

ANNUAL PROGRAMME



EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR
MINORITY ISSUES

2016

European Centre
for Minority Issues (ECMI)

Director:
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This publication provides information about the research and action planned at the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) for 2016. The past 12 months have verified that our new focus on human (in)security and radicalisation of the public space, which often affect minorities adversely, is relevant; even established, long-term resident minorities have experienced insecurities and attacks. At the same time, the situation in Crimea has frozen, and thousands of Crimean residents have fled; they are now internally dispersed persons (IDPs) in the Ukrainian mainland. There is of course good news in the area of minority protection; governments are moving to include more minorities in the list of protected minorities. Across Europe – East and West – there remain, however, many issues and challenges to be addressed. The ECMI selects those issues and challenges that are relevant for protecting and promoting minority identity and cultures and designs its projects accordingly. With this Annual Programme we will give a few indications as to what we intend to focus on in 2016, and in so doing, we hope to continue dialogue with our partners about the issues and challenges that national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities face.

As always, we highlight our most prominent initiatives on page 4. We are continuing a number of on-going **research activities** and also planning new initiatives in critical areas of minority protection and cultural issues. Continuing its research on non-territorial autonomy, the **Justice and Governance** cluster will explore the differences and synergies between minority protection and non-discrimination in 2016, and it will look into the risks facing modern ideas of diversity management in order to seek ways these may be overcome. The distribution of financial support to organisations representing national minorities and the roles of ethnic minority representatives in the Baltic parliaments will be the two leading research questions for our work in the area of Politics and Civil Society. Facing the changing situation in Europe, the **Conflict and Security** cluster will focus on the impact of the refugee crisis on national minorities and the related issues of proliferation of hate speech in new media as well as the rise of the far right. Advancing the research on minority media and minority rights in education, the new challenge for us in the area of **Culture and Diversity** is to explore the interconnectedness between those issues and linguistic diversity as shaped by language policies. The research on cultural competences of the national minorities planned by the **Citizenship and Ethics** cluster will be shaped by data collection in border regions where past conflicts have resulted in feasible institutionalisation and will aim at identifying and analysing actors and actions that have led to increased European integration.

Our **action projects** continue to be implemented by our offices in **Kosovo** and **Georgia** and by our Eastern Partnership Team based in Flensburg/Kiev. The ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme has a very packed agenda for 2016, with many activities aiming to support Germany's Chairmanship of the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe. Nine seminars on the two thematic streams of "Non-discrimination and Organisational Capacity-Building" and "Participation and Consultative Bodies" have been planned for the target countries, **Belarus**, **Moldova** and **Ukraine**. In addition, workshops on Non-Territorial Autonomy will be held in Ukraine and Moldova. You can find more information about these and many other projects inside this publication.

Welcome to our Annual Programme 2016 and thank you for your interest in the ECMI.



Tove H. Malloy
 ECMI Director

FOREWORD

ECMI HIGHLIGHTS 2016

ECMI JOINS CAHROM

The Council of Europe Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) has accepted ECMI among its participants. The ECMI mandate begins in 2016.

ECMI IN BELARUS, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE (2014 – 2016)

Having successfully completed the first year of the Eastern Partnership Programme (EPP), ECMI will continue the series of seminars and workshops in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. The EPP is implemented with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. (see page 50)

THE REFUGEE CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON MINORITIES

The new Conflict & Security Cluster project will explore if and how perceptions of minority groups in Europe have shifted in the context of migration, and whether the ways in which they are affected by it pose specific challenges that are distinct from those of the majority population. A workshop titled “Visions of Radical Otherness: From Anti-Semitism and Anti-Roma Rhetoric to the Anti-Refugee Discourse” will be organised in 2016. (see page 19)

TRAININGS IN MINORITY ISSUES

In response to the increased interest in minority issues and demand for focused training, in 2016 ECMI will offer a number of lectures and tailor made package-courses to various institutions and audiences throughout Europe. More information can be obtained from the ECMI Secretariat. (see page 54)

ECMI CAUCASUS

In 2016 ECMI Caucasus will address a number of new issues that have arisen from developments in 2015. The key topics for the programme will oscillate between practice-oriented research and project activities, feeding into each other and providing deeper insights into developments of the region. Anti-discrimination, freedom of religion and local authorities as a primary contact point between population and authorities are among the key issues that ECMI Caucasus will work on throughout 2016. (see page 34)

ECMI KOSOVO

Strengthening of the ‘watchdog’ role of minority civil society in ensuring transparency and accountability of public authorities in Kosovo is a new 2-year project of ECMI Kosovo, launched in October 2015. It will develop a monitoring and evaluation system on the implementation of minority rights by local authorities and will implement a capacity-building programme to strengthen minority CSOs. Through its projects, ECMI Kosovo continues to promote **inter-ethnic and cultural tolerance** as a prerequisite to enhance inter-ethnic dialogue and bring about reconciliation in Kosovo. (see page 40)



●●● www.ecmi.de

ECMI DIRECTORS

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RESEARCH



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JUSTICE & GOVERNANCE

JUSTICE & GOVERNANCE

As issues of norm diffusion and convergence have come to the fore at the macro level, with the EU taking a greater role in Europe's normative regime, aspects of legitimacy and responsibility of protection schemes at local and regional levels require focused attention. In 2016, through a series of research and action-oriented projects, the Cluster will continue its work in four thematic areas that still have significant gaps and deficiencies in the existing research:

- 'Non-Territorial Autonomy: Interpretations, Forms, and Opportunities' addresses a range of ideas and institutional arrangements related to the notion of autonomy on non-territorial grounds, seeking to describe, compare, and critically evaluate these ideas and their implementation.
- 'Ethnicity, Territoriality and Equality' analyses the links between the notions of territory and ethnicity in public debates and policies concerning ethnic minorities, as well as such related issues as territorial autonomy promotion of equality, cultural policies, and categorisation of ethnic groups through territorial affiliations.
- 'Translation of Norms and Ideas into Practice' investigates how the notions of non-discrimination, minority protection, and participation co-exist in national and sub-national legislation, public institutions and public debates.
- 'Deficiencies and Gaps in Minority Protection' seeks to identify the cases where the ideas of minority protection are applied contrary to their substance, to elaborate the criteria for the selection of such cases, and to analyse their causes and consequences.

The Eastern Partnership Programme, developed jointly by all ECMI clusters and field offices, addresses minority issues at various levels, seeking to invest in the development of the expert and practitioner communities dealing with minority issues in the EU Eastern borderland and to facilitate communication concerning minority issues between this region and the rest of Europe.

COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT NON-TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY

Aims

The scholarly network on the issues of Non-Territorial Autonomy (NTA) established at the ECMI-led workshop in June 2011 works on a series of academic and applied events and publications on NTA issues.

Action Setup

ECMI, in cooperation with The Tom Lantos Institute, EURAC and with the Political Science Department of Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania works on an Oxford University Press Series on Territorial and Non-Territorial Autonomies. In cooperation with the University of Glasgow, ECMI holds a conference on NTA in Ukraine.

Partner Institutions

The Tom Lantos Institute (Hungary), Institute for Ethnic and National Minority Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Hungary), EURAC (Italy), the Political Science Department of Babes-Bolyai University (Romania)

Outcome

One volume of the series is to be submitted to the publisher.



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ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme seminar on advisory and deliberative structures, Kiev, Ukraine (30 Nov-01 Dec 2015)

MINORITIES AND TERRITORIAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is assumed that territorial arrangements are crucial for minority protection, since until recently setting up cultural and linguistic regimes on territorial ground has been deemed a rule and is common practice. Although there has been extensive research and a significant amount of scholarly publications concerning the ethnic and cultural dimension of sub-national territorial arrangements, some deficiencies and gaps in these studies and public debates still persist.

The research area can be described as linkages between the notions of territory and ethnicity in public debates and policies concerning ethnic minorities as well as related issues of promotion of equality, cultural policies, and categorisation of ethnic groups through territorial affiliations. The objectives are the description, comparison, and critical assessment of the ways minorities are symbolically attached to and/or detached from certain territories. This area provides for a new perspective on how diversity is conceptually organised and accommodated; a way to assess how symbolic policies affect the real state of minorities. Practically relevant outputs can be proposals concerning specific policies that may affect certain minorities (including 'minorities within minorities') and proposals regarding new ways to improve minority position through territorial planning and development.

Aims

The project addresses the models under which linkages between ethnicity and territory are articulated (or acknowledged implicitly) and conceptually organised. It also initiates discussion on the practical applicability of such models, inter alia on the outcomes already achieved and the prospects for the future.

Action Setup

Activities include a conference on the Gagauzian autonomy held in Moldova as a side event of the EPP in April 2016 and planning joint projects on territorial policies with regard to Ukraine.

Outcome

ECMI Working Papers

Funding

The Danish MFA (for the EPP); to be identified



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EPP Team: Viktoria Martovaskaya, Dr Alexander Osipov, Dr Hanna Vasilevich (left to right)

DIFFERENCES AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN MINORITY PROTECTION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Aims

The cluster aims at exploring the disjuncture and similarities in interpretations and conceptual organisation of equality on ethnic or racial grounds in different theoretical, discursive and institutional frameworks, first and foremost within minority protection and non-discrimination. The project seeks to analyse theoretical and practical linkages between non-discrimination and minority protection; particularly, what kinds of effects result or may result from placement of the issues of culture and group identity into the agendas of social equality.

The project seeks to address issues relevant to diversity policies and jurisprudence, and issues that are still overlooked or insufficiently studied rather than theoretic debates. The major goal is to arrange for a discussion which addresses implications, consequences and potential effects of the (dis)similarities between minority protection and non-discrimination.

Action setup

The activities are merged into the ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme (EPP). The expert seminars concern the issues of equality with regard to national minorities covering Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

Outcome

The EPP seminar proceedings are to be used for publications within and beyond the Programme's scope as well as for the planning of future events; practice-oriented conclusions made in course of the EPP may be transformed into policy recommendations.

Funding The Danish MFA (for EPP)



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FROM CLOSED DECISION- MAKING TO PUBLIC POLITICS: TRANSFORMATION OF THE DIVERSITY POLICIES BEFORE THE DEMISE OF COMMUNISM

Aims

The project seeks to launch a scholarly discussion on the active phase of the communist diversity policies and their transformation in late 1980s.

