

THE CENTER FOR REGIONALISM

2010 YEAR IN REVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT

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Foreword

There's another year behind the Centre for Regionalism and its young team. In some areas it was more than successful, and in some in expectance of better times to proceed with complex projects commenced several years ago. The Igman Initiative was absolutely the most successful last year. The climax of its activities was its 21st session held in Sarajevo on 29 May 2010, at which there was a ceremony on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. However, it was much more than a mere marking of a jubilee. It was a unique opportunity for the presidents of the four countries signatories to the Dayton Agreement to meet and to praise in their speeches the Igman Initiative for its courage, visions and persistence, as well as to send encouraging messages to the citizens of the region. A number of media called this session historic, as it announced the end of a long-standing adverse trend in the relations in the region and a continuation of a process of a full normalisation of relations through the Partnership for Europe, which is a title of a joint statement signed by the four presidents at the session. The Igman Initiative was given many recognitions at the session, however, there were new challenges put before it in its mission to help this region become a boring place to live in free of fabrication of abundant history. In the pursuance of its objectives, there are two key tasks to be fulfilled – resolving the remaining open issues among the four countries and the beginning of institutionalisation of mutual cooperation taking Nordic countries as a model. A new force to help us to successfully face these challenges is the Igman Initiative Youth Forum, presented at this session. Some fifty educated young people from the four countries who make a backbone of the Youth Forum will gradually assume the burden of carrying out the mission from Igman Initiative veterans. In Kosovo, the project Local Politics in Multiethnic Communities was continued through a mentorship programme which is to help representative of local authorities in Kosovo municipalities to broaden their knowledge and skills aimed at the improvement of multiethnic relations and protection of rights of minorities. On the other side, activities within the Civil Dialogue, a project commenced in Kosovo as early as in 2002 will be undertaken in a greater extent in 2011 and it will be complementary to the Belgrade – Priština dialogue.

Neither the engagement of PHILIA in Central Asia was full due to turbulences in Kyrgyzstan and the entire region, preventing previously planned activities to be conducted. However, at the beginning of 2011, with the support of LGI from Budapest, a set of project is to commence aimed at transfer of experience in overcoming post-conflict situations and prevention of possible future conflicts. Locally, the Centre for Regionalism conducted its activities in the area of democratization, decentralization and improvement of inter-ethnic relations in Serbia with full intensity. A great success in this area is the fact that, as a result of efforts of some key political factors, the process of decentralization will be on agenda through amendments to the Constitution and practical steps that would make Serbia a modern country with a great degree of local and regional self-government. The Centre itself was frequently, due to its positions regarding this issue, accused by the so called “patriots” of attempts to disrupt the state integrity through decentralization. It was not easy to be a target for years however it is worth all we went through.

Looking back at the year behind us, we are optimistic when 2011 is concerned, as well as those to come, as all the efforts made in the course of almost fifteen years since the Centre for Regionalism was founded have begun to yield results.

Sincerely yours

Mr. Aleksandar Popov,
Director of the Centre for Regionalism

IGMAN INITIATIVE

“New Regional Policy and European Integration FORUM”

Fuška Gora, Serbia, 12- 14 May 2010.



Youth Forum of Igman Initiative, established during the 20th session of the Igman Initiative in Supetar, Brač Island, Croatia in October 2009. has realised its first project titled „*New Regional Policy and European Integration FORUM*“ in Fruška Gora, Serbia, aiming to promote the ideas of the Igman Initiative among the young people in the region.

The FORUM gathered around fifty young people from the Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were given an opportunity to meet each other, to become familiar with issues that young generations are faced with in all countries of the region, and to discuss about new regional policy of cooperation and normalization of relations on the road of European Integrations.

Youth Forum of Igman Initiative was supported by co-presidents of Igman Initiative, acted also as panellists in the opening session: Mr. Aleksandar Popov, Mr. Branko Lukovac, Mr. Vehid Šehić and Mr. Zoran Pusić. Opening remarks were also given by Ms. Ana Manojlovic program coordinator of the FES Buro in Belgrade, and and Youth Forum of Igman Initiative co-presidents: Mr. Srđan Vezmar, Mr. Vlado Dedović, Mrs. Dajana Džindo and Mr. Dalibor Baković.



Second day of the FORUM was dedicated to European policy towards Western Balkan Countries, and therefore special guests were H.E. Ambassador Vincent Degert, Head of the EU Delegation in the Republic of Serbia, H.E. Imre Varga Ambassador of Hungary, H.E. Clemens Koja Ambassador of Austria, Mr Ivan Bojanic from Regional Cooperation Council from Sarajevo (Bosnia and Hercegovina), and Mr. Nikola Lukic, representative of Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following session was dedicated to new regional policy, and the day was concluded by presentations related to position of young people in Western Balkan countries.

On the last day of FORUM, participants were divided into three working groups. Each group was given a task to discuss particular topic (**I group** – EU policy towards Western Balkan Countries, **II working group** – New regional policy and political concepts of normalization in relations

between the Countries signatory of the Dayton Agreement, **III group** – Analysis on Youth position in the countries of former Yugoslavia) and to come out with policy proposal. Final session of the FORUM included presentations of working groups' proposals.

POLICY PAPER – REVIEW OF RELATIONS IN THE REGION: 10 YEARS OF NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS – FIRST DECADE OF THE IGMAN INITIATIVE

Relations among the countries in the region, primarily Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia (Included in the Igman Initiative project) are at the turning point. Bilateral relations and regional cooperation, inseparable from the former, are getting into a new, possibly critical, phase of integrations into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. In spite of the institutional challenges in the EU, crisis in the Euro Zone and a certain fatigue, the EU enlargement policy to this region continues. Their mutual support to this and readiness to solve open issues dating back from the recent, war past, is an indicator of a genuineness of one's own European aspiration.

Although almost needless to say, the Igman Initiative unreservedly supports these trends and positive advancements in the region. The aim of this Policy Paper is to encourage bilateral and regional cooperation, restoration of trust and reconciliation, as well as, by all means, the further European and Euro-Atlantic integrations of the entire region. The survey of the most significant areas presents both the current state of the affairs and problems and unresolved issues that still impede the cooperation and negatively affect the overall situation. Recommendations are given in good faith, in a balanced manner and with an intention to encourage additional activities and search to finally resolve those issues.

