English. The municipal website is available in three languages. However, information about the activities and events in the municipality is not equally updated in Albanian and Serbian language since there

are still numerous documents that have not yet been translated into Serbian.

The Municipal Statute has been translated into the Serbian language. The Municipality publishes the bulletin in Albanian and Serbian, but nobody is interested in the Serbian version. We have to translate it since it is imposed by the standard. We send a report on the number of documents translated into Serbian to the Ministry of Local Government Administration every month.

E.G. Podujevë/Podujevo Municipality Advisor for Legal Issues

HLC interview, 28 June 2007

4. Application of the Law in Predominantly Serb Municipalities

4.1. Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipal Assembly

The Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipality generally respects the Law on the Use of Languages. Official languages are Albanian and Serbian. All official municipal documents, Statute, decisions, job opening advertisements, and employment contracts are in Albanian and Serbian. Two translators work in the municipality and they translate all documents. They deliver them on time. The Municipal administration issues documents in languages in which the requests are submitted. Simultaneous interpretation equipment is installed in the Municipal Assembly. All information, names of municipal services and their employees are in Serbian and Albanian. The municipal stamp is in Serbian, Albanian, and English. Names of streets are only in Serbian. The municipal building sign is written in Serbian only and it says that this municipality is part of the Republic of Serbia administrative structure. The Municipality has not yet built a website.

In 2005, I tried to take down the sign at the entrance to the Municipal building, which said, in Serbian only, that this municipality was in the jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia and to put up a sign stating "Štrpce Municipality" in three languages without any symbols and additions. However, upon the Mayor's request, the new sign was taken down and the old sign was put up again.

Ahmet Aliu, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Municipality Head of the General Administration Directorate

HLC interview, 7 September 2007

4.2. Leposavić/Leposaviq Municipal Assembly

The Leposavić/Leposaviq Municipality does not apply the Law on the Use of Languages. The Municipal administration generally issues documents in Serbian unless clients demand documents in Albanian. One translator had worked in this municipality until the Municipality ceased all communication with the Kosovo Government. He was then laid off since there was no funding for this position anymore. UNMIK translators offer their services in case there is a need for translation. Kosovo Government delivers documents in Albanian and Serbian. Sometimes the envelopes are addressed to “Albanika” Municipality, which is not defined by law to an official Albanian name for the municipality. When this happens, municipal employees return the received documents. Names of municipal services, their employees, and information on the bulletin boards are in Serbian language. Names of towns and villages are also only in Serbian. There are services in the Municipal administration that use stamps with “The Republic of Serbia” written on them, the Cadastre Office, for example. Additionally, this service issues documents written in the Cyrillic script. If one wishes to have a document in English and with the UNMIK stamp on it, the applicant must pay 20 Euros.

Names of the municipality and its bodies are written in Serbian only because if we had signs in Albanian as well, there might be a chance that somebody would deface them, tear them down, or damage them in some other way.

**M.R., Leposavić/Leposaviq Municipality
Chairman of the Executive Board**
HLC interview, 10 September, 2007

4.3. Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok Municipal Assembly

Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok Municipality does not apply the Law on the Use of Languages at all. According to the Municipal Statute, Serbian and Albanian are official languages. However, names of municipal services, the name of the municipality placed on a plate at the entrance of the building, names of employees, and all information are solely in Serbian. Since there are no budgetary allocations for a translator, the Municipality has no one to translate documents from Serbian into Albanian. If there is a need for something to be translated into Albanian, the municipal administration clerks ask their colleagues from the Office of

Communities in the Čabra/Çaber village to complete the translation for them. The Statute is written in Serbian and Albanian languages, and so is the municipal stamp. The Kosovo Government forwards documents in Albanian and English. The Municipality does not have a website or a logo, but it uses the UNMIK logo. Names of streets are in Serbian.

The UNMIK administration office is located in the same building as the Zubin Potok Municipal Assembly. They have a translator for the Albanian language and sometimes they do us favours when we have meetings. However, they do not do this every time. We do not translate the records from the meetings. Albanians employed in the Office of Communities in the village of Čabra sometimes translate some documents that we receive in Albanian. They do this even though it is not in the scope of their duties.