Action Setup

Drafting project proposal, articles and working papers

Expected outcomes

Publications; revitalisation of the collaborative research network on communist legacies

Timeline

Throughout 2016: negotiations with the partners; fundraising; drafting publications

Partner Institutions

University of Glasgow

RISKS STEMMING FROM MODERN IDEAS OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND THE WAYS THEY CAN BE CURBED

Aims

The project is aimed at launching a scholarly discussion on the risks posed in the long run by misinterpretations of minority protection, non-discrimination and related ideas. Identification of potential research topics and objectives and assessment of their relevance must lead to the establishment of a collaborative research network and/or launch of a research project with ECMI's involvement. The practical relevance of the project is the identification of the deficiencies and pitfalls in the existing minority-related mechanisms and of the way they can be overcome.

Action Setup

The cluster seeks to host PhD students and post-docs working on the respective issues.

Timeline

Throughout 2016: search for potential partners and donors.

Expected outcomes

Collaborative research network



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POLITICS & CIVIL SOCIETY

The capacity of national minority groups to exert influence over decisions taken in the political, socio-economic, or cultural spheres represents a fundamental condition for a peaceful and democratic society. As such, the extent to which political parties and non-governmental organisations of citizens belonging to national minorities are capable of successfully advocating change in favour of the groups they represent is an important indicator of the level of empowerment of national minorities.

Consequently, the Politics & Civil Society Cluster focuses on the analysis and evaluation of the capacity of minority parties and non-governmental organisations to induce desired changes at the local, national, and European levels, with the purpose of identifying the best practices and most appropriate solutions that would lead to improving the level of participation of national minority groups in public life. The theoretical underpinnings of the cluster's activities lie both in the classic understandings of participation, which focus primarily on electoral processes such as voting or participating in election-related campaign activities, as well as on more recent developments in understanding participation, such as non-electoral mobilisation, protest, or participation through new media.

More specifically, the cluster approaches participation from two main perspectives. On the one hand it analyses how minority organisations are empowered by the state by looking at the consultation mechanisms in place, the public funding available, and the general patterns of interaction between non-governmental minority organisations and relevant state institutions. This top-down approach is complemented by a bottom-up one, analysing patterns of mobilisation at the grass-roots level and their impact on decision making. The cluster focuses also on transversal patterns of representation, looking at how minority women and young persons participate in public life.

MONEY MATTERS: DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTING NATIONAL MINORITIES

Aims and objectives

The participation of national minorities in political and public life is to a great extent determined by the activities of their representative organisations, for whose functioning adequate funding is of fundamental importance. Building on the results of an expert meeting on this topic organised by ECMI in 2013, this project aims to create a comprehensive overview of the practices employed by governments for distributing funds to minority organisations across Europe, thus creating the premises for a conceptual and practical framework that would lead to a better understanding of how participation of national minorities is enabled through funding throughout Europe.

Background

Despite the fundamental importance of ensuring adequate funding to minority organisations for the effective participation of national minorities in political and public life, both academic literature and policy analysis on this topic are extremely sparse, so that such a project appears to be both relevant and timely. The amounts earmarked for use by national minority organisations, their distribution, the funding priorities of states, as well as the monitoring and transparency mechanisms in place are all important aspects of the financial support offered to such organisations across Europe. The project thus aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding of the issue of funding of minority organisations by identifying areas in need of further research and by attempting to create a framework that will allow for future comprehensive recommendations to governments in this respect.

Thematic areas of research

The project will focus on the issue of funding as directed by states to minority organisations by analysing three main thematic areas. First, the funding of projects proposed by minority organisations will be analysed, taking into account the criteria employed by states in selecting the projects and the recipients of the funds, the respective amounts earmarked, the procedures by which states determine their spending priorities, and the evaluation and impact assessment mechanisms in place. Second, the issue of funding as related to the political participation of minority groups will be researched, including the manner in which political minority organisations obtain their funding, the transparency and reporting requirements, the legal restrictions in place, and their practical effects. The third component analyses minority funding from an international perspective, with a focus on minorities' kin states, which sometimes provide them with material help (financial or in kind). As shown by the Hungarian Status Law, such an approach invites a host of normative questions, starting from the very general (i.e. whether states have a moral duty to provide such help) to more particular (e.g. what forms of help are acceptable, and in what areas). Here, in addition to much needed research on specific case studies, there are many normative questions to be answered, such as the limits of such involvement, the impact on domestic politics, etc.

Expected outcomes

Database; Policy recommendations



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ROLES OF ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE BALTIC PARLIAMENTS

Aims and objectives

Some ethnic minorities achieve parliamentary representation through their own political parties; some enter Parliament on the list of mainstream parties or political organisations of larger minorities. The aim of this project is to investigate whether the way ethnic minorities enter Parliament makes a difference in the representation and self-perception of their roles as ethnic minority representatives.

Background

Since 1995 there has been a continuous downward trend in the share of stateless persons and a significant upward trend in the parliamentary representation of ethnic minorities in Estonia and Latvia; however, there was hardly any research study investigating whether this numerical (descriptive) representation led to a substantive representation in the Baltic parliaments.

Thematic and methodological aspects: The project investigates the roles ethnic minority representatives play in the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It relies on the original dataset of Baltic legislators and addresses the question whether entering a parliament on a mainstream party list leads to a different role perception in comparison with gaining representation through the own ethnic party.

Expected outcomes

Research study



ECMI headquarter, Flensburg



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 CONFLICT & SECURITY*

CONFLICT & SECURITY 2015

In 2014, the crisis in Ukraine has once again brought to the fore the frailty of the path to peaceful integration that Europe embarked upon, as well as the direct threat that conflicts pose to minority groups. Together with another major crisis confronting Europe today, the rise of right-wing populist parties whose discourse almost invariably includes an exclusionary drive, the conflict in Ukraine shows that state and nation building processes remain enduring topics that however require fresh approaches adapted to the realities of 21st century Europe. As the roots of conflict in inter-ethnic or intercultural contexts can often be traced back to the history of groups inhabiting a certain territory, often manipulated by nationalist interpretations that emphasise divisiveness and antagonism, the research carried out within the Conflict & Security Cluster will approach contemporary challenges to minority groups by placing due weight on their historical legacies. This approach brings a historical perspective to the understanding of these conflicts, which in turn appears as a necessary prerequisite for the development of effective strategies leading towards their contemporary resolution and the reconciliation of the ethnic groups in question.

At the same time, the new challenges confronting minority groups, as well as the new modes of mobilisation they often entail, call for a more elastic concept of security, departing from traditional interpretations that have focused on the state to concentrate more on the individual. This focus of the Cluster on human security allows for addressing emergent security issues such as the refugee crisis and its impact on minority groups, the increasing incidence of extremist violence directed against members of minorities and in particular the Roma, the proliferation of hate speech in the new media, or the resurgence of the radical right in the post-Cold War political environment. This reorientation in focus towards the individual implies that potential solutions to these challenges need to take into consideration the new vulnerability emerging in the context of the double threat posed on the one hand by extremist radical groups and on the other by the enhanced state surveillance and control associated with their monitoring, and the fact that this new, global vulnerability is particularly salient for minority groups. In line with the ECMI's approach to bridging the distance between theory and practice by drawing on the synergy between research, action and standards, the projects developed by the Conflict & Security Cluster aim to combine theoretical re-conceptualisations of the issues under consideration with practical recommendations meant to increase the level of involvement of civil society in their resolution.

HATE SPEECH AND ITS PROLIFERATION IN THE NEW MEDIA

Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this project is to contribute to a better understanding of the shifting patterns of hate speech in Europe, with a particular focus on tackling its proliferation in the new media and the subsequent radicalisation of online space. As such, the specific objectives of this project are to analyse on the one hand the newly emerging patterns of prejudice that are affecting minority groups in Europe, and on the other to address the specific issues pertaining to the propagation of hate speech in the new media of communication associated with Web 2.0. The project thus addresses one of the most complex challenges to policy making in this field, respectively the need to strike a balance between the effective monitoring of online hate speech and the threat posed to individual liberty by the encroachment on personal freedom in the name of providing effective security. This project will be developed in cooperation with the Citizenship and Ethics Cluster at ECMI and will involve interested international partners as well.

Background

The project starts from the premise that hate speech puts forth a political code for interpreting the world that promotes conflict and antagonism rather than tolerance and cooperation, and which often targets minority groups. From the resurgence of anti-Semitism during the last decade to the propagation of anti-Roma discourse and various forms of xenophobia, the proliferation of discriminatory discourse shows on the one hand a continuity with historical patterns of prejudice in the perpetuation of a rhetoric of radical difference and exclusion, and on the other the emergence of new conceptualisations that are adapted to contemporary European and global developments, such as the ongoing refugee crisis. The relative anonymity offered by virtual space, coupled with its ever-growing importance as a source of information and communication, particularly for youth, facilitates the dissemination of hate speech, as well as the establishment and maintenance of networks connecting radical groups across Europe. As a consequence, while previously limited and specific to national contexts, discriminatory discourse is now acquiring a distinctly European, if not global dimension, to which minority groups are particularly vulnerable.

Thematic Areas of Research

Addressing a pressing need to investigate the new challenges associated with the proliferation of hate speech, the project seeks to carry out innovative research on this topic, as well as to establish a network of scholars and practitioners working on this subject. Shifting the focus of attention from an exclusive preoccupation with perpetrators in order to explore the role of government agencies and representatives of civil society in monitoring and reporting instances of hate speech, the project sees as one of its potential practical outcomes the formulation of policy recommendations that would lead to a more responsible and responsive media, and, in general, to strategies that would identify other means to counteract the proliferation of hate speech that would go beyond the criminalisation of its most excessive instances. As such, in line with ECMI's vision of bridging the gaps between theory and practice, the project aims both to theoretically explore the dynamics of contemporary hate speech in Europe and to devise strategies for its practical containment and mitigation.

Activities & Outputs

- Publication of special issue of the Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe (JEMIE) on 'Anti-Semitism in Romania and Moldova', the result of a two-part workshop organised in 2014 and 2015 in cooperation with the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Leicester, UK
- Workshop "Visions of Radical Otherness: From Anti-Semitism and Anti-Roma Rhetoric to the Anti-Refugee Discourse" (2016 – in cooperation with the Politics and Civil Society Cluster)
- Creating a network of potential partners; developing a research strategy for the project.

Partner Institutions

University of Leicester (UK);
Uppsala University (Sweden)



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THE CONTEMPORARY RADICAL RIGHT – FROM MARGIN TO THE MAINSTREAM?

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the project is to examine the impact of the recent rise of the radical right in contemporary Europe on the life of minority groups. The project focuses on the one hand on the security dimension implicit in the escalating number of violent attacks on members of ethnic minorities and migrants, often carried out or instigated by members of extremist right-wing groups. On the other hand, addressing the increasing importance of right wing populism in mainstream politics in a number of countries in Europe, the project will also trace the effects of the radicalisation of the mainstream political agenda in some countries on the political participation of minorities to public life.

