



Minority Rights in Practice in South-East Europe 2004-2008

Final Review Report



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COLOPHON

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FOREWORD

In recent years, the general legal and political environment for the harmonious development of interethnic relations has improved substantially in most parts of South-East Europe. However, the reality of interethnic relations and minority rights varies greatly. Overall, despite major efforts made by the governments of this region to adapt their legislation to international standards, one has to acknowledge that minorities continue to be exposed to varying levels of discrimination, segregation and marginalisation. Moreover, real participation of ethnic minorities in decision-making processes remains limited and lags behind political rhetoric. This is due to a lack of effective implementation of legal provisions, inadequate policy commitments and insufficient public understanding, especially at local level.

One of the main lessons we have learned from our previous experience in the Balkans is therefore the need for sustained efforts to increase the awareness and competence of public authorities to adopt a policy of inclusion towards ethnic minorities and to empower minority groups, especially the small neglected minorities, so that their voices are heard. In this process, civil society has a crucial role to play, at both local and national level, to fill in the gaps in government policies as well as to exert pressure on the institutions to fulfil their obligations and to make new anti-discrimination provisions an everyday reality.

These are some of the challenges that have been addressed by the "Minority Rights in Practice" project in nine countries of South-East Europe. In 2004, after more than ten years' work in the field of ethnic relations and minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, the King Baudouin Foundation decided to continue its work with a new focus on policy change at local, national and international levels to overcome discrimination and advocate effective participation of minorities.

This report summarizes some of the outstanding achievements of the MRP partners during a limited period of time and with limited resources and it sets out recommendations for further action in this field. While the first two sections focus on recent trends and developments in the field of minority rights and on how MRP partners contributed to advance minority rights protection, the third part provides an insight into the impact of European integration on protection of minority rights. The last section of the report describes the role of civil society in this field and puts forward four sets of recommendations: for the MRP partners, for the donor community, for the EU and for the governments of South-East Europe.

The Foundation would like to pay tribute not only to its MRP partners for their continued commitment to this ambitious endeavour, but also to the authors of the report who have successfully met the challenge of drawing lessons from this initiative. We extend our gratitude to our long-time financial partners, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Open Society foundations as well as to the European Commission which contributed to increasing the scope and impact of the Minority Rights in Practice project.

King Baudouin Foundation
September 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After four years of supporting minority rights in the Balkans, the King Baudouin Foundation's Minority Rights in Practice (MRP) initiative came to an end in 2008.

Dozens of individual projects carried out within this framework in nine countries of South-East Europe have made a significant contribution to raising public awareness of minority rights, getting minority issues on government agendas and putting new institutions and laws into practice.

The main instrument for advancing minority rights in South-East Europe is European integration. As all countries in the region progress- albeit at a different pace - towards EU membership, EU conditions and progress reports on minority rights are crucial in pressuring governments to live up to their international commitments. As a result, a significant aspect of MRP has been regular dialogue between the network partners and the European Commission, both in Brussels and in the various countries. Often, the only way for minority issues to receive government attention has been through the EU. This channel of communication has helped the European Commission to advance the quality of its reporting on minority rights as well as facilitating advocacy skills in the region. Following the end of MRP, there remains an ongoing need for this dialogue so as to ensure a regular and timely exchange of information between minority rights NGOs and the European Commission.

Advances in minority rights are often a consequence of meaningful dialogue between governments and minority communities. However, few channels for such communication exist and minorities often find themselves cut off from access to dialogue with their governments. A number of MRP projects have therefore focused on initiating dialogue on the specific concerns of minority communities.

Another key component of the MRP has been to infuse life into the plethora of minority institutions. New minority rights legislation leads to the creation of numerous new institutions at state and regional levels, but these have often remained empty shells due to the lack of resources and relevant experience. By providing advice and monitoring their work, many institutions have been able to improve their work and become fully functional.

Finally, the MRP initiative facilitated the exchange of ideas, experience and best practices across South-East Europe. Through thematic workshops and handbooks, it pooled this know-how and established strong regional links.

With the end of the Minority Rights in Practice, work in the field of minority rights in South-East Europe is far from finished. As minority-related work is still not sustainable through domestic funding, external support remains a crucial life-line for the advancement of minority rights. Governments throughout the region are formally committed to reforms and EU integration, but minority rights are often neglected and figure low on the list of government priorities. Exclusion and the marginalization of vulnerable minorities is not a phenomenon of the past, so the partners of MRP remain committed to work in this field and external support remains essential.

SAMENVATTING

Na vier jaar steun voor de rechten van minderheden in de Balkanlanden kwam er in 2008 een einde aan Minority Rights in Practice (MRP), een initiatief van de Koning Boudewijnstichting.

De tientallen individuele projecten die in dit kader in negen landen van Zuidoost-Europa zijn uitgevoerd, hebben een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd om het publieke bewustzijn van de rechten van minderheden te verhogen, om minderhedenthema's op de overheidsagenda te plaatsen en nieuwe instellingen en wetten in werking te stellen.

Het belangrijkste instrument om de rechten van minderheden in Zuidoost-Europa te bevorderen, is Europese integratie. Omdat alle landen in de regio – weliswaar in verschillend tempo – stappen zetten naar het EU-lidmaatschap, zijn de voorwaarden en de voortgangsverslagen van de EU over minderhedenrechten van essentieel belang om regeringen onder druk te zetten om hun internationale verbintenissen na te komen. Een regelmatige dialoog tussen de partners in het netwerk en de Europese Commissie, zowel in Brussel als in de landen zelf, vormde dan ook een belangrijk onderdeel van het MRP-initiatief. Vaak krijgen minderhedenthema's enkel aandacht van regeringen via de EU. Dit communicatiekanaal heeft zowel de Europese Commissie geholpen om de kwaliteit van haar verslaggeving over minderhedenrechten te verbeteren als de advocacycapaciteiten in de regio bevorderd. Na het einde van MRP blijft deze dialoog nodig om een regelmatige en vroegtijdige informatie-uitwisseling tussen ngo's voor minderhedenrechten en de Europese Commissie te garanderen.

Vorderingen op het vlak van minderhedenrechten zijn vaak het gevolg van een zinvolle dialoog tussen regeringen en minderheidsgroepen. Maar er zijn weinig kanalen voor deze communicatie en minderheden stellen vaak vast dat zij geen toegang hebben tot een dialoog met hun regering. Daarom legde een aantal projecten in het kader van het MRP-initiatief zich toe op het opzetten van zo'n dialoog over de specifieke bekommernissen van minderheidsgroepen.

Een ander essentieel onderdeel van het MRP-initiatief bestond erin de overvloed aan instellingen voor minderheden tot leven te brengen. De nieuwe wetten in verband met de rechten van minderheden hebben geleid tot allerlei instellingen op nationaal en regionaal niveau. Maar die bleven vaak een lege doos bij gebrek aan middelen en omdat maar weinig mensen wisten hoe ze die nieuwe structuren tot leven konden wekken. Dankzij adviesverstrekking en begeleiding konden veel instellingen hun werkzaamheden verbeteren en volledig operationeel worden.

Ten slotte heeft het MRP-initiatief de uitwisseling van ideeën, ervaringen en goede praktijken in heel Zuidoost-Europa bevorderd. Met behulp van thematische workshops en handboeken is kennis bijeengebracht en zijn hechte regionale banden gesmeed.

Met het einde van *Minority Rights in Practice* is het werk op het vlak van de rechten van minderheden in Zuidoost-Europa verre van voltooid. Omdat het werk voor minderheden nog altijd niet alleen met behulp van binnenlandse financiering kan gebeuren, blijft steun van buitenaf van essentieel belang voor de bevordering van de rechten van minderheden. Hoewel de regeringen uit de hele regio zich formeel hebben verbonden tot hervormingen en integratie in de EU, blijven zij de rechten van minderheden toch vaak verwaarlozen en staan die rechten allermindst bovenaan hun prioriteitenlijstje. Omdat uitsluiting en achterstelling van kwetsbare minderheden niet alleen een fenomeen uit het verleden is, willen de MRP-partners zich verder inzetten voor werk op het terrein en blijft externe steun van cruciaal belang.

SYNTHÈSE

Après quatre ans de soutien aux droits des minorités ethniques dans les Balkans, l'initiative Minority Rights in Practice (MRP) de la Fondation Roi Baudouin a pris fin en 2008.

Des dizaines de projets individuels mis sur pied dans ce cadre dans neuf pays d'Europe du Sud-Est ont contribué de manière non négligeable à sensibiliser la population aux droits des minorités, à placer cette problématique à l'agenda des gouvernements et à mettre en pratique de nouvelles lois et institutions.

L'intégration européenne constitue le principal instrument permettant de faire progresser les droits des minorités dans le sud-est de l'Europe. Étant donné que tous les pays de la région briguent – à un rythme certes différent – l'adhésion à l'Union européenne, les conditions posées par l'Europe et les rapports évaluant les progrès en matière de droits des minorités sont essentiels pour obliger les gouvernements à respecter leurs engagements internationaux. En conséquence, un aspect important du programme MRP a résidé dans un dialogue régulier entre le réseau de partenaires et la Commission européenne, tant à Bruxelles que dans chacun des pays concernés. Souvent, le seul moyen de susciter l'intérêt des gouvernements pour les problèmes des minorités a été l'UE. Ce mode de communication a à la fois aidé la Commission européenne à améliorer la qualité de ses informations en matière de droits des minorités et facilité les compétences de sensibilisation dans la région. À l'issue du MRP subsiste un besoin de poursuivre ce dialogue afin d'assurer un échange régulier d'informations entre les ONG actives dans la défense des droits des minorités et la Commission européenne.

Les progrès réalisés résultent souvent d'un dialogue constructif entre les gouvernements et les communautés minoritaires. Il existe toutefois peu de canaux permettant ce type de communication et les minorités se trouvent souvent exclues d'un dialogue avec leurs gouvernements. De nombreux projets MRP se sont dès lors efforcés de créer les conditions d'une interaction sur les préoccupations spécifiques des communautés minoritaires.

Un autre élément clé du programme MRP a consisté à dynamiser la pléthore d'institutions destinées aux minorités. La nouvelle législation en matière de droits des minorités a donné lieu à un grand nombre de nouvelles institutions aux niveaux national et régional. Ces dernières restent souvent des 'coquilles vides' du fait qu'elles manquent des ressources et de l'expérience nécessaires pour donner vie à ces nouvelles structures. En donnant des conseils et en supervisant leurs activités, on a permis à beaucoup d'institutions d'améliorer leur travail et de devenir pleinement fonctionnelles.

Enfin, l'initiative MRP a favorisé l'échange d'idées, d'expériences et de bonnes pratiques dans le sud-est de l'Europe. Par le biais d'ateliers thématiques et de manuels, elle a rassemblé ce know-how et instauré d'intenses liens régionaux.

Si le programme Minority Rights in Practice prend fin, le travail dans le domaine des droits des minorités est loin d'être achevé. Etant donné que les activités liées aux minorités ne sont toujours pas soutenues durablement par un financement national, le soutien externe reste une bouée de sauvetage indispensable pour faire progresser leurs droits. Bien que les gouvernements de la région se soient formellement engagés à des réformes et à l'intégration européenne, les droits des minorités sont fréquemment négligés et occupent le bas de la liste des priorités gouvernementales. L'exclusion et la marginalisation de minorités vulnérables étant loin d'être un phénomène révolu, les partenaires de MRP restent résolus à travailler dans ce domaine et le soutien extérieur demeure essentiel.

I. INTRODUCTION

Minority rights feature prominently in the reports of the European Commission on the progress of the countries of South-East Europe (SEE) and inter-ethnic relations are widely recognized to have suffered considerably under the legacy of Communism in some countries and during the wars of the 1990s in others. Despite the obvious importance of minority rights and minority-majority relations in SEE, international assistance in this field has been limited. The amount of funding available has been modest and minority rights have often not been an integral part of the broader democratization and human rights initiatives in the region.

The King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) has been one of the few donors in SEE to focus assistance on improving ethnic relations and minority rights in the past 8 years. In partnership with other donors, in particular the C.S. Mott Foundation and the Open Society foundations in the different countries in the region, the KBF coordinated the "Improving Ethnic Relations in SEE" programme (IER, 2001-2003) together with in-country partners in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia. The programme involved small grants to over 220 locally based initiatives to overcome divisions and exclusion in ethnically diverse communities and build the capacity of local activists and organizations from all ethnic groups.

From 2004, the KBF continued providing support in the field of ethnic relations and minorities with the "**Minority Rights in Practice in SEE**" (MRP) initiative. Its focus was on advocacy and common action in advancing policies and practices to create better conditions for the effective participation of minorities in SEE countries, in view of their goal of European integration. The MRP combined work on local, country, regional (SEE) and European levels. The programme provided grants to NGO partners in the countries of the region in support of initiatives to enhance minority rights by building the capacity of minority organizations and local and state institutions, in combination with awareness raising campaigns and media work in selected localities and on a national level. Starting with Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia in 2004, the MRP programme gradually extended its support to initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and from 2007, to Montenegro. The country-wide initiatives frequently reached down to the local level, where minorities are directly affected by state policies.