**M. A, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok Municipality
Executive Board Chairman**
HLC interview, 30 July 2007

4.4. Zvečan/Zvečan Municipal Assembly

Zvečan/Zvečan Municipality barely applies the Law on the Use of Languages at all. Even though Serbian and Albanian are official languages according to the Municipal Statute, names of institutions, information, names of municipal bodies and their employees are solely in Serbian. The municipality issues all documents in Serbian. It issues documents in Serbian unless a client specifically demands that the document be issued in Albanian. These documents, issued in Albanian, contain Serbian orthographic characters, such as: Š, Č, Ć, Ž and Đ because the municipality does not have appropriate software. The Statute is only available in Serbian. Although there is no municipal Translation Service, equipment for simultaneous interpretation has been installed and is operational. The municipal logo and the stamp are in Albanian, English and Serbian. The Municipality has not yet designed a website. All street names are in the Serbian language alone.

Our office has a forward department located in the Lipa and Žaža villages where Albanian people live. These are the only villages in our municipality with an Albanian population. An Albanian is working in this forward department and he takes care of the correct spelling of people's names and places in personal identification documents requests... The only problem, which occurs in personal documents issued by other



Kosovo municipalities for the citizens born in Žaža, is the fact that the village is recorded under the name of “Kelmend”, which does not exist according to the UNMIK Regulation 2000/43 on Number, Names, and Boundaries of Municipalities.

D. I., Zvečan/Zveçan Municipality Civil Registration Office Coordinator
HLC interview, 30 July 2007

We have a rule that municipal administration clerks communicate with clients in the language the clients use to speak to clerks...We hired clerks who speak Serbian and Turkish, besides Albanian, in the admissions office. That was the requirement for the job.

H.H. Prishtinë/Priština Municipality Head of the General Administration Directorate
HLC interview, 27 July 2007.

5. Application of the Law in Prishtinë/ Priština Institutions

5.1. Application of the Law in Prishtinë/Priština Municipal Assembly

According to the Statute, Albanian, Serbian, and English are official languages in the municipality, while Turkish, Bosniak, and Roma have the status of languages in use. This means that citizens from these ethnic communities can contact municipal administration clerks in these languages and they will receive an answer. Turkish, Bosniak, Roma, Ashkaly, and Egyptian clerks are free to use their languages in everyday communication. All official documents, rulebooks and regulations, work plans, reports, decisions, resolutions, and administrative directions, along with other documents, are written in Albanian, Serbian, and English. The Municipality issues documents in languages in which clients submit requests. Grammar and spelling mistakes, as well as mistakes in the spelling of names and surnames, often appear in documents issued in minority languages. This is also the case with other municipalities. Most Albanians employed in the municipal administration speak Serbian, but they are unable make a distinction between Serbian and Bosniak languages.

The municipality has a Translation Service which employs four translators, two for Serbian, one for Turkish, and one for Albanian. Equipment for simultaneous interpretation is installed in the Municipal Assembly and is operational. Simultaneous interpretation into Serbian or Turkish is provided for the meetings of the collegium of directors, if needed. The municipal stamp and the logo are in Albanian, English, and Serbian. The municipality name plate placed at the entrance of the building is in Albanian, English, and Serbian, as are the names of all municipal services and all employees. Most of the documents and information posted on the bulletin board are in Albanian.

Communication with the Kosovo Government is exclusively in Albanian and the municipal administration officers receive documents written only in Albanian. If they do not understand Albanian, they contact the respective service within the Government asking them to send a document in a language that they can understand. The municipality has a website in Albanian and Serbian. However, only the part written in Albanian is updated regularly.

The Office of Communities located in Gračanica/Graçanicë receives decisions, invitations, employment contracts, etc, from the Municipality in the Serbian language alone. The Office of Communities issues documents in minority languages, but mainly in Serbian, since they are related to the requests of Serbs who rarely send their requests directly to the Priština/Prishtinë Municipality.

As far as the free use of Serbian and other minority languages in the Municipality goes, it is at a satisfactory level. I have been working in the municipality for five years and I can say that we have good relations with our colleagues. All documents that come to the Office of Communities from the Municipality are in Serbian language. We also regularly receive the Official Gazette in Serbian and this Official Gazette has also been printed in Turkish recently... I noticed that the municipal website does not contain updated information in Serbian. We have not contacted the Municipal Information Office about this.