CEREMONIAL SESSION OF THE IGMAN INITIATIVE ON TEN YEARS OF EXISTENCE - SARAJEVO, 29 May, 2010.

The Igman Initiative this year marked the tenth anniversary of its existence. The solemn Session was held on May 29th in Sarajevo, under the title *Ten Years of Normalisation of Relations and Ten Years of the Igman Initiative*: RESUME OF RELATIONS IN THE REGION – BILATERAL RELATIONS AND REGIONAL COOPERATION.

Heads of state of Serbia - Boris Tadić, Montenegro - Filip Vujanović, Croatia - Ivo Josipović and the presiding of the Presidency of B-H - Haris Silajdžić, participated in the event.



At the beginning of the session, participants were welcomed by the Mayor of Sarajevo Alija Behmen and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dimitris Kourkoulas. Following that, co-presidents of the Igman Initiative, Vehid Šehić, Aleksandar Popov, Zoran Pusić and Branko Lukovac addressed the participants.

Tadić: A Decade of Exceptional Progress in Relations in the Region

President of Serbia, Boris Tadić stated in Sarajevo that in the last ten years an exceptional progress was made in the relations among peoples and countries, adding that the European Union might take that fact into account in the enlargement process.

"Peoples in the Western Balkans are the closest to each other", said the Serbian president in his address to the leaders of the countries of the region.

Having pointed to the progress made in the previous decade, President Tadić reminded on the atmosphere and circumstances under which the first summit of the Igman Initiative countries in Banja Luka in 2000, which he attended, was held:

"At that time, there were no normal relations among the peoples on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Borders were closed and countries did not have normal diplomatic relations. It was difficult even to think of going to our capitals and establish friendship and links".

"That is why I believe that an exceptional advancement was made in the previous ten years, just as I believe that the European Union should appreciate that", said the president of Serbia.

He added that he was aware of a certain enlargement fatigue felt in the EU due to the financial crisis and pointed out that it would be an immense and irreparable damage to have a halt in the process of EU enlargement to the Western Balkans.

"That would have tragic consequences on citizens of the Western Balkans. Consequences of the crisis must not be paid by the citizens of our countries ", stated Tadić.

He invited his counterparts from the region to send a clear signal from the meeting to their European partners that the enlargement policy was to be proceeded with at any cost.

Josipović: As an EU Member, Croatia Will Continue to Assist Its Neighbours

President of Croatia Ivo Josipović invited all leaders in the region of the Western Balkans not to give up their common European future and promised Zagreb's assistance to all its neighbours in the European integration process.

President Josipović made a remark that it was courageous to initiate the reconciliation process at the time the Igman Initiative commenced its activities.

"That vision is has come true and we all share the same efforts and ambition. Our EU membership in the near future is not a reason to turn our back to neighbours. Contrary to that, everyone want good neighbourhood ", concluded President Josipović.

He pointed that Croatia would, once an EU member, continue to assist countries in the region and encourage their membership in all international organizations.

"The secret is in goodness, wisdom and courage to be above the cynicism of daily politics and make a step forward towards the future. The Igman Initiative made that possible by becoming active amidst the war in B-H ", said President Josipović.

He stressed that stability and welfare in B-H were a vital interest of Croatia.

"Let's hold our hands and speak with one voice for the European B-H and European region ", said President of Croatia.

Josipović invited leaders of the region not to give up the common future and stated that problems those countries were facing were temporary.

"We must learn lessons from the wars waged in this region ", said President Josipović, adding that an important task of the regional leaders was that of reinforcing peace and making compromises.

Silajdžić: Normalisation of Relations as Fast as Possible

The presiding of the Presidency of B-H, Haris Silajdžić stated that the objective of the Igman Initiative was clear and unambiguous, directed towards support and promotion of local and regional dialogue in the sphere of politics, economy, education and culture.

In his address to the participants of the 21st session of the Igman Initiative, Silajdžić pointed out that the aim of the gathering was to encourage countries of the region to contribute to a fast and meaningful normalization of relations among B-H, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia.

He stated that a dialogue on all outstanding issues was also necessary, particularly on the absence of trust as a major impediment in the region.

"Trust is the most important factor in our relations", said Silajdžić, inviting presidents of Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia to concretize Igman Initiative ideas and set up joint teams on the high level to get involved in establishing and cooperation of scientific and research centers in a number of areas.

Silajdžić expressed hope in the success of humanistic ideas promoted by the Igman Initiative, adding that it had been proven in this region that nothing could be achieved by using force".

In his opinion, all issues could be resolved by dialogue, and the common opportunity offered by the Igman Initiative concept would be taken in the region in the best way.

President of Montenegro Filip Vujanović stated in Sarajevo that the main condition for the progress of the Western Balkans was linking of the four countries - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia.

Vujanović also pointed out the necessity of establishing links in sport, art and culture in which the contribution of the civil sector was significant.

President of Montenegro added that the Igman Initiative as a network of civil sector representatives should be committed to the strategic objectives of all countries – fostering

neighborly relations and regional cooperation.

"The European integration is a common objective of all our four countries. We live in time in which genuine values are to be cherished and there is no actual success without regional cooperation", said President Vujanović, adding that under such circumstances it would be easier to establish the economic cooperation.

President Vujanović stated that conflicts in the Western Balkans were a consequence of disrupted inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations.

In his words, that was why values of socialism should be preserved, being "the values of anti-fascism and inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony used to be called brotherhood and unity".

Entering the Conference Room Together

Presidents of the four countries arrived to the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina one after another, in 20-minute intervals, but they entered the conference room together, demonstrating unity which was the purpose of that regional meeting.

Letters of a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nebojš Radmanović and former President of Croatia, Stjepan Mesić were read at the conference.

Mr. Radmanović stated in his message that conferences like the one organized by the Igman Initiative could contribute to the stability of the region.

In his words, ideas of the Igman Initiative were always supported in the countries of its members as they were realistic and practical, suiting the needs of citizens.

Mr. Mesić stated in his letter that 10 years ago, normalization of relations in the region was only a dream, whereas then it was a reality. In his opinion, great progress had been made in facing the past and the time had come to move on.