Background

In recent years, Europe has witnessed a growth in the popularity of right wing populist parties, often promoting, directly or in veiled form, xenophobic or anti-immigration agendas. Extremist right wing groups are also making an unfortunate comeback, visible in the increased incidence of violent attacks carried out against members of ethnic minorities and migrants. More alarmingly, the activities and discourse promoted by radical right groups sometimes hark back to the legacy of interwar fascism, as reflected either in the active adoption of fascist symbols and rhetoric by certain groups, or in revisionist approaches to the atrocities committed by fascist movements and regimes. As such, this project will analyse the resurgence of the contemporary radical right according to a twofold division, dealing first with the populist right wing parties that promote an exclusionary agenda from within the democratic political system, and second with the extremist cellular groups and networks that are becoming increasingly difficult to censor due to their extensive use of the new media.

BECAUSE MINORITIES MATTER...

CONFLICT & SECURITY



Participants in discussion on the effectiveness of tools to fight right-wing populism. www.crisp-berlin.org

Thematic Areas of Research

The increasing convergence of the Eastern and Western European radical right calls for an integrated approach to this phenomenon at a European level. However, any such approach would also need to be sensitive to the historical specificities of the countries under consideration, as these are often reflected in the discourse and activities of contemporary right-wing groups. Partly related to the project on the proliferation of hate speech in online media, the present research could thus make a theoretical contribution to the conceptualisation of the new type of threats facing minority communities in contemporary Europe. Practically, since the increase in the popularity of right wing populist parties and radical right groups is partly related to voter apathy and lack of participation in the democratic political process, launching a set of targeted awareness-raising campaigns, especially among young people, regarding the threat posed by the radical right or the value of diversity for a multicultural Europe, has the potential to counteract exclusionary, nationalist rhetoric. The involvement of civil society by promoting alternative forms of political mobilisation emphasising grassroots activism will also represent a valuable tool in combating these phenomena.

Activities & Outputs

- Erasmus+ Project "Fighting Right Wing Populism", in cooperation with CRISP Berlin (2015)
- Organisation of a conference on this topic in 2016
- ECMI Working Paper; publication of a special issue of JEMIE
- Training courses for relevant non-governmental organisations; creation of a network of academia, civil society and government representatives

Partner Institutions

CRISP Berlin (Germany);
Uppsala University (Sweden)

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THE REFUGEE CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON MINORITIES

Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the project is to determine the impact of the ongoing refugee crisis on the situation of minority groups in Europe. The objectives of the project are to trace these effects both at the level of policy – following the debates surrounding the relationship between the protection of ‘traditional’ minorities and policies designed with regard to the so-called ‘new minorities’ – and at the level of political discourse, as visible both in mainstream political debates and in instances of social mobilisation outside the sphere of formal politics. More specifically, at the level of policy, the project seeks to analyse the potential for extending certain aspects of the existing legal framework for the protection of national minorities (for example, the provisions on equality and non-discrimination) to recent migrants, and the ways in which these could be re-designed for this purpose. At the level of discourse, it will factor in both academic debates concerning the similarities and differences between historical minorities and recent migrants, as well as the shared vulnerability of these groups to exclusionary rhetoric coming from sections of the majority population.

Background

The ongoing refugee crisis, representing the most serious wave of migration in Europe since the end of World War II, has dominated media headlines in the course of 2015, as well as featuring prominently as a salient issue among European policy-makers. However, in the debates surrounding the issue, attention was focused primarily if not exclusively on the relationship of the newcomers to majority populations, at the expense of considerations pertaining to the impact of the crisis on minority groups. As the issue of the successful integration of an unprecedented number of refugees and migrants in European societies looms large, significant questions arise regarding this impact, as well as possible parallels and lessons that could be learned from the existing legal framework and expertise in dealing with minority groups in providing a more appropriate and effective response to this crisis.



Armenian children

Thematic Areas of Research

On the one hand, it can be argued that the current refugee crisis has led to some extent to a marginalisation of concern with issues confronting traditional minorities (e.g. Roma integration, or the situation of Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians in Crimea), both in the media and the attention of the general public. On the other, particularly in the context of the proliferation of forms of exclusionary discourse directed primarily, although not exclusively, against migrants and refugees, associations have emerged that draw links between historical minority groups and recent migrants, whether in terms of distinguishing the two according to criteria such as the level of integration or its likelihood, national loyalty, social cohesion, or 'deservingness', or in the more extreme form that entails a rejection of diversity and difference as such.

Particularly although by no means exclusively in Central and Eastern Europe, the perceived failure of Roma integration has been mentioned by certain governments as a basis for rejecting the refugee quotas discussed at the level of the European Union, while the more radical notion of a 'Christian Europe' put forth by numerous politicians holds the potential of impacting negatively on non-Christian minority groups that have lived in Europe for centuries. Violent attacks carried out by right wing extremists against members of historical minorities (such as the Sorbs in Germany, for example, who were targeted in the wake of the grassroots mobilisation associated with PEGIDA), as well as the general shift to the right visible in European politics, appear to be extremely dangerous developments that would affect not only recent migrants, but long-established minority communities as well. As such, this project aims to explore if and how perceptions of minority groups in Europe have shifted in the fluid, ever-changing context of migration, and whether the ways in which they are affected by it pose specific challenges that are distinct from those of the majority population.

The identification of eventual gaps and potential examples of good practices resulting from such research should then be functional in extrapolating the useful lessons learned for the design and implementation of successful strategies aimed at responding to the refugee crisis.

Activities & Outputs

- Workshop "Visions of Radical Otherness: From Anti-Semitism and Anti-Roma Rhetoric to the Anti-Refugee Discourse" (2016 – in cooperation with the Politics and Civil Society Cluster)
- ECMI Working Papers and Issue Briefs



Dr Tove Malloy
Director of ECMI,
Head of Cluster
CITIZENSHIP & ETHICS

CITIZENSHIP & ETHICS

The Citizenship and Ethics Cluster aims to foster minority research into the new 21st century discourses that require different approaches to understanding national minority narratives. While the security and justice discourses continue to be articulated, discourses of cohesion, citizenship and environmental survival are forming. These are discourses that have yet to manifest themselves in the area of minority research.

The European citizenship discourse has formed over the last couple of decades and often takes its cues from the public debate on EU constitutionalism and the so-called 'democratic deficit'. Incorporating articulations of values-driven acts and actions, national minority narratives inform the European citizenship discourse. The effects of acts and actions are bigger and wider than those generated by top-down contributions to the integration of Europe. They are social and cultural trends aimed towards the formation of a European civil society, a vast, dynamically inter-connected and multi-layered European social space consisting of many thousands of non-governmental initiatives, networks, personalities, movements and organisations. In fact, national minorities are likely to accumulate more social and human capital than the average citizen due to the nature of national minority existence (Competency Analysis, 2007). Social capital and participation are thus the key words in the narratives that national minorities put forth in terms of citizenship.

Because most of Europe's national minorities live in border regions, the importance of the acts of citizenship that they perform takes on a European dimension, not only as a bilateral phenomenon but as a European integration phenomenon creating spaces of co-operation rather than confrontation. In 2015, the Cluster will continue exploring the current dynamics within minority communities that contribute or challenge the active citizenship values and practices, and will pay particular attention to education as a powerful mechanism for bringing about positive social change.

NATIONAL MINORITY CITIZENSHIP

Aim and objectives

The overall goal of *National Minority Citizenship* (MINCIT) is to inform the contemporary academic discourse on European citizenship with a model of national minority citizenship. The specific purpose is to research 'national minority regions', such as the Danish-German border region, which appear to exhibit new citizenship behaviour. These could include but may not be limited to the border regions of Germany-Netherlands, Germany-Belgium, Germany-Poland, the Czech Republic-Poland and Poland-Lithuania.

Background

There are between 80 and 100 million Europeans who claim to belong to a national minority. Most of them are legal citizens of a national state. But a large part also declares allegiance to a neighbouring state. Decades and at times centuries have gone by in which these national minorities have lived in a new home state due to border revisions, while retaining cultural and national ties to the former home state, now kin-state. As proponents of bicultural and binational identities, these national minorities have either overcome the 'daily plebiscite' syndrome of whether to show loyalty and allegiance to one nation, or they have become accustomed to a 'double daily plebiscite'. It is therefore questionable to speak of the national identity and national allegiance of these groups. As a minimum there must be two foci of allegiance. This poses potential challenges to the conventional concept of national citizenship as defined in terms of solidarity with a cultural group, loyalty to a national state, and allegiance to the symbols and traditions of that national state.

Taking as its starting point the national minority citizenship which is being forged in the Danish-German border region, where two kin-state minorities and a linguistic minority have created a new narrative of active citizenship, MINCIT will investigate whether the citizenship skills of these minorities are to be seen as a trend informing the European citizenship concept and thus European integration.

This is crucial at a time when, on the one hand, a European citizenship model is being defined, and, on the other hand, citizenship as 'Bürgerschaft' is in decline. Policy makers as well as academic scholars are keen to define a new model of citizenship for Europe and in particular the EU. At the same time, Europeans are increasingly turning away from political processes. Social movements are mobilising outside political processes in protest. Active and participatory citizenship remain theoretical constructs while disempowerment in the democratic process is taking hold, thus presenting the risk of the demise of a European tradition of democratic citizenship.

Activities

A comparative study based on the political sociological narratives of the 'acts of citizenship' of national minorities, compiled and analysed through quantitative and qualitative data collection, will provide the basis for a theorisation of a new model of citizenship not yet conceptualised in Europe.

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CULTURAL COMPETENCIES AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

Cultural competencies of national minorities are vastly overlooked in the policymaking on social cohesion in Europe. Major programmes, like the European Union's Cultural Programme – now Creative Europe – has made good strides towards relevant objectives, such as promoting cross-border mobility, encouraging transnational circulation, and fostering intercultural dialogue. Unfortunately, they have stopped short of incorporating the cultural competence dimension of national minority human and social capital. With very few exceptions, scientific research on national minorities and culture is confined to normative issues of cultural rights. While this is important, it begs the question of how national minorities enjoy their rights. This is because it focuses on minorities as objects rather than subjects of their own narratives. In other words, it ignores the ability of national minorities to be pro-active players in the forging of a united Europe.

Aims and objectives

The project will explore European national minority narratives with the aim to identify whether and how national minorities become pro-active in specific areas that contribute to the increased integration of Europe's countries and regions. Specifically, it will examine minority pro-action resulting from the development of inter-cultural dialogue and cross-border co-operation in areas where past conflicts have divided societies and where animosities might still exist. It will be among the objectives to define the roles of national minorities in new approaches to inter-community relationships and communication, to governance of regional development, and to the forging of a European identity through regional integration.