MRP PARTNERS¹

- Albania: Human Development Promotion Center (HDPC) 2004-2008
- BiH: Centres for Civic Initiatives (CCI) 2005-2008
- Bulgaria: Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, (IEI) 2004-2008
- Croatia: Coalition for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CPPHR) 2005-2008
- Kosovo: Humanitarian Law Center, Prishtina (HLC) 2005-2008
- Macedonia: Common Values (CV) 2004-2008
- Montenegro: Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC); Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM), Centre for Human and Minority Rights (CEZAM), UNO Libertask/Ask, 2007-2008
- Romania: Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, (EDRC) 2004-2008
- Serbia: Civic Initiatives (CI) 2004-2008

The SEE regional MRP network involved regular meetings between the partners to exchange experience through topic-based regional workshops. These workshops on specific issues also incorporated representatives of governments and international organizations, along with experts on minority issues. The European-level advocacy initiative aimed to raise the awareness of relevant EU institutions and decision makers on emerging issues and needs related to minority rights in SEE and inform them about relevant good practices. The initiative involved bilateral meetings of in-country partners with representatives of the European Commission and other EU officials and continual feedback on the state of minorities in the countries of the region, based on the partners' local, community and state level work, in particular with regard to the implementation of minority rights.

This report is based on an assessment of the Minority Rights in Practice (MRP) programme as one of the few regional initiatives which bring together various NGOs from South-East Europe, including current EU member states, candidate countries and potential candidates to the EU. The purpose of this report is to identify the contributions MRP has made to the status of minorities during its four-year term, to examine the situation of minority rights in South-East Europe in 2009 and outline in which directions NGOs, international organizations, donors and governments need to work to further consolidate the legal advances to date. As such, this report seeks to be not only an assessment of past accomplishments, but also to provide guidance for future work on minority issues in region. It is based on the observation that there is still a substantial need for the further involvement of civil society in the advancement of minority rights in the region and for international organizations and donors to promote this process.

The first chapter outlines key developments and trends in the various countries of the region, related to the dynamics of minority-majority relations, the level of advancement of minority rights and critical issues and shortcomings which slow down or hamper these advancements. The next chapter examines strategies which NGOs in general and the MRP partners in particular have taken to confront these challenges in the field of minority rights across the region. The following two chapters draw the lessons from this experience, the first by looking at the opportunities and limitations of EU integration for minority rights, while the next chapter examines the role of civil society in the advancement of minority rights. Finally, this report concludes with recommendations to the various stakeholders in the field of minority rights.

¹ See Annex II for a description of the MPR partners.

II. MINORITY RIGHTS IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE TODAY: KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

A. Dynamics in Minority-Majority Relations in SEE

Following a decade of heightened minority-majority tensions and violence over much of the region in the 1990s, the first decade since 2000 has been largely characterized by peaceful relations. The last major incidence of anti-minority violence occurred in March 2004 in Kosovo, when large mobs attacked the Serb minority in vulnerable enclaves, followed by sporadic low-level attacks against minorities in Serbia, primarily in Vojvodina. The period between 2004 and 2008 has thus been shaped by the continued re-building of inter-ethnic trust destroyed by earlier events and the partial expansion of legal protection in line with the broad commitment of the region's governments and elites to European integration. Although the claims of governments in the region to a European orientation have arguably not always been sincere, as shown by the nationalist rhetoric of the government of the Republika Srpska since 2006, there is little risk of a return of nationalist semi-authoritarianism anywhere in the region.² For instance, the largest and most threatening nationalist party in the region, the Serb Radical Party, failed to win a decisive victory in Serbian parliamentary elections in 2008 after the independence of Kosovo and has since then come close to disintegration.

These improvements are significant in comparison to the difficult 1990s, but they are not yet fully consolidated. Ineffective public administrations, corruption, populist political elites, the frequent lack of government commitments, inefficient institutions and weaknesses in the rule of law continue to mar some countries and prevent full democratic consolidation and implementation of minority rights. There is a risk of a split between those which have joined the European Union or have implemented reforms and have prospects of joining the EU and those lagging behind with little hope of EU accession in the coming 10-15 years. In addition to Romania and Bulgaria, Croatia belongs to the former group, while Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia belong to the latter, with Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia in between the two groups. This is not to suggest that the reforms have necessarily proved successful in the frontrunners of the region, nor that those lagging behind are failing. However, the delays in reforms and EU accession are likely to accentuate rather than close the gap in the coming years, especially as the EU may seek to slow down, rather than speed up its enlargement into the countries of the region. The window of opportunity for enlargement may close as a result of a combination of factors. One important factor has been the sluggish pace of

² Critics of both the government of the RS and the current Macedonian administration, however, noted authoritarian reflexes and tendencies in both administrations, especially with regard to minorities and vulnerable groups. See Dan Bilefsky, "Tensions rise in fragile Bosnia as Serbs threaten to seek independence", *International Herald Tribune*, 27.2.2009; Neil MacDonald, *Poll gives Macedonia chance to impress EU*, *Financial Times*, 29.3.2009.

reforms in Bulgaria and Romania since accession in 2007.³ The negative perception of this process in a number of EU member states has compounded some of the reluctance towards further quick enlargement. In addition, the difficult Lisbon Treaty ratification process, the impact of the global economic crisis on existing EU member states, especially in parts of Central Europe (e.g. Hungary) and outstanding territorial and political disputes, including the border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia, have reduced EU support for enlargement.⁴ In the region as a whole, progress and political reform have often been difficult, although the process varies between the countries of the region.

The economic crisis which is beginning to affect South-East Europe is also likely to affect the governance of the countries and majority-minority relations in the region.⁵ It is too early to assess the impact, especially as it could be both positive and negative. The danger is a rise of political and economic populism, which undermines reforms, including minority rights, and empowers political leaders who may be tempted to scapegoat minorities. On the other hand the crisis might highlight the importance of economic and political reform and reinvigorate a sense of urgency in gaining access to the relative protection which the EU can offer through membership.

Turning to majority-minority relations, regional trends are varied and contradictory.

Ethnic distance remains a matter of concern throughout the region. A significant proportion of majorities view minorities with suspicion and reject their presence in leading positions in their country, in close family ties or as superiors. These trends can be identified in countries which have experienced severe conflict, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, and countries which have seen little violence, such as Montenegro, although there is some obvious regional variation.

Ethnic Distance in Montenegro

A study on ethnic distance by CEDEM in Montenegro in the framework of the MRP project, for example, suggests that few Montenegrins would like to have a Roma or an Albanian in a leading position in their country rather than an American, German or Russian.

The largest ethnic distance in Montenegro was measured among attitudes of Serbs towards Albanians, while minorities in general have less negative views of others than the larger communities, i.e. Montenegrins and Serbs. A striking finding is that intolerance increased between 2004, when the same survey was first carried out, and 2007. This shows that ethnic distance has not diminished since the independence of Montenegro, but has rather gathered in significance. This trend appears to be shared by some other countries in the region, suggesting the continued need to promote tolerance and address negative stereotypes.

For the full report see: http://www.cedem.cg.yu/opolls/images/Ethnic_distance_2007.pdf

.....
 3 Although there is variation between the countries, as the regular EC reports testify.
 See http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/progress_reports_en.htm.

4 See Christophe Solioz, "Has Europe dropped the Balkans?" *Open Democracy*, 5.5.2009.

5 Toby Vogel, "The Balkan bail-out club keeps getting bigger", *European Voice*, 16.4.2009.

A worrying development is the fact that members of the younger generation are frequently more bigoted and prejudiced than their parents' generation. While relations between majorities and larger minorities are often characterized by tensions, smaller minorities are often subject to silent assimilation. In addition, the Roma minority continues to suffer widespread discrimination throughout the region. Regional initiatives, such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, have begun to address some of the structural causes of Roma discrimination in the field of education, health care and housing, but there has been little improvement in social attitudes and those of the public administration.

B. Advancing Minority Rights: Opportunities and Gaps

In terms of the development of government policies on minorities, the overall positive trend during the first years after 2000 has failed to continue in many areas in the second half of the decade. After joining the EU in 2007, Romania and Bulgaria were no longer subject to the same kind of conditionality as during the accession process. The monitoring mechanism in place since the two countries joined the EU has secured some continuity in certain fields, such as the reform of public administration, but minority rights are no longer under the same scrutiny as they were prior to accession. While it might be too early to determine whether this shift has resulted in a decline or stagnation of minority protection, it amounts to the loss of a key instrument in ensuring compliance with international minority rights standards.

Serbia experienced a decline in minority rights protection between 2004 and 2008, including the abolition of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights in 2006 (re-established in late 2008) and a temporary upsurge in anti-minority incidents in 2004 in Vojvodina. In Kosovo, significant new laws were passed in the aftermath of the declaration of independence in February 2008, but the Serb boycott of Kosovo's institutions and the distrust resulting from the violence in 2004 and the declaration of independence have seriously undermined these institutional efforts. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, increased inter-ethnic polarisation in the political discourse after 2006 has not affected minorities directly, but has contributed to an overall decline in ethnic relations and political reforms.

Minority rights enjoyed a surge in the early 2000s in South-East Europe. Numerous new laws in the field of minority rights affected the Western Balkans in particular, where new minority laws were passed between 2002 and 2008 in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia. This wave of new legislation resulted from implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in the region after the convention came into force in 1998. In addition, domestic factors contributed to these new laws as governments recognized the need to establish a new relationship with minorities following the lost decade of the 1990s. In other countries of South-East Europe, the first years of the millennium consolidated the inclusion of minority parties in government, from Romania and Bulgaria to Albania, derived from a gradual change in state policies towards minorities in some of the countries.

Many of the new laws across the region establish sophisticated and complex institutions offering representation to national minorities and varying degrees of cultural autonomy in some cases. However, the reality of the new minority laws soon began to clash with their intended purpose as their implementation lagged behind considerably. In practice, the participation of ethnic minorities in decision-making remains very limited. Some of

the constraints on effective implementation are connected to ignorance or low awareness of the benefits of rights-based policies which include, rather than exclude, minorities from national and local decision making processes. The capacity in various levels of public administration to implement such policies, particularly on a local level, is insufficient or non-existent. With no provisions to sanction non-implementation or poor implementation, minority rights are often lost among other priorities of overloaded reform agendas. Governments have failed to make sufficient efforts, if any, to clarify and build public support for the adopted measures in the social environment characterised by low awareness and negative public perceptions. This failure results in public resentment towards minority rights policies, which are perceived as "unfair" to the majority and further increases the vulnerability of minority issues to political manipulation.

Other common constraints relate to the democratic deficiencies in the countries in the region, where institutions and governments are still not accustomed to be held to account by their constituencies, and the limited role which civil sector organizations are able to play. Local authorities are still learning how to interact effectively with other levels of government and how to represent and advocate for the interests of their communities. There is insufficient space, time and resources for civil sector and minority organizations to meet and learn from each other or take common action. There is also little communication between organizations working on different aspects of civil society and local development on the one hand and those specialised in minority and human rights on the other. This results in fragmentation of human rights approaches. Organizations not involved directly in minority issues usually have a low level of awareness of minority rights and the need to enforce them effectively in the country. This reduces the effectiveness of action for minority rights and integration as part of the democratic process on a central and local level.

III. ADVANCING MINORITY RIGHTS PRACTICES IN SEE

A. Bridging the Gap

The Minority Rights in Practice programme aimed to foster policy change to bring about increased minority participation in SEE countries, providing a broad strategic framework for initiatives to bridge the gap between declared policies and their actual implementation. The programme combined three components:

- a) monitoring legal measures and mechanisms and identifying ways in which they can be implemented more effectively;
- b) building the capacity of ethnic minority NGOs to represent the interests of their communities in the public policy process locally and nationally;
- c) raising the awareness of governments and relevant public institutions to the need to ensure the equal access of minorities to public participation, including effective practices of partnership with NGOs and representatives of minorities.

In addition to country initiatives, MRP also provided a regional forum for the exchange of views and experience and to establish contact with European institutions in order to voice various issues and promote good practices related to minority rights.

However, owing to the complexity of minority rights and their practical meaning in the variety of local contexts in the different countries in the region, uniform solutions cannot be applied, nor can we rely on external requirements alone to drive the process as long as there is no domestic sense of ownership over the standards. The country initiatives depended on the selected partners in each country. The partners themselves suggested the best ways to address the most critical issues on the basis of their knowledge and experience as leading organizations, some working mostly on minority rights, others on broader civil society issues. In most countries, one leading organization mobilised partnerships and interaction with other civil society actors and networks. In Croatia, the partnership was based on a registered coalition of 9 organizations, while in Montenegro it was a partnership of 4 organizations specialised in different fields, which united their efforts in order to meet the complex requirements of the MRP programme.