At the end of the Igman Initiative session, the participants adopted a joint statement.



Furthermore, for the occasion of this session, a study *10 years of Normalisation of Relations – First Decade of the Igman Initiative* was published as a reminder of achievements and failures, testifying on great efforts made to overcome a heavy burden of the past and to indicate a future cooperation based on mutual respect, partner relations, interdependence and solidarity. The study is an attempt to present all results, expectations and efforts made by the Igman Initiative. The study was presented at the session and attracted the great attention of participants, media, as well as heads of four states.

During the Honorary Session of the Igman Initiative in Sarajevo, it was agreed to continue work on the remaining unresolved issues between the Dayton Peace Accord countries. In that sense, special expert teams will be formed in the beginning of 2011, which will start working on the following:

- Borders,
- Refugees
- Succession
- Prosecuting war crimes

- Status problems of citizens

The first of the results of this work will be presented in the 22nd Session of the Igman Initiative which is to take place in October 2011 in Belgrade, and is to be attended by the four Presidents and the EU Commissioner for EU Enlargement, Mr. Stefan Fule.

The Igman Initiative Youth Forum

The other special event that marked the 21st session of the Igman Initiative was setting up and presentation of an Igman Initiative Youth Forum. Set up with an aim of promoting the ideas of the Igman Initiative among the young people in the region and a wish to continue with the Igman Initiative activities in the period to follow, this forum is meant to gather young people from the countries signatories of the Dayton Agreement and its activities are aimed at promotion of regional cooperation and normalization of relations, democracy, tolerance and observance of human rights.



From left: Mr. Vezmar, Ms. Dzindo, Mr. Dedovic – Co-presidents of Youth Forum of Igman Initiative

The Youth Forum is to conduct its activities on the territory of countries signatories of the Dayton Agreement and will be a constituent part of the Igman Initiative. A member of the regional board of the Igman Initiative Youth Forum, Srđan Vezmar, addressed the Sarajevo session participants, presenting activities conducted until then in establishing the forum and plans for the forthcoming period.

2010 SUMMER SCHOOL OF DEMOCRACY

The goal of the Summer School has been to give explanation and better understanding of those dangerous tendencies in societies in general and to plan future actions with NGOs from the region together with some leading politicians from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Most of the people would like to live in a free and democratic society, in a state where the laws would be just and equal for all. But few people have experience and knowledge about social and political conditions which should be fulfilled to make such society possible. The practice of democracy must be learned.

Young people of countries of the region live in societies in which ideas of racism and chauvinism are often treated as legitimate political opinion, in which such opinion is represented by even very popular sportsmen or singers, and in which history is still taught from biased textbooks where such ideas are justified by historical reasons. For that reason it is important to create opportunity for young people to hear different opinions about possible (and so frequent) abuse of strong feelings of identity, to better understand the source of such feelings and learn about consequences of their abuse.

Triangle of cooperation on the tripartite border between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia

On September 20th In Neum (Bosnia and Herzegovina), a meeting of the Committee for cross-border cooperation in case of natural and other catastrophes and natural resource management at the tripartite border between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia was held. Two most important projects within the framework of this cooperation were held:

1. Regional firefighting center – UNDP made a project which was forwarded to the EU for financing. It was noted at this meeting that further harmonization with municipal authorities was necessary (especially in municipalities of Dubrovnik Region). It was agreed that it needs to be done within the time-frame of the next two months, in order to prepare the final version of this project for the next meeting of the Committee.

2. Regional TV center - It was agreed that this project also needs to be additionally modified and precise financial construction for its realization must be prepared for the next meeting. It also needs to be decided which TV center will be the main project holder.

It was agreed that this meeting should take place in late 2010, and it should be followed by a Ministerial meeting, which is also going to serve as a donor conference. The meeting will be held in Sarajevo and after that, presidency over this initiative will be taken up by Croatia. However, due to elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, meeting was postponed for early 2011.

Meeting with Štefan Füle, the European Commissioner for Enlargement

On September 10th 2010 in Brussels, the European Commissioner for Enlargement Štefan Füle, received the Igman Initiative delegation, consisting of its board members: Živorad Kovačević, Aleksandar Popov and Vehid Šehić.

Having been informed on the past and future activities of this network of NGOs from the countries signatories to the Dayton Agreement by the delegation members, Commissioner Füle stated that the Igman Initiative was unique by the method of conducting its activities and reputation it gained in the course of 10 years of its activities.



Due to that, it made a great impact and achieved excellent results in its efforts aimed at improvement of regional cooperation. As the regional cooperation is one of absolute priorities of the EU, the Igman Initiative might count on its full support in the forthcoming period, he added. Commissioner Füle said it would be given his support in contacts with governments and in the public of the countries of the Dayton Agreement.



From left: Mr. Fule, Mr. Popov, Mr. Sehic – Meeting in Brussels

As far as specific support is concerned, it is possible through realization of joint projects as well as through a direct support to projects of Igman Initiative and its members. With regard to that, following the talks with Commissioner Füle, the Igman Initiative delegation also had talks with Mr. Yngve Engström, Head of Unit DG Enlargement.

The EU Commissioner Mr. Fule met again with the delegation of Igman Initiative on October 7th in Sarajevo, during a visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately after held elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Meeting of Igman Initiative representatives with the President of the Republic of Serbia - Mr. Boris Tadic, agreement on the next Igman Initiative session

On December 7th 2010, President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Boris Tadic, received Mr. Zivorad Kovacevic, president of the Igman Initiative Board and Mr. Aleksandar Popov, co-president of the Igman Initiative in Serbia. Meeting was focused on preparations for the 22nd Igman Initiative session, which is going to be held on October 2011 in Belgrade. In keeping with

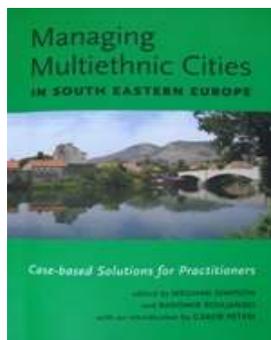
what was agreed during the previous session held on May 29th in Sarajevo, all four Chiefs of states signatories to the Dayton Agreement will attend the 22nd Igman Initiative session. Representatives of Igman Initiative have introduced two main focal points of the next session to



From left: Mr. Kovacevic, Mr. Tadic, Mr. Popov

President Tadic – remaining open issues between countries of Dayton quadrangle and institutionalization of cooperation between these countries. President Tadic offered his full support for this orientation, especially for application of certain positive experiences from the Nordic model of cooperation and for efforts in the direction of institutionalization of cooperation between countries signatories of the Dayton Agreement. During this meeting, President Tadic was informed that Mr. Stefan Fule, EU Enlargement Commissioner, will also attend the 22nd Igman Initiative session.