Methodology

The narratives of national minorities will be the focus of the project. They will be examined through data collection (qualitative and quantitative) in five border regions where past conflicts have resulted in lingering animosities: Germany-Denmark, Austria-Slovakia, Germany-Czech Republic, Hungary-Slovakia, and Italy-Slovenia. Based on new scientific concepts of cultural competence, active citizenship, transnational identities and creation of spaces for politics in regions, the project will identify and analyse actors and actions among national minorities that have lead to increased European integration.

Output and activities

- Data collection and comparative analysis (5 border regions)
- Development of a coherent theory and methodology to assess comparatively the extent to which minority inter-cultural competencies have any impact on border governance, regional development and European integration
- Policy analysis – a first formulation of the implications for European cohesion of minority cultural capital in border regions

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 CULTURE & DIVERSITY

CULTURE & DIVERSITY

- Is diversity a societal asset or a key challenge to integration and social cohesion?
- Which are the points of intersection between cultural groups that could enable efficient societal cohesion?
- What is the role of the minority media in intercultural dialogue?
- How is diversity managed in the field of education?
- Can linguistic divides be reconciled within multilingual societies through targeted implementation of language rights?

These are some of the key questions that the Culture and Diversity Cluster is exploring, through a number of research projects addressing one of the key issues of contemporary politics – the governance of cultural diversity.

Acknowledging the rise of cultural conflicts at the end of the 20th century, the cluster research programme departs from the assumption that politically relevant *cultural differences such as language, religion, traditions and ethnicity have a significant potential to fuel tensions if manipulated or abused*¹. Elaborating strategies and practices of diversity management hence needs to become a policy priority in the age of globalisation. Ensuring societal stability and cohesion while respecting democracy, human and cultural rights is one of the key challenges of the 21st century.

To avoid terminological confusion with the numerous definitions of 'culture'², and with respect to the goals of the research programme, the Cluster addresses the concept through the idea of the 'others', looking not so much at the reasons for 'us **versus** them' but rather than at the possibilities for 'us **with** them'.

1 B Crawford & R Lipschutz, The Myth of 'Ethnic Conflict': Politics, Economics, and 'Cultural' Violence, University of California International and Area Studies Digital Collection, Research Series, Vol 98, 1998; p.11
 2 Kroeber, A.L. and Kluckhohn, C. (1952) Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum.

MEDIA AND DIVERSITY

Although freedom of opinion and expression are recognized as fundamental rights both by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19) and by the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article 11), pluralism in society cannot be achieved unless stakeholders are actively engaged in using and protecting their rights provided by law. Therefore, effective inter-cultural communication, as an aspect of pluralism, is determined by the environment within which it develops, by the medium and by the agents of communication.

Aim and Objectives

Public media can contribute significantly to promoting and fostering the cohesion of diverse societies. But media can also hamper all integration efforts by disseminating manipulative messages, by promoting fear and hostility and spreading negative stereotypes. As a key tool of public communication, media is a crucial factor for enabling pluralism and inter-cultural dialogue, for increasing the levels of tolerance towards and understanding of diversity, and for encouraging inter-community cooperation. Therefore, by examining the structural and cognitive projection of diversity in media, the research aims to identify and reflect upon successful practices of and challenges to social cohesion within plural cultural societies.

The research aims to address intercultural dialogue as projected through media. With the assumption that a dialogue needs two active parties, the project has two focal points:

- the official (majority) public media and
- the minority media outlets

Comparing the behaviour of majority and minority 'official' media would provide a better understanding of the level and quality of intercultural dialogue as a public policy and societal practice, while the focus on social networks and interactive media could bring insights into the aspects of personalisation of formal processes.

Activities

- The project will start with a series of case studies, each looking at the mainstream and minority media, how they project the issues of diversity and what their role is in fostering or impeding intercultural dialogue within a particular society. A non-resident internship scheme is envisaged for the purpose of gathering data.
- Further, the project will report and analyse identified challenges to social cohesion or points of intersection, on the basis of which policy recommendations will be developed.
- The project will also initiate the development of a database of minority media in Europe.
- As an output of the research, a series of working papers will be developed.



MINORITY RIGHTS IN EDUCATION

Aims and objectives

The overall goal of the project is to look at the specific power of education as a fundamental human right and at the same time as a mechanism for minority empowerment, for strengthening democracy, for fostering social cohesion and respect for diversity. To obtain a better understanding of the current issues and to identify needs for further research and action, the programme will focus on exploring the different types of educational models and the provisions of minority rights to and within education.

Background

Encouraging citizens to actively engage in social and political life has become a growing political priority both at national and European levels. To stimulate this process, social and civic competences were introduced among the eight key competences for lifelong learning, identified by the Council of Europe and the European Parliament in 2006. The Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) has introduced active citizenship among the main objectives for education systems throughout Europe, supporting the understanding of the role of education as a defence mechanism against the rise of violence, racism, extremism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.

Education can make a major contribution to social cohesion and social justice and hence enable positive social change. It is an instrument that can foster democracy and the promotion and protection of human and minority rights by equipping not only young people but all members of society with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower active citizens to contribute to the development and well-being of the society in which they live.

Activities

Focusing the research interest on education and national minorities, the programme will explore the current dynamics and challenges confronting minority communities in the field of education. It will address issues such as the need for developing particular educational programmes, and will also entail a comparative analysis of the existing minority schooling practices with regard to the impact on community, regional and social development.

Research will be undertaken on the basis of the legal provisions and national/regional standards with regard to the education of national minorities. The findings will enable assessing the variety of models adopted throughout Europe, analysing them as consequences and/or factors for specific social, economic, and political developments and their impact on communities in general.



LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND LANGUAGE POLICIES

With its 225 indigenous languages, Europe has always been considered a genuine multicultural and multilingual space. And yet, European languages represent only 3 per cent of the world's linguistic diversity, which according to the Council of Europe and UNESCO estimates reaches about 7000 languages. Considering the fact that 96 per cent of them are spoken only by 4 per cent of the world population, it is no surprise that almost half of the languages are in danger of extinction. Language has a twofold role. On one hand it is an instrument, a pragmatic tool for communication. On the other hand, it is an identity building element and a powerful distinguisher between cultures and communities. Regarding the latter, the right to the use of one's own language has been recognised as one of the fundamental cultural rights that individuals can enjoy. However, its implementation is often challenged not only by operational and technical barriers, but also by nationalist ideologies that perceive the introduction of linguistic rights as a threat to national identity. With the aim of preserving and fostering linguistic diversity as European cultural wealth, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages clearly emphasises the need for promoting multilingualism as a tool for achieving greater social cohesion. Protection of minorities, of their identities and cultures, does not imply segregation and exclusion from the mainstream education, language and society. Special arrangements for minorities that promote linguistic diversity, such educational establishments in minority languages, could potentially lead to the isolation of particular groups through the crystallisation of society into two or more distinct linguistic spheres. The cases of Georgia or Macedonia clearly indicate that the lack of knowledge of the official state language is disadvantageous to national minorities. At the other end of the spectrum are societies where minority languages remain at the margins of society, suffer from low prestige and risk disappearance altogether. There is, then, a pressing need to create a balance between linguistic integration and genuine multilingualism.

Aim and Objectives

Accounting for the multiple challenges before states to handle linguistic diversity, the research project will explore the interaction between policies on languages, education and media and their impact on minority rights. Answers will be sought to the following questions:

- What are the major challenges to the implementation of language policies protecting the linguistic diversity?
- What is the impact of language policies on minority rights in education?
- What is the impact of language policies on minority rights to information and access to media?
- What type of measures protecting the cultural rights of people can contribute to an efficient intercultural dialogue and societal cohesion?

CROSS CLUSTER

NATIONAL MINORITY INDICATORS

Aim and Objectives

This project will develop indicators to assess the levels of implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) in the state parties to these instruments. The main objective is to provide the FCNM *Advisory Committee* and the ECRML *Committee of Experts*, as well as state parties and minority groups, with two practical toolkits of minority indicators, on an article by article basis. With the overall goal of improving the implementation of the FCNM and ECRML, the outputs of the project will provide a detailed description of indicators offering a multi-dimensional and multi-domain approach to assessing the performance of states. The indicators will aim at revealing to what extent the instruments' legal provisions are translated into practical implementation.

Background

Indicators for measuring the performance of international human rights treaties are increasingly a requirement in the assessment of the impact of legal standards. In the case of national minority standards, the Council of Europe's Secretariat to the FCNM began its work on indicators in 2008. A preliminary study to theorize and conceptualize political indicators describing the performance of the FCNM was produced in the areas of legal and political adaptation of provisions in member states party to the instrument.

To respond to the need:

- to pilot performance indicators to assess the **direct impact** of the FCNM's minority standards
- to initiate a parallel process for the other Council of Europe legally binding instrument of special relevance to national minorities - the ECRML

In 2012 ECMI produced a preliminary study on the conceptualisation of indicators to measure the impact of the ECRML.

Methodology

The project will develop two sets of common indicators and indices (for the FCNM and ECRML), which are:

- Multi-dimensional and compounded
- Multi-domain and inter-disciplinary
- Quantifiable and qualitative
- Applicable cross-country

The indicators will be developed by an inter-disciplinary network of experts. Professional evaluators will aid with the formulation of methodologies and methods. The work will be overseen by two steering groups (for the FCNM and ECRML).

Outputs

- Two handbooks with indicators for each article of the FCNM and ECRML
- Two academic publications (on FCNM and ECRML respectively)

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CROSS CLUSTER



MINORITY MAP AND TIMELINE OF EUROPE (MMTE)

WWW.MMTE.EU

Aim and Objectives

The Minority Map and Timeline of Europe (MMTE) is an online interactive and hands-on research tool that provides an impartial perspective and evaluation of minorities, minority issues, and minority-majority relations within all states and regions of Europe. The user interface of the MMTE website – including complementary interactive and detailed maps, timelines, and analyses – provides new, varied, and interconnected ways to interpret minority communities. The MMTE utilises a visual and hands-on approach to present data and information for better comprehension of relationships and associations concerning minorities and the countries they are living in. To this end, the website is composed in a thematic format to promote consistency, uniformity, and comparison between entries.

Background

The MMTE is an ongoing flagship project of the European Centre for Minority Issues. While first created in 2001 as the Ethnopolitical Map of Europe, in 2010 the project was re-evaluated and redesigned to reach the widest audience today. Suitably, as an easy-to-use tool, the MMTE provides current and credible quantitative and qualitative information on Europe's minorities for students and researchers, nongovernmental organisations and policy makers, and the informed public. The Minority Map and Timeline of Europe endeavours to act as a central clearinghouse website that provides information on minority communities in a timely, straightforward, and reliable manner. Additionally, the MMTE project is intended to help develop ECMI's own goals and projects to better understand minority issues as well as implement corresponding programmes.