**S. K, Gračanica/Graçanicë Office of Communities
Head of the General Administration and Finances
Department**

HLC interview, 27 July 2007

Some Prishtinë/Priština citizens, members of minority communities, remain dissatisfied with the services provided by the municipal administration and believe that this represents an obstacle for the integration of minorities into Kosovo society. One Serb woman wrote a letter to the municipal Urban Inspection in the Serbian language. The Urban Commission

showed up at the scene, conducted an inspection, but it sent the answer in Albanian.⁵

I submitted a request to the Municipal Urban Inspection in Serbian language asking them to inspect the level of damage in my apartment. During the inspection, I communicated with the inspectors in Serbian without any difficulties. However, several days after the inspection, I received an answer to my request and it was only in Albanian. Moreover, my first name and my last name were incorrectly written and used Albanian characters. I do not understand Albanian so I had to ask for my documents to be translated into Serbian. However, I was told that I had to look for the Municipal administration translator myself, which I didn't do because it's their responsibility, not mine.

S.B., a Serb from Priština/Prishtinë
HLC interview, 17 September 2007

5.2. Application of the Law on the Use of Languages in Courts

The Official languages in the Prishtinë/Priština Municipal and District Courts are Serbian and Albanian. All officers communicate with clients in languages in which they are addressed. If they do not speak that language, then they look for an interpreter. Simultaneous interpretation is provided in trials and all parties to the procedure follow the course of the hearing in their mother tongue. Subpoena contains a form in both Albanian and Serbian. All judges receive necessary documents in their mother tongue. All laws in the Gazette are published in English, Albanian, and Serbian. Prishtinë/Priština District and Municipal Court, as well as other courts in Kosovo, do not have their own publications. Judges in Kosovo receive information on various activities through the Supreme Court or the Kosovo Judges Association. Other information and the bulletin are in Albanian, English, and Serbian.

Court decisions are prepared in accordance to the party's nationality. Bosniak judges prepare their activity plans in the Bosniak language. They also write their court decisions in their own language. This document is then translated into Albanian if parties are Albanians. Albanian judges do the same – they write

their court decisions in Albanian and then they are translated into the party's language.

F. M. Prishtinë/Priština Municipal Court Lawyer
HLC interview, 31 August 2007

5.3. Application of the Law on the Use of Languages in Health Care Centre IV

The Prishtinë/Priština Health Care Centre does not apply the Law on the Use of Languages at all. All information is exclusively in Albanian. All documents, including patients' medical files, forms, forms for referring to doctors, specialists, labs and prescriptions, are prepared solely in the Albanian language. This health care centre's public documents come from the central Prishtinë/Priština Health Centre and are in Albanian. The Health Care stamp is only in Albanian language. Employees do not know that the Law on the Use of Languages exists and they said they never heard about the measures they were supposed to take in order to apply the law. There are one Bosniak and one Turk employed in this health care centre as part of the medical staff and they are free to use their languages in communication with their colleagues, but they receive information pertaining to the job in Albanian language. Collegium meetings are conducted in Albanian and Albanian colleagues have to provide simultaneous interpretation for them if needed.

We provide medical services for all residents of this neighbourhood in this health care centre. We regularly have patients who are Bosniaks, Roma, or Ashkalies ... I am doing my best to provide all services in an optimal manner. I also communicate in Bosniak with our Bosniak patients. Rarely do we have Serb patients.

H.F.M., Prishtinë/Priština Health Care Centre IV
Paediatrician
HLC interview, 13 August 2007

When we have Bosniak patients, they speak to us in Bosniak language and we give them answers in their language. We write names of these patients in a notebook according to the rules of their language. We have not been informed of the Law on the Use of Languages and the things we need to do in order to apply this law.

Z.B. Prishtinë/Priština Health Care Centre IV
Nurse
HLC interview, 13 August 2007



5.4. Application of the Law on the Use of Languages in the Assembly of Kosovo

The Law on the Use of Languages is fully implemented in the Assembly of Kosovo. The signboards at the entrance to the Assembly building are in Albanian, Serbian, and English. Names of Assembly Members and other employees are also written in all three of these languages. All Assembly materials, laws, and the Assembly Bulletin "AST" are in Albanian, Serbian, and English. Simultaneous interpretation is provided for the work of Assembly Committees, Assembly Members from the minority communities.

The Assembly's website (www.assembly-kosova.org) contains materials and information in Albanian, Serbian, and English. All parts of the web page are updated regularly and a comprehensive collection of enacted legislature can be found in all three languages.

