

# ECMI NGO Network Newsletter

## ECMI NGO Network for the Improvement of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia

This is Newsletter of the ECMI NGO Network for the Improvement of the Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia. This Network is a result of a joint initiative between the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), in Flensburg, Germany and members of this Network. This Network will enhance the co-operation of the member NGOs towards the development and improvement of interethnic tolerance, respect for differences and dialogue among all those living in the Republic of Macedonia. In particular, this NGO Network aims to strengthen the capacities of the participating NGOs to generate joint projects and other initiatives with a strong interethnic dimension and to implement such initiatives.

### News from the Network

**October 4**

**ECMI Regional Office Skopje**

**Visit by Marc Weller, Director, ECMI**



Marc Weller, Director of ECMI in Flensburg (Germany) visited ECMI Regional Office in Macedonia between 4th and 6th of October.

He participated as a trainer in the training on Framework Convention for National Minority in Ohrid, organized by the Humanitarian Association of Roma in Macedonia "SONCE", a member of the Network. The Project is funded by the ECMI National Network and the Minority Rights Group.

Marc Weller devoted a significant part of his stay in Macedonia to meeting the ECMI Team where he was briefed about the activities of the ECMI Regional Centers and Network members. The

strategy for further development of the Network was also discussed. The Research Team for the Project "Towards Regional Guidelines for the Integration of Roms in the Republic of Macedonia" also briefed Mr. Weller on the progress of their work.

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**October 31**

**ECMI Regional Office Skopje**

**Visit by representatives of The Royal Norwegian Foreign Ministry**

Mr. Braatu, Deputy Director General for Western Balkan MFA Oslo, Mr. Dag M. Halvorsen, Royal Norway Ambassador in the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Sigred Bay, Senior Adviser and Ms. Natasha Serdarevik, Project Manager at Royal Norway Embassy paid a visit to the ECMI Regional Office Skopje.

Elizabeta Markoska, ECMI Program Manager welcomed them with a brief presentation on the ECMI NGO Network for the Improvement of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia. Subsequently the word was passed to Dr. Eben Friedman, ECMI Research Associate who made a presentation on the Project in a preparatory phase "Securing Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement through Concrete Policy Action". The meeting continued with the presenta-



tions by Robert Rustem and Gjulten Dalipova, Research Assistants of the Project "Toward Regional Guidelines for the Integration of Roms in the Republic of Macedonia".

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## Activities of the ECMI NGO Regional Resource Centres

**October 8**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Gostivar**

**Day of Culture Presentation of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centers**



Rain could not deter the citizens of Gostivar from attending the Cultural Presentation of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centers from around the country. The multi-lingual event that

was held at the recently opened Gostivar Amphitheatre and brought together people to celebrate culture.

The program included Folk dances group (Regional Centre Shtip), Pantomime (Regional Centre Bitola), Dance theatre, Modern ballet and Rap performance (Regional Centre Tetovo), and Recitals in Macedonian, Albanian, Roma and Turkish (Regional Center Gostivar).

This was the first event of its kind and surely not the last to be organized for the cultural presentation of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centers.

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**October 10**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo Open Forum – Restoring Confidence in Tetovo**

The Open Forum "Restoring Confidence in Tetovo", took place at the premises of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo. This event was organized by the Forum of Albanian Women in co-operation with the NGOs members of the ECMI Network - "New Side of Life", Hendikep and Multikultura.

The aim of the Open Forum was to emphasize the need to restore confidence in Tetovo region as one of the most affected areas from the 2001 crises. Several issues were addressed as the need of understanding different cultures in this region, drawing on diverse ways for restoring the confidence and last but not the least the need of local authorities' involvement in the whole process.

It continued with an interactive discussion of the participants who drew attention to the role of the family in restoring the confidence among the children.

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**October 15**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Bitola Round Table “Partnership between the NGOs and Media – Experiences and New Strategies”**

The Round Table “Partnership between the NGOs and Media – Experiences and New Strategies” that was held at the Hotel “Epinal” Bitola was organized by the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Bitola.