Extensive, authoritative information – concerning both confrontational and peaceful minority-majority affairs – is maintained through the four divisions of the MMTE Research Axis: Minority-Country Map, Minority-Country Timeline, Minority Portrait, and Country Portrait. Together, facts, synopses, and analyses are provided concerning both the minority communities and governments of the states of Europe. While more general information relates to the government's relationship and approaches to the country's minority communities, a more detailed examination concerns the circumstances and factors relating to select minorities.

Thematic Areas of Research

The research and entry writing of the MMTE is divided into three phases. In the first phase, the Minority-Country Maps provide a sweeping examination of countries in Europe and of the minority communities residing there. The second phase adds a historical dimension through the Minority-Country Timelines, highlighting key events and periods of relevance for minority-majority relations. The third phase comprises the Minority Portraits and Country Portraits, which act together as a comprehensive evaluation of the state of affairs concerning the country governments and minorities.

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ECMI ROMA EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

In light of the platform for development, aiming to reduce poverty and social exclusion in the EU, the integration of the largest ethnic minority in Europe dispersed in all member states – the Roma – appears as one of the most significant societal challenges. Although as EU citizens the majority of the estimated 10-12 million Roma in Europe can exercise their political and civil rights, de facto they constitute a number of disadvantaged communities in terms of level of exclusion, quality of life and prospects for the future. For a number of years now, efforts to advance Roma inclusion in the mainstream European societies have been made at national, European and international level.

With its Cross-Cluster research programme, ECMI aims not only to address the complexity of Roma inclusion, but also to promote the need for a general policy shift with a focus on 'Roma empowerment'. The programme is an outcome of more than 10 years of active research and project work carried out by ECMI headquarters, regional and country offices. The particular culture-sensitive approach to Roma rights developed during that period has enabled ECMI to bring about new perspectives to the issues of Roma education, empowerment, discrimination, etc. A series of publication and events in 2014 will launch the new programme framework.

ROMA INTEGRATION POLICIES IN A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Aims and Objectives

Analysing the current situation, researchers at ECMI have come to believe that the approach to the development of policies for Roma integration is scattered and hardly coordinated, based more on theoretical approaches and assumptions than on the evaluation of project outcomes and field findings. International and national level agendas are quite often top-down formulated and fail to take into account the success/failure of earlier programmes, addressing Roma as vulnerable beneficiaries rather than agents of expected change. The lack of synchronised and coordinated approach to the issue, regarded as a national matter, furthermore obstructs the finding of efficient and working solutions at a trans-national level. The project therefore aims at:

- Analysing the policies targeting Roma in a critical perspective
- Identifying common EU Roma integration challenges and respective good practices
- Identifying the possibilities for approaching Roma integration as a synchronised EU policy with common mechanisms for Roma integration
- Developing a system of integration indicators and a standardised EU Instrument for monitoring and evaluating integration mechanisms
- Promoting the need for shifting the policy approach from “inclusion” towards “empowerment”

Background

The EU Council conclusions of May and June 2011 on Roma integration, following the proposal from the European Commission for an EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies, instructed all member states to present to the European Commission a strategy for Roma inclusion, or alternatively to present sets of policy measures within existing social inclusion policies for improving the situation of Roma people. The EU Framework aims to bring about a change in the approach to Roma inclusion from scattered, project-based and unrelated interventions to a comprehensive approach embracing four key areas through an integrated and coordinated effort. To bring about a real positive change for the largest European minority (10-12 million people, according to the CoE estimates), a focused and critical analysis of policies, practices and challenges at local, national and EU level is needed.

Activities

- In-depth research on the national and EU level policies targeting Roma
- Analysis of the National Integration Strategies submitted to the European Commission in 2012 under the EU's new policy to strengthen the member states' policy and programming on Roma integration

Output

- Research and policy recommendations
- Establishing a network of experts and practitioners
- Working paper



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ASSESSING THE MECHANISMS FOR ROMA REPRESENTATION

Aims and objectives

The research project will analyse the effectiveness of the mechanisms for the political representation of the Roma minorities in selected European countries. With the help of the local knowledge and expertise of partner organisations in these countries, the project will engage in an assessment of the opportunities for political representation of this minority, by analysing both the legal/institutional arrangements and their implementation and impact in practice.

Background

Political representation of the Roma minority is generally acknowledged as one of the essential paths toward the empowerment and integration of this ethnic group in the wider society. After the fall of communism, countries in Central and Eastern Europe have adopted a wide range of legal and institutional measures aiming to facilitate the representation and participation of the Roma in public life. In spite of these developments, to date academic research concerning the appropriateness, implementation, and efficiency of these measures is lacking, both on a country-by-country basis and comparatively between countries.

Thematic Areas of Research

The analysis of the legal and institutional arrangements will include (but will not be restricted to) an overview of electoral legislation, of special legislation for the Roma minority (where available), relevant policy documents, consultative bodies, elected bodies, ethnic parties, mainstream parties, appointed representatives at both local and national level, and any other relevant legislative or institutional developments. In addition to this mapping exercise, the assessment of the quality of the political representation of this minority will include an evaluation of the functioning and impact of these arrangements, based on existing data and on a series of additional interviews with Roma stakeholders.

Expected outcomes

Research study



Ewa Chylinski
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ECMI CAUCASUS

The ECMI Caucasus programme in 2016 will address a number of new issues that have arisen from developments in 2015, along with those of earlier times in need of new perspectives. The key topics for the programme will oscillate between practice-oriented research and project activities, feeding into each other and providing deeper insights into developments of the region.

Anti-discrimination and equality issues are slowly gaining momentum in South Caucasus. With legislative framework in place since 2014, Georgia and Azerbaijan are setting up relevant institutions and operational mechanisms that will monitor, promote and implement equality legal provisions. Armenia is still in the process of discussing non-discrimination and public consultations have started at the end of 2015. ECMI Caucasus will follow developments in the region, particularly from a minority perspective as part of multiple discrimination perspectives.

Freedom of religion or belief will be held under scrutiny in a number of activities related to non-discrimination and tolerance. All three countries declare strong support for freedom of religion, yet a traditional profoundly rooted attachment to one religious identity makes the societal tolerance towards other religions and acceptance of needs of other congregations difficult.

Local authorities as a primary contact point between population and authorities have been brought into focus in 2014 and in 2015. Reforms of self-governance systems in Georgia and Armenia indicate that the inherent centralised systems of governance prevent effective self-governance with the participation of local residents, despite formally adopted legal provisions. Such an approach has many implications for minorities, particularly those living compactly. The dichotomy of legalism and practice will be investigated and local authorities offered training in handling their responsibilities.

ECMI Caucasus is looking forward to working together with international, regional and local partners and communities across the region.



GEORGIA

MINORITY INCLUSION AND GOVERNANCE POLICY

In 2016 Georgia will be probing its democratic development through participation in electoral processes. The key focus of the programme will be on parliamentary elections in Georgia to take place in the fall of 2016 and minority participation in the elections. Four years in power of the Georgian Dream Coalition (who won the elections in 2012) have had an unexpected impact on minorities' participation in electoral processes – as candidates, as voters and as members of district and local election commissions – with a decline of almost 20%, revealed during local elections in 2014. Following up on the ECMI Caucasus publication “A study of electoral behavior of ethnic Armenians in Georgia” (http://www.ecmicaucasus.org/upload/ECMI_Research_EB_Final_ENG.pdf), further assessments and trainings in political participation will be conducted in collaboration with Georgia's Central Election Commission and in partnership with the Public Movement “Multinational Georgia”. ECMI Caucasus plans to observe election participation through its election observatory and on the election day in Kvareli – the same district with many smaller minorities as at parliamentary elections in 2012 to compare minority participation in electoral processes.

The Ministry of Education and Science will support language and minorities in designing a programme for the revitalisation of small minority languages in formal education as part of the new national strategy on tolerance and minority integration 2015-2020. Although Georgia is still discussing signing and ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Ministry of Education and the Council of National Minorities agreed on the need to bring small minority languages such as Udi, Avar, Kurmandji, Assyrian, Chechen and Ossetian back to school. The languages are under the threat of disappearance among its speakers in Georgia and require the development of respective curricula and teaching materials. ECMI will assist with the drafting of policy for developing standards for speakers and non-speakers of these languages, as well as involvement of parents in the revitalisation process based on European experiences.



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ROMA INCLUSION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

The marginalisation of Roma communities is not a new issue for Georgia. For several years ECMI Caucasus has been supporting Roma in social inclusion and education, with a special effort on non-discriminative attitudes of wider communities and schools where Roma live. With the prize for tolerance and inclusion given to a school director of one of Kobuleti schools, this achievement will be used as a best practice example for other schools and local authorities with compact settlement of Roma. In a series of trainings and roundtables, parents, teachers and school councils will be introduced to measures necessary for changing attitudes and creating a tolerant and inclusive school environment. Particularly with the adoption of anti-discrimination laws there will be an opportunity to monitor the efficiency of the eradication of prejudice towards Roma.

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CENSUS DATA – A NEW REALITY OF POPULATION DEVELOPMENT?

The preliminary general results of the population census conducted in Georgia at the end of 2014 have been announced in mid-2015 and one of the unexpected results is a population decline from 4.5 mill reported in 2014 general statistics to 3.7 mill. Further data are expected to be available in April 2016 including data on minority population. ECMI Caucasus will seek access to these data to conduct analysis and research related to the changes in the ethnic, linguistic and religious composition of the population. A survey related to labour migration conducted in 2015 (forthcoming as a working paper) revealed strong migratory processes from minority regions. This will have implications not only for the protection and promotion of minority rights in key areas of minority inclusion – education, participation and local governance – but also in the dimension of integration.

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IMPLEMENTING HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS IN GEORGIA

In November 2015 Georgia has been examined through the UN Universal Periodic Review system. Prior to this 2nd cycle examination, ECMI Caucasus in cooperation with six other NGOs submitted an alternative report and presented it in Geneva. Following the recommendations of the UPR review and recommendations of the EU Association Agreement review, ECMI Caucasus will assist in the development of a comprehensive implementation plan of initiatives, activities and measures related to effective progress in furthering Georgia's Human Rights Strategy and to fulfillment of commitments related to visa liberalisation requirements.