The common factor among the individual projects in all countries was the combined approach of ensuring that the individual activities complement each other and form part of a larger in-country approach. This approach was based on expanding the interaction between various stakeholders in selected ethnically diverse localities and linking this work locally with country-wide and European issues and stakeholders. In many cases, lessons from the local level work triggered regional initiatives put forward and hosted by a country partner. This allowed local experience to shape and be shared among all MRP

partners. Some critical issues arising from local or country-level work became the subject of European-level meetings or advocacy initiatives. Another common feature for all countries was the proactive communication strategy which aimed to reach out to broader audiences through the media, public advocacy campaigns and public meetings, events and presentations, bringing the minority rights message to the general public in the target regions and countrywide.

B. Evolving Outcomes

1. Amending Legislation

The discrepancy between law and reality often derives from the fact that legislation sets out ambitious rights protection mechanisms and tools to secure the participation of minorities, but lacks procedures to implement these provisions. The law may require these institutions and mechanisms to be established and to function, but in a great many cases no penalties are prescribed and no deadlines are stipulated for their establishment. In addition, legislation adopted on a national level frequently requires follow-up legislation and regulations to translate the mechanisms and provisions to other levels of governance. If legal provisions are not harmonised, their practical implementation on a local level will be blocked. Many years may elapse before legislation is implemented, because political representatives from the majority lack the commitment and will to confront this shortcoming. This has been a major challenge with most minority legislation in the region, most notably in connection with the Federal (Yugoslav) Protection of National Minorities Act adopted in 2001.

A number of initiatives of MRP partners in response to various needs in the different countries in the past four years have aimed to put forward new laws or amend existing legislation. Some responded by seeking amendments to vague laws, stipulating specific responsibilities and deadlines for the establishment and functioning of institutions.

Reforming Minority Legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

The Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed a minority law in 2004. While in many aspects this law contained positive provisions, the obligations of institutions and the time frame for the establishment of new minority institutions were too vaguely formulated.

On the basis of broad public debate organized in partnership with other NGOs and national minorities, in 2005 the Centres for Civic Initiatives (CCI) proposed amendments to the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities Act to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly.

The proposed amendments addressed the financing of national minority institutions, the relations between public broadcasters and national minorities, improved employment opportunities for national minorities including affirmative action, the use of insignia and symbols and improved minority language education provisions. Importantly, the proposed amendments included the introduction of a 60 day deadline for the establishment of a Council of National Minorities BiH. The Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities Act was unanimously adopted by the MPs in the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly.

Following this success, the CCI successfully lobbied the Ministry of Administration and Local Government of Republika Srpska (RS) to harmonise the entity law with the amended state law, again with a legal obligation for a specific timeline for the formation of the Council of National Minorities at the RS National Assembly. These activities received the support of the President of the RS National Assembly and several MPs.

Throughout the region, the MRP programme initiated pioneering work in introducing minority rights provisions. For example, CEZAM, as part of the coalition of NGOs working on the MRP programme in Montenegro, organized a legal analysis and debates on the establishment of legal minority rights frameworks. This was unique for the country and most of the CEZAM's findings were accepted by state institutions, especially in the joint drafting of the National Strategy for a Minority Policy by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and CEZAM. Similarly in Macedonia, CV cooperated with the Parliamentary Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations and the committee incorporated many of CV's recommendations in their 2009 strategy.

The regional MRP meetings provided opportunities for comparison and exchange of experience on legislation on national minorities in the different countries. For example, this helped the EDRC in its work on proposals for a national law on minorities, followed by a workshop on this issue. Although the Romanian Parliament did not adopt the law, this work was important in putting the issue on the public agenda.

2. Monitoring Implementation

Without civil sector monitoring, the implementation of legislation, including in the field of minority rights, is often late, haphazard and piecemeal. International organizations usually lack the capacity and powers to monitor the implementation of legislation, even if it arises from the international obligations of the country. Few other actors are available to take on this role apart from non-governmental organizations.

A mechanism for civil sector monitoring and reporting in Bulgaria

The MRP partner organization in Bulgaria, the IEI Foundation established a mechanism for civil sector monitoring and reporting of government performance in the area of minority rights. The first round of monitoring was organized in 2006 in coalition with 15 influential human rights NGOs. It examined the implementation of government measures to address the findings and recommendations of the European Commission report in the field of human rights protection and the integration of minorities and minority groups under the Political Criteria chapter. The Civil Sector Monitoring Report was sent to policy makers and experts in the relevant European and national institutions and presented at a public forum in Sofia. Participants included Bridget Czarnota, Head of the EC enlargement mission to Bulgaria, other representatives of the EC and high-ranking officials from the institutions discussed in the report. Starting with MRP funding, the IEI Foundation has raised other funds and has organized two more rounds of alternative civil sector monitoring and reports: in 2007 and 2008 on Bulgaria's post-accession compliance with EU membership criteria in the field of human rights and protection of minority and vulnerable groups; and in 2008 on Bulgaria's compliance with the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The monitoring of minority rights legislation across the region has been a pillar of most MRP country projects. Partners in countries including Croatia, Macedonia and Albania implemented consistent capacity building initiatives to develop monitoring skills locally, involving NGOs, minority communities and local institutions. In other countries such as Bulgaria and Kosovo, civil sector monitoring and reporting on the implementation of minority rights have been key elements of the partner strategies.

Monitoring Minority Rights Legislation in Kosovo

In Kosovo, the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC-Kosovo) has been a leading organization in monitoring the implementation of minority rights. In the framework of the MRP programme it has focused on gathering statements from minorities and various stakeholders and analysing legislation in Kosovo to identify gaps in the implementation of legal measures and mechanisms guaranteeing minority rights. The main areas explored include the right to freedom of movement and security, ethnically motivated incidents, access to the administrative and judicial authorities, the official use of language, access to health care and social services, access to employment and discrimination, access to property, the level of participation in political life and conditions for the sustainable return of all internally displaced persons. The HLC produced three monitoring reports respectively in 2006, 2007 and 2008.⁶ Each is based on hundreds of statements and legal analyses and provides clear recommendations to the authorities on essential measures in the various areas to improve the situation of minorities. These reports were based on a case study approach, examining the impact of legislation in specific, meticulously documented cases. Published in Serbian, English, and Albanian, the reports were presented to the public and widely disseminated in Kosovo and in Serbia. In addition, HLC published three leaflets underlining the rights of members of minority communities in Kosovo based on three laws: the *Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Communities Act*, the *Protection from Discrimination Act* and the *Use of Languages Act*. Leaflets were prepared in Serbian, Albanian, Bosnian, Turkish, Romani and English language and disseminated among minority communities in Kosovo.⁷

3. Building the Capacity of Key Minority Rights Stakeholders

Minority rights legislation and international standards can be a powerful tool in the hands of minority communities and civil society in their work with the authorities to shape policies. However, in order to fulfil this role, they need to be familiar with these frameworks and standards, which is often not the case, especially with regard to translating abstract international standards or constitutional guarantees into specific policies. Knowledge and awareness on a state level among public administration (often fragmentary or perfunctory) and knowledge among minority communities themselves, is often not transferred to the local level. The capacity of local administrations to put legal provisions in practice and of local civil society and minority communities to advocate for this effectively, is limited. In practice this blocks the local implementation of minority rights policies. Raising awareness of the state's obligations and commitments towards minorities is therefore crucial in rendering them effective. Familiarizing key constituencies with minority rights has been a consistent element in the activities of all MRP partners.

a) Bringing together diverse local stakeholders. In many countries such as Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia, a main focus of MRP has been to bring diverse constituencies together and to improve capacity through sharing their experience and knowledge of minorities. This was achieved by a variety of means such as seminars, workshops, local awareness raising initiatives and campaigns. Despite the different approaches, the significance within the country strategy and the local contexts, a common feature was the focus on capacity development, bringing together and creating a common space for interaction between diverse stakeholders including local self-government and institutions, NGOs, minority representatives and organizations and local journalists. Along with advancing knowledge about minority rights in general, this helped to open dialogue among local actors and resulted in a number of new joint local initiatives. In some countries, e.g. Serbia and Macedonia, in addition to local interaction among the civil sector, minority communities and institutions, some of the capacity building initiatives also stimulated exchange with state-level institutions.

⁶ <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/FHPKosovo/ETNICKE-MANJINE/1466.en.html>

⁷ <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/FHPKosovo/ETNICKE-MANJINE/index.1.en.html>

Case Studies and Local Workshops in Albania

To increase knowledge among civil society and local institutions on minority rights standards and how they can be used in local policy implementation, HDPC in Albania combined an issue-based case study approach with broad local discussions on the findings of these studies. The idea was to design activities in ethnically diverse municipalities and districts, based on real needs and concerns. Four strategic case studies were developed by experts on the following topics: a) living conditions and access of Roma communities to social protection; b) minority representation in local public administration; c) access to education for Roma communities; and d) access to the media. The findings of these case studies were discussed at six local round tables respectively in Elbasan, Gjirokastër, Permet, Shkodër, Korçë, Sarandë and Tirana. The round tables involved representatives of minority communities and associations, local government, local media, universities and relevant central institutions operating on a local level. This approach helped to put minority issues on the local agenda and contributed to creating a new type of debate among diverse stakeholders on highly sensitive issues. In some cases, it also led to practical initiatives to improve the situation of minorities. An example is the Creation of a Roma Education Centre in Elbasan, which continues to receive funding from the Municipality.

The regional MRP meetings enabled extensive discussions and sharing among the country partners of lessons learned from the emerging practices in developing skills and knowledge in the area of minority rights. This stimulated a joint regional initiative for capacity development named *Dialogue for Interaction. Advocacy and Networking Capacity Building Programme* (DIANET). This project, supported by the EC and the KBF in 2006-2007, complemented the MRP programme.

DIANET: Dialogue for Interaction. Advocacy and Networking Capacity Building Programme 2006-2007 (supported by the EC and KBF)

DIANET was initiated and implemented jointly by KBF, the Human Development Promotion Center (HDPC) in Albania, Common Values (CV) in Macedonia and Civic Initiatives (CI) in Serbia. Though activities were focused on these three countries, DIANET involved all MRP partners. It emerged as a regional initiative and a regional product of the MRP programme. The priority of DIANET was to provide tools and skills to develop the capacity for advocacy and interaction between civil society and governments, especially on a local level. Activities included regional training of trainers organized by a regional team in each of the three countries, joint development of a comprehensive toolkit for minority rights advocacy in diverse communities, development of a regional website and a regional workshop on cooperation between civil society and governments held in Durrës, Albania. The initiative provided training to 35 minority rights advocacy trainees in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia, who had conducted numerous training sessions in local communities as part of the MRP programme in the respective countries or in the course of initiatives of their organizations working in the area of human rights and minorities. The advocacy toolkit is considered as one of the few practical instruments available to bring together a variety of resources and contains case studies illustrating effective approaches from all of the 9 countries involved in the MRP programme.

b) Increasing the capacity of the local and regional public administration for good governance in multi-ethnic communities. It is crucial that local and regional public administrations adopt minority rights as integral principle of good governance. Public administrations frequently lack the tools to incorporate new legislative advances in the field of minority rights and non-discrimination into their administrative practices.⁸

Some MRP partners, such as HDPC in Albania and EDRC in Romania, undertook activities focused on increasing the capacity of public administration in the area of minority rights. In addition to involving decision makers in all capacity building activities, the HDPC also provided on-the-job assistance to the local administration in several municipalities in mainstreaming a minority rights approach in their work. The EDRC in Romania, together with the Institute for Public Administration, organized several training sessions for local public administrations. However a great deal more work is needed. Some of the challenges relate to the very low level of local understanding of the needs of minorities and the meaning of minority rights.

Training the Romanian Police on Minority Issues

Besides the education authorities, the state institution most often encountered by citizens is the police force. Considering the troubled record of the police in their treatment of minorities, awareness of minority concerns among the police is particularly important. Accordingly, this was the focus of an EDRC project in Romania.

Raising awareness among police forces was one of EDRC's long-term strategies before and during the MRP programme, involving training sessions on non-discrimination legislation in Romania, its relevance for the police and relations between the police and the community for police officers from 21 county departments (6 outside Transylvania and one from Transylvania); community meetings involving local authorities and ethnic groups; and an information campaign Police career opportunities for high school students of minority ethnic origin. The main partners were the Romanian General Police Inspectorate and the Cluj-Napoca Police College.

After 8 years of training and cooperation with the police by the EDRC, police awareness of minority rights significantly increased. This is evidenced by growing requests from the Police for further minority rights training, which has meanwhile become a part of their training system. A further outcome is increased representation of minorities in the police force as a result of a three-year campaign. A third result of this long-term cooperation with the police is a legal initiative by the police force to institute a minority language proficiency requirement in policing multicultural communities.

