

# 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

September 17

**ECMI Regional Centre Skopje**

**Mr. B Mossberg, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) Stockholm**

Mr. B Mossberg, Head, Division of Western Balkan, SIDA, Stockholm and Ms. Annika Palo, Director - Development Cooperation, SIDA Skopje Office visited ECMI Regional Office in Skopje and the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Kumanovo.

He paid a visit to the ECMI Regional Office in Skopje. Sunoor Verma, ECMI Regional Representative introduced the ECMI Team to the visitors and had a brief presentation on the ECMI NGO Network for the Improvement of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia. Subsequently the word was passed on to Dr. Eben Friedman, ECMI Research Associate, who made a presentation on the latest ECMI Project "Towards Regional Guidelines for the Integration of Roms in the Republic of Macedonia".

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September 15

**ECMI Regional Office Skopje**

**Mr. Jonas Bergström visits the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo**

Mr. Jonas Bergström, Senior Advisor, Division of Western Balkans, Sida Stockholm paid a visit to the Regional Office Skopje where he held a meeting with the ECMI Macedonia Team.

In order to get acquainted with the ECMI mission in the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Jonas Bergström visited the Regional Centre Tetovo where he met representatives of Network members. At this occasion he was also introduced to the activities of the LOJA Babylon Centre in Tearce. Mr. Jonas Bergström continued his field trip at ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Gostivar, where he held meetings with some of the NGOs, members of the Network from the region.

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### Activities of the ECMI NGO Regional Resource Centres

September 2

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Shtip  
Consultative Meetings with Members of the  
Centre**

The ECMI Program Managers Elizabeta Mark-



ovska and Kushtrim Hoxha, accompanied by Web Content Manager Grdanoska Verica and visiting intern Anna Magyarosi, visited the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre in Stip.

At the joint session of the ECMI Team from Skopje, the Regional Technical Assistant and the NGO members, Program Managers introduced the SWOT analysis as a method of evaluation and gave recommendations to improve the performance of the Center.

Subsequently, a number of individual meetings were held not only at the premises of RC Shtip but also in the offices of the NGOs. At these meetings the discussion focused on the ongoing projects financed by ECMI and the Project Proposals for the following Project Cycle.

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#### **September 4**

##### **ECMI Regional Centre Tetovo**

##### **Consultative Meetings with Members of the Centre**



The ECMI Program Managers Elizabeta Markovska and Kushtrim Hoxha, accompanied by Web Content Manager Grdanoska Verica and visiting intern Anna Magyarosi, visited the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre in Tetovo.

A number of the meetings were held at the premises of Regional Centre Tetovo while some meetings were held in the offices of the NGOs. At

these meetings the discussion focused on the ongoing projects financed by ECMI and the Project Proposals for the following Project Cycle. The ECMI Team also had a chance to visit the performance of Dance theatre at the Babylon center, which is managed by the Center for Balkan Cooperation "LOJA", member of the ECMI Network.

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#### **12 September**

##### **ECMI Regional Centre Kumanovo**

##### **Workshop for drafting of a Strategic Plan**

The members of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Kumanovo met for a strategy planning meeting that lasted two days at the Hotel "Centrobiznis" Vinica in Kumanovo.

The aim was to come up with a sustainability plan for the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Kumanovo. Moreover, they discussed potential partnership with the local authorities and exchange of information.

They made a decision to host a Donor's Confer-



ence on the 16 October, 2003. The members made use of the meeting to present some follow on Project Proposals that are going to be presented at the Donor Conference. These long term initiatives are based on findings from the pilot projects implemented jointly by the members and funded by the ECMI NGO Network.

Facilitators at the workshop were Sonja Arsovska,



President of the NGO S.O.S and Feat Kamberovski, President of the Forum for Roma Rights "ARKA". Kushtrim Hoxha and Sunoor Verma from the ECMI Skopje Office also participated in the discussions.

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## **September 22**

### **ECMI Regional Centre Tetovo**

#### **Visit by Pro Credit Bank**

On the request of Pro Credit Bank a meeting was held with ECMI NGO Network members at the premises of the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo. After a brief introduction by the members of mission of the ECMI Network in Macedonia, they described their activities to the representatives of Pro Credit Bank. Moreover, they explained the procedures and methods of fundraising.

On their side, representatives of Pro Credit Bank presented ECMI Network Members the conditions under which credit for upcoming projects could be approved. Attracted by the possibility, members made inquiries about the application details.

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## **September 25**

### **ECMI Regional Centre Tetovo**

#### **Visit by Ms. Marija Todorova – representative of the British Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia**

Ms Marija Todorova – representative of the British Embassy in Republic of Macedonia has visited the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo.

