
Serbia: First of four planned seminars with National Councils completed

National Councils represent not only national minorities in Serbia: they also represent minorities' cultural autonomy and are therefore an important element in the institutional framework that regulates minority rights. Civic Initiatives decided to hold 4 seminars devoted to empowering these councils. The first seminar was held in October 2006 with representatives of the Romanian National Council.

As part of the DIANET project, Civic Initiatives completed the first of four seminars designed to empower national councils in Serbia. These councils play an important role in regulating the position and rights of national minorities by advocating minority rights and improving their position and participation in public life.

In view of the particular need to strengthen the capacities of smaller, less articulate and influential minorities, Civic Initiatives decided to hold the first seminar with representatives of the Romanian national minority, under the theme "Advocacy for minority rights". 14 members of the Romanian National Council took part and participants had the opportunity to learn more about minority rights, to expand their knowledge and skills with regard to advocacy and the steps involved in developing any advocacy programme.

The seminar was a follow-up to DIANET Training of Trainers (ToT) programme and was conducted by two trainers who had completed the ToT. The success of this first seminar means that the same model will be used in the remaining three events with other national councils.

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