⁸ See the joint KBF/EDRC publication "Good Governance in Multi-Ethnic Communities" (2007) <http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=193672&LangType=1033>

4. Enhancing Minority Representation and Political Participation

The political participation of minorities and their representation on various decision making levels is crucial both for policy formulation and for implementation, including in the field of minority rights. Like other minority rights instruments, the regulations for minority representation are often vague or fragmentary and there is a pressing need for harmonisation between the various levels of governance.⁹ For example, if minorities are present at all, under existing regulations for minority representative bodies in some of the countries they face a number of challenges such as unclear mandates, insufficient resources or insufficient awareness and capacity of their members in connection with their roles and responsibilities. Several MRP partners focused strategies and initiatives to address above shortcomings.

a) Making local minority representative structures work. Throughout the region, new institutions have emerged to include and represent minorities on a national and local level. However, there has generally been little state guidance as to how, when and in what scope these new institutions are to operate. Accordingly, a number of partners worked with these bodies to ensure that they function properly and are able to define the minority rights agenda. This was a particular focus in Serbia and Macedonia. Furthermore, the Coalition for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Croatia organized activities for newly-elected national minority council members, minority representatives and representatives of local authorities to raise their awareness and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

Supporting Minority Councils on a Local Level: Experience from Serbia and Macedonia

Recent legislation in Macedonia and Serbia established inter-ethnic councils on a municipal level. These bodies, composed of majority and minority members, are a local conflict management instrument, also serving to ensure that local authorities comply with minority rights standards and take minority views into account.

In reality, however, these councils hardly function in Serbia and Macedonia. In some municipalities they were never even established, while in others they were only convened for their founding session or on very infrequent subsequent occasions, despite the clearly visible needs for their existence.

In 2007-2008 the main focus of the work of Civic Initiatives in Serbia was on increasing the effectiveness of the provision establishing Municipal Councils on Inter-Ethnic Relations introduced with the Local Self-Government Act in 2002. Where these councils have been formed, their existence is largely perfunctory and examples of effective functioning in practice are very infrequent. To address these shortcomings, CI designed a two-pronged action plan. The first involved intensive activities to build the practical capacity of members of Municipal Councils on Inter-Ethnic Relations in four selected municipalities in Vojvodina and Sandžak with cooperative local authorities and significant minority populations (Zrenjanin, Alibunar, Prijepolje and Priboj). This included a number of preparatory meetings and a training programme of 3 consecutive sessions on minority rights standards and ways to implement them in practice. The second strategic direction focused on creating horizontal links between municipalities in different regions by bringing together representatives of their Municipal Councils on Inter-Ethnic relations to discuss common issues and share practices. On the basis of in-depth work in selected municipalities, CI also organized effective advocacy to stimulate the establishment of such councils in municipalities in the south of Serbia, in which they had not been established. Together with other initiatives in Serbia (such as the Open Society Fund recommendations on the work of the Municipal Councils on Inter-Ethnic Relations) this contributed to the functioning in practice of these local minority representative bodies. However, the need for systematic capacity building among members of local minority representative bodies will continue to be a priority, especially after new local elections when new council members will be elected.

⁹ See the joint KBF/CV publication "A guide to minorities and political participation in South-East Europe" (2009) <http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=247160&LangType=1033>

Similarly, Common Values in Macedonia focused its work on increasing the capacity of members of the Municipal Commissions on Inter-Ethnic Relations as the most important local decision-making bodies. This involved specialised training on the duties and responsibilities of the councils and their role in municipal governance. Further training brought council members together with representatives of local government and the local civil sector. As a result of the project, members of the commissions met their counterparts from other municipalities and the Parliamentary Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations for the first time.

On the basis of the experience gained, three key factors were identified to account for the ineffectiveness of the local councils:

- Lack of capacity and professionalism (most commission members are not appointed on the basis of their merits, but as a result of political bargaining).
- Limited mandate of members (as in Municipal Councils) in which NGOs such as CV have invested their efforts (recommendations were sent to the authorities to employ a public administrator in the municipality to meet the needs of the Commissions).
- Lack of funding, since municipal budgets do not cover these commissions and the municipalities are not required by law to provide them with finance.

b) Increasing the political participation of minorities. Some minority communities, in particular the Roma, are often under-represented in elected institutions from parliaments to municipal assemblies. While some problems of under-representation derive from the fragmented political landscape of some minority communities and electoral thresholds which exclude minority parties, the low participation of Roma in particular has deprived the community of a voice in national and local debates. Accordingly, some MRP partners initiated activities around elections to improve the level of political participation of minorities, especially Roma who are still the most under-represented minority across the region. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the CCI assisted national minority associations in carrying out voter education, especially in Roma communities. It also provided training in advocacy and political participation for minority candidates for seats guaranteed for national minorities in municipal elections (see below).

In preparation for the 2005 parliamentary elections, the IEI Foundation in Bulgaria organized a campaign for minority political participation in 2005 under the slogan “More Minorities in Politics – Better Policies For All”. The campaign involved a variety of activities including a national conference, national radio broadcasts and a petition supported by 30 NGOs calling for the equitable inclusion of minorities (focusing on Roma) in the administration. After the elections, the IEI Foundation continued to draw the attention of various institutions to the need to create conditions for minority participation in administration. One example is the standpoint submitted to the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform in 2006 regarding the Strategy and Action Plan for Human Resource Management in State Administration from 2006 to 2013.

Reserved Seats for Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In some cases the practical implementation of provisions in central legislation is blocked by the absence of the corresponding legal provisions at lower administrative levels. Immediately before the local elections in October 2007, the CCI undertook an initiative to harmonize the municipal statutes with BiH electoral legislation, which stipulates a number of guaranteed seats for national minorities in municipal councils.

As a result of the CCI initiative, five municipalities adopted statutes guaranteeing one seat for representatives of national minorities. The CCI also provided training in advocacy and political participation for minority candidates for guaranteed seats in municipal elections.

In Macedonia, CV has mostly promoted minority participation on a local level, for example by forming a partnership between local NGOs, local institutions and stakeholders and the Šuto Orizari municipality in Skopje, which has a Roma majority. The initiative was a breakthrough, as this municipality had never previously cooperated with civil society. The coordinator is employed in the local administration, facilitating contacts with NGOs and citizens and arranging joint projects. Local institutions such as two elementary schools, a health centre, a social service unit and the police office are included in the partnership.

5. Raising Awareness among Majorities

The effectiveness of minority rights is highly dependent on their social context. A government might be formally committed to minority rights, but if its social environment displays little or no appreciation and awareness about minorities, these legal commitments are unlikely to translate into reality. Lack of awareness among majorities about the status of minorities can affect members of minority communities in two ways. Firstly, it can render state institutions less effective in the field of minority rights, since civil servants do not understand the implications of these rights in their daily work and do not appreciate the situation of minorities. Secondly, hostility towards minorities on the part of the majority population might express itself directly in the shape of discrimination and exclusion without being mediated through state institutions. Changing majority perceptions of minorities is therefore a crucial aspect of advancing minority rights, especially in a regional context where minority rights are often mistakenly viewed as a) 'supplementary rights' which only the minority enjoys; b) externally imposed but essentially undesirable and c) strengthening an already threatening minority.

All MRP partners ensured that their activities were widely reported and public awareness campaigns were an integral part of the various projects. In addition, a number of the MRP country partners undertook more targeted activities to alter public perceptions of minorities:

a) Awareness raising among the general public of minority rights and diversity. Some MRP partners sought to provide visibility to the viewpoint of minorities among ordinary citizens in order to promote tolerance and dialogue. This is an important focus considering the considerable levels of ethnic alienation in the countries in the region. For example, the CCI held a media campaign in BiH in which a video spot entitled "We are also here" was broadcast by 30 public media stations in BiH at the end of 2005 and January 2006. The Nansen Dialogue Centre in Montenegro produced a series of fifteen 4-8 minute TV spots on a programme called Hyde Park TV. These shows featured the personal viewpoints and experiences of ordinary citizens from different multi-ethnic communities on minority rights practices in their local communities and on a national level. "Hyde Park TV" was broadcast on the main Public TV channels and some local TV stations.

A National Campaign on Minorities in Serbia

Civic Initiatives organized a national campaign for the introduction of legal regulation in the field of national minority rights at the level of the Republic of Serbia. This involved preparing a publication entitled "National Minorities in Serbia: Text Collection", which provided factual data and analyses of the current position of various minority groups in Serbia and existing legal regulations relating to minority issues. The publication also offered arguments for institutional protection of the position of national minorities and further development of the institutional framework. It was distributed through the *Politika* daily newspaper in 180.000 copies, and the *Danas* national newspaper in 22.000 copies. In addition it was translated and published in the most popular regional newspapers of the Slovakian and Hungarian national minorities entitled *Magyar Szó* and *Hlas Ludu*.

A number of other MRP partners organized awareness raising activities in the regions or municipalities in which they work. In Macedonia, for example, CV held public debates and round tables in Mavrovo and Rostuse on inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations entitled "Differences Bring Us Together". A related initiative in Macedonia was the establishment of the Čair Days. This project was launched by the municipality as a result of a partnership between CV and the municipality of Čair in the city of Skopje. The three-day event included a football tournament under the name "Sports Without Language Barriers" with ethnically mixed teams, a parade of seven cultural organizations in the municipality from different ethnic backgrounds wearing their traditional dress and a traditional dance concert. This initiative was the first of its kind in this municipality, populated primarily by Roma and Albanians, but including other communities. The event was entirely funded by the municipal administration.

b) Advocacy campaigns and initiating amendments to the public agenda. In addition to raising general public awareness on minority rights and diversity, a number of partners initiated targeted public advocacy campaigns to lobby for particular minority policies. Most partners made public awareness an integral part of their numerous issue-based advocacy campaigns.

In Macedonia, for example, CV lobbied for an anti-discrimination law on a local and national level. Other partners like EDRC in Romania developed and launched a monitoring report on discrimination, xenophobia, racism and intolerance in Romania. This report sought to raise issues of police abuse against members of the Roma community and xenophobic manifestations in sports on the agenda. It also mapped the legal and institutional developments and the efforts of the state throughout 2006 and the beginning of 2007 to address discrimination and racism issues. The report was presented to the public in Cluj-Napoca and attracted wide media coverage.

Policy Advice and Initiating National Debates: The Croatian Experience

A key aspect of public advocacy for minority rights is bringing key constituencies together. Basing advocacy and policy work on inclusive consultation processes, such as a series of workshops, renders policy papers more relevant and increases the likelihood of them shaping the policy agenda.

In Croatia, the CPPHR produced six thematic policy papers, which were widely disseminated by domestic and international organizations (such as the OSCE and EU). The policy papers grew out of five thematic round tables with national and regional minority and government representatives and minority experts and seven regional workshops with representatives of minority councils and local authorities. A key feature of this initiative was the integrative approach which combined media outreach with training and capacity building of minorities and advocacy.

The policy papers are available at: <http://www.center4peace.org/english/Publications.htm>

6. Increasing Understanding of Minority Rights and Diversity in the Media

The media play a critical role in shaping public opinion and perceptions. The way the media cover minority issues in the region often contributes to widespread negative stereotypes and discriminative public attitudes towards minorities. The media environment is widely insensitive to ethnic and religious diversity and the awareness of the vast majority of media personnel on minority rights as part of functioning democracies is scanty. In addition, many media are themselves ethnically divided. There is a lack of ethnocultural pluralism and minorities are rarely represented in mainstream majority media. In order to change public attitudes it is important to work on developing journalists and media policies to achieve understanding and responsible coverage of diversity and minority issues.

Some of the MRP partners have approached this through specific activities. In Albania, the HDPC developed a partnership with the Media Institute and organized special training on minority rights and media professionalism for young journalists.

In Bulgaria, the IEI Foundation has focused particularly on the media in its activities, organizing numerous initiatives as part of its consistent strategy to increase media understanding and sensitivity on minority rights related issues. The IEI campaign for ethnocultural pluralism in the media in 2005 aimed to sensitise the media to minority issues and the values of ethnocultural diversity and promote guarantees for equal access and participation of minorities in the media. It involved research on media coverage on minority issues based on monitoring of the national periodical press and broadcast media, at the same time addressing proposals to ensure legal guarantees for ethnocultural pluralism in the media to the respective bodies and institutions.

As part of the series of annual, regional issue-based MRP workshops, the IEI foundation hosted an international conference in 2005 entitled "Media: Responsible Intermediaries in a Multicultural Society? Challenges and Realities", which resulted in a handbook on media and diversity.¹⁰ The handbook put forward four sets of recommendations dealing with the need respectively for bringing domestic legislation into line with international standards, for regulation and self-regulation to control hate speech and promote cultural diversity, for training and re-training journalists to cover minority issues in the media in an ethical manner and finally for fostering interaction between media, media regulatory bodies and NGOs.