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REGIONAL PROGRAMME SOUTH CAUCASUS

SOUTH CAUCASUS OMBUDSPERSON INSTITUTIONS NETWORK Best practice model for regional collaboration

With the adoption of Anti-Discrimination legislation in Georgia and Azerbaijan and similar legislation on the way in Armenia, the three Ombudsman institutions expressed interest and a wish not only to collaborate on the development of coherent implementation mechanisms for anti-discrimination in their respective countries, but also to make the mechanisms comprehensive across the region. In addition, growing interest and experience sharing with Ombuds institutions and Anti-discrimination commissions in other EaP countries has been discussed in 2015. The work of Ombudsperson institutions in the post-Soviet countries requires specific approaches and competencies in multiple discrimination issues. The Georgian ombudsman can share its experiences in gender and minority issues through an already-functioning reporting mechanism and extending its best practices to colleagues in other EaP countries.

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CROSS REGIONAL PROGRAMMES: EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP MINORITY NETWORK Extension of implementation

Despite planned completion of the programme in 2015, the minority networks requested an extension of the project into 2016, due to requirements of the EU Association Agreements of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The project, led by Minority Rights Group Europe, operates in six countries of the EaP – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – and has established a primary network of minority organisations and networks of local organisations. Currently 95 organisations have joined the network, sharing experiences and issues related to minority protection and promotion in their respective countries. The constraints in Azerbaijan and partly in Belarus related to elections (presidential and respectively parliamentary) have limited the scale of implementation for trainings and piloting of collaboration between local authorities and CSOs. The extended activities in 2016 will be targeting closer cooperation with local authorities, and EaP National Platforms of civil society organisations that are still insufficiently engaging minorities in implementing EU policies at the local levels.

It will aim at firming the results achieved and bring the sustainability of local governance beyond strategies, and at strengthening of minority governance in the EaP countries by implementing models and examples of successful minority participation and promotion of minority rights and democracy.



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CAUCASUS



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ECMI KOSOVO

2015 was a period of major social and political events in Kosovo. Against this unstable but challenging background, ECMI Kosovo continued to be an independent and impartial actor in addressing issues of concern to minority communities in Kosovo. Through its 25 strong staff from diverse backgrounds and its two offices, in Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovica North, the organisation has played a key role in progress in Kosovo in the field of minority rights from the institutional and political to the daily-life level.

This year, we launched the *Kosovo Communities Issues Monitor* which, for the first time, monitors, analyses, and provides recommendations on developments and incidents related to the position of minority communities in Kosovo. The Monitor particularly seeks to report on incidents of a controversial nature, within the framework of international and domestic minority rights legislation. Further, ECMI Kosovo has continued to provide a series of in-depth analyses aimed at informing the wider public and policy makers on the on-going developments related to the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities, as well as other issues related to the Brussels Dialogue Process between Kosovo and Serbia. Our Monitor and public policy briefs have been received positively and contributed to shaping the debate on these issues.

During 2015, we also stepped up our social media outreach activities, which resulted in an increase of 1000 “likes” on our Facebook page compared to November 2014. This success is compounded by an active Twitter account and a steadily growing number of stakeholders receiving our external communications through *MailChimp*. Consequently, donors, beneficiaries and the general public are made increasingly aware of our achievements.



In addition to analysing and monitoring the position of minority communities in Kosovo, we have implemented a number of important projects, focusing on improving access to employment and education for minority communities, improving the institutional capacities of municipalities to promote and protect the rights of minority communities, addressing and preventing gender-based violence, and promoting cultural tolerance among Kosovo youth from various communities.

We launched a number of new projects during 2015, including the implementation of a European Union-funded project aimed at providing support and assistance to Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian community members engaged in collecting recyclable waste to improve and enhance their self-employment opportunities in Kosovo's labour market.

Towards the end of the year, we also started two new projects funded by the US Embassy in Pristina and USAID; the overall aim of the US Embassy-funded project is to provide a series of trainings, study visits to multi-ethnic municipalities and locations in Kosovo and to share experiences and celebrate diversity. The USAID-funded project aims to provide support to grassroots civil society organisations to increase their capacities to monitor local authorities.

Drawing on our long-standing commitment to tackle discrimination faced by Roma students in the education sector, we joined the European Roma Rights Centre in a research project aimed at identifying cases of segregation of Roma students in Serbian-curriculum schools in Kosovo. Our engagement in this under-researched area includes field visits to locations in all regions of Kosovo where our project team collects testimonies from the community and school officials.

During the past year, we have also continued some of our ongoing projects. The project "Empowering Minority Communities against Gender-Based Violence," funded by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, completed its second, and final, year. This project provides legal and economic empowerment of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Serb women in four municipalities with the purpose of strengthening adequate gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and treatment services and to address the extreme socioeconomic vulnerability of the women of these communities. With these objectives in mind, we have organised skills training for beneficiaries, roundtables with women, psychological sessions for beneficiaries and paralegals, and workshop discussions with men, and implemented curricula on women's rights in high schools in the municipalities in question.

With the financial support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo, we have continued to provide support and advocate for a solution to the ongoing problem of the lack of recognition of diplomas issued by the Serbian parallel education system in Kosovo by Kosovo authorities. Our work at this stage has consisted in trying to mediate a technical solution, pending a political agreement, which will allow diploma holders to apply for jobs at Kosovo public institutions. Such a mechanism has been agreed upon by all sides after an intense period of negotiation and mediation. The mechanism is expected to come into force during the beginning of next year. This should be a first step towards the harmonisation of Serbian-language education in Kosovo.

Also in the domain of education, we have continued to implement an UNICEF-funded project which supports the establishment and functioning of teams bringing together municipal authorities and school representatives with the purpose of retaining and preventing children from dropping out of school in nine municipalities throughout Kosovo.

Over the year, ECMI Kosovo has continued to implement its long-standing project, supported by the Finnish Embassy in Kosovo, in providing assistance to ten Serb-majority municipalities in areas of local economic development and decentralisation. A number of milestones have been achieved in 2015, including but not limited to updated Local Economic Development strategies adopted by the municipalities and their associated Action Plans, issue-based dialogue forums between municipal officials, members of municipal assemblies and vulnerable and marginalised groups, and the implementation of a capacity-building programme on professional and entrepreneurial skills for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

With the support of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Office of the Language Commissioner, for the fifth consecutive year we have provided beginners' and advanced level language courses in the official languages of Kosovo, Albanian and Serbian, to municipal officials in thirteen municipalities throughout Kosovo.

These projects give a good impression of the various domains in which we are active. We are convinced that these projects have major impact at the institutional level – where they raise the awareness and capacities of institutions to promote and protect minority rights – and in the daily lives of members of minority communities in Kosovo.

As we look forward to continuing and expanding our work in 2016, we would like to thank our long-standing trusted partners who have supported our work throughout so many years, especially the Government of Finland, the Government of Norway, the European Union Office in Kosovo, the US Embassy, USAID, UNICEF, OSCE HCNM, UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the Kosovo Language Commissioner, as well as other associates and partners who have made our success possible.





IMPROVING MINORITY COMMUNITIES' ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN SERBIAN LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Aim and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to propose and support a solution that will enable citizens of the Republic of Kosovo who have obtained degrees issued by the University of Mitrovica North (UMN) to apply for employment in public institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

Background

The UMN is the only Serbian-language University in Kosovo, serving all Serbian-speaking communities (Serbs, Gorani, Bosniaks, and Roma). The university operates under the legal framework of the Republic of Serbia as part of the Serbian higher education system and is neither licensed by the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology nor accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency. This project tackles three issues related to this situation, namely: the obstacles to public employment faced by Serbian-speaking communities due to the non-recognition of their university diplomas; the lack of a long-term plan for the recognition and integration of the UMN within Kosovo's higher education system; and the absence of communication and cooperation between UMN and Kosovo authorities and other higher education institutions.

Activities in 2016

During 2016, the project will focus on implementing the ad-hoc mechanism for certification of UMN degrees that was established in the fall of 2015 with the purpose of allowing graduates to apply for jobs with public institutions in Kosovo. This includes supporting the establishment and raising the capacity of stakeholders involved in the process, including the Commission for the Verification of UMN Diplomas within the Ministry of Education and special offices which will receive individual applications from graduates in the municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North and Graçanicë/Gračanica. In addition, ECMI Kosovo will be responsible for the verification of diplomas by the UMN. ECMI Kosovo will establish the conditions and capacities for the initiation of a negotiation process between relevant stakeholders on the accreditation and licensing of UMN by the Kosovo Government and its integration in the national higher education system through the production of a comprehensive roadmap.

Finally, the non-institutional component of the project aims to build a trust-based environment, facilitating communication and cooperation among the involved actors. Linkages and discussion will be enhanced among the central-level institutions, municipal bodies, academic environment and civil society and between UMN and the University of Prishtinë/Priština.

Funding Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Timeframe

April 2014 – April 2016



Contact:
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KOSOVO

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH FOR ALL NEWLY-ESTABLISHED MUNICIPALITIES IN KOSOVO (TSIGAN)

Aim and Objectives

The goal of the TSIGaN project is to promote strong, effective, accountable and transparent local self-government for Kosovo Serbs, triggering sustainable and inclusive growth as a means to improve inter-ethnic relations and to contribute to a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo as envisaged in the Ahtisaari plan.

The project seeks to increase the capacities of local governments to fully and effectively implement their competencies attributed by the Ahtisaari plan, by the Constitution of Kosovo and by the Law on Local Self-Government, in order to establish growth-oriented policies at municipal level for the benefit of the local communities. The project also encourages active participation and engagement of all local communities and vulnerable and marginalised groups (VMGs) in the decision-making process, in social life, and in local economic development.

Background

The decentralisation process has thus far re-engaged the Serb community within Kosovo institutions, but important socio-economic issues persist. Hence the project aims to address the pressing need for better socio-economic perspectives, more job creation, the empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups, and improved social cohesion. It also seeks to reach northern Kosovo, where the 19 April agreement between Pristina and Belgrade and the upcoming local elections open a new era. The TSIGaN project extension will promote strong, effective, accountable and transparent

local self-government in Serb-majority municipalities, triggering sustainable and inclusive growth as a means to strengthen reconciliation and to contribute to a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo as envisaged in the Ahtisaari plan. The project will cover the Serb-majority municipalities of Gračanica/Graçanicë, Klokot/Klllokot, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Parteš / Partesh and Ranilug/Ranillug, Štrpce / Shtërpçë, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zveqan).

