

YOUNG

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO

YOUNG YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO

REPORT¹

EULEX has a longstanding commitment to assisting the Kosovo authorities in establishing sustainable and independent rule of law institutions. Rule of law greatly relies upon the degree of inclusion of all members of society, especially the youth. If guaranteed systemically, inclusion and representation concur to the health and prosperity of democratic institutions, as institutions are made up of people.

To have rule of law delivered in practice to all, it is essential that members of a community share a common sense of identity, trust and representation towards and within these very institutions. As the youth undoubtedly represents the future of Kosovo, the desires, aspirations and projects of the youth are of paramount importance. Indeed, one simply cannot try to shape the future for the better without taking into account the views and ideas of those that literally hold the future in their hands – youth. Furthermore, as the young have specific needs and interests, they need targeted policies as well as institutions – first and foremost in the rule of law sector – that allow for their participation and respond to their requests.

The role of the youth has been mapped with the first-ever UNSC Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security 2250 adopted in 2015 as a landmark reference document, stressing the role of youth as agents for peace and security and calling upon our political classes to increase the participation of youth in conflict prevention activities but also in decision-

making at all levels. Together with UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, peace and Security, this represents the global roadmap in ensuring that the voice of youth and women be heard when addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

To open up spaces dedicated to the voices of Kosovo youth, and to espouse a more comprehensive and participatory understanding of rule of law promotion, on 27 June 2019 EULEX hosted “YOUNG”, the first-ever event organized by the Mission that focuses specifically on youth and its perspectives on the future of Kosovo.

When it comes to rule of law, Kosovo has adopted laws and regulations that are advanced and in line with European standards and best practices. Implementation, however, is found to be more problematic. Kosovo institutions as well as supporting organizations should focus on the implementation phase of laws, ensuring that formal equality and rights fully translate into substantive equality and exercise of rights. What’s more, Kosovo institutions should match technological progress. If adequately utilized, digitalization can open up new ways to meaningfully engage with the youth and encourage pro-activeness.

As for the youth itself, they also bear responsibility when it comes to the wellbeing and well-functioning of Kosovo institutions. In this regard, young women

¹ This document is a compilation of the opinions and ideas expressed by the participants of the YOUNG conference, which took place on 27 June 2019 in Pristina. The document does not necessarily reflect the views of EULEX Kosovo.

and men should increase cooperation in their advocacy efforts, demonstrate initiative vis-à-vis the advancement of their communities, and take up their own civic responsibility and duties as active members of the Kosovo society.

The participants and panelists of the conference were divided into working groups whereby they discussed pressing matters of the youth in the rule of law sector, how they can promote active citizenship, push forward policies, influence decision making processes, and so on. These groups reflected opinions and experiences of young women and men who are actively engaged in youth advocacy, empowerment, representation and entrepreneurship in Kosovo. They came up with proposals and findings in regards to different important factors that directly or indirectly affect different dimensions of rule of law.

The proposals and findings of the working groups focused on matters such as:

Gender mainstreaming and an intersectional understanding of discrimination should be promoted systemically and moreover, underrepresented voices should find a place in the media and in the political discourse. Promoting inclusion of marginalized communities such as people with special needs, LGBTI+ community, who often face discrimination in various sectors. Implementing the existing advanced laws in this sector is also an imperative steps towards achieving social inclusion of these groups.

Enhancing youth representation and active citizenship in institutions, specifically in the rule of law sector

Empowerment and inclusion of youth in decision making processes towards building more transparent and accountable rule of law institutions

Digitalization of public institutions greatly enhances transparency and accountability and in this way promoting the rule of law. Institutions should take up the challenge of interacting more systemically and directing with citizens, exploring new opportunities opened up by technological progress. By way of example, institutions should increase their responsiveness to citizens' inputs and feedback, as well as their online presence.

The 65 young professionals, as a means of cooperation suggested to the EULEX Mission to increase visibility and outreach by engaging offline and online with the youth in particular, to promote the perspective of rule of law by using European best practices and standards as vital models to follow.

