

## Minority Rights and Development Processes in South-East Europe

### Background and context

The human rights system consists of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, which are indivisible and interdependent. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, religion and association with a national minority is a key basis of human rights protection enshrined in international law.<sup>1</sup> Effective participation of minorities in economic, social, cultural and public life is one of the key internationally agreed standards of minority protection.<sup>2</sup> However, increasing evidence suggests that members of minority groups are more often poorer and excluded from participation in development processes than members of majority communities in a given country.<sup>3</sup>

In South-East Europe, poverty among minorities is widespread and they experience exclusion from the social and economic life of their countries. This is in the context of increasing poverty of whole societies. The countries of former Yugoslavia are recovering from a decade of devastating wars. In ethnically divided communities, often minorities are further excluded from employment and access to education because of explicit or hidden discrimination, or because they do not have ties with the decision-makers. All countries in South-East Europe, with the exception of Greece, are suffering from the effects of transition to market economies. Unemployment is high and safety nets are weak. Spontaneous privatization has benefited few, and minorities have benefited even less than majorities. Minorities were among the first to be made redundant when enterprises were cost-cutting during transition.

In countries such as Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, human development indicators are among the lowest in Europe and poverty is acute. Roma across the region suffer from poverty; lack of access to public services, including quality education and adequate health care; long-term unemployment; and systemic discrimination. Although reliable data disaggregated by ethnicity is lacking, evidence suggests that minorities often live in the least developed parts of their country and rarely participate in decisions about their communities' and countries' development.

Opportunities for inclusive and effective development in South-East Europe do exist both in terms of funding and

policy development. Stability and Association Agreements (SAAs) between South-East European countries and the European Commission (EC) require states to act to eliminate discrimination and protect minority rights, to overcome economic exclusion and poverty among the Roma, to create conditions for sustainable refugee return; SAAs also stress the importance of inclusive regional development. Considerable external funding from the EC, World Bank, United Nations (UN) agencies and bilateral donors is allocated to South-East Europe. Concrete steps to include minorities should be taken when external donors develop country assistance strategies, when South-East European governments put together development plans, within activities of the Stability Pact of South-East Europe, and in the context of EC SAA processes or World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Policies and practices of domestic and international development actors that ensure participation of all groups in development processes will help to reduce poverty across South-East Europe and further reconciliation processes.

As part of ongoing work to improve minority protection and enhance dialogue between communities, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) and Inter-Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation (IEI) organized a two-day interactive workshop on Minority Rights and Development Processes in South-East Europe<sup>4</sup> in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 22–3 March 2002. All participants had experience of working on development issues; most came from the region; a few worked in the region for international organizations and development agencies.

The objectives of the seminar were: (1) to develop strategies to address practical problems regarding participation of minority communities in all stages of the development project cycle; (2) to exchange visions and practices in mediation between institutions and marginalized communities in the process of formulating and applying development programmes targeted at marginalized communities; (3) to link local realities with national policies and international human rights standards; (4) to share good practice in approaches to development.

Participants identified and prioritized the following key issues for in-depth discussion:

- recognition of minorities in relation to access to development;
- access/discrimination in the development process, including participation in decision-making processes;
- implementation of programmes to ensure they effectively address minority needs and protect human rights.

The issue of special programmes targeting at the most marginalized groups and the poorest regions was also discussed in detail.

## Key issues

### Recognition of minorities

The right to self-identification is enshrined in international law (Framework Convention on National Minorities [FCNM], Art. 3). This right has individual and collective dimensions. Each person has the right to identify themselves with a minority group (or not), and each group has the right to decide whether it would like to preserve its own group identity, including customs, traditions, language and religion. In its General Comment 23 on Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the UN Committee on Human Rights (UNCHR) has stressed that the existence of a group is based on objective criteria and the right to self-identification, and that it is not up to the state to decide whether a minority group exists. Despite this, minorities face problems with being recognized by their states across South-East Europe.