I have been working as a Legal Advisor in the Assembly of Kosovo for more than four years. I have been a member of various commissions for making drafts of various law-making within the Committee for Judicial, Legislative Matters and Constitutional Framework with sub-committees for Gender Equality, Petitions and Public Complaints and Missing Persons. This Committee is particularly careful when drafting new laws, making sure they comply with the enacted laws, especially the Law on the Use of Languages.

H.G. Legal Advisor in the Assembly of Kosovo
HLC interview, 11 July 2007

5.5. Application of the Law on the Use of Languages in the Kosovo Property Agency (KPA)

Albanian, Serbian, and English are the official languages in the KPA and they are equally used. Names of services and names of employees are also written in official languages. The agency issues documents in languages in which clients make submissions. Agency informs citizens through publications, brochures, and information in daily and weekly newspapers in Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo in all official languages. KPA also broadcasts adverts on Kosovo TV stations in the Albanian and Serbian languages and in the Serbian language on TV stations in Serbia. The KPA website (www.kpaonline.org) is in all three official languages and is regularly updated in all three languages.

Agency receives requests from the members of minority communities and we provide services in the language of the request. When documents are verified and all relevant parties informed, the request is ready to be submitted to the commission that is deciding on the request. The entire procedure is carried out in the client's mother tongue. KPA official response is written in the client's language and English. In case a document is not written in an articulate manner, then an English version of the document shall prevail...KPA has employees who are Albanians and members of minority communities and none of the employees are taking Albanian requests because they are Albanian or Serbian requests because they are Serbian. We work together in order to respond to the needs of all Kosovo citizens regardless of their ethnical background.

A.R.S., KPA Lawyer
HLC interview, 6 August 2007

6. Mitrovica/Mitrovicë

Mitrovica/Mitrovicë is divided administratively into two parts. One is the southern part where Albanians predominantly live, and the other is the northern, predominantly Serbian part. The Municipal building is located in the southern part of the town. UNMIK administration is located in the northern part while the municipal administration for the northern part of the town is set up in the UNMIK building. The official languages in the Municipality are Albanian, Serbian, English, while Turkish is an official language in the southern part. There are Offices of Communities in both parts of the town and they have coordinators. These offices are independent of each other. Representatives from the Office of Communities had participated in meetings regarding the implementation of projects relating to return and house reconstruction. Interpretation into Serbian and Albanian language was organized for this occasion. However, representatives of this office in the northern part of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, who are Serbs, stopped attending these meetings because, as they said, they had established cooperation with various international organizations regarding the same issues.

Each document sent from the northern part to officers in the southern part of the town is in Serbian, English, and Albanian. In addition, documents coming to the municipal administration in the northern part of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë from the Municipality

in the southern part are translated into Serbian. The Municipality does not have its logo and the municipal stamp is in Serbian, Albanian, and English. There is a municipal website, which is administered in the southern part of the town. The part of the website in Serbian, however, is not updated.

**6.1. Application of the Law in the Mitrovicë/
Mitrovica Municipal Assembly
(South Mitrovica/Mitrovicë)**

Simultaneous interpretation is provided during the collegium of directors' meetings and during the Municipal Assembly sessions. All acts and documents are in Serbian and Albanian. The Municipal Statute has not yet been amended in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages, but it has been translated into Serbian. Documents are issued in languages in which the request was submitted and municipal administration officers communicate with clients in the language use when the clients contact them. There is a Translation Service in the Municipality and it employs four translators, two for Albanian and two for Serbian language. However, because of the great amount of work, translators do not manage to finish their work on time. This is particularly the case with the minutes from the collegium of directors' meetings, which prevents officers from minority communities from taking a more active role. Even though Turkish is one of the official languages in South Mitrovica, there is no translator for Turkish language. However, documents can be issued in Turkish language. One clerk, who is Turkish, also performs translation services besides his regular duties. Information on the bulletin board is posted exclusively in Albanian, and so are the names of municipal services and employees. Information regarding public sessions is also only in Albanian. According to the municipal administration clerks, somebody destroyed information written in Serbian. The signboard with the Municipality name written in Albanian, Serbian, and English is placed on the entrance of the building.

