



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Kosovo Youth Speaks out

Prishtinë/Priština, 20 October 2010 – The Kosovo Stability Initiative (IKS), in partnership with UNICEF Office in Kosovo and with the support of the Luxembourg Government, launched the youth opinion poll *'Unleashing Change: Voices of Kosovo's Youth 2010'*.

Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe and the poorest economy in the region. Every fourth person falls into the 15 to 24 year age group, 73 percent of whom are unemployed. While many agree that the future of Kosovo lies in the hands of young people, Kosovo youth occupies very little place in the policies that determine their future. Education, youth empowerment and employment remain key challenges on Kosovo's path towards European integration. Kosovo needs to invest more in its youth to be a competitive economy in the wider European market.

The study explores the current situation of young people in Kosovo, putting together their views, experiences and frustrations in terms of education, employment, participation in decision-making processes, and future perspectives. In doing so, the *'Voices of Kosovo's Youth 2010'* report aims at introducing young people at the center of the debate on Kosovo's future, serving as an advocacy tool for identifying gaps and directing efforts towards adapting the education system according to market requirements, identifying opportunities for youth employment and finding channels for youth representation and participation in decision-making.

The launching event saw the participation of key stakeholder and represented an opportunity for governmental institution, international organizations, as well as civil society actors at large to come to terms with the challenges of the Kosovo youths and to create a gateway for the designs of policies and practices that will meet the needs of these young people in a bid to secure a better future for Kosovo.

The launch of the youth opinion poll *'Unleashing Change: Voices of Kosovo's Youth 2010'* takes place under the umbrella of the *Poverty Eradication Week 2010* (18 – 25 October) – *'Only With Your Voice and Action, Together we can End Poverty'*.