Participants stressed that recognition by the state that particular minority groups do exist is key in relation to development programmes because:

- development programmes cannot be targeted at a particular group or their impact evaluated with regard to a particular group if the government does not recognize that the group exists;
- recognition is a pre-condition to participation; and
- recognition is necessary to enable collection of disaggregated data on economic and social indicators.

Lack of reliable data disaggregated by ethnicity on economic and social development indicators is a big problem across South-East Europe.<sup>5</sup> Such data is necessary to improve monitoring of performance of government and other development actors, and to begin to know the extent of poverty among different groups in the country so that programmes to reach the poorest can be effectively developed with their participation.

Effective privacy legislation and data protection measures must also be put in place. People must feel comfortable to openly self-identify with a group. For example, Roma have often been reluctant to self-identify as Roma because of the experience and fear of discrimination. It is

increasingly accepted that the numbers of Roma recorded by censuses are inaccurate, and reliable NGO or other estimates have to be taken into account.<sup>6</sup> This issue also affects other communities. Across the countries of former Yugoslavia, the problem of statistics is compounded by inaccurate data still based, in many cases, on 1991 censuses. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro carried out censuses in 2001. However, many people have yet to return to their pre-war homes. Documentation of poverty among the displaced, refugees and returnees is particularly lacking in countries of former Yugoslavia.

Participants stressed that while disaggregated data was important, care must be taken to ensure that the right to self-identification and the right to privacy are respected. In addition to adequate legislation and redress mechanisms, employing minority people in data collection (whether through censuses or for development projects) and explaining what the data is collected for could help to ensure that people feel able to self-identify openly.<sup>7</sup>

One participant stressed that international development agencies usually work in partnership with governments. So if a government refuses to acknowledge the existence of a minority group, external development agencies and donors cannot focus their programmes on that group or develop programmes with the participation of members of the group. However, development programmes often focus on the poorest regions, which are very often disproportionately inhabited by minority groups (e.g. in the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria, war-affected areas of Croatia and western Macedonia). Participants stressed that development actors can make their own observations of poverty among a particular group, and thus encourage the government concerned to recognize a group.

Participants also stressed that diversity within minority groups has to be considered, as some people, such as minority women, experience multiple forms of discrimination and multiple barriers to development. Some of these barriers can come from within the group, for example over access to education for girls in some patriarchal communities. The right to self-identification has to be respected by everyone, and this can be problematic within majority and minority communities.

### Access/discrimination

Non-discrimination is a basis for human rights protection, and is enshrined in the constitutions of all South-East European countries and in numerous international instruments, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racism (ICERD), ICCPR and ICESCR (International Convention on Economic and Social Rights), ratified by South-East European countries. In the context of economic and social provision,

non-discrimination includes targeting the poorest ethnic groups for development in order to diminish discriminatory effects of past practices and policies, and to diminish any differences in poverty levels among different ethnic groups.

Minorities have the right to 'effective participation in economic, social and public life, including in decisions that affect them' (FCNM, Art. 15). In the context of development, this includes both meaningful participation in the process and in the outcomes.<sup>8</sup> At a minimum, 'meaningful participation' implies wide consultation with minority communities at every stage of the development project cycle. However, in many cases, 'meaningful participation' means that the responsibility for the project from start to finish, including at the conceptual stage, is devolved to the community. Many participants stressed the importance of conducting needs assessments within minority communities in order to enable them to set their own priorities for development. This is simply not happening in South-East Europe.

Decision-making processes on allocating budgets are key to access to development and meaningful participation in decision-making. Minority access to decision-making on finances is problematic across South-East Europe; but some good practice exists at the local level. However, most relevant budget lines in South-East European countries are decided centrally, and neither minorities nor local authorities have a say.

A crucial barrier to development for minorities across South-East Europe is lack of access to credit. For example, it is very difficult for Roma to get credit from the banks as their possessions are often considered not good enough collateral. Refugees and people displaced as a result of wars also do not have collateral. In divided societies, decisions seem to depend on ethnicity; thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina returnees who are in a numerical minority in their locality are not likely to have access to employment or credit. Finally, minorities generally do not have ties with those who make decisions regarding credit. In the view of several participants (based on personal observation), if there were similar applications from clients of different ethnicities, the decision-makers would most often select the person from their own community – and the decision-makers are most often from the majority communities. Participants stressed the importance of developing clear and fair criteria for loans and monitoring performance both internally and externally. Institutions, such as equal opportunities commissions or financial ombudspersons, have an important role to play in external monitoring.