Promotion of the handbook „Managing Multiethnic Cities in South Eastern Europe“



Managing Multiethnic Cities in South Eastern Europe, handbook maps out major initiatives in South Eastern Europe that were launched in response to the region’s turbulence. In several case studies, the book offers contextual background as well as detailed information on specific activities undertaken to deal with such issues. It is a handbook designed for representatives of NGOs, international organizations, local and central governments and other activists working on issues in post-conflict societies. Handbook was made by experts, practitioners and policymakers who are engaged in this field in the framework of Igman Initiative and Association of Multiethnic Cities in Southeast Europe, in cooperation with LGI (Local Government Initiative) from Budapest. The authors drew from their own experiences, while elucidating conflict situations and tools they have used to mitigate these situations.



From left: Mr. Popov, H.E. Degert, Ms. Delevic Mr. Popov, H.E. Vincent Degert – Head of EC in Serbia

Handbook offers case studies that present efforts and results achieved in the process of overcoming consequences of conflicts in Southeast Europe, as well as experiences in managing multiethnic communities. There are also concrete and practical suggestions with skills and knowhow very useful for practitioners, not only in the context of post-conflict situations, but also in the context of prevention of potential new conflicts.

Speakers on this promotion were: Ms. Milica Delevic, Director of the EU Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Vincent Deger, Chief of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia and Mr. Aleksandar Popov, Director of the Center for Regionalism. Publication was issued in English language and it is expected to be translated in Russian language, in order to make it accessible for users in Central Asia within the framework of the

project "Transfer of experiences from Igman Initiative and Association PHILIA to Central Asia", which is being conducted by the Center for Regionalism in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Publication was supported by LGI OSI from Budapest.

RECONCILING FOR THE FUTURE – EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS

COUNTRY BASED PANELS IN NIS (SERBIA), MOSTAR (BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA), OSIJEK (CROATIA) AND THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ZAGREB

The lead applicant of this project is Association of Local Democracy Agencies. Center for Regionalism is one of the partner organizations, together with Local Democracy Agency Nis (Serbia), Local Democracy Agency Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Local Democracy Agency Osijek, Centre for peace and non-violence Osijek (Croatia)

This one year regional co-operation programme, organised with the support of the European Commission – Instrument for Stability, was designed as a series of three country - based thematic panels held in NIS, Serbia (December 2009), in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina (March 2010) and in Osijek (April 2010). The final conference was held in Zagreb at the end of June 2010. The set of project activities including the regional conference gathered more than 150 participants - NGO representatives, experts, local self-governments, political analysts, members of national minorities from the three countries included to address some of the key challenges of the post-conflict reconciliation in view of the EU integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. During the entire action, a wide range cross-border and regional co-operation initiatives were supported, involving both NGO-s and their networks and local self-governments.



During the thematic sessions, renowned experts presented the different aspects of reconciliation and some of the key challenges for both civil society and public authorities in the region. Key note presentations during the panels in Nis, Mostar, Osijek and the final conference in Zagreb included also: Mr. Bruno Vekaric, Deputy Prosecutor, War crime Prosecutor's office, Belgrade, Zivorad Kovacevic, President of the European Movement in Serbia, Aleksandar Popov, Director of Centre of regionalism, Novi Sad, Vehid Sehic, Citizens' Forum Tuzla, Zrinka Vrabec Mojzes, Croatian President's Office, Per Vinther, president of ALDA Christopher Fry, ICTY Liaison officer in Croatia, Zoran Pusic, Civic Committee for Human Rights, Zagreb, Ana Makic, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia.

CIVIC DIALOGUE KOSOVO – SERBIA

Mentorship Programme

As a follow up to project Local Policies in Multiethnic Communities in Kosovo, Center for Regionalism has initiated, in the second part of 2010, the project named “Mentorship”, which is supported by LGI from Budapest. The project is being implemented in cooperation with local governments of Obilic, Kamenica and Orahovac.

Two trainings will be held in Vojvodina, three two-day trainings in pro-minority policies will be held in Kosovo and within the project and one two-day training will be organized in Macedonia, dealing with the activities of municipal councils for inter-ethnic relations.

The mentorship programme anticipates that each mentor stays four times seven days in the municipality he/she is in charge of assisting project participants on the spot in creating appropriate minority policies for good governance.

The Centre for Regionalism will enable the mentorship programme participants to take part in other gatherings to be held in Serbia, Kosovo or surrounding countries dealing with the topic of managing local multi-ethnic communities, at which examples of good practice in the sphere of pro-minority policies will be presented.

A guide for better management of local multiethnic communities in Kosovo, will be made, as well.

PHILIA ASSOCIATION

CENTRAL ASIA

Study Tour – Trans-border partnership for conflict transformation and peace building, Novi Sad, September 13-18.

Center for Regionalism in partnership with OSI/LGI from Budapest, and UNDP Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, organized a study tour of representatives of local government and non-governmental institutions from border adjacent communities from Central Asia to Southeast Europe.



The purpose of the project was to exchange best practices of Philia Association and its partners in the South-East Europe countries in development of cross border cooperation, diversity management, conflict prevention and peace building as well as resettlement and reintegration experiences. The idea of the tour was to build upon existing capacities and partnerships established in the framework of Cross Border Cooperation Initiative launched by Peace and Development Programme, UNDP Kyrgyzstan and Khujand Area Office of Communities Program, UNDP Tajikistan, in particular with regard to institutionalizing cross border working groups and cooperation model of cross border municipalities (borrowed from Philia Association).

Study tour participants attended thematic workshops and trainings focused on the following key issues: water supply, disputable territories, territorial organization, and conflict and diversity management. Training and workshop coaches were prominent and competent government officials and experts such as Branko Lukovac , former minister of external affairs of Montenegro, Oliver Ivanovic, State Secretary in the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo and Tomislav Zigmanov, director of Vojvodina Croatian Cultural Institute.

