

## Croatia: Public events highlight minority rights implementation

Two events in Zagreb continued public discussion on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities. A round table focused on the right to equal official use of the written and spoken languages of national minorities. A conference in Zagreb considered outstanding issues and progress made since the 2005 conference on the legislation, organised by the OSCE Mission to Croatia.

The Zagreb round table concentrated on the use of national minority languages in regional and local government and on Croatian radio and TV. Minority representatives raised questions regarding the practical application of the national legislative framework provisions that provide guarantees for equal official use of minority languages. Particular attention was drawn to the term "acquired rights", which remain vague and without official interpretation. Issues relating to the provisions and application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages were also considered.

The December conference, which brought together over 70 participants from government institutions, minority councils and associations, civil society and international organisations, began with an address by HE Ambassador Robert W Becker, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia. Three thematic sessions followed, which considered issues relating to the work of councils and representatives of national minorities and the Council for National Minorities; the representation of national minorities in state administration and the judiciary; and the exercise of cultural and linguistic rights of national minorities.

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