Participants stressed the importance of all development actors setting clear criteria for bidding for development projects, advertising widely, including providing information in minority-inhabited areas and in minority languages, and being transparent in decision-making

processes. Too often this is not the case. Several participants said that it is difficult for NGOs, especially those based outside capitals, to find out about project applications and criteria for grants distributed within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Some participants highlighted the difficulty when economic logic clashes with the need for social provision: people who have less experience of working because they have been excluded from the labour market might initially need more support or produce less.

### Implementation of programmes

Development and human rights have developed separately. However, in recent years the human rights approach to development has been gaining support. This approach has profound implications for development policy and practice:

- It makes human rights standards the guide to processes and outcomes for development.
- It puts human beings at the centre of development and empowers them to make 'rights' claims on governments regarding development issues.
- It puts the spotlight on international cooperation in development as a necessary pre-condition, indeed an obligation of states, in order to achieve universal fulfilment of human rights.

A number of bilateral and multilateral donors claim that they are adopting a combined approach. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works to secure the freedom and dignity of people, and to ensure participation and equality, and that it respects UN treaties in its own work.

Participants stressed that minority rights would need to be explicitly considered as part of a human rights approach.<sup>9</sup> Accountability is key: donors and development actors should ensure that human rights and minority rights are integrated into development processes and develop their own organizational policies on minorities, like the gender policies that exist in most organizations. These policies would consider the steps that need to be taken when designing, implementing and monitoring any programme, and include performance indicators.

In South-East Europe, international actors play a key role in development, but many of their personnel are not sufficiently aware of the context in which they work. Participants stressed that international donors should examine their own strategies, and South-East European countries' national development policies, and consider to what extent these take into account the needs of marginalized groups. Development actors and financial institutions should consider the ethnic make-up of the country when planning a programme, and build in mechanisms to ensure that minorities do participate.

Devolution of projects to localities and communities was seen as important, and participants stressed that often local/municipal development plans and projects are more appropriate than centrally drafted ones. This is because the drafters are more aware of the local situation and accountable to the local people, and there are more possibilities for meaningful participation of minorities in planning and delivery. However, devolved funds must be monitored by donors, and programmes evaluated by the implementing agency, donor agency and central government, if appropriate. This is especially important in areas where nationalist leaders are in power at the local level. Participants stressed that in planning and monitoring any programme, development actors should consider different sources of data, including data from minority organizations on their community's situation.

Development agencies have an important role to play in the provision of credit to persons who are not considered credit-worthy by financial institutions. Micro-credit schemes have proved viable in South-East Europe.<sup>10</sup> However, targeting the most marginalized for loans, micro-finance schemes, and small and medium enterprise (SME) grants might not be sufficient in areas of very high unemployment and poverty. When the Swedish government provided grants and loans for SMEs in Vukovar, Croatia, it was difficult for people to start viable businesses and repay the loans because there is so little economic activity in the area. Successful development projects could set up partnerships between very underdeveloped regions and more developed areas, which would ensure that what is produced is in demand.

Several participants stated that development projects can play an important role in increasing dialogue or improving cooperation between different communities. Participants gave examples of successful projects which provided basic services, such as developing irrigation and infrastructure, or environmental projects, in which everyone in a local area has a stake.

### **Targeted programmes**

Targeted development programmes include programmes aimed at specific groups (minorities or women), and at the most underdeveloped regions, which are often inhabited mainly by minorities. However, such programmes can be seen as taking money away from potential programmes targeting the wider community. If the targeted group corresponds to an ethnic group, this can be very unpopular. The overall increasing poverty across South-East Europe makes the situation worse.

