



**Делуваме.Локално.Заедно**

**Daja zor.Lokalnikane.Jekha jek**

**Act.Local.Together**

**Birlikte.Yerel.Hareket ediyoruz**

**Lucrăm.Local.Deadun**

**Veprojme.Bashkerishte.Ne nivelokal**

FIRST REPORT ON MONITORING OF MEETINGS OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILS  
REGARDING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

# IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION OF SMALL(ER) COMMUNITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

April-June 2016

Publisher:

National Roma Centrum  
str. "Done Bozhinov" 11/5,  
1300 Kumanovo, Macedonia  
Phone: +389 31427558  
E-mail: [info@nationalromacentrum.org](mailto:info@nationalromacentrum.org)  
Website: [www.nationalromacentrum.org](http://www.nationalromacentrum.org)  
[www.ednomagazine.com](http://www.ednomagazine.com)



# REPORT FROM THE MONITORING OF THE SESSIONS OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILS REGARDING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Period: 01 April - 30 June

## INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared within the project activities “Improving the participation of small (er) communities at the local level” with the support of Delegation of the European Union. The main objective is to establish mechanisms to improve the participation and protection of the rights of Roma and other smaller communities at the local level in accordance with the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The implementation period of the project is from 01.04.2016 until 30.09.2017, in 5 municipalities: Kumanovo, Bitola, Kocani, Prilep, Tetovo.

Association National Roma Centrum from Kumanovo (NRC) together with the Association of Roma Aven Kocani, starting from April 1 to June 30, 2016 monitored the level of the quality of the sessions and their dynamics, structure of participants in decision-making process regarding inter-ethnic relations, whether the Commission on inter-ethnic relations is functional and consulted and whether their opinions and recommendations have been taken into account, planning and allocation of funds, participation of smaller communities directly or indirectly as citizens. During the monitoring 5 quarterly reports will be developed on the quality of the meetings of the municipal council regarding participation of smaller communities in decision-making process at the local level. Before you is the first report which refers to the period from April 1 to June 30, 2016.

The purpose this monitoring of the councils sessions is to get additional transparency in decision-making process and participation of smaller communities in policy making at the local level.

After each monitoring period, civil associations and local authorities will be informed through reports on key findings from the monitoring of the sessions on the municipal councils about inter-ethnic issues.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTION AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN MUNICIPALITIES KUMANOVO AND KOCANI**

### **Constitution**

Constitution of Republic of Macedonia in the preamble and amendments from 16.11.2001 stemming from the Ohrid Framework Agreement brought some changes in the status and positioning of the smaller ethnic communities in the Republic of Macedonia.

Amendment 5 is amending Article 7 of the Constitution which introduces that on the whole territory of the Republic of Macedonia and in international relations official language is Macedonian and its Cyrillic alphabet and the language spoken by at least 20% of the population and their letter. Personal documents on citizens who speak an official language other than Macedonian are published in Macedonian and its Cyrillic alphabet and the language spoken by the citizens and its alphabet.

Any person living in a unit of local self-government in which at least 20% of the population speaks a language other than Macedonian in communication with regional offices of ministries and in communication with the ministries may use any of the official languages and the ministries and regional offices will answer in Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet as the official language and on the alphabet and its letter used by the citizen.

Amendment 12 replaces Article 78 of the Constitution whereby the Committee on Community Relations is formed which consists of 19 members of whom 7 are Macedonians and Albanians from among the Members of Parliament and one from among the Turks, Vlachs, Roma, Serbs and Bosniaks. Committee members are elected by the Parliament, and if a community does not have representatives, the Ombudsman after consultation with relevant representatives of those communities, shall propose the remaining members of the committee. The main function of the Committee is to consider matters of relations between communities and to give opinions and suggestions which the Parliament is obliged to consider. In case of dispute for conducting the voting procedure in Parliament, the Committee will decide with majority votes from the members whether the procedure will conduct.

### **Law on Local Self-Government**

Law on Local Self Government in Article 55 establishes the Commission for community relations to be formed in municipalities where at least 20% of the total population are members of a particular community. The Commission is composed of an equal number of representatives from each community in the municipality, and the manner of selection is determined by the statute of the municipality.

The Commission considers issues regarding relations between communities and gives opinions and suggestions which the municipal council should consider and decide about them. Article 90 stipulates that in the municipalities official language alongside Macedonian and its Cyrillic alphabet is the language and alphabet that at least 20% of the inhabitants of the municipality use and the language and alphabet which less than 20% of the inhabitants of the municipality use the municipal council decides about their use.

## **Statutes of municipalities of Kumanovo and Kocani**

The statute of municipality of Kumanovo adopted on 30.06.2003, in Article 27 stipulates that the regulations pertaining to culture, use of languages and alphabets spoken by less than 20% of the citizens of the municipality, determining and use of back and flag of the municipality shall be adopted by the majority of present council members, with a majority of votes of the present council members belonging to communities that are not the majority population in the municipality. Article 47 predicted the establishment of the Commission for Inter-Ethnic Relations which will consider issues related to community relations and will give opinions and suggestions for their resolution which the Council shall consider and decide about them.