The municipal administration clerks are obliged to give respond to clients in the languages in which clients first address them. They also issue documents in the languages in which the clients submit their requests. We have not yet received any complaints, claiming that a person has not received an answer in the language in which he or she communicated with the municipal administration... The name of the

municipal administration services were all written in all three languages, but clients very often graffiti and tear parts written in Serbian.

**A.K. Mitrovicë/Mitrovica Municipal Assembly
Deputy Head of General Administration
Directorate**

HLC interview, 18 July 2007

**6.2. Application of the Law in the Mitrovica/
Mitrovicë Municipal Assembly
(North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë)**

There are signs posted at the entrance to this administrative institution in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë saying "The Republic of Serbia, Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija". Names of municipal administrative services, employees, and information on the bulletin boards in the municipality are only in Serbian. Names of streets are also only in Serbian. Equipment for simultaneous interpretation has not yet been installed and documents are issued solely in Serbian. There is a Translation Service with two translators.

Our Office of Communities has its Coordinator while the Office of Communities in South Mitrovica has its own Coordinator. We do not report to them and neither do they report to us. They have their Mayor (Mursel Ibrahim) and he is not our Mayor. A person, who is practically undertaking the duties of a Mayor in our part of the town is the Head of the UN General Administration, Vladimir Anokhin. He reports to the regional UN Administrator, Jaroslav Kozak. Therefore, we have nothing to do with the municipality located in the southern part of the town.

**S.R., North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë Office
of Communities Clerk**

HLC interview, 19 July 2007

**6.3. Position of Roma, Ashkalies and Egyptians in
Mitrovica/Mitrovicë Municipality**

Roma, Ashkalies, and Egyptians have their own representative in the Municipality. The Roma language is not in official use in the northern or southern part of the town and a clerk uses it only if somebody speaks to him in this language. In general, Roma think that they do not enjoy freedom of speech in the municipality of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë.



I spoke to an engineer, who was a Serb, in the Serbian language a year ago in the Roma Mahala. His name was Gradimir and I cannot remember his surname. Two young men, Albanians, who were passing by, overheard our conversation. It bothered them, they asked me why I spoke in Serbian, and told me they would throw a hand grenade at me if they heard me speaking Serbian again. I reported the incident to the Kosovo Police Service patrol that was in the neighbourhood.

They briefly talked to these young men and released them. And, when I was at the green market in North Mitrovica, I was speaking Roma with my cousin when an older man approached me and started threatening me since, according to him, I was speaking Albanian.

**E.B. Roma, Ashkalies and Egyptians’
Representative in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë Municipality**
HLC interview, 18 July 2007

Recommendations

- The Kosovo Government should launch a campaign to inform the citizens of Kosovo and persons employed in public institutions about the responsibilities of institutions that originate from the Law on the Use of Languages.
- The Kosovo Government should create independent and transparent conditions for the work of the Commission for Languages, which was established in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages.
- The Commission for Languages should monitor the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages and regularly report to the Government and the public about implementation gaps.
- The Kosovo Government should forward all documents, information, and instructions to local institutions in the official languages of the municipality, in which the institutions are located.
- The Kosovo Government should organize courses of official languages in Kosovo for all people employed in the central public services. In order to have coordinated application of orthographic and administrative rules in writing official documents,
- Kosovo Ministry of Traffic and Communications should establish and maintain close cooperation with municipal institutions in order to ensure orthographic rules are adhered to in respect of street and town names.
- All Kosovo municipalities should fully implement the Law on the Use of Languages at the local level.
- All Kosovo municipalities should amend their statutes in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages.
- All Kosovo municipalities should enable citizens to obtain documents in the official languages of the municipality.
- Municipal administration clerks, when composing documents for upon the request of a citizen, should abide by the grammatical and orthographic rules of the language in which the document is issued.
- All official public documents should be translated into all official languages of a municipality.
- All municipalities should make budgetary allocations to hire a sufficient number of translators for all official languages in the municipality in order for all citizens and municipality employees to be adequately informed and receive necessary documentation on time.
- All municipalities should make budgetary allocations to have their own municipal website. Web pages should be available in all official languages of a municipality and should be updated regularly.
- In municipalities, such as Dragaš/Drageash and Peja/Peć, in which Bosniak is one of the official languages, it is necessary to provide all necessary conditions for Bosniak citizens and employees to obtain documents in the Bosniak language.
- Municipalities should organize official language courses of for municipal administration clerks.