7. Promoting Reform of the Education System

In all countries in the region, the reform of the education system is a critical area of particular relevance for minority rights, extending well beyond education in minority languages. Learning about the values of diversity and minority rights concepts is usually absent from the curricula. As a result, children from the majority community are frequently subjected to manipulation and reproduce the predominant stereotypes and prejudices against minorities in their society. Surveys in Serbia and elsewhere indicate that younger people often hold more nationalist views than their parents. This is a direct consequence of the education system. In many countries, children from different ethnic groups study in separate schools and have very limited meeting points. Another regional trend in most countries is unequal access to education for minority children, especially Roma, and lower quality education. The issue of education and diversity cannot only be approached by providing for education for minorities, but must be addressed by changing the overall perception of diversity in the education system.

¹⁰ See KBF/IEI joint publication entitled 'Achieving media responsibility in multicultural societies – Resource Pack: Information, Practices, Standards and Recommendations' (2006) <http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=178324&LangType=1033>

While education issues were present in the variety of capacity building activities, debates and campaigns for minority rights in all in-country MRP programmes, some of the partners undertook targeted initiatives to address shortcomings in educational policies and practices.

At the beginning of the new school year in autumn 2005 in Bulgaria, the IEI Foundation carried out a broad campaign to promote the integration of minority children into the education system. This initiative combined advocacy initiatives with public awareness raising about the need to desegregate Roma-only schools and the benefits of bringing children from differing ethnic backgrounds to learn together at school. Posters, video and audio clips were disseminated in 25 cities around Bulgaria, mainly regional and municipal centres. The audio and video clips were broadcast on state television and radio and on local cable television channels and radio stations. The IEI Foundation succeeded in mobilising a broad range of NGOs and maintained constant interaction with decision makers on various levels to change policies and practices for the educational integration of minority children, focusing on Roma. At the beginning of 2007 the IEI Foundation reviewed the compliance of the educational legislative base and drafted proposals for bringing it into line with international law and standards with regard to the education rights of minorities. In 2006 and 2007 IEI exerted additional pressure for change through its Civil Sector Monitoring Report on government policies in the field of human rights and minority protection and through its participation in the Advisory Council at the Ministry of Education and Science on the educational integration of minority children. These advocacy culminated in the IEI Foundation drafting and submitting proposals for amendments to the draft education bill in the process of preparation by the Bulgarian government in 2008.

A Textbook on Multicultural Education in Romania

The EDRC in Romania focused on introducing multicultural education into the Romanian mainstream education system. The EDRC developed a textbook for 3rd and 4th grade students and tested it in 10 schools throughout the 2005-2006 school year. The topics covered by the curriculum include information on national minorities in Romania, a description of immigrants and lessons on diversity in the family, religion, the community, friends and colleagues, the heroes in different cultures and gastronomic traditions. The education curriculum and teaching approach raised the interest not only of teachers but also of the Ministry of Education. The multicultural education textbook has been republished and distributed in the school system. Currently, there are plans to further expand intercultural education for 7th and 8th grades. The fact that a practice developed by an NGO has become mandatory, requested and supported by the Ministry of Education and applied throughout the school system, can be seen as a major success. This resulted from years of painstaking work, including demonstrating the benefits of this approach to intercultural education. Credit should also go to the activeness and openness of some of the relevant institutions.

For the textbooks see: http://www.edrc.ro/publication_details.jsp?publication_id=20

One of the MRP partners in Montenegro, UNO Libertask/Ask, also focused its activities in the area of education. This involved research in 8 multi-ethnic municipalities to examine the level of knowledge among school teachers about education for minorities and about minorities in multi-ethnic environments, opportunities for funding this education on a local level; analysis of the existing legal framework and a comparison of various experiences in the introduction of education in minority mother languages. The results of this work were presented and discussed with relevant educational institutions and civil sector organizations.

Finally, education was also the topic of the 2006 regional MRP conference organized by Civic Initiatives in Belgrade. The meeting brought together experts on civic and multicultural education with minority representatives, regional partners and experts to discuss minorities and education beyond the narrow scope of minority education alone, but also focusing on changing perceptions among majority children. The handbook based on the conference brings together regional experiences in the field and was widely disseminated by the MRP partners.

IV. CHALLENGES FOR MINORITIES AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

A. European Integration as a Driving Incentive for Advancing Minority Rights

The integration of South-East Europe into the European Union has become a central pillar of reform in the region since 1999. While membership was inconceivable for most countries of former Yugoslavia (except Slovenia) during the 1990s, the reform dynamics arising from the membership prospects of Bulgaria and Romania only began to unfold in the late 1990s. Once membership negotiations accelerated in the case of the latter two countries and the EU offered clear accession prospects to the countries of former Yugoslavia, European integration began to deploy its potential for transformation.

Reforms in fields unrelated to each other, from the banking sector to the judiciary and minority rights, were profoundly impacted by the EU integration perspective, which has come to be nearly universally shared by every government in the region at least formally committed to the project. Minority rights form a key, though ill-defined aspect of EU membership conditions as laid out initially in the Copenhagen criteria of 1993. They have since become an integral part of the enlargement process and the reform agenda which the countries of the region have voluntarily accepted. While the European Union has not contributed new standards to minority rights, it has provided mechanisms for their advancement in a region where minority rights remain fiercely contested at times. Three dynamic forces are at play when considering the role of the European Union in the field of minority rights. Firstly, by adding minority rights to the package of reforms necessary for membership, they constitute an integral part of the commitment which countries accept in a process in which they voluntarily participate. Minority rights are therefore not just an imposition, but an agreement to which the governments of the region have committed themselves. Secondly, a positive association is created between minority rights and European integration. Recognition and integration of minorities in the state are not a sign of a failed state where a majority cannot assert itself, or an unsuccessful nation state, but it symbolizes European identity. The inclusion of minority parties in government, and sometimes even in positions of responsibility towards the EU (as in Romania) thus becomes a symbolic affirmation of government aspirations to join the European Union. Minority inclusion is therefore a national interest and allows majorities to re-define how such an interest is constituted and defined, as arguably has been the case in Croatia. Thirdly, the inclusion of minority rights into the conditionality policy of the EU gives an international organization the powers to require certain policies from a country which might be reluctant to meet certain commitments if they were exclusively formulated by lower-key international organizations.

The central role the European integration process has achieved in the implementation of minority rights has, however, not been without difficulties and setbacks. Two particular challenges have emerged in South-East Europe:

- a) The approach of the European Commission in the field of minority rights has often been unsystematic and ad hoc. This is largely the consequence of the lack of minority rights norms in the EU itself and inadequate institutional capacity to monitor the implementation of minority rights. The European Union has 'borrowed' minority rights standards, in particular from the Council of Europe, to be able to compare the status quo to well-defined legal commitments and requirements. At the same time, the EU often lacks the capacity to assess and monitor implementation. While other international actors and NGOs have again cooperated closely with the EU to fill the gap, the nature and flow of information has often been insufficient for the EU to adequately monitor and guide minority rights implementation in accession countries.
- b) Once a country has joined the European Union, the monitoring and conditionality in the field of minority rights (as elsewhere) ends and countries can backslide. Even though international minority rights instruments contain specific safeguards against countries lowering existing minority rights standards, their implementation and other positive practices can stagnate, be reduced or even reversed once a country joins the EU. The EU has found tools to secure compliance in other domains in the post-accession period, such as in the field of combating corruption as exemplified by the EU withholding funds to Bulgaria. However, as minority rights have not been taken on board as core EU business and as standards and criteria are underdeveloped, there is little post-accession follow up. In addition, once a country has joined the EU, the discrepancy between some older member states and their lack of commitment to minority rights is particularly obvious and it is hard to hold full members to different standards.

B. Combining State and Regional Level Activities with Interaction on a European level

From the very beginning, MRP has sought to build on the central role the EU plays in connection with reforms in the region. Annual consultations between officials in the European Commission monitoring minority rights in South-East Europe and partners from the MRP network began at the outset of the project and have intensified over the years and gained in formal structure. This consultative process has helped to shape the contents of the minority section of the annual progress reports of the European Commission for a number of countries of South-East Europe. While not all information and suggestions are incorporated in an equally systematic manner in the reports, there is a clear sense among the MRP partners that their voice is reflected in the progress reports.

Beyond the formalised communication between the European Commission and the MRP partners on the progress reports, varying degrees of communication have emerged. For example, EC officials have attributed considerable importance to their communication with the Humanitarian Law Center in Kosovo to share information on the status of minorities and a regular flow of information has resulted from the project. A number of partners, however, have noted that the delegations of the European Commission in a number of countries in the South-East Europe are considerably less accessible, maintain a poorer quality of communication and are less responsive to minority concerns than the European Commission in Brussels.

Lobbying in Brussels: The Experience of Civic Initiatives

The following case put forward by Civic Initiatives illustrates the potential and impact on a national level of effective communication between the EU and civil society in the region. In 2005, as part of their advocacy efforts to increase transparency in the election of representatives of national minority councils and the role and mandate of these councils, CI held a national round table which formulated recommendations to the government.

As the government did not take any action, CI drew the EC's attention to the issue. At the request of the European Commission, CI and KBF sent a memorandum outlining the critical issues for the implementation of minority rights, in particular with regard to the need for comprehensive legal regulation of the National Council (elections, powers, mandate, accountability etc.). It also provided specific recommendations to the EC on how the Serbian government could amend the existing Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities Act in order to provide a comprehensive minority protection framework on a Serbian level. The recommendations included a direct and transparent election and clarification of the mandate and the scope of action of the Council of National Minorities on a Republic level. The memorandum also underlined the need for a democratic and transparent process involving minority representatives, civil society and other stakeholders, accompanied by broader democratic public debate to increase public awareness and improve the visibility of minorities. The recommendations were taken into account and the issue of the effectiveness of the national councils of minorities was subsequently included in the EU monitoring/progress report. Since then, the EC systematically assesses the progress made by the Serbian government with reference to these specific issues raised by CI.

V. THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ADVANCING MINORITY RIGHTS

Long-term programmes like Minority Rights in Practice, along with the efforts of other donors and international organizations such as the Open Society Institute (OSI), the Minority Rights Group (MRG) and the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) have demonstrated the important role that civil society organizations can play in advancing minority rights in the various countries in the region. As outlined by the case studies from the country initiatives under the Minority Rights in Practice programme, civil society can be a catalyst in putting issues on the public agenda, raising awareness, convening stakeholders for constructive debate and searching for joint solutions to the complexity of minority issues on the various levels. Civil society can be instrumental in promoting consistent capacity development among minority organizations and representatives, state institutions and media. Furthermore, civil society needs to act as a watchdog to ensure that governments live up to their domestic and international commitments. Such efforts can be especially effective in monitoring implementation and proposing improvements and amendments to regulations and legal frameworks. MRP partners tested a variety of innovative approaches and practices in the field of education, local governance, training, and media, some of which have been mainstreamed throughout their countries.

However, while the Minority Rights in Practice programme stimulated many positive steps, the long-term task remains of further advancing minority rights. This can hardly be “accomplished” by only one, or even several programmes, as it requires the emergence of a new type of policy mindset and interaction, a culture of awareness and practices of diversity as integral elements of democratic societies.

Civil society as a whole, and non-governmental organizations in particular, remain a crucial pillar for the advancement of minority rights in South-East Europe. While sometimes perceived as an actor which only has a role until the state is fully committed to minority rights, it is clear that the role of NGOs in the field of minority rights in the region will need be sustained even once governments accept their commitments with greater sincerity. The significance of NGOs derives from a number of factors linked to the present situation of minority rights in the region and other persistent aspects.

Temporary Factors

Many of the advances in the field of minority rights have been driven by the process of EU integration in the region, but have not been fully endorsed by the governments. As EC progress reports and the reporting on the FCNM across the region highlight, implementation consistently lags behind formal legal standards. International actors often lack the time, resources and local and regional understanding to engage in effective monitoring of the

implementation of minority rights. As a result, NGOs are often the only effective actors that can take on this task. Furthermore, even the limited reporting and monitoring by the Council of Europe and the European Commission relies extensively on the input of NGOs.

The implementation of laws and international commitments in the field of minority rights is not always delayed deliberately, but frequently as a result of an overloaded reform agenda and a lack of expertise in public administrations. NGOs therefore have a vital role a) in drawing attention to minority issues to make sure that they are not neglected among other more prominent reform topics and b) because many NGOs have longer experience and more in-depth expertise than governments and public administrations in the field of minority rights. NGOs are thus able to provide public administration with training and expertise to advance minority rights.