Many participants stated that some programmes targeted at the poorest and most marginalized groups can be effective. Preference was given to programmes which do not create a culture of dependency: employment initiatives and those that emphasize the ability of the individual and community to 'self-develop'. These targeted pro-

grammes should be supported, and work needs to be done to raise public awareness of the fact that this is not privileging a group, but trying to diminish the gap between that group and society overall. It is important that the targeted groups do not become scapegoats for the economic problems of the majority. Media, government and politicians can play an important role in explaining what targeted programmes are trying to achieve. However, too often some of these actors play the opposite role and inflame public opinion against targeted programmes.

Several participants stressed that comprehensive programmes aimed at integration of the Roma into the wider societies are needed and must be implemented effectively. In Bulgaria and Romania, such programmes do exist; however, there is practically no implementation. These programmes were developed partly to meet Copenhagen criteria for accession to the EU. External pressure can encourage implementation, but care must be taken to ensure that the Roma community is not blamed for delays in accession.

Some participants said that targeting a minority group can have negative effects and felt that, in some war-torn regions, the best way forward was to target the regions and everyone who lives within them. Singling out a particular group could easily be politically manipulated and inhibit reconciliation processes, while regional projects could help improve communication between communities.

For any targeted programme to work, it is key that it is developed, implemented and evaluated with the active and meaningful participation of the targeted group. In South-East Europe, often programmes targeting underdeveloped regions are centrally managed and money is misused or opportunities are missed. Control over funding must be devolved and effective monitoring must be put in place. Problems with accountability and mismanagement of funds exist at all levels. Therefore, effective monitoring of all programmes, including targeted programmes, is key.

### **Good practice case studies<sup>11</sup>**

#### **Bridging the gap between communities in Eastern Slavonia**

Vukovar was devastated by the war in Croatia and many people have still not returned to their homes. There are problems with property rights, unemployment is very high, the infrastructure is destroyed and the economy stagnant. There is tension between the Serbs and Croats. The Center for Peace, Reconciliation and Psycho-Social Assistance in Vukovar is an inter-ethnic NGO that works for human rights protection, reconciliation and to improve the economic situation in the region. It works for the development of the community as a whole, and uses development projects both to improve the situation and

to bring the two ethnic communities together. The programmes encourage participation of people from different ethnic groups. Center for Peace provides courses in IT and business administration, and helps develop business plans. Participants come from different ethnic groups and Center for Peace has noticed that many participants begin to talk with those from other ethnic groups and they are willing to help each other. Everyone comes because they have something to gain, but the projects also provide a rare opportunity for Serbs and Croats to meet and work on something together. As trust develops, sensitive issues such as discrimination, return and human rights protection can be tackled. Center for Peace has been approached by the local authorities to work in partnership on development projects; it plans to ensure participation of members of all ethnic groups living in the area in the projects on which it works with the local authorities.

### **Overcoming barriers to access to credit in Macedonia**

The Enterprise Support Agency (ESA) is a company (established by a non-profit foundation) in Macedonia which trains people and supports them in putting together business plans in order to apply for credit for small and medium enterprises. ESA has offices in three cities (Tetovo, Gostivar and Ohrid) and its clients are from different ethnic communities. It has developed a standard format for credit applications, and it ensures that the applications conform to the same set of standards. This is very helpful for people wishing to start or expand their own business, and it is especially good for members of minority communities that ESA has offices across the country and that its staff speak Macedonian and Albanian as well as other minority languages (Turkish, Serbian). The applications are made to commercial banks of Macedonia. Although the applications follow the same format and meet the same ESA standards, a higher percentage has been successful from Ohrid (primarily inhabited by ethnic Macedonians), than from Gostivar and Tetovo (inhabited primarily by ethnic Albanians and other ethnic minorities such as Turks and Roma). ESA is currently investigating the reasons for different rates of success for applications complying with the same ESA standards but coming from different parts of the country and different ethnic communities.