As part of the program representatives from Central Asia had an opportunity to visit Subotica, a multiethnic city in north of Vojvodina with a long tradition of multiculturalism, that succeeded in maintaining good interethnic relations despite the stream of nationalist sentiment, that took over the countries of Western Balkans in nineties. Slavko Parac, President of the City Assembly, addressed the delegation from Central Asia and informed them about current projects, existing cultural events and cross border cooperation established with other cities in the region. Dejan Zvekić, Mayor's Advisor for International Cooperation conducted training on cooperation and partnership, mentioning prerequisites, resources and methods required for the establishment of a successful partnership and cooperation.

Delegation from Central Asia also visited the City of Tuzla, the only municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was not governed by nationalist authority, during Bosnian war. There is also a great example of self-organization of citizens, who attempted to maintain harmonic interethnic relations among Serbian, Croatian and Bosniak citizens and fought against nationalism in the midst of the war violence and destruction. The participants of the study tour were addressed by the Mayor of Tuzla, Jasmin Imamovic, and the President of the Municipality Assembly, Nada Mladina.

As a result of the study tour the participants received knowledge and skills on the following directions: strengthening interethnic cooperation and mutual understanding in polyethnic communities; involving ethnic minorities into public social life, implementation of the joint trans-boundary infrastructure projects addressed for improving water supply, access to transport infrastructure for frontier communities; and peculiarities of attracting investments for deciding common trans-boundary problems.

MMCP Workshop on prevention and reconciliation strategies of interethnic conflicts in Central Asia, Budapest, September 26 – 28.

As a result of violent events that took place in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, MMCP of OSI/LGI from Budapest brought together partners of the program for a two day Workshop to brainstorm on situation by assessing needs and challenges, and ways to address them by developing project ideas/action plan with the focus on management of multiethnic communities in Central Asia, and interethnic conflict: prevention and reconciliation strategies.

Participants in the workshop were representatives of MMCP and Philia Association from Southeast Europe, and Center for Social Integration Policy, UNDP and Soros Foundation from Kyrgyzstan.

Participants discussed about the needs and demands of the southern Kyrgyzstan and other multiethnic cities of neighboring countries, as well as about perspectives of trans-boundary cooperation development between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and interaction with “Philia” Association for increasing potential of frontier communities in Central Asia.

ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTER FOR REGIONALISM

Local policies in multiethnic communities Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja

Local Policies in Multiethnic Communities is a project focused on analysis and evaluation of local regulations and laws, as well as practice in the field of minority rights and interethnic relations. Goal is to build up the capacities of local governments in multiethnic communities. In this context, this project aims to promote human and minority rights and interethnic collaboration. In 2010, Center for Regionalism conducted a project in municipalities in South Serbia: Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja. Within that project, following activities were implemented: visiting these municipalities and the Coordination Body for Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, meetings with NGO and OSCE representatives, training courses for NGO representatives, Board meetings and training courses for representatives of the Board, research, round table discussions, study visits to Vojvodina, publication of the research and promotion.



Special attention in this research was focused on local regulations related to the protection of minority rights and interethnic relations, as well as on respective institutional framework – Municipal Councils for Interethnic Relations and Local Ombudsman. Talks with representatives of competent municipal bodies and institutions of education and culture helped in gaining insight in state of affairs, i.e. types of local policies enforced in this field important for protection of minority rights. Investigation of municipal documentation and interviews with a number of representatives of local authorities have revealed present conditions in the field of official use of languages and alphabets, ethnic structure of employees in municipal administrative bodies and institutions of public relevance.

During the visits to the municipalities in Vojvodina, participants in this project expressed their great interest in the 48-hour system and other examples of good practice in the municipality of Indjija. Representatives of the municipality Bujanovac have shown interest in closer cooperation with the municipality of Indjija, for the purpose of establishment of the 48-hour system and improvement of local self government. Some of the conclusions are:

- There is a need to collaborate with minority communities with already accomplished advanced levels of realization and improvement of their own rights, such as Hungarian national community. Goals were set for future projects: transfer of experiences in the field of implementation of minority policies from municipalities in Vojvodina and learning from other minority communities.
- Majority of minority communities in Serbia are faced with similar problems in implementation of respective Laws, but a number of local authorities have managed to tackle those challenges. Collaboration with those municipalities is of great importance for those less successful in the process of improvement of the position of minorities.

Research findings and project conclusions were fully published in the paper “Analysis of local minority policies in municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja”.

Project was supported by the Fund for an Open Society, Belgrade.

Roma in Serbia Reach Threshold to Participate in Direct Election of National Councils

In February 2010 Center for regionalism launched new campaign. As of March 8, 2010, Roma in Serbia were able to participate in elections for National Councils, a mechanism to facilitate the participation of minority groups in decision-making at the national level. A new law on National Councils of National Minorities, which entered into force in August 2009, requires national minorities to compile voter lists that meet a certain percentage of the total community (as identified in the National Census). If this threshold is met, the minority community is eligible to participate in direct elections for their National Council. In early February 2010, Roma lacked the number of registered voters needed to hold direct elections. Due to an extensive voter mobilization campaign, the number of registered voters tripled, from 15,000 to over 43,000. The campaign, led by the Center for Regionalism, an NGO based in Novi Sad, Serbia, involved informative trainings on the new Law and on voter participation, public relations, canvassing, and community organizing. To carry out these activities, the Center for Regionalism received assistance from the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative of the Open Society Institute (OSI)-Budapest, and cooperated with the Roma Information Office of OSI-Budapest,

the Foundation for an Open Society-Serbia, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Serbia, and a host of local community leaders and organizations, and media outlets, and others. According to the 2002 National Census, there 150,000 Roma in Serbia, though estimates suggest that the population is much larger.