Permanent Factors

Beyond EU enlargement and reluctant governments, NGOs hold great significance in the field of minority rights. The long-term role of NGOs in the field of minority rights is likely to develop in two directions: Firstly, there will be a sustained need to monitor, critically assess and assist government efforts. Minority rights often remain an even more controversial area than other fields of human rights. Extreme right-wing parties and groups, such as Ataka in Bulgaria, might join governments or exert pressure on them to adopt anti-minority positions, requiring NGOs to monitor government policies. Secondly, the coming years are likely to see stronger institutional forms of minority representation emerge in most countries of the region, as minority self-government bodies become more established. These forms of cultural autonomy and minority representation might take over some of the watchdog functions which NGOs have exercised to date. In addition, they will be more representative in articulating minority demands. However, the role of civil society will be to monitor these institutions and ensure that they are sufficiently representative and inclusive with regard to the respective minorities. In addition, few institutions exist to voice the aggregate concerns of multiple minorities. Many minority institutions are often limited to articulating the concerns of their particular community, often from a less strategic perspective than is required. This links the particular deficiencies in minority rights to broader human and minority rights issues. Here, NGOs will have an important role both in building the capacities of these specific minority organizations and in continuing to aggregate and voice broader minority rights concerns.

The role of NGOs and civil society more broadly will consequently continue to be essential for the advance of minority rights in the region. Despite this evident need, there is still a lack of resources and capacity in the region. Other initiatives have focused on human rights and local confidence building projects have addressed minority rights and inter-ethnic trust, but few have tackled minority rights head on. In addition to KBF as a long term pro-active donor in the field and the Open Society Network, only projects by MRG and ECMI have been significantly active in this field in a number of countries across the region.

Regional Linkage and Networking

While many programmes of a regional scope often bring partners together from different countries, in the case of MRP the space for regional work was part of a consistent strategy to link the country specific programmes and identify common ground for joint action. This involved several types of initiatives, all planned and developed by the organizations from the participating countries:

The 10 partners' meetings which took place during the programme were a forum for comparative learning and joint brainstorming on strategies and approaches in the diversity of contexts in the different countries. Organized in Brussels or in one of the participating countries, these meetings contributed to enriching country approaches and activities, identified important issues for regional thematic discussions and gave birth to new regional initiatives such as the DIANET project mentioned in previous sections of this report.

The thematic regional workshops were based on key challenges and issues identified by the partners in relation to minority rights in the region. Each was organized by one of the partners coordinating the input and involvement of the rest of the partners. Throughout the MRP programme, four thematic workshops were held in the following key areas:

- 'Media - Responsible Intermediaries in a Multicultural Society: Challenges and Realities, Sofia, February 2005, Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation;
- 'Good governance in Multi-Ethnic Communities: Conditions, Instruments, Best Practices, Ways to Achieve and Measure Good Governance on a Local Level', Cluj-Napoca, March 2006, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Centre;
- 'Minorities and Education: Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region', Belgrade, June 2006, Civic Initiatives;
- 'Political Participation of Minorities in Southeast Europe in the Process Towards EU Integration', Skopje, March 2008, Common Values.

The workshops involved the participation of minority experts and practitioners, both from civil society and local or central governments, and international officials. They resulted in practical handbooks with contributions from MRP partners in each participating country and others, containing international standards and practices, regional experiences and case studies. For a full list of the handbooks, see Annex III.

In addition to meetings and workshops attended by all MRP partners, the programme also provided for bilateral exchanges among partners involving mutual visits or joint initiatives.

Minority rights initiatives have proved to be more effective if they are part of a long-term and consistent approach that links different local, national and regional actors. As outlined in this report, the MRP programme has resulted in some significant outcomes including successful changes in legislation, raised awareness of minority rights among citizens, increased visibility of minority issues on the policy agenda, forums for meetings and cooperation between institutions and civil society and enhanced capacity of minority NGOs and official institutions. The MRP programme helped to improve the legitimacy of civil society as a key actor, both with state institutions and increasingly with broader audiences. However, the main question remaining after all the above efforts is what will remain when the projects have concluded. In the case of MRP, the choice of core country partners was not least determined by consideration of the sustainability of initiatives set up by the project. As a result, the partners are organizations with a country-wide reach and legitimacy in minority communities as well as government authorities. All of these partners are committed in the long term to continue to work for minority rights implementation in practice. For some, like the IEI Foundation in Bulgaria, EDRC in Romania, HLC in Kosovo and CV in Macedonia, minority rights and diversity are at the core of their mission and strategy and they are continuing to implement minority rights initiatives, often building on the experiences gained during MRP. For others, like CPPHR in Croatia, CI in Serbia or HDPC in Albania, this

commitment is part of their broader civil society work in their countries and minority issues and work with minority communities and organizations is increasingly a crosscutting element of their strategies. In addition, there is now a regional commitment to continue working together as an informal network to share practices and develop joint initiatives for monitoring government performance, to communicate findings for improving minority rights implementation in the various countries and to retain strategic advocacy links with the European Commission.

For the time being, all MRP partners have been successful in continuing to draw on their experience of MRP for their current and future work in the field. However, the biggest challenge to both the individual members and to the regional network lies in the shifting trends in funding assistance from both private and public donors and EU funds on country or regional levels. Minority rights are seldom a leading priority for donors in the long term and a great deal of skill is needed to ensure that they are included as an important regional issue within broader democratisation projects or service provision programmes. The sustainability requirements that accompany all donors' aspirations to leave a long-term legacy in the field are usually underpinned by two assumptions: firstly, that it will become possible to raise funds locally from individuals, business or philanthropy organizations on the basis of the success of the project. With the economic hardships in the relevant countries, especially with the effects of the current economic crisis, this is hardly likely to happen soon. Donors in the countries of the region are usually focused on social assistance rather than civic initiatives, especially as minority rights are too controversial to solicit financial support within the countries from actors other than the government or even from the government itself. Secondly, EU funding is often based on the assumption that governments will increasingly understand the benefits of working in partnership with NGOs, including in the area of minority rights, and will subcontract them as service providers in areas like capacity building, initiatives with minority communities and even monitoring of government performance. Some of this does happen during the pre-accession process as a result of reforms stimulated by EU monitoring of the progress of the relevant countries. With full EU membership, however, the extent to which governments prioritise minority issues is determined less by external demands than by domestic commitments.

Without the external pressure from EU monitoring (as standards differ between pre-accession and new member countries), progress on minority rights implementation can slow down or be lost among the other government development priorities. A broader question is to what extent governments will be willing to support monitoring and advocacy initiatives and to what extent the civil sector can be independent if it is only funded by governments.

There is a need for broader debate on the assumptions and the reality in connection with the sustainability of efforts in the area of minority and human rights, especially advocacy, watchdog and monitoring aspects and on the real challenges of sustaining initiatives and organizations working on these issues. As noted earlier, effective monitoring will be a priority in the long term and will remain part of the checks and balances of a functioning democracy. In order to meet this priority, sufficient civil society resources and capacity will be critical.

VI. INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: LOOKING FORWARD

Although minority rights have made considerable advances in recent years, major challenges remain. The MRP programme has ended, but there is still a space and a need for international organizations, states and civil society to work on improving minority rights in South-East Europe. Apart from the slow and often intangible progress in the field for minorities themselves, there have been many setbacks.

The advancement of minority rights in South-East Europe is not inevitable, nor is it going to occur by itself. Governments often fail to make genuine commitments to minority rights or to make them a priority. At times of increased social and ethnic tensions, as is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Kosovo today, minorities risk being caught in a vulnerable position.

On the basis of the experience of the MRP programme and the work of the partners in the field of minority rights, much remains to be achieved in South-East Europe. During the duration of the project, the region saw significant legal advances and the first tentative steps in their implementation. Two countries, Bulgaria and Romania, joined the European Union, while other countries of the region, with the exception of Croatia, remain far from membership itself. The coming years will therefore require the continued implementation and consolidation of minority rights in South-East Europe.

A. Recommendations for the MRP partners

1. Annual Report on the State of Minorities

A core activity the network may consider developing is an annual report on the state of minorities in South-East Europe. Such a report, based on a common structure and methodology across the region, would enable the network to provide key international organizations, in particular the EC, with timely information on the state of minorities and help to shape the international agenda in the field. In order to ensure maximum effectiveness, such a report should be synchronised in terms of its content and timing with the interests and needs of the European Commission and should include brief country chapters (max. 15-20 pages each) and one important cross-cutting regional aspect per year. The annual launch and the preparation would provide opportunities for the partner organizations to meet and develop bilateral and multilateral initiatives. The reports can also serve as a basis for dialogue with state parties. Considering the relatively long time-frame of reports on implementation of the FCNM (including the shadow reports) and the fact that the FCNM does not address all aspects of minority issues in the region, alternative forms of report would fill a void in the FCNM reporting cycle and such an initiative would address a genuine need.

2. Repository of Best Practices and Project Materials

The status of minorities and the legal framework across the region vary considerably, as do the number of minorities and the challenges facing them. However, the responsiveness of states is similar, as are the experiences of MRP partners in communication with minorities and state institutions. Positive experience and successful strategies in one country can thus be useful for other countries. Accordingly, one of the contributions a network can make is to establish a database of expertise in particular aspects of minority rights, such as monitoring local minority institutions, and to gather particularly successful materials and practices. This could facilitate other partners working in similar projects. In particular, training materials and other documents on international standards or general minority rights can easily be transferred across the region. Such an exchange would allow for the improvement and development of such materials and improve the cost-effectiveness of the work of network members.

3. Systematic Inclusion of Minority Organizations

The degree of involvement in minority issues among network members varies greatly, as does the involvement of members from minority communities. In order to further advance minority rights and minority inclusion, network members would benefit from developing an approach to minority inclusion in their minority-based work which would ensure that minority organizations themselves increasingly become beneficiaries and stakeholders in the implementation of minority-related projects.

B. Recommendations for the Donor Community

1. National and Regional Support for Minority Rights Projects

Minority rights related projects across the region remain underfunded by international donors across the region. Through the support of KBF and partners, minority rights work has become the focus of a number of key human rights and civil sector organizations in the region. However, minority rights work is not yet sustainable without external support. There are too few domestic donors and governments remain generally reluctant to provide resources to NGOs in the field. There is therefore a need for continued donor support to ensure that advances in recent years are not reversed.

2. Small Grants for Bilateral Initiatives and Regional Networking

Following the conclusion of MRP and the project's emphasis on sustainability, there continues to be scope for supporting small bilateral and multilateral initiatives among partners and other minority rights based projects. Such a small seed fund for cross-border initiatives could facilitate the transition from the project network into a self-sustaining regional network of NGOs. Beyond the network itself, there is a continued need for regional minority rights initiatives. As many countries have similar minority rights protection mechanisms, cross-country cooperation can provide for an essential cross-border learning process in the coming years.

3. Strategic Planning among Donors for Minority and Human Rights

There is a need for broader debate among donors (including the EU) on the assumptions and the reality in connection with the sustainability of efforts in the area of minority and human rights, especially its advocacy, watchdog and monitoring aspects and the real challenges of sustaining initiatives and organizations working on those issues. This involves assistance in both pre-accession and post-accession periods. As already said, effective monitoring will be a priority in the long-term and will be part of the checks and balances of functioning democracies. Adequate civil society resources and capacity in this respect will be critical to meet this priority.

4. Contact Point in Brussels

One of the key features of the network activities of MRP has been the link to the European Union in Brussels. This link has not only allowed the partner organizations to gain understanding of the ways in which the EU can advance minority rights, but also established regular communication between the European Commission and the partners. This communication has helped to shape the progress of the EC on the countries of the Western Balkans and has led to other forms of information exchange. It would therefore be important to continue to maintain these ties. Some of these relations have been greatly facilitated by the presence and contacts of the KBF in Brussels and it would be important for the network and other minority rights based initiatives to have a contact point in Brussels which would facilitate communication with the EC, other EU institutions and third parties in Brussels to the necessary degree.

C. Recommendations for the EU

1. Clear Criteria in the Field of Minority Rights

Minority members and NGOs in South-East Europe widely consider the EU to be generally open and to be a partner in its stance towards minorities, but that it does not take a consistent and systemic line. A number of MRP partners have noted how certain issues are not mentioned in one progress report but are noted in another, despite little variation either between countries or over time. Accordingly, an unambiguous check-list in the field of minority rights would be useful in sending a consistent and meaningful message to the countries in question.

2. Communication with NGOs

Channels of communication with the civil sector and institutionalized fora at the level of EC delegations should be improved. In a number of countries in SEE, NGOs working on minority rights note a lack of any fruitful and regular exchange of information with the EC delegation, while communication with staff at DG Enlargement in Brussels has been generally considered to be easier and more productive. However, considering the time constraints and distance between the EC in Brussels and the NGOs, it would be desirable to establish a better mode of cooperation in country.