### **Effective micro-credit schemes in the Roma community in Bulgaria**

Integro is a Roma NGO working with the Roma community in Rousse, Bulgaria. Here, Roma have very restricted access to development opportunities and to employment. Many Roma people in Rousse have been unemployed for twelve years, since the start of transition, and this has undermined their confidence and led to very low self-esteem. Integro manages a micro-credit scheme for Roma,

financed by an external donor. The scheme is run as a cooperative, with very small financial contributions from those who receive the credit. It is managed jointly with the borrowers. Integro has also been working in partnership with local authorities to distribute public land to the poorest, in this case the Roma. This is one instance in which this Roma NGO has been consulted by the government as to the needs of the community; it also plans to work with the government to provide information to people regarding relevant provisions in Bulgarian legislation. The key to success of the micro-credit scheme is that people work together and feel ownership of the scheme. Also, the scheme is not an isolated project, but part of ongoing work to improve access to development opportunities for Roma. The scheme is combined with a needs assessment of the community and ongoing efforts to improve Roma's access to education and to increase their self-esteem. The role of Integro as a mediator between the local authorities and the Roma community has also contributed to its success.

### **Alter Modus: reaching the excluded in Montenegro**

Alter Modus is a development NGO working in Montenegro. It has several income-generating activities, including in-kind projects that provide equipment and support for marginalized people. Alter Modus also implements a micro-credit scheme, providing loans to people who do not have access to credit through banks. Alter Modus has set clear criteria for participation in this project, and it advertises in the local community. However, there has been no interest from Roma people, including displaced Roma from Kosovo/a who are among the most marginalized in Montenegro and have no access to other credit. The NGO therefore specifically targeted information at the displaced Roma from Kosovo/a, by meeting with the people and describing the programme and other support (e.g. access to word processing, or help developing a business plan) that Alter Modus and other NGOs in Montenegro could offer. In this case, supplementary steps were needed to reach part of the target population and the development organization has invested the time to take them.

## **Recommendations**

Participants made the following recommendations.<sup>12</sup>

### **Pre-conditions**

- Recognition is important; states should be urged to respect international law on the right to self-identification and recognize minorities that exist within their borders. International actors should put pressure on governments to recognize unrecognized minorities.
- International development agencies need to engage at a community level and not rely solely on information/advice from governments. International organiza-

- tions should carry out their own needs assessments. These should include input from minority representatives from NGOs, and should be done at a local level.
- Projects must be based on real needs and this will be achieved if minority men and women set priorities for their own group.
  - Governments and the media, at national and local levels, should ensure that the public understands that targeted development programmes will benefit the whole of society, and that minority groups are not being 'privileged'.
  - Donors should ensure that development programmes are based on human rights and reflect the needs of minorities, with the participation of minorities at every stage of the process.
  - International organizations should recognize the linguistic diversity of where they work by, for example, employing minority staff. Decentralization of information provision in minority languages should be established.
  - A comprehensive approach is needed to improve the minority situation.

#### Effective participation

- Active participation of minorities in development processes is key. This includes input into conceptualizing country strategies, participation in programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- One effective way of operationalizing participation of minorities through Parliament could be by empowering working groups on development issues and including minorities within them.
- Issues of diversity within groups, and representativity, should be taken into account by development actors. Meaningful participation of minorities means input of different perspectives that exist within minority communities.
- International organizations should work with communities directly and not exclusively with governments.
- There is a need for better coordination between international development agencies, and for better contacts among all development actors and stakeholders, including international, governmental and civil society.