Despite being one of the largest minority communities in Serbia, Roma face widely documented discrimination in virtually all spheres of life. In recent elections, voter turn-out among Roma has been low. Prior to this campaign, many were not registered to vote, lacked information about voting and voting registration, or did not possess the documentation needed to vote. Moreover, the majority were unaware of National Councils and their significance. Without the ability to directly elect National Councils, the Roma community was at risk of further disenfranchisement from decision-making. This would have grave social, political, and economic implications for their participation in Serbia's future. According to the new law, 19 national minorities in Serbia have the right to found a National Council. Councils operate on the national level, and oversee and influence policies in several primary areas of minority rights, such as education, the media, official use of language, and culture. Councils also appoint members of local, multiethnic Council on Interethnic Relations. If a minority community does not meet the threshold, a complicated process of nominations and negotiations with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights ensues. To be able to participate in direct elections, the Roma community needed over 43,000 registered voters: 50% of the community, minus 20% (representing those who are below the legal voting age of 18 years). Seeing a dire situation, the Center for Regionalism initiated its campaign in early February 2010. Working with partners in the field, the Center launched its campaign by identifying several municipalities most in need: municipalities with sizable Roma populations that were not politically mobilized, were poorly

informed about National Councils, and live in segregated or isolated areas. Although municipalities in southern and eastern Serbia were targeted (Bor, Negotin, Zajecar, Knjazevac, Boljevac, Vranje, Leskovac, Bujanovac, Medvedja, Presevo, Vlasotince, and Nis), the campaign's impacts reached across the country.

The Center mobilized local coordinators and teams of volunteers, who led the campaign at the local level. They conducted informative trainings for these teams on National Councils, the significance of Roma representation in these councils, and the technicalities of voter registration. In the field, these teams conducted additional trainings for partners and target audiences. In total, over 50 individuals were trained. In addition, the Center and its local partners collaborated with other potential allies, including representatives of local self-governments, local and national media, schools, community groups, political parties, and international organizations. Partners distributed informational leaflets, placed posters in public spaces, and made use of local/national media to spread information about the campaign and its significance. Materials were developed in both Serbian and Romani. Collectively, the campaign generated a strong network to engage in community organizing, canvassing, and other activities to mobilize voters and compile voter lists. A large number voters needed to be informed and registered in a short amount of time. Technically, inputting data required around ten minutes per person, and many cases, only slow computer software was available. Additionally, some potential voters were skeptical of the campaign. Observers also described efforts made to raise fear among Roma about registering to vote, such as through claims that "that they are giving signatures for some special list and no one knows what will happen to them later." In addition to meeting the threshold needed for National Councils, the campaign had the effect of raising awareness among the Roma community at large about their rights and responsibilities in democracy. A considerable amount of attention was paid to the situation in Roma communities, exposing much-neglected issues in the mainstream media. Moreover, it showed the power of community mobilization. The voter lists were submitted to and reviewed by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, who check the validity of the lists. The Ministry announced publicly which national minorities met the threshold and will be able to elect members of their National Councils directly. Elections were held in spring of 2010 and it was extremely important for all minority groups in Serbia and especially for Roma. New national Council of Roma has been elected and it is comprised of several voter list which gave diversity in its membership and working bodies

Local development strategy of the municipality of Presevo

During the work on the project Local policies in multiethnic communities in municipalities in South Serbia, Center for Regionalism operated as an organization with a very good insight in circumstances and situation in South Serbia, including all problems that burdened this region. Beside interethnic relations which are the main focus of attention, poverty and difficult economic position of all citizens are another issue. Economic, cultural and overall development in this neglected area needed a boost. Hence, project of creating new local development strategy in the municipality of Presevo on the basis of previously adopted strategy with expired mandate and largely outdated intentions and goals was launched. Goal of this project was to improve strategic local planning in the municipality of Presevo by issuing and adopting new local development strategy, as well as to encourage citizens' participation by engaging all local protagonists in this process. Idea is to boost the development of this municipality, raise standards in providing services, modernize economic potentials, attract investments and create preconditions for better everyday life of all citizens.

This project is a joint initiative of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung foundation from Belgrade, Fund for an Open Society, municipality of Presevo and Center for Regionalism as a project holder and implementor of activities. Work on the local development strategy of the municipality Presevo is being realized in cooperation with competent municipal offices together with all other segments of local self government, including citizens. In keeping with what was previously agreed and with duties, municipality of Presevo brought a decision at the municipal Council and the Assembly to encourage participation in planning and offer assistance to the expert group in the process of proper creating local development strategy. Decision to form a Committee is binding for all members, which means that representatives of the municipality who were appointed to the Committee are obligated to attend every meeting, provide information to the expert group, discuss issues important for the quality of the future document, offer concrete project proposals to the members of the expert team working on local development strategy. For the most part, members of the Committee are economists - members of the Municipal Council, vice-presidents of the municipality, representatives of the municipal department of finances and office for local economic development of Presevo.

Strategy contains project proposals in five areas: public administration, protection of environment, economic development, infrastructure and social development. Each of these areas branch out in subdivisions that cover individual segments of local development in more detail. Along with each project proposal, action plans are being defined, as well as all informations related to implementation and competent departments of the municipality. Quality planning of all aspects of development includes making and implementation of a model that meets all citizens' social and economic needs and interests. One of the most important

goals of strategic planning of development is creating new jobs and reducing overall unemployment rates, as well as reducing gender and social imbalances for marginalized groups, stimulating employment of young people and people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. These segments are especially emphasized within the new municipal strategy. In order to efficiently oversee the implementation of local development strategy in Presevo, a decision was brought, following examples of good practice in certain self-governments in Serbia, to install software designed to monitor and present progress in realization of the local development strategy, which also includes basic information about the person and the local institution responsible for implementation of certain tasks defined by the strategy. IT firm from Novi Sad, experienced in working with local self-governments, decided to take up the task of installing software in Presevo and train employees and representatives of the Office for Local Economic Development of Presevo to use that software.

State Policies of Regional Development of Serbia and Hungary

Amendments to the Law on Regional development from April 2010 are foreseeing, among other changes, division of central Serbia into two statistical regions, instead of four. Newly created regions (except in cases of Vojvodina and Belgrade region) are lacking institutions entrusted with drafting development strategy and with application procedures for EU funds. They also lack adequate positive experience in cross-border cooperation, which is a factor of regional development.



