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PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

15:00 – 21:00

WELCOME

Arrival of participants during the day

19:00 – 20:00

Welcome Cocktail & Registration at the Terrace of the Lobby Bar

*Kjartan Björnsson, Head of Section, Regional Cooperation and Programmes,
Directorate General for Enlargement, European Commission*

*Ralf-René Weingärtner, Director of Human Rights and Antidiscrimination,,
Council of Europe*

20:30

Dinner at Restaurant Bruno

Thursday, 28 June 2012

09:30 – 15:00

OPENING PLENARY SESSION

09:30 – 09:45

Opening speech on the joint framework of cooperation of the three regional programmes

Kjartan Björnsson, Head of Section for Regional Programmes, Directorate General for Enlargement, European Commission

Ágota Kovács, Human rights and Minorities, Regional Cooperation and Programmes, Directorate General for Enlargement, European Commission

09:45 – 10:05

Council of Europe: **Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South East Europe**

Markus Jaeger, Head of Division, Directorate of Human Rights and Antidiscrimination, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe

The overall objective of the programme is to improve respect for human rights, particularly minority protection in the Beneficiaries in practice, by enhancing the capacities of the relevant national bodies and the regional coherence of their activities. The specific objectives are to (i) strengthen the proper implementation of relevant national legislation and promoting best practices and to (ii) develop a functioning regional network of the relevant national bodies and exchange of best practices in the field of minority protection at regional level. The expected results are:

1. The capacity of national specialised bodies dealing with minority protection, according their mandate and in line with national legislation, international and European standards, is strengthened.
2. Co-operation and co-ordination between minority protection bodies present within each Beneficiary at central and local level are reinforced.
3. Relations and co-operation between minority protection bodies and the legislative, executive and judicial authorities in each Beneficiary is enhanced.
4. A regional “Network” of all specialised minority protection bodies from each Beneficiary is established and operational.
5. Documentary resources of common interest are produced by the Network.
6. The best practices of NGOs in the field of the minority protection are identified and promoted through selected projects.

10:05 – 10:25

OSCE/ODIHR: **Best Practices for Roma Integration**

Judith Kiers, Project Manager, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to the integration of minorities in the Western Balkans in accordance with the Beneficiaries’

commitments in the perspective of EU accession. The specific objective is to improve the quality of life and access to rights of the Roma communities in the Western Balkans. The project will address the needs of target groups and beneficiaries through five expected results:

1. The region's good practices in multi-sector municipal collaboration, Roma involvement in decision-making and participation of Roma in political life have been strengthened and applied in practice;
2. Roma people's interest in and possibilities to access civil registration and legal aid services have increased throughout the region;
3. Roma people are more empowered to advocate and have greater opportunities to benefit from mechanisms and initiatives for legalisation and improvements of their settlements;
4. Possibilities for Roma participation in public life have been enhanced through anti-discriminatory policies and practice and increased public awareness about Roma rights to be included and not to be discriminated against, and;
5. Possibilities for Roma participation in Government-led national and regional co-ordination and other compatible cross-border initiatives in and outside of the Western Balkans have been enhanced.

10:25 – 10:45

Council of Europe: **Regional Initiative on Inclusive Education**

Sarah Keating, Head of Unit for Regional and Bilateral Co-operation – South East Europe, Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe and

Lida Kita, Specialist in VET and Social Inclusion - Country Manager, European Training Foundation

Social inclusion is a key challenge for the enlargement region. This programme proposes to enhance social cohesion in the region by promoting inclusive education and training. Specifically, it aims to promote the concept of inclusive education, as well as relevant policies and practices in the formal education system at pre-university level in the Western Balkans through awareness-raising, mutual learning and capacity building measures.

As a main result, pilot projects for inclusive schools will be implemented throughout the region. Pilots are at the centre of this project, forming the basis for awareness campaigns and networking activities. The key issue is how to move from the pilots to overall reforms and the programme will propose efficient mechanisms in place to ensure this.

10:45 – 11:30

Questions and Answers session

11:30 – 12:00

Coffee Break

12:00 – 12:30

Introduction on the Workshops

12:30 – 15:00

Lunch

15:00 – 18:00

WORKING GROUPS

Participants will be asked to highlight specific examples of good practice in their country and/or area, which they consider relevant as concrete solutions. Where good practice does not yet exist, they will be invited to suggest concrete proposals for how to tackle one or more of the recommendations.

Each Working Group will be chaired by a moderator who will ensure that focus is kept during the discussions on concrete solutions to the challenges that have been identified in the various recommendations. One or two keynote commentators will give first impulses for the discussion. A rapporteur will report to the plenary, with the help of a note-taker.

WORKING GROUP 1: HOW TO BETTER IMPLEMENT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION?

Moderator: Goran Basic, Deputy Ombudsman, Republic of Serbia

Keynote commentator: Irma Baraku, Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination, Republic of Albania

Rapporteur: Bashkim Ibishi, Executive Director, Kosovo Agency for Advocacy and Development

Note taker: Aleksandar Lazovski, National Project Officer, BPRI

Since 2004, all jurisdictions within the Western Balkans region adopted anti-discrimination laws¹ which helped to establish new institutions and national standards. Nevertheless, Roma and other marginalized communities still lack sufficient knowledge on what discrimination actually is and how to make use of the existing legislation. Outreach and information campaigns in this field are necessary, as well as strengthening the capacities of new institutions and mechanisms for combating discrimination. Support should be particularly provided in the areas of data collection, monitoring and outreach.