In the statute of municipality of Kocani in Article 30 is set to be established a Commission for Inter-Ethnic relations, whose composition, method and scope of work will be determined by the council. Also in Article 7 of the Statute stipulates that back and flag of the municipality will be elected by the majority votes of the councilors, for which the majority of the councilors belonging to the minority communities will be necessary.

## **METHODOLOGY OF MONITORING**

The monitoring includes 6 sessions of municipal councils in Kumanovo and Kocani:

### **Kumanovo**

- 27.04.2016
- 25.05.2016
- 08.06.2016

### **Kocani**

- 27.04.2016
- 27.05.2016
- 15.06.2016

During these sessions we analyzed the quality of the sessions and their dynamics, structure of participants, the process of making decisions about inter-ethnic issues, whether the Commission on inter-ethnic relations was consulted and whether their opinions and recommendations have been taken into account, their participation in policy making process, implementation plan, planning and allocation of funds, the involvement of smaller communities directly or indirectly as citizens and so on.

## **POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Ha On the sessions of the municipal council of Kumanovo almost all members of the council from position and opposition group attend the sessions including the members from the smaller communities. Commission on Inter-ethnic Relations did not attended on any meetings of the council of municipality of Kumanovo. The whole composition of the council of the Municipality of Kocani attended the session which has one independent counciler. Commission on Inter-ethnic Relations is not formed in municipality of Kocani.

Council of municipality of Kocani consists of 19 councilors of which six are from the opposition SDSM, eight from the position party VMRO-DPMNE, one counselor from NSDP, the Democratic Alliance, the Socialist Party and VMRO-People's Party, one councilor as representative of the Roma community who is independent adviser.

Council of municipality of Kumanovo consisting of 32 councilors of which eleven are from the Coalition SDSM twelve councilors from Coalition VMRO-DPMNE, four councilors of DUI, two councilors from DPA, one of the NDP and two councilors from Group voters.

## **FINDINGS OF THE MONITORING**

At the session held on 27.04.2016, on the Council of Kumanovo agenda was found Draft- decision on exemption from payment of fees for arranging construction land for determining the legal status of illegally constructed building of Islamic community of Macedonia - Skopje, Muftistvo Kumanovo which the counselors adopted it without discussion.

At the meeting held on 25.05.2016, there weren't any point concerning inter-ethnic relations and their participation in decision-making process at the local level.

The meeting of the council of the municipality of Kumanovo on 08.06.2016 also didn't have any point regarding inter-ethnic relations.

At the meeting held on 27.04.2016, on the Council of the Municipality of Kocani agenda not any point was found of the smaller communities, except for councilors questions where the representative of the Roma community demanded restoration of all the streets of the Roma neighborhood, which question received a response from the Mayor that it is expected in two months to renovate and repair the street Stamen Manov in which live members of the Roma community.

At the meeting of 27.05.2016, on the agenda there were no points regarding inter-ethnic relations, except in matters where the councilors questions where one questions was asked whether the municipality applied for the forum for communities for budgetary spending money. The question was answered by the Mayor who said that the municipality has applied and received money and that the process will start from September and a budget forum will be formed.

At the meeting of 15.06.2016, on the agenda not a single point was found regarding smaller communities and their participation in the decision making process at the local level.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Matters regarding inter-ethnic relations are not on the agenda of the meetings of the councils enough. Regarding the councilor questions arises some question regarding the smaller communities, which receives short answer and there is no discussion on which should be payed more attention.

The Commission for Inter-Community is not invited to the meetings of the council of the municipality of Kumanovo. It needs to be consulted and invited when the agenda will have issues of inter-ethnic relations and its recommendations and opinions should be taken into account.

The inclusion of smaller communities directly or indirectly as citizens is very small on the sessions of the municipal councils. It is necessary to involve the citizens in decision-making process at the local level and to participate in the sessions of the councils in order to provide greater transparency of the meetings.

## SUMMARY

Key findings in the first report of monitoring sessions are that the monitoring period from 1 April to 30 June 2016, on the sessions of the municipal councils the discussion about inter-ethnic relations and their participation in decision making at the local level was very little.

In municipality of Kumanovo official language alongside the Macedonian language and the Cyrillic alphabet, is the Roma language.

In the statute in municipality of Kocani is predicted forming of the Commission for Inter-ethnic Relations, but the Commission is not actually formed.

Commission for Inter-ethnic Relations in the municipality of Kumanovo consists of 12 members of which two members are members of Macedonian, Roma, Turkish, Albanian, Serbian and Vlach community.

Questions for inter-ethnic relations are not on the agenda of the current session of the municipal councils. Few issues affecting smaller communities were mentioned but no specific points that concern them.

\*\*\*\*\*

The project “Improving the participation of smaller communities at the local level” is financed by the Delegation of the European Union.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Association National Roma Centrum (NRC) Kumanovo and the partner organization Assotiation of Roma AVENA, Kocani, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.