Challenges that seem to be a limiting factor to the enforcement of the Law on Regional Development can be handled with help of other countries' experiences, where division to statistical regions was already conducted and capacities for successful application for EU funds were developed. In this sense, Hungary – already an EU member country, is the example closest to Serbia. As a founder and a host of the General Secretariat of the Association of Multiethnic Cities of Southeast Europe PHILIA, Center for Regionalism already maintains good cooperation with certain cities in South Hungary, such

as Szeged, Baja, Gyula, Pecs, Szentés. Renowned experts from Hungary were being invited and taken part in expert meetings on the subject of regionalism and decentralization, organized by the Center for Regionalism. Goal of the project was to enable exchange and transfer of Hungarian experiences in this area and offer contribution to a more successful implementation of the Law on Regional Development. In order to achieve the selected goal, following activities were implemented: two expert meetings were held and a publication that includes conference speeches, followed by conclusions and recommendations derived from discussions was issued. Each copy of publication was printed bilingual and distributed to government ministries, regional development agencies, regional institutions, civic society organizations and the media.

Project was implemented in cooperation with Embassy of Republic Hungary in Belgrade.

Conference “Decentralization of Serbia – Status quo, needs and challenges”

Balkan regional research network (BIRN) in partnership with the Center for Regionalism, organized a two day conference covering the topic of “Decentralization of Serbia – status quo, needs and challenges”. The conference was held at the City Assembly of Novi Sad, on February 25th and 26th of 2010. The following topics were covered at the conference:

- Regional policies of the European Union
- Pre-accession funds and their utilization
- Statistical and functional decentralization of Serbia

Through introspection of current conditions in Serbia with regards to its inevitably needed decentralization, numerous challenges and obstacles were identified. The discussion that followed after introductory speeches of the panelists, for the most part eliminated skepticism about the processes of decentralization among the audience. Participants also addressed the correlation between the processes of decentralization and possibilities of utilization of European funds, especially those intended for regional development and cross-border cooperation.



In his opening speech, State Secretary for Regional Development Mr. Dejan Jovanovic addressed the importance of decentralization of Serbia, and clarified that the purpose of such process is to invest into underdeveloped regions across country. Head of Political Department of the British Embassy said that: “Regionalization is the steppingstone of European integration processes.”

At the opening session of the conference, Aleksandar Jovanovic, President of the City Assembly and Gordana Igric, Director of BIRN gave their opinion on this topic, while Aleksandar Popov, Director of the Center for Regionalism noted that merely one fifth of the citizens of Serbia consider decentralization as necessary, and evaluated that such proportion is a consequence of common misconception that decentralizations leads towards separatism.

Dr. Franz Schauzberger, President of the Board Directors of the Institute of European Regions from Austria, and Antonela Valmorbida, Director of the association Agency for Local Democracy from Italy, talked about up to date processes of decentralization within the countries of the European Union.

Dr. Schausberger highlighted that, according to the legislation of the European Union, regionalization denotes strengthening of a country, and not the opposite of that, its fracture.



Nenad Canak, President of the National Council for Decentralization, as well as Maja Sedlarevic, Vice President of the Assembly of the AP Vojvodina, actively joined the discussion.

Ms. Sedlarevic said: “Taking into consideration that AP Vojvodina was admitted into Assembly of European Regions in 2002, decentralization is an inevitable process that is ahead of us.”

Vladimir Pandurov, Chief Secretary for Regional and International Cooperation of AP Vojvodina highlighted that: “...In the past few years, Vojvodina, using some of the instruments it is entitled to, such as Fund for Capital Investments, opened up the process in which local authorities can define their top priority projects.

Mayor of Novi Pazar Meho Mahmutovic expressed his opinion that the conference: "...Is an outstanding opportunity to elucidate misconceptions and prejudices about regionalization, as this subject theme has been politicized to a great extent.

Conference gathered about 130 participants from Serbia, Austria and Italy. Participants from Serbia included representatives of local authorities from the following cities: Nis, Kragujevac, Prijepolje, Bor, Medvedja, Presevo, Novi Sad, Kovin, etc.

The conference was evaluated as very useful and successful by its participants, who highlighted the importance of such gatherings as a toll to bring the idea of decentralization closer to the public eye, through concrete examples and experiences derived from member countries of the European Union. With regret was noticed the absence of the representatives of the competent ministries, and emphasized the importance of cooperation between independent experts and decision makers in this aspect. Participants educed proposals for further engagement in this domain, noting that meetings and conferences such as this one, should be organized in other regional centers and cities in Serbia, and suggested that the subject themes should be expanded putting the emphasis on concrete examples from the EU, as well as on practical instructions for using available European Funds. There is also a great need for the experts from the EU member states, who would share their experiences and knowledge, and contribute to the processes of decentralization in Serbia. Participants suggested that the next meeting should cover the topic of cross-border cooperation and project development, as well as include training on how to access European Funds and implement projects financed by European Union.

Everybody agreed that there is a greater need for a broader and more in depth cooperation among local authorities across the country.

The project has been supported by the Embassy of Great Britain in Republic Serbia.

Project: "Neighbourhood – Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Co-operation on Municipal Level in the Countries of Western Balkans"

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka, in partnership with the Center for Regionalism from Novi Sad, HOMO from Pula and Union of National Minorities from Republic Srpska, launched in May 2009 a two-year project titled "Neighborhood - Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Cooperation at the Municipal Level in the Western Balkans". The project is being implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

The project aims to determine the extent to which municipal policies respect local legislative, as well as European and international standards in regards to the protection of rights of national

minorities, and to make recommendations for improving the status of national minorities at the municipal level, and effectively resolve problems that members of are minorities face with.

