

ECMI PRESS RELEASE
Skopje 5th December 2003

3RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE
"ECMI NGO NETWORK FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA" AND 2ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE "ECMI REGIONAL NGO CENTRES"
(Skopje, Friday 5th December 2003)

The European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) based in Flensburg, Germany, is pleased to announce that on Wednesday 10th December 2003 from 17:00-19:00 hrs at the Hotel Holiday Inn (st. "Vasil Agilarski" no. 2, Skopje) "ECMI-NGO Network for the Improvement of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia" will celebrate its third anniversary.

The project ECMI NGO Network for the Improvement of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia was launched by ECMI Flensburg in December 2000 as part of a series of new initiatives in South East Europe. The aim of this member-driven Network is development of cooperation among member NGOs to identify common ground for action on issues related to advancing interethnic dialogue in the Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, grass-root NGO capacities are enhanced with the help and expertise of ECMI team to generate joint pilot projects. The work of about 70 Network members, representing all major ethnic communities in the country, had a substantial impact on citizens because the projects are based on local priorities.

ECMI NGO Network members adopted and put to use a detailed Memorandum for Cooperation, including Criteria for participation in the ECMI-NGO Network and a Guide to Good Practices of NGOs in the year of the establishment. Since then, additional amendments have been included into the founding document that mirrors the changing needs of the Network. The Coordinating Body consists of 13 members representing the ethnic and regional composition of the Network. The delegates of the Coordinating Body will present their activities at the press conference.

ECMI Regional NGO Centres were established 2 years ago as neutral grounds for all NGO members in developing, coordinating and implementing joint projects on issues that cut across interethnic ties. The centres in the cities of Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Gostivar, Bitola and Shtip are also focal points for meetings with local authorities, local business sector, media and donors. The Skopje Centre also serves as the headquarters for this project and for ECMI in the Republic of Macedonia. At the press conference the Representatives of the Regional Centres will present their work and the challenges they face.

The project was made possible by the generous support of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FRESTA- Secretariat for Peace and Stability), the British Embassy in Skopje, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

For more information, please consult the website of the ECMI-NGO Network at www.ecmingonet.org.mk or contact Sunoor Verma, ECMI Regional Representative in Skopje (ECMI Regional Office Skopje, Majka Tereza 13a, Tel.: +389 (0)2 3215 637; 3215 638 - Fax: +389 (0)2 3215 639). For more information on ECMI: www.ecmi.de.

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