#### Tools for implementation

- There is a need for more targeted programmes for the most marginalized communities; these should be developed and implemented with the meaningful involvement of targeted groups and should include capacity-building.
- Development agencies should make micro-credit schemes available. International donors should guarantee funds for micro-credit schemes for most marginalized communities.
- Development programmes should encourage minority and majority cooperation.
- There is a need for transparency and public information on programmes, funds and criteria. The media, including minority media, can be used for continuous provision of information. Donors should include civil society (including minorities) in information provision. Partnerships between governments and NGOs should be explicit and based on clear agreements and transparency.
- People should be employed from the locality where the project is implemented.
- Contracts from international donors should stipulate that the governments (implementing organizations) are required to ensure participation from minorities, and development ministries should be legally obliged to include minority rights, standards and implementation in the process of any programme, as a condition of receiving development aid.
- Governments and international organizations should train their staff on minority rights and issues, and, in the case of international actors in South-East Europe, on the region. Government and public officials should have to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of human rights to be employed or promoted in these institutions.
- Monitoring of process and outcomes of projects is key. Disaggregated data is needed to evaluate the outcomes of projects; it should be based on self-identification by minorities, and minority officers should be included in the collection of the data; the right to privacy must be respected.
- Decision-making on funding for social programmes should be decentralized; implementation should be locally led and involve NGOs, while legislation should remain centralized and compliance with the legislation should be monitored.

## Notes

- 1 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Art. 1; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- 2 ICERD, Art. 4; Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), Art 15; United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (UNDM).
- 3 For an analysis see Riddell, R., *Minorities, Minority Rights and Development*, London, MRG, 1998, also available in Albanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian from MRG.
- 4 This workshop is part of a three-year programme South-East Europe: Diversity and Democracy. It is financially supported by Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, European Commission, and UK Department for International Development.
- 5 Some data exists. See for example, Ringold, D., *Roma and Transition Countries in Central and Eastern Europe*, World Bank, 2000, for limited data that exists as well as for an analysis of measurement problems.
- 6 For the extent of disparities regarding the number of Roma between official statistics and various estimates, see, for example, Liégeois, J.-P. and Gheorghe, N., *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*, London, MRG, 1995.
- 7 See Council of Europe's Recommendation R (97) 18 of Committee of Ministers Concerning the Protection of Personal Data Collected and Processed for Statistical Purposes.
- 8 For a through analysis, see *Minority Rights and Development: Overcoming Exclusion, Discrimination and Poverty*, paper submitted by MRG to UNWGM, E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2002/WP.6, 24 May 2002.
- 9 For an analysis see, Tomaševski, K., *Minority Rights in Development Aid Policies*, London, MRG, 2000. Also available in Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian from MRG.
- 10 For successful experience in Central and South-East Europe, see PAKIV's work with Roma ([www.pakiv.org](http://www.pakiv.org)). For successful experiences elsewhere, see Grameen Bank (Bangladesh) and Self-Employed Women's Association (India) micro-finance projects documented by the World Bank.
- 11 For more information on the projects featured as case studies, please contact MRG or the featured organizations. Contact details of the NGOs can be obtained from MRG.
- 12 The workshop participants developed these recommendations together. They enjoyed broad support of the participants and organizers; however, not every participant was required to agree with every recommendation.

## List of participants

### Albania

Zenepe Dibra, Intellectual Women of Shkodra, Shkoder

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aleksandar Eskic, Enterprise Development Agency, Banja Luka, Republika Srpska

Slobodan Stajic, National Organizing Committee 'Link Diversity' for Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Sarajevo

Zara Halilovic, Ministry for European Integration – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

### Bulgaria

Becca Lazarova, Shalom Regional Association, Sofia

Bilyana Petkova, Women's Association for Ethnic Tolerance, Banite, Smolyan District

Elena Gyurova, IEI, Sofia

Emilia Mateina, IEI, Sofia

Iosif Nounev, Ministry of Education, Sofia

Isabel Uribe, European Commission, Sofia

Kalina Bozeva, IEI, Sofia

Lilia Makaveeva, Integro Association, Senovo, Rousse District

Lina Stanoeva, IEI, Sofia

Maria Stoimenova, IEI, Sofia

Mariana Fingarova, Journalist, Plovdiv

Mark Bossanyi, IEI, Sofia

Meral Mehmed, Demos Foundation, Silistra

Rumen Seferinov, Unity 2001 Foundation, Vidin

Rupen Krikoryan, MP Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights and Religion, Sofia

Sahak Chalakyan, Hamazkain Armenian Organization, Plovdiv

Stefan Yugov, Izgrev Stolipinovo Foundation, Plovdiv

Valeria Kalcheva, IEI, Sofia

### Croatia

Drago M. Pepic, Center for Peace, Legal Advice and Psychosocial Assistance – Vukovar, Vukovar