The aim of the visit was closer introduction of the realized and ongoing Projects of the Network members. Discussion for undertook activities in this and previous year by the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Tetovo also took place.

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## **September 25**

### **ECMI Regional Centre Gostivar**

#### **Meeting with representatives of the German - Hungarian Contingent of EUFOR – Concordia**

The joint German-Hungarian Contingent of EUFOR – Concordia, Gostivar branch held a meeting with members of the ECMI Network at the premises of ECMI Regional Resource Centre Gostivar. At the gathering the spokespersons have introduced the missions and activities of their respective organizations. Major Ferenc Petneházi, leader of the Contingent, presented the mission of EUFOR – Concordia by composition of the forces and organizational structure.

He also stressed the positive role that Concordia has in Gostivar region. On their side, the ECMI Network members clarified the activities that they carry out in this region and the position they take in solving the community problems.

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## **September 26**

### **ECMI Regional Centre Kumanovo**

#### **Promotion of the ECMI Network on Kumanovo Local Television**

As part of an educational programme, the local Television Kumanovo broadcast a report on the ECMI Network. The feature presented the mission of ECMI in the Republic of Macedonia as well as introduced viewers to the ongoing activities. Even a fragment of a regular meeting between members of ECMI Regional Resource Centre Kumanovo was shown on the News. This particular report has also contributed to the promotion of the ECMI Network, its mission in Republic of Macedonia and the member organizations from Kumanovo.

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## News from the Network Members

September 9

### Center for Roma Community "Drom" Program for informal education of the Roma "The Roma Future"

The informal school year for 106 Roma adults and children from Kumanovo started on 9<sup>th</sup> of September and will end on 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2004. This Program is organized by the Center for Roma Community "Drom" in partnership with Swiss Agency for Development.

The target group are those Roms, who haven't received primary school education. Most of them are orphans or children that left school or are unemployed adults from the districts of Bavchi, Sredok and Baraki.

Training will take place at the offices of the Center for Roma Community "Drom". Upon successful completion of the school year and the compulsory exams, students will be awarded diplomas from the Vocational University in Kumanovo.

Participants are divided into four groups according to their level of education and age. Hence, the following groups started work in September: a group for pre-school children, a group for 13-15 year-old-teenagers, a group for 12-16 year-old-teenagers and one group is specifically aimed at mature participants. Students are taught to read and write in all of the classes.

Because the educational program of the Roma called 'The Roma Future' will continue in the future, organizers hope that a lot of people will be reached. The integration of these marginalized groups into society is an urgent need.

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September 10

### Cultural and Humanitarian Association of Turks "Chelebia"

### Exhibition – Traditional Dresses of the Bitola Ethnicities



The exhibition "Traditional Dresses of the Bitola Ethnicities" was opened from 10<sup>th</sup> until 28<sup>th</sup> of September at the premises of "Institute and Museum" Bitola. This exhibition was a part of the project "Bitola Babam Bitola II", organized by the Cultural and Humanitarian Association of Turks "Chelebia", in partnership with the "Institute, Museum and Gallery" Bitola.

The project is part of the Program for Improvement of the Interethnic Relations, carried out by FOSIM, King Baundoin Foundation, James Stewart Mot Foundation and Allavida Foundation. The exhibition revealed the economic, political and multiethnic life of the town through the traditional dresses. Under the influence of the east and west and merging Macedonians, Turks, Vlachs, Jews, Albanians and Roma, the exhibition showed that Bitola can offer a variety of traditional dresses.

The shown photographs represented the culture, tradition and habits of the citizens of Bitola. They also represented the obvious influence of the European fashion style.

The unique mixture of dresses caught the attention of many visitors who gave their high opinion



about the initiative by the Cultural and Humanitarian Association of Turks "Chelebia" and showed interest for future events of this kind.

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### **September 17**

#### **Roma Women's Organisation "DAJA" – Kumanovo**

#### **Open Forum– Rights of Roma Women in the Family and Society**

From September 17<sup>th</sup> on, Roma Women's Organisation "DAJA" held seven tribunes on the issue of Rights of the Roma Women in the Family and Society.

The tribunes took place in the following towns of the Republic of Macedonia: Berovo, Vinica, Pehchevo, Delchevo, Bitola, Kriva Palanka and Kumanovo.

The lecture of Ms. Atina Murgashanska, a law expert, focused on the basic rights of women in the family and society. She stressed that although Roma women should have the same rights as everybody else, they are more frequently victims of family violence. Open Forum - titled "Rights of the Roma Women in the Family and Society" has contributed to raising awareness about the basic women rights that Roma women should enjoy in the midst of their families and society.

