

Macedonia: Dialogue for interaction

In June 2007 Common Values organized conference on the following topic "Dialogue for interaction-vision for cooperation of the representatives of ethnic communities and institutions on local level". The aim of the conference was to incite dialogue for interaction between the representatives of the ethnic communities and local institutions in the decentralization process.

In June 2007 Common Values organized conference on the following topic "Dialogue for interaction-vision for cooperation of the representatives of ethnic communities and institutions on local level". The aim of the conference was to incite dialogue for interaction between the representatives of the ethnic communities and local institutions in the decentralization process.

Conference was attended by the representatives of relevant institutions, local governance, representative of the Office of the European Commission in Skopje, nongovernmental organizations working in the sphere of human rights and rights of the representatives of the ethnic communities, as well as media.

The conference was organized in four panel discussions and final session for sublimation of the conclusions reached at the panels:

- Decentralization and rights of the ethnic communities
- Education and ethnic communities on local level
- Role of the ombudsman in protection of the rights of the ethnic communities
- Role of the Commission for minority relations and rights of the ethnic communities

Decentralization and rights of the ethnic communities was the topic of the first panes discussion that incited fruitful discussions and polemics that can be sublimated in following conclusions:

- There are challenges in finalization of the legal framework for the issues related to the realization of the rights of the ethnic communities on local level
- Insufficient representation of the members of the ethnic communities in municipal administration
- Roma community is not represented in municipal structures
- Decentralization opens opportunity for improving the condition in the sphere of interethnic relations

At the second panel discussion dedicated to the education and ethnic communities the following conclusions emerged from the fruitful discussion:

- Introducing voluntary teaching for learning the language and culture of Roma, Vlachs and Bosnians was estimated as positive
- Recommendation to the relevant institutions for equitable deployment of resources for scholarships for Roma pupils
- Recommendation for raising criteria for election of mentors for Roma pupils
- Implementation of the adopted Strategy on Roma and the segment for improving Roma education as its constituent

The third panel was dedicated to the Role of the ombudsman in protection of the rights of the ethnic communities and the following conclusions emerged:

- Adoption of Law on preventing discrimination is necessary that will clearly define what discrimination is
- Evident small number of appeals to the Ombudsman related to the violation of rights of representatives of ethnic communities
- Tight cooperation between NGO sector and Ombudsman is in the interest of citizens-representatives of ethnic communities

Role of the Commission for minority relations and rights of the ethnic communities was the topic of the fourth panel. All participants in the discussion stressed the need of functioning of the Commissions that should have the role of monitors for early detection and prevention of problems in their local communities. The following conclusion emerged:

- Need of greater citizens' informing for the existence of the Commissions for minority relations
- Rule book for work of the Commissions should be adopted
- Municipalities should provide budget for their functioning
- Municipalities should provide technical support to the Commissions (premises, equipment, logistic support by municipal administration)

In the final session the conclusions and recommendations of the panels were sublimated and all participants

stressed the need of constant work in the sphere of promotion and protection of the rights of the ethnic communities. Conclusions and recommendations of the conference will be published in a report. That will be the step forward in the affirmation of the issues in relevant institutions. The aim is to cope with or amortize registered weaknesses, and promoting positive practices and experiences.

For further information, please contact: Hajrije Ahmed
Common Values
info@cv.org.mk