Activities in 2016

- Training for women in government on development of strategies and communication.
- Reinforcing the economic attractiveness of territories and promoting local tourism and local agriculture.
- Updating the Local Economic Development strategies adopted by the municipalities and their associated Action Plans.
- Improving the dialogue between central and local governments through issue-based discussions.
- Establishing issue-based dialogue forums between municipal officials, members of municipal assemblies and vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Capacity-building programme on professional and entrepreneurial skills for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Funding

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Timeframe

2014 – 2016



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ENHANCING ACCESS TO AND RETENTION IN EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN – PHASE II

Aim and objectives

The project aims to enhance the access to education and retention in education for vulnerable and disadvantaged children through strengthening the capacities of municipal officials and teams for prevention of and response to school drop-outs and non-registration at school and municipal levels. The project has been implemented for 21 months in six municipalities, and expands in its second phase to three additional municipalities.

Background

The Government of Kosovo is committed to developing and implementing inclusive policies, pursuing the establishment of an inclusive education system with equal opportunities and quality education for all children in the Republic of Kosovo. However, despite the strong legal basis, children from vulnerable and marginalised groups – especially Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, children with disabilities and repatriated children – continue to face significant challenges in their education, with the issue of drop-outs and out-of-school children being particularly alarming. Presently, both the relevant municipal government institutions and the drop-out prevention and response teams lack adequate capacities and knowledge to fully implement the legislative and policy framework aimed to reduce numbers of out-of-school children and school drop-outs. Therefore, ECMI Kosovo will support municipal officials and the drop-out prevention and response teams in nine target municipalities in addressing the issue of out-of-school children in a systematic and coordinated manner and thus ensuring the right to education for all children in Kosovo.

Activities in 2016

- Support six municipalities with the implementation and review of the municipal action plans aimed at increasing access to and retention in education and their extension for 2016;
- Support the development of the three new municipal action plans to increase access to and retention in education in the municipalities
- Support the Teams for Prevention and Response to School Drop-outs and non-registrations at school and municipal levels in nine municipalities in identifying, recording, managing cases, and monitoring children at risk of drop-out and children out-of-school
- Document best practices in reducing the number of out-of-school children and advocate for their institutionalisation

Funding

UNICEF

Timeframe

June 2015 – May 2016



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KOSOVO

INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA, ASHKALI, AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES THROUGH A RECYCLING COLLECTIVE

Aim and Objectives

The project “Increasing Employment of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities through a Recycling Collective” aims to increase self-employment opportunities for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo through strengthening and unifying recycling initiatives already present in these communities.

Background

Throughout ECMI Kosovo’s previous work in the field, these communities have vocalised the need for social inclusion and economic development, including greater access to employment possibilities. As Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are some of the most disadvantaged in Kosovo society, employability and self-employment initiatives are imperative to increase their livelihood. Waste collectors belonging to these communities work in particularly harsh, inhumane conditions, and are entitled to sanitary conditions. The project will consult with waste collectors so their needs, concerns and experiences will be integrated into the design and implementation of the project’s actions and activities.

The main Target Group is unemployed members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who will benefit from the action through increased opportunities for employment and improved working environment conditions. Final Beneficiaries are to be Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian

communities, citizens of selected municipalities, and Kosovo society at large. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities will benefit through the increased opportunities for employment, which will increase family incomes and overall living conditions. The citizens of selected municipalities will also profit from this action through the recycling aspect, which will promote an environmentally friendly atmosphere within these municipalities. Finally, Kosovo society at large will gain from this initiative, since the employment and livelihood of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities will be increased, leading to a more inclusive, multi-ethnic state and decreased vulnerability of some of the most frequently marginalised ethnic groups in Kosovo.

Activities in 2016

During 2016, the project will focus on supporting and strengthening the informal waste collectors belonging to the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, as well as the association of informal waste collectors Collective Recycling Initiative Kosovo (CRIK), established in September 2015 within this project by ECMI Kosovo, through structural and programmatic support. This includes, but is not limited to, training informal waste collectors in access to resources, market conditions, and establishing linkages with recycling companies, as well as increasing their capacities to improve their livelihood in a safe and environmentally responsible way. The project will also



focus on providing support, including through the provision of equipment and supplies, to the association of informal waste collectors as it works on organising the informal waste collectors around the common goal of increasing self-employment and improving livelihoods. During 2016, the project will also focus on devising and implementing a campaign designed to raise the awareness of recycling among the general populace and to advocate and support environmentally-friendly initiatives within five target municipalities.

Specifically, the project will:

- Organise a series of trainings for beneficiaries designed to improve their skills and increase their capacities in effectively and safely collecting and selling recyclable waste.
- Support and strengthen the association of informal waste collectors CRIK through the provision of necessary tools and equipment, as it works on organising the informal waste collectors around a common goal of increased incomes, better representation at the municipal and central level, and inclusion in the wider debate on recycling initiatives in Kosovo.
- Devise and implement an awareness-raising campaign promoting recycling and environmentally-friendly measures aimed at increasing recycling initiatives and showcasing the positive impact informal waste collection has on the environment and in the economy.
- Organise a workshop to present and discuss project findings and possible sustainability measures with municipal authorities, garbage collection companies, recycling companies, and representatives from the Ministry for Environmental and Spatial Planning, site managers from waste centres, the board of the Association for Waste Recycling, and project beneficiaries.

Funding

This project is an EU funded project managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo

Timeframe

14 December 2014 – 14 December 2016

STRENGTHENING THE WATCHING ROLE OF MINORITY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN KOSOVO

Aim and Objectives

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the 'watchdog' role of minority civil society in ensuring transparency and accountability of public authorities. Participating CSOs will directly benefit from capacity building activities through a training program (20-30 participants), including practical, on-the-job coaching, as well as practical experience in conducting monitoring, evaluation and advocacy. The final beneficiaries will be minority communities in Kosovo, who will profit from a strengthened civil society and improved accountability and transparency in governance on minority issues. In addition to capacity building trainings for minority CSOs, the project will produce two monitoring and evaluation reports over 1.5 years in the form of a practical handbook for the use of grassroots CSOs to implement.

Background

Currently, governance on minority issues in Kosovo suffers from a lack of accountability and transparency, with minority civil society playing a weak role in this process due to their low capacity, experience and resources. On paper, the legal framework and institutions created for the protection of minority communities in Kosovo are very comprehensive. However, to date there is little evidence that individuals are feeling the benefits of these laws and policies in their everyday lives. Sources continue to point to the unequal treatment of minorities across Kosovo society, from restricted access to essential services such as social security, health care and education to ongoing problems in accessing personal identification. There is thus an observable gap between Kosovo's legislative and institutional framework for the protection of minority rights and the actual situation facing minority communities in Kosovo. The civil society sector should be playing an active role in monitoring government activities and holding it accountable to its performance, but is often plagued by uneven and weak capacities to play this 'watchdog' function. In spite of plans to formulate a more constructive approach and collaboration between government and civil society, several challenges thus remain to ensure that civil society can effectively fulfil its role as a key actor in the development and strengthening of a pluralistic and accountable democracy in Kosovo.

Activities in 2016

Develop a monitoring and evaluation system on the implementation of minority rights by local authorities to be implemented by grassroots CSOs. A capacity building program will be developed and implemented to strengthen minority CSOs' ability to effectively monitor, evaluate and advocate for minority rights implementation by public authorities.

Funding

Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution, a USAID funded Program

Timeframe

October 2015 – March 2017

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DIVERSITY IS OPPORTUNITY: PROMOTING TOLERANCE AS A MEANS OF RECONCILIATION AND DEMOCRATISATION

Aim and Objectives

The project goal is to promote inter-ethnic and cultural tolerance as a prerequisite to enhance inter-ethnic dialogue and bring about reconciliation in Kosovo. The proposed action is to bring young people from Albanian, Serbian, Roma and Bosniak communities in Mitrovica/ë North and Gračanica/Graçanicë closer through trainings, creative workshops and study visits promoting values of cultural tolerance and democracy. In a formal and informal manner, young people will be able to present themselves and their communities to young people from other communities and, at the same time, learn about the others. Taking into consideration that Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, such efforts are paramount for breaking the barriers between ethnic communities, thus contributing to meaningful and sustainable conflict resolution and reconciliation, and the creation of a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo society.

Background

Kosovo hosts a very heterogeneous multi-ethnic society, where communities live in both geographically mixed and dispersed regions. Its well-being depends on interethnic tolerance and understanding. However, the ethnic barriers between communities remain huge as a result of the memory of the 1990s conflict and the continuing political tensions. These ethnic divisions are cemented amongst the youth in Kosovo mainly as a result of the extremely low contact between youth from different communities and the lack of possibilities for becoming acquainted with values of diversity and tolerance, either through school or social activities. Young people are often completely unaware of the cultural heritage, traditions and history of other communities.

Activities in 2016

Organise two-day training on minority rights in international and Kosovo legislation, to be held in Gračanica/Graçanicë, with visits to relevant central level institutions. A series of workshops will be held with the aim that the participants make a reportage related to their personal experiences with cultural diversity in Kosovo. The reportage will be published online (ECMI Kosovo website, Twitter and Facebook) and through other media outlets in order to raise awareness among a broad audience on the existing ethnic distance between young people of different communities in Kosovo, and how cultural tolerance and openness can bridge the existing ethnic gap. Closing ceremony in Gračanica/Graçanicë, where the project will be presented and the reportage will be first shown to the audience, in the presence of all participants.

Funding

US Embassy Pristina Democracy Commission Small Grants Program.

Timeframe 1 September 2015 – 31 March 2016



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KOSOVO



FLENSBURG



Dr Hanna Vasilevich
Project Research Associate
Programme Manager, EPP

FLENSBURG

ECMI EASTERN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME (EPP)

The inter-regional programme covering the three South Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and the three Eastern European countries (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) will build on the experiences gained by the ECMI in Georgia and the Western Balkans. Through trainings and mainstreaming efforts, stakeholders will be supported in establishing minority focal points as an integrated part of the functioning of the institutions and as efficient units that may take appropriate action on behalf of equality bodies in relation to national minorities. The action will further enable relevant national structures to engage in networking and cross-regional collaboration and take advantage of knowledge transfer based on good European practices. The equality bodies will be supported in mainstreaming reporting on minority issues in their regular state reports and in elaborating and publishing specific minority issues reports.

This project will seek to include minority issues systematically into the competencies of national and regional anti-discrimination bodies, such as Public Defenders and Ombudsperson institutions as well as complaint bodies throughout the two regions – South Caucasus and Eastern Europe, with the aim of establishing permanent structures within existing institutions that specialise in combating discrimination through minority rights. A major aim is to create a network to encourage knowledge transfer and support regional approaches.

The ECMI Eastern Partnership Programme (EPP) was launched in 2014. Over the next three years (2014-2017), the Programme will be implemented in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine thanks to the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.