3. Securing Minority Rights Protection after EU Accession

The policy of conditionality practiced by the European Union has to date not extended beyond the accession of a country to the EU. The record so far in the field of minority rights and other domains of good governance suggests that without any continuity in international monitoring and conditionality, governments can and do reverse certain policies or at least reduce their commitment to the implementation of agreed policies and laws. It would therefore be crucial to develop monitoring and enforcement mechanisms beyond accession. While these might focus on non-discrimination, they can also link with the Council of Europe in efforts to secure the full implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. As the link between reforms and funding (or withholding funding) in other domains in new member states suggests, the EU is not unable to extend conditionality beyond membership. Accordingly, comparable conditionality should also be developed for minority rights until the reforms are fully ingrained and irreversible and until human and minority rights standards set by member states themselves and their implementation extend protection beyond the minimum existing standards.

D. Recommendations for Governments in SEE

1. Communication with Civil Society

In many countries of the region, governments are perceived as neglecting the sphere of minority rights. Government authorities appear unavailable as partners and fail to communicate regularly with minority organizations and institutions, including official state institutions on a local level. When communication is established and government officials do participate in events, this dramatically improves the satisfaction of NGOs and communities even if particular grievances are not resolved.

2. Monitoring Implementation on a local level

Across South-East Europe, much of the burden of minority rights implementation has been shifted from state to local authorities. This shift is a useful development in line with the general need for decentralisation and the benefits of institutional service delivery for minorities at the level closest to them. At the same time, however, local authorities often struggle to ensure the protection of the rights of minorities required by law. This gap is caused by a lack of capacity and commitment on a local level and a lack of guidance by the state. Accordingly, states in most of the region need to provide stronger support and guidance to municipalities in implementing minority rights provisions. Furthermore, there is a need for a monitoring mechanism with the active participation of the civil sector, ensuring that municipalities fulfil the domestic and international legal requirements to which the countries have committed themselves.

3. Expanding Minority Rights Implementation Capacity on all Levels of Administration

In order to mainstream minority issues as part of the wider reform agenda, there is a need for a capacity development strategy on all levels of administration. This requires institutions to adopt standards guaranteeing the understanding and practical implementation of rights based policies, for example by means of requirements introduced into the job descriptions of civil servants. The civil sector should be considered as an instrumental partner in such capacity development, especially through programmes to stimulate interaction and joint learning among various stakeholders and with the active participation of minority communities.

4. Keeping Minority Rights Issues on the Public Agenda and Raising Awareness of the Benefits of their Implementation

There is very limited knowledge on minority issues among the wider public. Ongoing education on diversity and minority rights in particular should be a long-term priority for governments. This involves programmes to stimulate understanding of the values of diversity in the official school system along with public awareness campaigns and debates. The involvement of states in such programmes and their support for such initiatives in partnership with civil society will promote further understanding of the importance of minority rights and diversity as essential to the functioning of democratic societies.

ANNEXES

Annex I. Interviews conducted for this report

Hajrije Ahmed, President, Common Values, Macedonia

Elena Angelovska, Coordinator of the MRP project, Common Values, Macedonia

Arnaud-Pierre Appriou, European Commission, DG Enlargement, Kosovo Desk, Brussels

Indira Bajramović, Better Future Roma Women's Association, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bekim Blakaj, Head of the Prishtina Office, Humanitarian Law Center, Kosovo

Detlev Boeing, European Commission, DG Enlargement, Brussels

Snježana Bokulić, Minority Rights Group International, London

Kalina Bozeva, Chairperson, Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, Bulgaria

Monica Călușer, Programme Manager, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, Romania

Fabrice de Kerchove, MRP in SEE Project Manager, King Baudouin Foundation, Brussels

Miljenko Dereta, Executive Director, Civic Initiatives, Serbia

Nikola Duvnjak, formerly Civic Initiatives, Serbia

Leon Gjokaj, Nansen Dialogue Centre, Montenegro

Kliment Gligorov, formerly Common Values, Macedonia

Elena Gyurova, former Coordinator of the MRP project at the Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, Bulgaria

Jadranka Jelinčić, Director, Fund for an Open Society, Serbia

Nenad Koprivica, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, Montenegro

Maja Kremenović, Secretary of the Assembly of National Minorities of Republika Srpska, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Edita Mersimi, Common Values, Macedonia

Ardita Metaj-Dika, Project Manager, Humanitarian Law Center, Prishtina office, Kosovo

Ljubomir Mikic, former Coordinator, Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Croatia

Jasmila Pašić, former Coordinator, MRP Project, Centres for Civic Initiatives, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Gerrit Rauws, Director, King Baudouin Foundation, Brussels

Mariana Sălăgean, former Coordinator, MRP project, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Centre, Romania

Nedjeljka Sindik, Programme Manager on Anti-Discrimination and Minority Rights, UNO Libertask, Montenegro

Aleksandra Šanjević, former Coordinator, MRP project, Civic Initiatives, Serbia

Levente Salat, Executive President, Ethnocultural Diverse Resource Centre, Romania

Alexandra Stigmayer, Senior Policy Analyst, European Stability Initiative, Brussels

Anita Vojnovska, Common Values, Macedonia

Lindita Xhillari, Executive Director, Human Development Promotion Center, Albania

Focus Group in Macedonia

1. Risto Dimitrovski, CV monitoring team, Sopiste
2. Violeta Masevska, CV monitoring team, Sopiste
3. Redjep Ali Cupi, CV monitoring team, Suto Orizari
4. Rejhan Durmisi, CV monitoring team, Mavrovo/Rostuse
5. Pandorka Dimovska, Member of the Commission on Inter-Ethnic Relations, Mavrovo/Rostuse Municipality
6. Lejla Alilovska, Municipality of Cair
7. Nenad Markovic, Research Partner, Institute for Democracy

Focus Group in Serbia

1. Rodika Almazan, Member, Council on Inter-Ethnic Relations (CIER), Alibunar; member of the Romanian National Council
2. Vasa Dazdea, Journalist, Alibunar; correspondent, Libertatea; member, Committee for Information, Romanian National Council
3. Nedžad Turković, Mayor of Prijepolje (during the project)
4. Mirsad Duran, Executive Director of the Nova vizija NGO, Prijepolje
5. Vjerka Hrubik, Municipal administration, Zrenjanin
6. Laszlo Torde, Member of CIER, Zrenjanin; member, Hungarian National Council
7. Rozalija Torde, Member, Municipal Council of Zrenjanin
8. Jelena Perković, Media Consultant, MRP; Chair of the Information Committee, Ruthenian National Council, Editor in chief, Ruske Slovo (The Ruthenian Letter)

Annex II. The Minority Rights in Practice Programme in SEE - In-country Partners

ALBANIA

The Human Development Promotion Center (HDPC)

The HDPC is an Albanian not-for-profit NGO founded in March 1999 to contribute to human development in Albania through promoting the active participation of society in the process of political, economic and social reform. The HDPC works at local, regional and national level and focuses on two areas:

- The implementation of specific projects in fields such as human and minority rights, economic development, education, local governance, public participation in local development and capacity building of local stakeholders;
- Research in fields such as economic development, the labour market and employment at local and national level, the business environment and SME development, poverty, education and human development.

The objectives of the HDPC are:

- To monitor and assess progress in economic and social development at local and national levels;
- To implement projects that result in good practices and which can be further disseminated, replicated and translated into policy recommendations;
- To build the capacity of stakeholders at local and national levels;
- To raise awareness and support development issues.

Contact details

Human Development Promotion Center

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BULGARIA

Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation (IEIHRF)

The IEIHRF was established in 1996 as a Bulgarian not-for-profit NGO with the mission to promote human and minority rights and to encourage the participation of minorities in public life and intercommunity cooperation in the fields of political, economic, social and cultural development. The IEIHRF has initiated and implemented numerous local, national and international projects in three main fields:

- Rights-based educational integration of minorities;
- Ethnocultural pluralism in the media;
- Public participation of minorities, especially in the political arena.

The objectives of the organization are:

- To influence legislation and institutional policies in accordance with international human and minority rights protection standards;
- To raise awareness of these standards among politicians and public servants at local and national levels;
- To encourage citizen participation and supervision regarding the implementation of minority rights standards;
- To enhance public sensitivity and understanding about the problems and rights of minorities, encouraging a spirit of inter-ethnic tolerance, mutual support and non-discriminative practices;
- To enhance minorities' knowledge about standards and mechanisms to protect their rights and
- To increase their capacity for rights-based advocacy in institutions at all levels;
- To encourage cooperation and solidarity among NGOs and networks at regional and national level in the promotion of minority rights.

The IEIHRF has stimulated a number of coalition initiatives together with key human rights organizations and is leading the annual monitoring of government performance in the area of policies and practice of minority rights implementation, which results in shadow report, publicly presented and discussed.

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Centres for Civic Initiatives (CCI)

The Centres for Civic Initiatives (CCI) is one of the largest indigenous, non-governmental organizations in BiH. The mission is to initiate and promote active participation of citizens in democratic process and strengthen capacities of individuals and organizations to successfully solve problems in their communities.

The CCI has 6 offices across BiH with skillful and committed teams acting as facilitators and educators that contribute to improving awareness, participation and transparency with respect to democratic structures and social processes.

The CCI works with groups of citizens, NGOs and individuals from the government and the NGO sector to enhance the public awareness, knowledge and skills for effective citizen participation in decision-making at all government levels. The CCI is also working with the representatives from the executive and legislative authorities in order to initiate processes that would advance the existing legal regulative and practices and make the work of elected representatives more transparent and citizen oriented..

During 2005-2008 CCI has been implementing "Minority rights in practice" project with aim on contribution toward improving of interethnic relations and providing support to the process of establishing of democratic standards and total development of democratic society in BiH and the Balkan area in general. Some of the project activities included: supporting improvement of legal regulations, establishing of constant participatory process of independent monitoring of minority rights, raising the level of understanding among majority groups in BiH about minority rights, evaluation and reporting on the situation of national minorities' rights in BiH etc.

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CROATIA**Coalition for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CPPHR)**

The Coalition for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights is an association of nine nongovernmental organizations established in March 2000 aiming to carry out joint activities of human rights promotion and protection. The coalition works for strengthening the rule of law and raising awareness on the importance of respecting human and civil rights. It monitors consistent implementation of legal norms guaranteed by the Constitution and their concordance with internationally accepted standards, and also educates, informs and makes the public more sensitive to the importance of respecting universal human rights.

Coalition representatives are members of several governmental and parliamentary bodies and working groups dealing with different aspects of human rights in the Republic of Croatia. In July 2007, the Coalition was accepted into the Economic and Social Council of United Nations (ECOSOC). In April 2008, the Coalition became the member of the EPAN working group of CONCORD - European confederation of NGOs for assistance and reconstruction consisting of 18 international networks and 21 national associations from EU member states and EU candidate states.

Over the years, the Coalition initiated and participated in many campaigns and initiatives for adopting and amending relevant legislation, and changing policies and practices. Through their public appearances, the Coalition raises public awareness different issues, such as those affecting refugees, returnees, expellees, national and other minorities, poor and socially jeopardized, and other disadvantaged groups.

The Coalition member, coordinating the implementation of the MRP was the Center for Peace, Legal Advice and Psychosocial Assistance (CPLAPA), Vukovar. It works for the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy development and development of interethnic relations, with a special focus on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Croatia, refugee and IDPs rights and antidiscrimination. The Center provides direct assistance and education, monitors the state of minority rights and produces thematic reports and analysis. The Center actively participates in the work of several international NGO minority rights networks.

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KOSOVO

Humanitarian Law Center, Prishtina office (HLC – Kosovo)

The Humanitarian Law Center was founded in 1997 to help post-conflict societies in the former Yugoslavia re-establish the rule of law and come to terms with the legacy of large-scale past human rights abuses, in order to prevent their recurrence, to ensure accountability, and to serve justice. It has offices in Belgrade, and in Pristina.

HLC-Kosovo is documenting facts that will assist society in Kosovo to deal with war crimes and mass and systematic violations of human rights perpetrated in the 1990s, while at the same time promoting the protection of minority rights, whose unsatisfactory situation is largely a legacy of Kosovo's recent past. HLC seeks to promote and monitor the protection of minority rights, which are fundamental to Kosovo's democratic development, to prospects for minority return, and ultimately to a peaceful relationship between Kosovo and Serbia.

The HLC issues annual monitoring reports on Kosovo's application of legal measures and mechanisms guaranteeing minority rights, as well as an assessment of the impact of these on the return process. HLC-Kosovo works on raising awareness of minority communities about their rights guaranteed with legal provisions in Kosovo, as right holders empowering them to claim their rights. The office also works to raise the awareness of Kosovo's officials and institutions about their responsibility to protect the rights of minority communities and their responsibility to create policies that promote the return and reintegration of minorities.