Zoran Stankovic, Srpsko Narodnovijece – Serb National Council, Zagreb

### Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Biljana Erakovic, Municipality of Niksic, Montenegro

Jasminka Dulic, Croat Academic Society, Subotica

Jelena Milinkovic, NGO–Alter Modus, Podgorica, Montenegro

Nedjeljka Sindik, Ministry for National and Ethnic Groups Rights Protection, Podgorica, Montenegro

### Greece

Antonia Papadopoulou, Greek Helsinki Monitor, Athens

### Macedonia

Albert Musliu, Association for Democratic Initiatives, Gostivar

Zoran Gavriloski, Civil Society Resource Center, Skopje

### Romania

Mara Danaila, Romanian Association for Community Development, Bucharest

### Switzerland

Patrick van Weerelt, United Nations Development Programme, Geneva

### United Kingdom

Corinne Lennox, MRG, London

Magdalena Syposz, MRG, London (Project Coordinator and Rapporteur)

Veena Meeto, MRG, London (Project Coordinator and Rapporteur)

# working to secure the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples

minority  
rights  
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international

## Summary of recommendations

### Pre-conditions

- States should be urged to respect international law on the right to self-identification and recognize minorities that exist within their borders.
- International development agencies need to engage at a community level and carry out their own needs assessments.
- Projects must be based on real needs and priorities of minority men and women.
- Governments and the media should ensure that the public understands that targeted development programmes will benefit the whole of society.
- Donors should ensure that development programmes are based on human rights and reflect the needs of minorities.
- International organizations should employ minority staff and provide information in minority languages.

### Effective participation

- Minorities should actively participate in all stages of project cycles.
- Minorities could be included in parliamentary working groups on development issues.

- Issues of diversity within groups should be taken into account by development actors.
- International organizations should work with communities directly and not exclusively with governments.

### Tools for implementation

- There is need for more targeted programmes for the most marginalized communities.
- Development agencies should make micro-credit schemes available.
- Development programmes should encourage minority and majority cooperation.
- There is a need for transparency and public information on programmes, funds and criteria.
- People should be employed from the locality where the project is implemented.
- International donors should stipulate that implementing organizations must ensure participation of minorities.
- Governments and international organizations should train their staff on minority rights and issues.
- Monitoring of process and outcomes of projects is key.
- Decision-making on funding for social programmes should be decentralized and implementation should be locally led.

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**Southeast Europe: Diversity and Democracy** aims to promote minority rights and improve dialogue and cooperation between communities. The programme is coordinated by Minority Rights Group International, and has been developed and is implemented and evaluated together with partner NGOs from the target countries. For more information, please contact MRG or visit [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org). This report aims to summarize discussions from the workshop on Minority Rights and Development in South-East Europe held on 22-3 March 2002. MRG and IEI would like to thank participants for their contribution; the workshop report does not necessarily reflect in every detail the collective view of MRG or IEI, or all the participants.

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**Project Coordinators** Magdalena Syposz and Veena Meetoo.

**Editor** Sophie Richmond.

**Minority Rights Group International (MRG)** is a non-governmental organization (NGO) working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding between communities. MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. MRG is registered as a charity, no. 282305, and a company limited by guarantee in the UK, no. 1544957.

**The Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation** is a non-governmental organization based in Sofia, Bulgaria. IEI Foundation strives to promote mutual understanding, equal participation and cooperation between different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups in civil, political, social, economic and cultural development. For more information, please contact IEI: tel. +359 2 980 1716, email [inetin@cblink.net](mailto:inetin@cblink.net)

**Minority Rights Group International** 379 Brixton Road, London SW9 7DE, United Kingdom

**Tel** +44 (0)20 7978 9498 **Fax** +44 (0)20 7738 6265

**Email** [minority.rights@mrgmail.org](mailto:minority.rights@mrgmail.org) **Website** [www.minorityrights.org](http://www.minorityrights.org)