Participants were the representatives of the NGOs from Bitola and Ohrid, the Media, representatives from the Local Authorities, representatives of the ECMI Regional Office Skopje as well as representatives of ISC, Swedish Embassy and Swiss Embassy.

Dijana Gorgievska, the Coordinator of the Regional Centre Bitola made an introductory speech regarding the Mission and activities of the ECMI Network in the Republic of Macedonia. Afterward Pece Cvetanovski, moderator of the Round Table, started discussion about the present situation of negligible cooperation between the NGOs and the Media. It was also discussed about the need of joint efforts in order to enhance the impact of the NGOs initiatives through enlightenment of the citizens. In that way the NGOs and the Media will play a bigger role in solving the local problems and raising the awareness among the Bitola citizens.

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**October 16**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Kumanovo Donor Conference**

At the Hotel “Kumanovo” a Donor Conference was organized by the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Kumanovo. This is the first time that this kind of an event was organized in Kumanovo.

At the Conference present were: representatives of SIDA- Sweden, the British Embassy, the EU, the OSCE and the Swiss Embassy, the Mayor of Kumanovo, Mayor of Lipkovo, local Ministers of Education and Minister of Transport, Directors of the local schools and media as well as the ECMI Skopje Team and the representatives of the NGOs members of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Kumanovo.

This unique event brought together key Kumanovo stakeholders namely the local government, institutions, NGOs and the Media together to discuss with the International Donor’s Community the needs of the people of Kumanovo. Four projects, for which financial support is needed, were presented in details by the Network members. These proposals are based on the findings of pilot projects funded by the ECMI NGO Network.

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**October 18 - 19**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Shtip Workshop for evaluation of the performance**

The workshop for evaluation of the performance of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Shtip was held in its premises on the initiative of its members with purpose to improve several segments of their work. The workshop was divided in two parts on which was discussed about the present situation, all initiatives within



ECMI activities, previous and present, and the possible solutions and opportunities. It was decided that preparation and implementation of an Activities Plan for 2003/04 where all conclusions from the workshop will be included, would lead to better performance of the Regional Centre Shtip.

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### **October 18**

#### **ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Bitola Manifestation RED CODE**

As part of the project "Heroes and Villains", a manifestation called RED CODE was held at the veranda of the "House of Culture". This is the concluding event of the Campaign for Nonviolence among the Youth, organized by the Youth Cultural Centre, Bitola in partnership with the Association of Roms of Bitola "Bairska Svetlina", Citizens' Association for Democracy, Peace and Tolerance "AURORA", FELIX Group and "Association for Open Communications".

The press conference, which marked the start of the manifestation, made a request to the present representatives of the media to restrict violence in their informative and entertaining programmes. The programme that followed included: a stand presentation of materials on the topic of nonviolence by the representatives of the Regional Centers Shtip and Skopje, a dance performance by Dance of Equality from the Regional Centre Bitola and children's exhibition on the issue of non-violence among the youth by the representatives of the Regional Center Skopje. The secondary school "Josip Bros Tito" represented themselves with the group 'Youth Active' who joined the manifestation with a recital. The event finished with the rock concert of "Pampers" from Bitola.

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## **News from the Network Members**

### **October 10**

#### **ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Bitola Open Forum "Violence and the Media"**

At the premises of the University Library "St. Clement Ohridski", Bitola an Open Forum was held on the issue of "Violence and the Media" as part of the Project "Heroes and Violence". It was organized by the Youth Culture Centre in cooperation with the Association for Open Communications, Association of Roma from Bitola "Bairska Svetlina", Citizens Association for Democracy, Peace and Tolerance AURORA and Group FELIX.

Lecturer on the Open Forum was Roberto Belichanec from the Macedonian Centre for Media, Skopje and representative of the Stability Pact concerning the Media for Republic of Macedonia. Todor Ivanovski – Program Manager of YCC acted as moderator.

The lecturer of the Open Forum was focused on the impact of the Media on the people in their every day life, especially on the young generations. He brought up the problem of nonexistence of national system for ranging the TV programs. It was also discussed about the new draft of the law for regulation of this subject.