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### **September 18**

#### **Youth Cultural Centre - Bitola**

#### **Open Forum – Juvenile Delinquency and Law Regulative**

As part of the project "Heroes and Villains" an open forum was held on the issue of Juvenile Delinquency and Law Regulatives at the premises of "Institute, Museum and Gallery" Bitola. The event was organized by the Youth Cultural Centre – Bitola in partnership with Association of Roma from Bitola "Bairska Svetlina", Citizens'

Association for Democracy, Peace and Tolerance "AURORA" and "Association for Open Communication".

Lecturers at the forum were Mr. Lazar Nanev – Judge for juvenile delinquency from the Kavadarci Court and Ms. Valentina Grujovska – inspector for juvenile delinquency in Secretary for Internals Affairs, Bitola.

The draft of the Law for juvenile delinquency that was prepared by mutual cooperation of the Ministry for Internal Affairs and the Secretary of Justice was discussed. Causes of the juvenile delinquency were also brought up as well as the methods that can be used in resolving this problem.

The Open Forum grew into an interactive debate for the need of National Youth Program for prevention of the juvenile delinquency.

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### **September 18**

#### **ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Shtip NGO "Romani Asvin"**

#### **Debate – General Needs of Roma Youth**

A debate was organized on the issue "General Needs of Roma Youth" by the non-governmental organization "Romani Asvin" at the Shtip municipality. At that occasion, 30 Roma youngsters participated. The event was opened by the representatives of the organizing NGO: Mr. Serhan Demirov and Mr. Jasharen Mensur.

It continued with an interactive discussion of the participants who called attention to their everyday problems such as insufficient education, discrimination at work, lack of social benefits, early marriages and lack of perspective for Roma youth.

In the frame of the debate, the word was given to Ms. Snezhana Paparova and Ms. Juliana Spasova, representatives of the Association for Protection of Consumer's Rights, Shtip branch. They informed participants about the conse-



quences of low quality products and food poisoning.

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**September 24**

**ECMI Regional Centre Gostivar**

**Open Forum – Cultural Heritage in the Gostivar Region**



The Forum - Cultural Heritage in the Gostivar Region was held at the municipality of Gostivar. The event brought together sixty citizens from different ethnic backgrounds as well as local and national media correspondents.

Organized by the ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Gostivar, the Forum endorsed activities that would promote the cultural and historic heritage of Gostivar region. As it was agreed at the Forum, Gostivar, thanks to its tradition, has a potential to become a bridge for interethnic understanding and respect. For this purpose, all dilapidated monuments should be renovated without further delay. It was also agreed that there should be given support for the cultural activities in order to uphold the spiritual traditions in this area. Thus the interethnic life of Gostivar region through the centuries can be clearly illustrated.

The following lecturers contributed a great deal to the success of the Forum - Cultural Heritage in

the Gostivar Region:

Mr. Sherafedin Kaso – history expert, Ms. Dragica Jovanovska – history professor, Mr. Senat Bekiri – President of the NGO “Milenium” Vrapchishte and MS. Jovanka Stavrevska – Dankovska – Director of the House of Culture  
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**September 25**

**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 Albanian Women in co-operation with the NGO “New Side of Life”, took place in the village of Rogachevo, Tetovo region. The aim of the tribune was to emphasize the need to restore confidence between the two major ethnic groups, especially in areas most affected in the 2001<sup>st</sup> crises.

Although Ragachevo is a village which is populated mostly by Macedonians, participants showed great interest in the issue.

The speakers addressing the problem were Ms Dzane Kreshova, President of the Forum of the Albanian Women and Ms Branka Markovik, Representative of the NGO “New Side of Life”.

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**September 26**

**ECMI Regional NGO Resource Centre Shtip Association for Fight Against Breast Cancer “New Side of Life”**

**Open Forum – Rights and Obligation of the Health Workers**

The Association for Fight against Breast Cancer “New Side of Life” organized a Tribune called Rights and Obligation of the Health Workers, which was held in Shtip municipality. The Tribune is part of the project “Hope of the Patients in the Hand of the Medicine Ethic”, which is financed by



FOSIM and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Md. Cvetanka Samardziska Maneva, lecturer at the Open Forum addressed the participants about the rights and obligations of health workers, and most importantly, how to put them into practice.

The subsequent discussion led to the following conclusion: there is insufficient knowledge about the rights and obligations of both health workers and patients.

The success and timeliness of the Open Forum made the issue so highly relevant, that the local television repeatedly broadcast the summary of the Tribune.

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We hope that you have enjoyed this September 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](mailto:grdanoska@ecmingonet.org.mk).

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