In spite of adoption of anti-discrimination laws, public opinion surveys show that Roma and other marginalized groups remain among the most discriminated populations in the Western Balkans region. Public perception of Roma should be addressed through integration measures (i.e. employment, housing, education, healthcare) and campaigns taking into account the specific situation at local level.

Roma and other marginalized groups should have full access to public services and civil documents. Civil registration systems should be made more efficient through appropriate measures at the national and local levels. Special attention should be given to the registration of children at birth and the naturalization of stateless persons and refugees, in line with international and European standards. If necessary, legislation should be amended to create new mechanisms for subsequent registration and facilitating registration in other ways. Ombudsman's Offices, Ministries of Justice, Interior and Public Administration, as well as the civil society sector should support this process and establish co-ordination to ensure progress is made.

Throughout this process, Roma NGOs should be closely involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of Roma Action Plans and Programmes. Good practices related to Roma inclusion need to be shared and replicated. The role of Roma representatives in the decision-making process should be enhanced, and the position and needs of Roma women and girls should be considered.

Regional programmes can support this process by promoting the exchange of good practices, connecting different stakeholders and strengthening capacities of institutions and civil society working on preventing and monitoring discrimination.

WORKING GROUP 2: HOW TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE?

Moderator: Markus Jaeger, Council of Europe

Keynote commentator(s): Prof. Siniša Tatalović, Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb, Croatia, Advisor to the President of Croatia

Rapporteur: Professor Mitja Žagar, Scientific Councilor, Head of the International Centre for Interethnic Relations and Minorities in South Eastern Europe, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Note taker: Lea Sengers, Consultant, MIN

Despite the fact that Roma communities constitute the biggest ethnic minority throughout Europe, they are subject to sometimes overwhelming discrimination and marginalization in many spheres of public life, including access to public services, housing, and employment. Although all jurisdictions within the Western Balkans region have developed social integration policies² with regards to Roma communities, they are rarely fully implemented in practice.

To enhance participation in public life, authorities should make additional efforts and specific budgetary allocations towards implementation of existing policies and strategies. Roma NGOs should be closely involved in designing, implementing and monitoring of national integration strategies - as awareness, transparency, participation and inclusiveness are crucial for successful and sustainable implementation of national integration policies. While Roma community-based coordinators and leaders have a crucial role to play in this field, more efficient co-ordination between different levels of government, international donors and the Roma communities is essential. Media should also be encouraged to play a more active role in promoting Roma integration and a positive image of Roma communities.

Good practices, such as the establishment of Roma technical secretariats or information centres, should be further supported in order to enable them to monitor and co-ordinate policies in a systematic and sustainable manner.

Regional programmes can support this process by strengthening capacities of institutions and civil society in order to contribute to the overall increase Roma participation in all spheres of public life.

WORKSHOP 3: HOW TO APPROACH DIVERSITY THROUGH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Moderator: Sarah Keating, Head of Unit for Regional and Bilateral Co-operation – South East Europe, Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe

Keynote commentators: 1) Lida Kita, Specialist in Vocational Education and Training and Social Inclusion - Country Manager, European Training Foundation and

2) Predrag Lažetić, Director, Centre for Education Policy

Note taker / Rapporteur: Lana Jurko, Executive Director, Network of Education Policy Centers

All children have the right to high quality and appropriate education to maximise their potential and enable them to make their contribution to an inclusive society. Education is widely accepted as key for overcoming poverty and inclusive education is vital for overcoming social deterioration. Roma and other marginalized groups in the Western Balkans region are faced with limited access to education. Poverty, segregation or placement into special schools, as well as discrimination further exacerbate this problem. Additionally, the small number of Roma who benefit from early and primary education are still not adequately qualified for employment – highlighting the importance of higher education for this young population.

Roma children must not be segregated in education. Access to pre-school education is a key element of integration. Authorities should fight against prejudices and discrimination in schools. Further efforts need to be made to address the school drop-out issue, including through actions by Roma and non-Roma NGOs and in close cooperation with Roma parents who also bear responsibility in this respect. Monitoring and evaluation with a view to improving the efficiency and the quality of the education system should be ensured. Furthermore, tailor made language and literacy programmes for adult education should be further developed and implemented, as well as programmes which reinforce linkage between the education sector and the labour market with the aim of empowering young Roma.

Good practices, such as employment of Roma pedagogical assistants in schools and developing vocational education for adults, should be further supported and reinforced. Regional programmes can support the exchange experience in this field, including pre-school education, inclusion and anti-discrimination efforts in schools, and development of affirmative action measures.

19:00

Dinner

Friday, 29 June 2012

09:00 – 13:00

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION

09:00 – 10:00

Reports to the plenary on the findings of the Working Groups / Joint conclusions

10:00 – 10:20

Coffee break

10:30 – 11:30

Keynote speeches

Nebojsa Kaludjerovic, State Secretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General elect, Council of Europe

Andrzej Mirga, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti issues, OSCE/ODIHR

Alberto Cammarata, Acting Head of Delegation, European Union Delegation Montenegro

11:30 – 12:00

Press conference

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch

Departure of participants on 29 June