



## King Baudouin Foundation

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# Minority Rights in Practice in South East Europe 2004-2008

An initiative of the King Baudouin Foundation  
in partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
and the Soros Foundations

Launched in Brussels in 2004, the "**Minority Rights in Practice in SEE**" project aims to foster policy change at local, national and international levels in order to overcome discrimination and advocate for minority participation in social, political, cultural and economic life in all countries of South East Europe.

More specifically, the project sets out :

- To support civil society in its efforts to ensure that the legal measures and mechanisms guaranteeing minority rights are effectively implemented at all levels;
- To enhance the capacities of NGOs of ethnic minorities to represent the interests of their communities in the public policy development both locally and nationally;
- To raise the awareness of governments and relevant public institutions to provide for equal access to participation of minorities, including effective practices of partnership with NGOs and representatives of minorities;
- To provide a forum for the exchange of views and experience at regional and European level in order to voice issues and promote good practices related to minority rights in SEE.

The MRP in SEE operates at the **national, regional and European levels** (SEE and EU).

- At the **national level**, the project supports **strategic partners** in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia, including Kosovo. In each country, a grant is awarded to an NGO on the basis of an action plan that addresses specific issues, such as the monitoring of pre-and post-accession process in Bulgaria and Romania, the political participation in Bulgaria, legal changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the representation of minorities at the local level in Serbia, the implementation of international standards in Croatia, the inclusion of minorities in the decentralization process in Macedonia, refugee return in Kosovo or the monitoring of the European integration process in Albania, through capacity building schemes, public awareness campaigns, publication of shadow reports and strategic cases, round tables with the public authorities, etc.

- At the **regional/European level** (SEE and EU), the MRP in SEE undertakes both **networking** and **advocacy** activities:
  - **SEE Regional Networking:** in-country strategic partners are involved in the holding in the region of seminars such as “Media – A Responsible Intermediary in a Multicultural Society: Challenges and Realities” (Sofia, February 2005), “Good governance of multi-ethnic communities” (Cluj, March 2006) or “The Position of Minorities: Education as the Foundation of Stable Relations in the Region” (Belgrade, June 2006). Such seminars gather practitioners and experts from SEE as well as from international organizations.
  - **European Advocacy Initiatives:** recent developments have demonstrated that minority issues are stimulating increased interest among European institutions and policymakers. Such a trend is a consequence of recent European Union enlargement and is bound to be strengthened in the near future by the perspective of accession of Bulgaria and Romania and, in the longer term, that of countries in the Western Balkans. The MRP strategic partners contribute to nurturing this emerging debate, through policy work targetting the European Commission and the European Parliament (issue papers, policy dialogues, bilateral meetings).
  - **DIANET** (Dialogue for Interaction. Advocacy and Networking Capacity Buiding). This new component of the MRP in SEE has been developed with the support of the European Commission (CARDS Network to Network Programme). It aims at enhancing the networking and advocacy capacities of NGO’s in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia. To this end specific training schemes are being implemented in those countries for a period of 18 months (January 2006 - July 2007).

**For any further information, please contact:**

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