- A local workshop on national minorities' rights within municipal context was held in Banja Luka on March 25, 2010, which served, among other things, for presentation of publication "National Minorities Rights and Municipal Policies – A Study on the Application of Standards Regarding the Protection of Rights of National Minorities in BiH, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia". The publication is the result of months of research that was conducted from September to December 2009 in nine municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, with the main goal to assess compliance with applicable local policy standards regarding protection of the rights of national minorities.
- On May 10th and 11th of 2010 a regional workshop on "Municipal authorities and national minorities - cooperation and dialogue," which took place in Banja Luka, brought together over 30 representatives of national minorities and local authorities dealing with issues of national minorities from Serbia, Croatia and BiH. During the two-day work, participants exchanged best practices in cooperation between the municipality and national minorities, identified some of the obstacles to improving the position of national minorities, and set guidelines for further joint work which includes a cross-border cooperation.
- Regional workshop entitled "Local authorities and national minorities – cross-border cooperation and exchange of experience", which was held from 12th till 15th September 2010 in Pula, was attended by representatives of municipal authorities and associations of national minorities in Pula, Vodnjan, Umag, Banja Luka, Prijedor, Bor, Bujanovac and Zrenjanin.
- Workshop "Strategy for action of national minorities towards the local community" was held on October 5th 2010. in Banja Luka. The Action plan for joint approach of national minorities toward the city authorities of Banja Luka in the field of participation in decision-making process and realization of legal rights, was defined at the workshop.
- On Tuesday, 19 October, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka held a workshop in Prijedor with the representatives of legislative and executive authorities of Prijedor municipality and representatives of associations of national minorities from that region. It was agreed that the deputy would regularly inform associations about his work as well as current events in the Assembly that are of minorities' interest, and that he would regularly consult them on ways in which he as their deputy could pass on the common concerns and needs of the associations before the Assembly forum.

- At the workshop "The role of local authorities in cross-border cooperation", held in Novi Sad from 15 - 17 November, representatives of associations of national minorities from BiH, Serbia and Croatia, as well as representatives of local authorities from 9 municipalities agreed on the guidelines and the form of the manual for representatives of local / regional authorities, which will be published within the project. In addition to presentation of best practices from the sphere of implementation of cross-border activities, participants also agreed that they would continue the activities started in the direction of the cultural, tourist and economic cooperation between the municipalities involved in the project.

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES IN REGIONALIZATION AND PERSPECTIVES OF DECENTRALIZATION OF SERBIA

Round table on the subject EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES IN REGIONALIZATION AND PERSPECTIVES OF DECENTRALIZATION OF SERBIA was held on December 15th in Hotel "Prezident" in Novi Sad. There were forty participants, together with representatives of local and national media. Round table was organized by the Center for Regionalism in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Purpose of the round table discussion was to familiarize the public in Serbia with experiences of decentralization and regionalization of countries with such tradition, including countries that fought long battles for systemic reform. Beside presentation of certain good solutions and practices to the expert public, another goal was to electronically document the whole meeting. This material will be used to produce a one-hour special documentary to be broadcast on several national TV stations, as well as on local media.

Conditions in Serbia were a motivation to offer assistance in the process of decentralization, followed by expert contributions and presentations of concrete examples from most developed countries in Europe, along with benefits of distribution of power and decision-making for citizens in their own local communities.

In Serbia, ever since the new Constitution was passed, and especially after Statute of Vojvodina and the Law on Regional Development were passed, there is an ongoing political debate focused on what type decentralization, if any, Serbia needs. Establishment of the Government Secretariat for Decentralization, responsible for initiation of the whole process and creation of strategic documents that steer Serbia towards standards of the majority of EU states, was a step in the right direction and a glimpse of hope that this issue finally gets to be tackled. In spite of the fact that in Serbia this remains a political issue, there is only a small number of applicable informations and examples from EU which are of use in removing fears and concerns, often imposed for the purpose of intimidation with separatism and segregation. Models of

decentralization, benefits of that process and good solutions are a part of goals sought by public discussion. Participants of the round table were experts from a number of EU countries, together with local experts focused on these subjects.

Aleksandar Popov, Director of the Center for Regionalism, and Michael Ehrke, Director of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Instead of expected presence of Bojan Pajtic, Premier of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Maja Sedlarevic, Vice-president of the Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina took part in this meeting. Ms Sedlarevic presented the only true territorial part of decentralized system of Serbia and activities within which Vojvodina takes up an important role in Europe of Regions. Genuine and necessary radical decentralization, instead of deconcentration of power which is often presented as decentralization, was especially emphasized. Regional EU policies and advancement of Serbia on the path towards the EU were presented by Srdjan Majstorovic, Deputy Director of the Office for EU integrations. Participants were very much interested in learning about available funds and prospects of Serbia in this context. Vladimir Goati, Director of Transparency Serbia, held a very interesting presentation on the subject Regionalization – institutional cure for heterogeneous societies. Emphasis was put on societies with numerous and diverse ethnic communities, as well as on their advantages in the process of decentralization. In this respect, all advantages were mentioned, as well as a list of countries in similar situation and results of their reform of territorial organization.

Arrival and participation of renown world experts in the field of decentralization from Scotland, Switzerland, Italy and Hungary invoked the greatest interest in the public. New regionalism in Europe and devolution in Great Britain were main subjects presented by lecturer Michael Keating, professor at the University in Aberdeen, Scotland. Keating held a presentation of dimensions of regionalism, along with the process of transforming regional policies in regional administration, models of federalism, regional government and devolution of government, by which UK and Scotland are widely recognized.

After Keating, Elena D' Orlando, professor at the University in Udine, Italy, held a presentation on the subject of Regionalization in Italy. She presented the asymmetric model of decentralization of Italy, process of federalism which is still in early stages of development, along with steps taken up by the Italian government since unification days till present times. Having in mind the similarity of subjects, Marijana Pajvancic, professor at the University in Novi Sad, logically continued with presentation of the Autonomy of Vojvodina in the light of constitutional and legal solutions, with a view on and comparison with some of European countries and their solutions.

Final presentations were held by Urs Müller, Director of the BAKBASEL Institute from Switzerland, on the subject of decentralization of Switzerland. He especially emphasized the

influence of decentralization on local development, together with all benefits and results of that process directly perceived by citizens as an advantage. In this sense, he presented the territorial unification of Switzerland, indexes of decentralization developed by the Bakbasel Institute, as well as competences and composition of federal governments in Switzerland. In addition to that, he described the responsibilities, advantages and flaws of this kind of composition in Switzerland. And last, but not least, presentation was held by Gabor Peteri, Director of LGI from Hungary. As a World Bank expert, he is very familiar with political and other conditions in Southeast Europe. Financial aspects of decentralization/regionalization are of crucial importance for true decentralization and sustainability of the whole system. Peteri presented his view on tax policies of regional and local governments in Serbia, dual system of local self-government, as well as options and models of fiscal reforms and policies applicable in Serbia.