



Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South East Europe

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The Project activities in the municipalities in Serbia are for the most part progressing according to the plan. Most municipalities have completed their preparatory activities. Some have adopted municipal assembly decisions to form a project implementation team (Petrovac na Mlavi) or to open municipal club (Bujanovac). Others, such as Bujanovac and Novi Pazar started to organize round tables to introduce human and minority rights to the public or tradition and culture of their ethnic community. Pancevo municipality established communication with several national councils for national minorities in order to explore their needs and opportunities for further cooperation in the realization of the right to use minority languages. On several occasions, the steering committee members have expressed their willingness to support the implementation of municipal projects.

¹ Almost all selected municipalities officially contacted the relevant tax authorities to start the procedure of exemption from VAT under the JP Minority Project. In the event they fail to obtain the VAT exemption, they will be willing to relocate the necessary funds from the budget reserves. Some of the municipalities are behind schedule with the implementation of the project activities mainly due to the complicated tendering procedures.

Bosilegrad - Local Self-Government

Field: Effective participation

Key minority engaged: Bulgarians

The project idea focuses on capacity building training for state officials at local level on the international mechanisms and national legal framework for the protection of national minorities. The project will also facilitate an exchange of experiences with Kovacica local self-government inhabited by Slovaks, Serbs, Hungarians and Romanians.

Bosilegrad local self- government got off to a late start with the project activities due to the unresolved VAT issue and the state of emergency caused by the weather conditions. In the forthcoming period the municipality will organize a training for its staff on the protection of human and minorities' rights and a study visit to Municipality of Kovacica in order to enhance

its capacity on promotion and protection of human and minorities rights. It will also start with the implementation of all other planned activities such as translation of documents and materials for the Municipality Council sessions and decisions of Municipality Council and Town Assembly into Bulgarian and publishing of a children's magazine in Bulgarian.

Bujanovac - Local Self -Government

Field: Non-discrimination / Media

Key minority engaged: Albanians

The project idea will aim to promote human and minority rights among youth through various activities (round tables etc.), including launching of 6 TV shows in Albanian and Serbian languages to promote diversity and inter-culturalisms. These programmes will be produced in the Office for Youth in Bujanovac.

The local self- government of Bujanovac adopted a parliamentary decision on the opening of the Municipal Club for Human and Minority Rights. The Municipal Club was equipped and officially opened in the presence of the Mayor of Bujanovac, pupils, students and COE Secretariat representatives on 15 April 2015. Thirty young people from all ethnic groups participated in the first training organized by the municipality on the Club's premises.



The topic of the training was "Human and Minorities Rights and Local Democracy" and it aimed at creating a sustainable human resource basis for cultivating the culture of human rights and exercise of national minorities' rights. The Municipal task force is continuously producing short films on human and minority rights which will be broadcasted on the local radio and TV channel.

Petrovac na Mlavi - Local Self –Government

Field: Culture

Key minority engaged: Vlachs

The project idea focuses on the protection and preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of the Vlachs through collection of data on their cultural heritage. The project will also aim to raise awareness about the Vlach culture and traditions among young people and the creating an informal network of Vlach associations.

Upon signing the small grant agreement, the Municipality of Petrovac na Mlavi made a decision to form an implementation team (municipal task force) which was approved by the Municipal Assembly in February 2015. The project implementation team has established communication with Vlach families in order to collect material from private collections and thus started to work on collecting old photographs of Vlach customs. Audio and video material from internal archives of the Cultural Center was also collected and processed. This material will be part of the Vlach cultural heritage database which will consolidate various items on Vlach

culture (audio and video material, photographs, literature). At the same time, the Cultural Center has started to collect old photographs on Vlach culture.

Petrovac na Mlavi heritage Museum examined the items of Vlach cultural heritage and prepared them for the upcoming exhibition. Preliminary selection of expert and external service for developing an internet website was also completed. A detailed plan for collecting the necessary references on the custom “Zmare” was made. The cultural event “Zumarijada” will be organized by the end of July 2015.

Novi Pazar - Local Self –Government

Field: Culture

Key minority engaged: Bosniaks

The project idea aims to facilitate a revival, preservation and promotion of the Bosniak culture and traditions through folklore: traditional dance, songs, music and costumes. The project will also aim to introduce to the majority and other national minorities the Bosniaks’ cultural specificities.

The Municipality of Novi Pazar held its first round table on 20 March in the Cultural Center of Novi Pazar. The event gathered representatives of the city administration, local NGOs and experts dealing with issues in the field of cultural heritage and cultural tourism. The topics discussed focused on the local cultural policy, preservation and promotion on Bosniak culture and the cultural diversity in Novi Pazar. Based on the conclusions and recommendations from the Round table, the municipality conducted an analysis of the local cultural policy which emphasized the importance of preservation of the Bosniak culture and the improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the city. The Municipal Task Force had started to collect archival data and



information on the most important cultural monuments and documents of Novi Pazar in order to create a promotional brochure. This brochure will be issued at the end of the Project.

Pancevo - Local Self -Government

Field: Official Use of Languages and Scripts

Key minority engaged: Macedonians, Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians

The project aims to facilitate the access to the most important decisions of the Assembly of the City of Pancevo in minority languages in official use within the city; holding meetings of the Assembly in the languages of the national minorities; and creation of an electronic database of the most important decisions within the jurisdiction of City of Pancevo, in Serbian and minority languages.

The Municipality of Pancevo established communication with the Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and Slovakian national councils in order to explore their needs and opportunities for further cooperation in the realization of the right to use minority languages and scripts in Pancevo municipality. Several meetings were organized in the City administration building during which participants analysed the local situation regarding awareness and implementation of minority rights. The municipality got off to a late start with the implementation of the project activities mainly due to the complicated tendering procedures and begun the implementation of all planned activities in late May.

City of Subotica - Local Self –Government

Field: Official Use of Languages and Scripts

Key minority engaged: Hungarians, Croats

The project aims to improve the use of official languages by building the technical capacity of the representative bodies of local self-government; procurement of specialized software for systematic organization of documents, with the application for electronic implementation of sessions of the City Council and the City Assembly ("electronic sessions"); and training on the use of applications for systemic organization of documents.

The Municipality of Subotica is implementing the Project activities according to the plan. The preparation of tender documents for the purchase and extension of the specialized software for Document Management System (DMS) was completed. The Terms of Reference, specifying the software characteristics and performance setting has been developed in accordance with the approved Project proposal, a codified model-form was developed and a number of legal forms were unified and translated. The preconditions for a public procurement procedure were fulfilled and a service provider will be soon selected. The Municipal Task Force plans to organize a conference on the Official Use of Minority Languages by the end of August/beginning of September 2015 at which will be invited municipal officials from the other selected municipalities within the Project in Serbia (Bujanovac, Bosilegrad, Novi Pazar, Petrovac na Mlavi and Pancevo).