HLC with its partners Research Documentation Center (BiH) and Documenta (HR) advocate the establishing of a *Regional Commission* for truth seeking about War Crimes since they are deeply convinced that it could support the work of prosecutors in the region by collecting, organizing and preserving evidence that could be used for initiating and conducting war trials. Initiative for Establishing a Regional Commission for Truth-seeking and Truth telling about war crimes - coalition for *RECOM*¹¹ is a network of NGO's, associations and individuals, who represent and affirm the initiative for establishing a regional commission with a mandate to investigate, establish and publicly disclose facts about war crimes and other serious human rights violations committed in the past in the territory of Yugoslavia, including the fate of the missing people. *RECOM* to be established on the basis of the common will of the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia and with the support of UN and EU.

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MACEDONIA

Common Values (CV)

Common Values is a non governmental organization that works in the field of promotion and protection of the rights of ethnic communities that live in Macedonia, strengthening their mutual dialog and cooperation. Common Values started its work in 2005 and has the potential and experience of four years of work in the field of strengthening the relations between ethnic communities, development of inter-ethnic dialogue and promotion of values of democracy, tolerance and mutual welfare.

Ohrid Framework Agreement opened new challenges for the citizen initiatives that are focused on supporting the dialog between ethnic communities. Common Values is actively involved in the process of achieving those challenges which are an important aspect for faster integration in the European Union.

Common Values has its efforts directed on three important areas:

- **Rule of Law** - implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement acts in the practical legal solutions, monitoring the situation regarding the protection of human rights;
- **Capacity Building** – strengthening of the capacities of local authorities, nongovernmental organizations and state institutions for successful addressing the problems and bringing solution connected with ethnic communities;
- **International Cooperation** – exchange of experiences with the neighboring Southeast European countries as well as the other European countries.

Common Values produced important outcomes for the citizens, non governmental organizations, local authorities and their bodies, state institutions, educational institutions, international institutions etc. Those outcomes include monitoring reports, suggestions for overcoming identified problems, guidebooks, analysis, researches, training sessions, conferences, debates, local initiatives, manifestations, activities for lobbying and advocacy etc.

Common Values is an organization which devoted its entire work on elimination of the obstacles on the road to joining the European Union.

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MONTENEGRO

Nansen Dialogue Centre Montenegro (NDCMN)

Minority Rights in Practice programme (2006-2008) has been implemented by an informal coalition of four NGOs, each contributing with its area of expertise to the success of the programme:

Nansen Dialogue Centre Montenegro (NDCMN) a local NGO founded in 2000, which has developed numerous initiatives aiming at strengthening of interethnic dialogue, conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation in the region by respecting human rights and freedoms;

Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) founded in 1997 with as main goals to advance and raise awareness on the importance of proper and successful democratic transition; to research, analyze and follow process of transition; and to contribute to strengthening of civil society and democratization process as a whole;

Center for Human and Minority Rights (CEZAM) . CEZAM is a newly established NGO focused on analysis, training and education in the filed of Human and Minority Rights;

LIBERTASK/ASK Union of Non-Governmental Organizations. Established in 2006 with the purpose to offer expertise in the area of minority rights protection, to conduct researches and advocate for minority rights protection in local and at international context, the Union has initiated and implemented programmes dealing with both the protection of fundamental human rights and discrimination ban. The Union is co-founder of the Coalition Against Discrimination in Montenegro, and is an implementing partner of Minority Rights Group International in Montenegro for the project Advancing Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Southeast Europe: Minority Rights Advocacy in the EU Accession Process.

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ROMANIA

Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center (EDRC)

The mission of EDRC is to contribute to the construction of democracy in Romania by improving the country's interethnic climate and promoting principles of ethnocultural peace and justice. The objectives of the center are:

- To gradually provide a more favorable climate for the interethnic relations in Romania;
- to increase the participation and visibility of minorities in the public sphere;
- to promote interethnic dialog;
- to initiate interethnic partnerships;
- to promote public policies concerning ethnocultural diversity;
- to encourage and assist nongovernmental organizations of the minorities;
- to investigate, document and monitor interethnic relations;
- to cooperate with local authorities with a view to promoting the interests of the minorities;
- to initiate partnerships with public authorities;
- to promote good governance in multiethnic communities;
- to support ethnic minorities in the assertion of their cultural identity;
- to promote multicultural educational programmes.

The Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center manages an important number of programmes in the field of interethnic relations, implementing or supporting projects that aim at different dimensions of accommodating ethnocultural diversity: good governance in multiethnic communities, improvement of ethnic relations through community development activities, research and documentation regarding the national minorities, multicultural education, and interethnic dialog.

In its intention to ensure a long-term impact upon interethnic relations in Romania, EDRC combines activities of community development with training activities, assistance and institutional development for stakeholders of the dynamics of the multicultural environment, research and publications.

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SERBIA**Civic Initiatives (CI)**

Civic Initiatives was founded in 1996, with a vision of society based on equal and active citizens who are able to decide the future of their own lives in a civil and democratic country that is governed by the rule of law and respect for human rights. The mission of CI is to empower civil society through education, the promotion of democracy and the provision of active support for its citizens.

Over the years Civic Initiatives has initiated and developed numerous initiatives and programmes in five key areas: young people, minority rights, educational reform, democracy development and the support of a national NGO network. The objectives of the organization include:

- To encourage and empower young people to become citizens who are actively involved in the process of creating positive change in towns throughout Serbia,
- To further develop legal regulations in the field of national minorities and to improve implementation of existing legislation;
- To empower social stakeholders to acquire better knowledge about human and minority rights and their implementation;
- To create conditions to empower the Roma to organize themselves and develop their capacities for improving their living conditions;
- To prepare schools, local authorities and national government to carry out their functions effectively within the newly decentralised framework;
- To instigate civic educational programmes that enable citizens to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills and values necessary for individual development as well as their responsible participation in a modern, democratic society;
- To provide support for the national NGO network, the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations of Serbia (FENS).

The topic of ethnic relations is present in all C.I. activities as they are perceived to be the most important for the stability of Serbian multiethnic society, as well as for the regional stability. Civic Initiatives has been promoting and educating on tolerance, acceptance of diversity and inevitability of living together as members of different ethnic groups and nations. CI has been doing a lot of work on national legal frame for minorities, as well as helping grass root organizations, especially Roma to realize their rights on local level. A recognition of the effective work of Civic Initiatives in the area of minority rights, is the prize it received from the Association of Minority NGOs for "promoting collective ethnic minority rights in Yugoslavia."

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Annex III. Key MRP Publications

a) Publications by the Network

- Discussion Paper by Florian Bieber (2004)
http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/Verslag/MRP_discussion_paper.pdf
- Achieving Media Responsibility in Multicultural Societies (2006)
<http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=178324&LangType=1033>
- Minority Rights Advocacy in South-East Europe. A Toolkit for NGOs (2007)
<http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=193670&LangType=1033>
- Good Governance in Multi-Ethnic Communities (2007)
<http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=193672&LangType=1033>
- Guide to Minorities and Education (2007)
<http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=218056&LangType=1033>
- A guide to Minorities and Political Participation in South-East Europe (2009)
<http://www.kbs-frb.be/publication.aspx?id=247160&LangType=1033>

b) Publications by MRP partners

- Common Values, Analysis of interethnic relations in Republic of Macedonia
http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&qid=98&Itemid=39
- Common Values, Realization of the right to use the languages of the communities in the communication with the state,
http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&qid=62&Itemid=39
- Common Values, International Standards For The Rights Of The Persons Belonging To Minorities
http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&qid=61&dir=DESC&order=date&Itemid=39&limit=5&limitstart=5
- Common Values, Realization of ethnic communities' rights in the Republic of Macedonia
http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&qid=60&Itemid=39
- Common Values, Dialogue for interaction – Vision for cooperation between members of ethnic communities and institutions
http://www.cv.org.mk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&qid=95&Itemid=39
- CEDEM, Ethnic Distance in Montenegro (2007): http://www.cedem.cg.yu/opolls/images/Ethnic_distance_2007.pdf
- Civic Initiatives, National Minorities in Serbia (2006): <http://www.gradjanske.org/admin/download/files/cms/attach?id=18>
- Humanitarian Law Center, Kosovo, Ethnic Communities in Kosovo in 2005
<http://www.hlc-rdc.org/Publikacije/859.sr.html>
Humanitarian Law Center, Kosovo, Ethnic Communities in Kosovo in 2007 and 2008
<http://www.hlc-rdc.org/FHPKosovo/ETNICKE-MANJINE/1466.en.html>
Humanitarian Law Center, Kosovo, Three information leaflets on the Use of Language Act, the Anti Discrimination Act and the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities Act
<http://www.hlc-rdc.org/FHPKosovo/ETNICKE-MANJINE/1481.en.html>
- Centres for Civic Initiatives, Analysis of the Situation of Health Protection among the Roma population in Bosnia and Herzegovina: <http://www.ccibh.org/dataf/ANALIZAZDRAVSTVENOROMI.pdf>
Centres for Civic Initiatives, Report on Roma Housing Issues in Banja Luka and Tuzla
<http://www.ccibh.org/dataf/STAMBENOBZBRINJAVANJE.pdf>

- Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Paper: Exercise of the rights to representation of persons belonging to national minorities in representative, administrative and judicial bodies, with the emphasis on the problems in relation to ethnic / minority affiliation (January 2006)

<http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/MRP%20Paper%201/Doc%20english%201.pdf>

Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Paper: Exercise of the rights to education of persons belonging to national minorities in mother tongue and script in eastern Croatia (March 2006)

<http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/MRP%20Paper%202/Doc%20english%202.pdf>

Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Paper: Problems of ethnically motivated incidents in the Republic of Croatia (May 2006)

<http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/MRP%20Paper%203/Doc%20english%203.pdf>

Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Paper: Challenges to a permanent solution of refugee issues in the Republic of Croatia – Implementation of the Sarajevo Ministerial declaration on regional refugee return (July 2006)

<http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/MRP%20Paper%204/Doc%20english%204.pdf>

Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Paper: Exercise of the right to the official use of national minority languages and scripts in local and regional self-governments units and programmes in national minority languages on the Croatian Radio and Television (December 2006)

<http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/MRP%20Paper%203/Paper%205%20eng.pdf>

Coalition for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Republic of Croatia: Displaced former tenancy rights holders – Review of the approach to acquired rights and provision of housing care for minority returnees in 2008 (October 2008)

<http://www.center4peace.org/Various%20document%20for%20web/Web%20materijali%20septembar%202006/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20KBF%202008%20papier%203%20eng.pdf>
- Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, Romania, Simona-Elena Bernat, Zoltán Molnár. Educație multiculturală în școli, pentru clasa a III-a și a IV-a. Cluj, EDRC Publishing House, 2006.

Monica Călușer, Borbala Kovacs. Report on Monitoring report on discrimination, xenophobia, racism and intolerance in Romania, 2007.

Marian Chiriac. Report on Is there a way out of the deadlock? An inventory of problems and solutions regarding the situation of the Roma in Romania, 2007.

Marian Chiriac, Monica Călușer. Report on The unknowns next door residents, refugees, asylum solicitants, illegal migrants in Romania, 2005.

http://www.edrc.ro/publication_details.jsp?publication_id=20



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The King Baudouin Foundation is an independent and pluralistic foundation whose aim is to serve society. Our objective is to make a lasting contribution to justice, democracy and respect for diversity. Each year, the Foundation provides financial support for some 2,000 organizations and individuals committed to building a better society. Our activity domains for the coming years are poverty & social justice, democracy in Belgium, democracy in the Balkans, heritage, philanthropy, health, leadership, local engagement, migration, development, partnership or exceptional support for projects. The Foundation was created in 1976, to mark the 25th anniversary of King Baudouin's reign.

We operate in 2009 with a budget of 35 million euros. As well as our own capital and the large donation we receive from the National Lottery, we manage Funds created by private individuals, associations and businesses. The King Baudouin Foundation also receives donations and bequests.

The King Baudouin Foundation's Board of Governors draws up broad lines of action and oversees the transparency of our management. Some 50 colleagues are responsible for implementing our actions. The Foundation operates out of Brussels, but we are active at Belgian, European and international level. In Belgium, we have projects at local, regional and federal level.

We combine various working methods to achieve our objectives. We support third-party projects, launch our own activities, provide a forum for debate and reflection, and foster philanthropy. The results of our projects are disseminated through a range of communication channels. The King Baudouin Foundation works with public services, associations, NGOs, research centres, businesses and other foundations. We have a strategic partnership with the European Policy Centre, a Brussels-based think tank.

Outside Belgium, the Foundation is particularly active in the Balkans in projects that promote EU integration, tackle human trafficking and defend minority rights. In Africa, we focus on projects involved in the fight against AIDS/HIV and in promoting local development. The King Baudouin Foundation is also a benchmark in international philanthropy thanks to, among others, the international Funds that we manage, the King Baudouin Foundation United States, and our role in the Transnational Giving Europe network.