### **October 15**

#### **ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo NGO "Youth Alliance"**

#### **Press Conference – Promotion of the Pilot Project for Disarming**

At the premises of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo a Press Conference was held, organized by the NGO Youth Alliance. The issue was the Pilot Project for Disarming coordinated by the NGO Youth Alliance, supported by the NGO Handicap, the Centre for Democratic



Development and the Humanitarian Association of Roma in Macedonia "SONCE", all members of the ECMI Network in the Republic of Macedonia.

The aim was to promote and explain the Pilot Project for Disarming financed by ECMI Network that will be ongoing in the next three months. The Project is aimed to raise the awareness of the citizens about the risk of keeping illegal arms and the need for disarming.

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**October 15**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo Loja Day**

Centre for Balkan Cooperation "LOJA" - Tetovo, member of the ECMI Network, marked three years of successful operation by organizing "Loja Day" on the 15 October 2003 at the House of Culture in Tetovo. This happening was brought into being thanks to the commitment of its members and their belief that they can make a difference. The event brought together both adults and children from different ethnic, cultural and professional backgrounds.

The idea of presenting their work in the field of culture resulted with an impressive program which consisted of exhibitions of numerous art pieces created by children and a magnificent cultural show afterwards. The opening word was given to the Executive Director of CBC Loja - Bujar Luma who presented their mission and briefly went through the main activities of the Babylon Centre in Tetovo and Tearce. The event continued with the Children's choir, Dancing groups and the Dancing Theatre "Youth Wave". Significant contribution to the show was also given from the dancing group of the Humanitarian Association of Roma in Macedonia "SONCE" – Tetovo, also a member of the ECMI NGO Network.

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**October 16**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Gostivar**

**Association for Education, Culture, Ecology and Humanity "MILLENNIUM"**



Visit by representatives of the Foundation King Boduen, Belgium

Visit by, Mr. Jan Baliu and Mariana Milosheva-regional consultants of the Foundation King Boduen, Belgium and Mr.Fabrice de Kerchove - Project Manager from the Program for improving interethnic relation. They were interested about the achievements of the Association for Education, Culture, Ecology and Humanity "MILLENNIUM", member of the ECMI Network. Their work in improving the interethnic relation within their community as well as with the neighbor municipality is evident. The need of international and domestic NGOs working on strengthening the civil society was also underlined.

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**October 22**

**ECMI Regional Resource Centre Bitola Cultural and Humanitarian Association of Turks "Celebia"**

**Open Forum "Bitola Ethno Culture"**

The Open Forum "Bitola Ethno Culture" was held at the Hotel "Epinal" as a part of the project "Bitola Babam Bitola II". The programme was



organized by the Cultural and Humanitarian Association of Turks "CHELEBIA", in partnership with the "Institute, Museum and Gallery" Bitola. The project was part of the Programme for Improvement of the Interethnic Relations, carried out by FOSIM, King Baundoin Foundation, James Stewart Mot Foundation and Allavida Foundation.

The Open Forum "Bitola Ethno Culture" revealed the vibrant multiethnic life in Bitola region that existed between the 15th-19th centuries. Keynote speakers were Ms Zdravka Maretik, ethnologist and Mr. Nikola Ivanov, historian. The previous two exhibitions organized in the last two months highlighted the economic, political and multiethnic life of the town through traditional dresses and original photographs; making the realization of the Forum is a logical conclusion of the project.

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**October 24**  
**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo**  
**Forum of Albanian Women**  
**Open Forum – Restoring the Confidence**



The Open Forum "Restoring the Confidence", which was organized by the Forum of the Albanian Woman in cooperation with the Association for Fighting Breast Cancer "New Side of Life",

took place in the village of Glogji in Tetovo region. The aim of the Open Forum was to detect the problems that the two major ethnic groups face a posteriori of the 2001 crisis. Participants showed great interest in the issue since the multi-ethnic area was seriously affected by the crisis. They emphasized the need and the will to restore confidence so they can look into the future without fear.

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We hope that you have enjoyed this October issue of the ECMI NGO Network Newsletter.

If you have any comments or suggestions for improvement of this newsletter, please contact Verica Grdanoska at: grdanoska@ecmingonet.org.mk.

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