



## Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South East Europe



## SMALL GRANTS UPDATE (CROATIA), FEBRUARY – JUNE 2015<sup>1</sup>

The selected local governments from Croatia have completed the preparatory activities for the projects and begun the implementation. Specifically, Pula and Cakovec local governments have organized a number of capacity building trainings for local officials and minority associations relating to minority rights; Knezevi Vinogradi local government has completed the identification of available literature in minority languages and started a process of categorization; and Gracac local government has completed its preparatory activities and will begin a series of thematic roundtables, as soon as its new National Minority Council has been elected, which is a partner in the project implementation. In addition, Pakrac local government organized a thematic conference on minority rights and supported the organization of two minority rights related events; and Bogdanovci local government is actively working to register a cooperative that will set-up and manage the internet radio station for minorities.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the general elections in Croatia will be held in early 2016, and this is likely to create challenges during the pre-election period. The JP Minority Project Secretariat will continue to closely cooperate with the local governments to ensure successful implementation of the projects

## Bogdanovci - Local Self-Government

Field: Media

Key minority engaged: Ruthenian and Ukrainian

The project idea foresees the establishment of an internet radio station of Bogdanovci municipality in Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages. Thematic radio shows would be combined with traditional music. The aim of the radio being community outreach and encouraging minorities living in Bogdanovci to be more engaged in public life. It is planned that the radio would initially operate for four hours per day, and would eventually become a live broadcast.

Bogdanovci local government is implementing a project to promote the language and culture of the Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minority, through launching an internet radio station with topical programs in Croatian and the respective minority languages. Unfortunately, it was found that the local government was unable to be founder of the radio station, and it was necessary to create a separate cooperative. The local government is actively working to create the

cooperative, and this process should be completed in August, when the radio station will be launched. In the meantime, the local government is planning to organise a town hall meeting in July, to solicit comments/ideas from the public on the topics to be covered by the radio station. It has also initiated the purchase of the required equipment and will provide training to the hosts of the radio programs.

## Cakovec - Local Self-Government

Field: Education

Key minority engaged: Roma

The project idea is to create a Roma women's enterprise which could serve as a training center for Roma woman to learn more about the opportunities for self-employment and current market needs in Cakovec and to encourage participation in the local economy.

Cakovec local government is implementing a capacity building project for potential female entrepreneurs from the Roma community. The local government has been actively consulting with the Roma community to agree on the details of the planned implementation, including the required training skills. It has provided basic IT equipment to the newly established Roma women's cooperative "Romana" and will shortly begin a course of IT training for the members of the cooperative. This will be followed by specific training in entrepreneurship. A public event will be organized in October to promote the activities of the cooperative.



## Gracac - Local Self-Government

Field: Education

Key minority engaged: Serbian

The project idea focuses on educating the local authorities, civil society organizations and minority councils about minority rights and how to realize them at the local level. The education component will include the production and distribution of information brochures and study visits to review existing good practice.

Gracac local government is implementing a project to promote social inclusion and improved inter-ethnic relations, through various activities implemented in partnership with the National Minority Council. A roundtable on the role of national minorities in the work of local government will be organized in July, and this will be followed by the preparation and distribution of a brochure on minority rights. It is planned to open a new legal aid and information

office in October and to organize a joint study visit to Daruvar municipality which is scheduled for end of July. The visit by representatives of the Gracac local government and National Minority Council will provide an opportunity to learn more about the working relations between the Czech national minority and local government in Daruvar municipality, which is regarded as an example of good practice.

## Knezevi Vinogradi - Local Self-Government

Field: Language and media

Key minority engaged: Hungarian and Serbian

The project idea has two components, namely upgrading the municipal website and translating relevant content to Hungarian, Serbian and English language; and refurbishment the municipal library and increase the number of books, particularly those in minority languages.

Knezevi Vinogradi local government is implementing a project to promote the literature of national minorities, through the categorization of literature in the municipal library and local associations by Hungarian, Serbian and German authors. The information will be posted on the website of the local government. The local government and its partners have already initiated the categorization, and this followed a joint study visit to Beli Manastir, which has an experience in this type of activities. It has been established that the categorization will identify a far larger number of publications than had originally anticipated. Categorization of books will be completed by the end of September and the online catalogue will be launched by the end of November 2015;



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## *Pakrac - Local Self-Government*

Field: Active participation

Key minority engaged: Serbian, Italian and Czech

The project idea focuses on the importance of media, education, official use of the language, culture and non-discrimination. These issues will be tackled through capacity building of the National minorities, and promoting their active participation in public life.



Pakrac local government is implementing a project to promote the participation of national minorities in the work of the local government and the economic life of the City, through revising the City's statute and organizing activities to strengthen the economic capacity of the national minorities. To this end, the local government has organized a number of public meetings to review and propose amendments to the City's statute, including a consultative role for the

Council of National Minorities and mechanisms to support minority NGOs and minority employment. The local government organized a conference to mark 'International Women's Day' (8th March) on the topic of employment of women from the national minorities, along with a conference to discuss the use of minority languages in primary education (also attended by pupils from Pakrac primary school who are taking their classes in Serbian language). It is planned to purchase a tractor for use by the minority communities, however the procurement has been delayed by the welcome news that the Ministry of Economy will provide supplementary funding in order to purchase a machine of higher specification. In July, the local government will organize the festival 'Pakrac Summer' which will consist of a number of events.

## *Pula - Local Self-Government*

Field: Language

Key minority engaged: Italian

The project idea focuses on the official use of Italian language in the public life of the City of Pula. It is planned to translate official documents/forms into Italian, post bilingual street/traffic signs, and provide additional Italian language classes. The activities will include media outreach in order to inform the community on how to best access the existing instruments for exercising rights for official use of Italian language.

Pula local government is implementing a project to promote the official use of Italian as a minority language. The relevant municipal documents and forms have been translated to Italian language and posted on the local government website, and bi-lingual name plates/directions will be posted inside the City administration building. The local government is providing an Italian language course for local officials and will provide certification for Italian language court interpreters. A certification ceremony for the officials completing the language course will take place in July.