NATIONAL MINORITIES AND ETHNOPOLITICAL ISSUES: BELARUS · MOLDOVA · UKRAINE

Aims and Objectives

The goal of the EPP is to enhance governmental administration and to promote state policy aimed at the provision of social equality and improvement of interaction between a state and national minorities in the Eastern border region of the EU in accordance with the best practices of the European countries including the Eastern Partnership itself. The EPP has the following objectives:

- Dissemination and transfer of information and know-how and, consequently, capacity building of the state bodies responsible for diversity management and equality along with the advisory bodies on minority issues.
- Establishment of interactions between governmental representatives, ethnic communities and experts through joint discussions, trainings, analytical work and networking.
- Common international critical discussions, understanding of gained experience, the analysis of capacities of adjustment to the conditions of the EU Eastern Borderland, and elaboration of recommendations, information and education materials.

EPP Methodology

The EPP covers two thematic streams: National institutions in pursuit of equality and diversity policies (including Non-discrimination and Organisational capacity-building) and Minority Consultative Bodies (Participation and Consultative Bodies). Each of the thematic streams of seminars includes main meetings (6 in each series) conducted in the capitals of the project countries and additional round tables (12 in each series) in district/regional centres with a narrowed thematic focus. Two big thematic conferences will be held in the end of the project and will demonstrate the results of the project and the elaborated recommendations.

Activities planned for 2016:

- Seminars in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova on two thematic streams: 1/ Non-discrimination and Organisational capacity-building and 2/ Participation and Consultative Bodies.
- Six block-seminars in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine
- Establishment of cross-regional networks between both public and private organisations
- Development of new public initiatives aimed at minority-related legislation will be encouraged

Timeframe 2014 – 2017

Donor

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

ECMI REGIONAL MINORITY ROUNDTABLE

Every year the ECMI invites the local national minority organisations from the Danish-German border region to a roundtable discussion on a topic which has affected all of them in the past year and which is seen as relevant for understanding minority issues and minority politics.

The ECMI Regional Minority Roundtable 2016 will invite the relevant minority organisations to discuss and jointly analyse the events and developments in the area of minority issues which took place in the border region in 2014.

ECMI NON-RESIDENT SRA MEETING

An important part of the ECMI's research capacity is the non-resident Senior Research Associate Network (SRAN), consisting of younger academic colleagues attached to university departments across Europe.

This is a body of scholars working in different fields who have a research interest in minority issues. It is a multidisciplinary body of experts which complements ECMI's core team of researchers by being integrated in the relevant research clusters as external ad hoc advisers and sparring partners for resident researchers.

Members of the SRAN participate in the ECMI's research projects and contribute to our publications. The SRAN supports our action projects and provides expertise and capacity building for our trainings and technical assistance contracts.

ECMI ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Advisory Council (AC) is a 15 member body of eminent experts in the area of minority studies appointed by the ECMI Executive Board in consultation with the founders of the Centre. The overall aim of the AC's support to the ECMI is to help ensure the Centre's position as a leading research and competence institution in Europe in the area of minority issues and as a primary sparring partner for governments, international governmental organisations, and the European Union in this field.

The members of the AC support the ECMI mission by establishing contacts with persons, institutions and organisations, by assuming duties of representation and promotion of the activities of the ECMI to European institutions and in specialist circles.

The AC is thus seen as an added value to the ECMI's combined research and competence capacity, as well as to the Centre's international networking capacity. The purpose of the AC is therefore to support the ECMI in its efforts to fulfil its mandate as stated in the Centre's mission statement. The tenure of each Council is three years. For membership and chairperson, please refer to the ECMI website.

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ECMI SUMMER SCHOOL

Minority Rights Regime in Europe

In these times of increased interest in diversity issues and diversity management, the interdisciplinary ECMI Summer School will address the current situation in Europe, exploring its impact on national minorities. Introducing the framework of the Minority Rights Regime in Europe from the perspective of international relations, politics and culture, the course will critically examine the extent to which national and EU institutions' mechanisms are able to face new challenges while protecting and promoting minority rights. It will build upon existing knowledge to yield innovative approaches and new ideas, with a focus on diversity management as a conflict-prevention mechanism. This topic will be approached through a thematic but also chronological perspective, analysing the relevant historical background, discussing the present state and envisioning future patterns as an outcome of the discussions and workshops during the course. Special attention will be paid to the experience of the Danish-German border region.

The intensive programme will include academic lectures, open discussions and interactive seminars organised in five thematic modules:

- Theory, History & Legal Framework
- Ethnic Conflict & Nationalism
- Politics & Minority Rights
- Minorities & Border Regions
- Diversity, Culture & Education

Participants will be introduced to various case studies and will enhance their knowledge on these issues, and will have the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice by discussing future possible scenarios and solutions. Upon successful completion of the course, the participants will be awarded certificates.

The summer school is aimed at Master and PhD students, young researchers and professionals.

Dates September 2016

Application Procedure

Please consult the ECMI web-page in March 2016.
Tentative deadline for applications: 15 May 2016.



Contact:
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Maj-Britt Risbjerg Hansen
Head of Secretariat and
Project coordinator

ECMI INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

For interested students and researchers, ECMI HQ in Flensburg, ECMI Kosovo and ECMI Caucasus offer the possibility of unpaid internships on pre-agreed research topics or projects. Additional information about the application procedure and the internship opportunities for all the offices can be obtained from the ECMI Secretariat.

ECMI TRAINING COURSES

ECMI offers tailor-made training courses for academia and professionals from a range of fields: human rights, development work, humanitarian work, education, law and law enforcement, social work, healthcare, and media. The courses are designed to serve the needs of NGOs, public institutions, governmental agencies, international agencies and organisations, and pay particular attention to topics like programming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and international and regional human rights mechanisms.

ECMI provides in-house trainings on minority rights and related issues on demand. The trainings can include various elements of the standard courses, compiled to adjust to particular needs. ECMI delivers trainings in English but also in a number of European languages.

List of courses

General courses

- Minority Rights in Theory and Practice (offered also as an e-course)
- Minority Politics in Practice
- Minorities and Conflict
- Minority Governance
- Minority Rights Framework
- Mainstreaming Minority Issues in Governance
- Mainstreaming Minority Issues in Development



Country-based courses

- Minority issues in the Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova)
- Minority issues in the Balkans
- Minority issues in the Caucasus
- Minority issues in Europe

Full description of the courses is available online at www.ecmi.de/trainings/
For more information or to place a training request, please contact ECMI Secretariat.

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ECMI M.A. SEMINAR “THE EUROPEAN MINORITY REGIME”

Description

Minorities have been part of European history and politics since the middle of the 16th century, often seen as obstacles to state-building, and later to nation-building. In the 20th century, personal identity became a public domain item and minority groups emerged and formed on the basis of identity and difference. Nevertheless, in the interconnected societies of the early 21st century, minorities are still seen as a threat to social cohesion.

Aims and Objectives

The multi-disciplinary Seminar aims to provide in-depth knowledge and robust skills on the basis of which the participants would develop an informed understanding of minority issues in the 21st century. Minority issues are examined from the perspectives of political science, law, political theory, political sociology, anthropology, history, and cultural studies. The specific objectives of the Seminar are:

1. To place minority issues in the wider context of European history/politics and the practice of European governance;
2. To enable understanding, critical analysis, and evaluation of contemporary debates concerning minorities;
3. To promote the political and ethical implications of academic research on minority issues.

Seminar Output and General Outline

The target group of the Seminar are graduate students who are interested in a career in national or international institutions and NGOs, as well as students who wish to continue their education in the social sciences or humanities.

Since 2011, ECMI has been delivering the Seminar at the Europa-Universität Flensburg (EUF) on annual basis. The Seminar is divided in three parts, each one further deepening the acquired knowledge:

Part I: History, International Law and Relations

- The emergence of a minority protection regime
- European international law and inter-governmental institutions
- Inter-state relations and European integration

Part II: Concepts and Theories

- Culture, language and ethnicity
- Conflict and unity
- Ethnographic and anthropological approaches to minority issues
- Theories of nationalism
- Late modernity

Part III: Politics and Policy

- Conflict mitigation
- Democracy, participation and empowerment
- Minority education
- Diversity management

Partner:

Europa-Universität Flensburg (EUF), Master Programme in European Studies



Contact:
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ECMI LIBRARY & PUBLICATIONS

The ECMI Library is an independent collection of books, journals, and grey literature of more than 3,000 items covering many aspects of minority issues. Every month, a complete list of ECMI Library acquisitions is available.

The highly specialised collection offers public access to a variety of materials in more than twenty languages on inter-ethnic relations, language and cultural diversity issues and ethnic conflict in Europe.

The Library is especially strong in the area of minority protection with regards to international law. It also includes a useful reference section and a considerable number of published and unpublished reports dealing with the subjects mentioned above.

Activities in 2016:

- Acquisition of 500 books on topics of inter-ethnic relations, language and cultural diversity issues and ethnic conflict in Europe
- Planned participation in launches of ECMI publications

JOURNAL ON ETHNOPOLITICS AND MINORITY ISSUES IN EUROPE



The Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe (JEMIE) is a peer-reviewed electronic journal edited under the auspices of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI). JEMIE is a multi-disciplinary journal that addresses minority issues across a broad range of studies, such as ethno-politics, democratisation, conflict management, good governance, participation, minority issues and minority rights. It is devoted to comparative analyses of current developments in minority-majority relations in the wider Europe. We also welcome contributions with non-European perspectives on ethno-politics in the wider Europe and on minority issues in Europe in a global context.

Within this broad framework the journal invites submissions in the following areas:

- Theoretical and methodological approaches to minority issues in Europe
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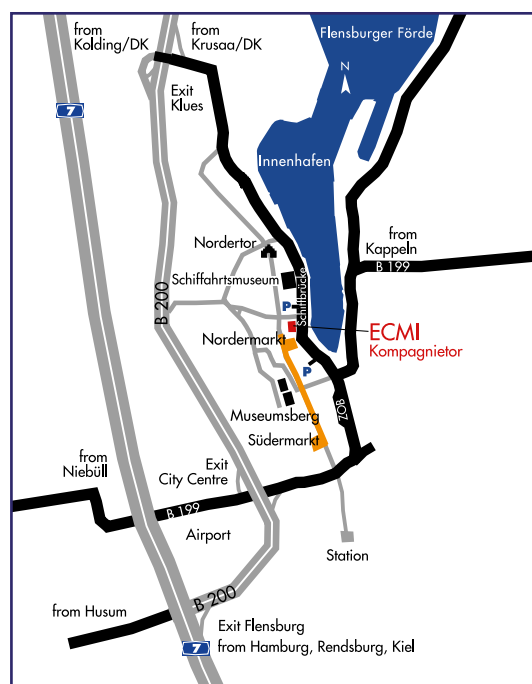


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