

**Securing Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement through
Concrete Policy Action: The ‘Policy Dialogue Initiative’**

**An ECMI Project in Macedonia
2004-2005**

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1. BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY

The signing of the Framework Agreement in Ohrid on 13 August 2001 by representatives of Macedonia's four largest political parties (two ethnic Macedonian and two ethnic Albanian) presented Macedonia as well as the international community with a unique opportunity to put an end to an ethnic conflict that threatened to destroy the country. By 2004, however, implementation of the Agreement had been limited to the largely-hesitant adoption of legislation in parliament, with no concrete action taken to demonstrate to the population of Macedonia that holding to the terms agreed at Ohrid was yielding benefits for all of Macedonia's ethnic communities. Given the fragile state of interethnic relations in Macedonia created by the conflict, implementation of the Framework Agreement is an extremely delicate matter. Further stalling of implementation had the potential to increase support within the ethnic Albanian population for radical groups, or propel recent converts to the political process back to the realm of violent action. Non-implementation risked provoking violence in segments of the Albanian population; however, weak implementation of the Framework Agreement was likely to encourage violence on the part of ethnic Macedonian radical groups anxious to capitalize on popular discontent associated with caving in to Western pressure and/or to surrendering to ethnic Albanian demands. In light of the dangers associated with both non-implementation and poor implementation of the Framework Agreement, it was crucial that the provisions of the document be implemented, and that they are implemented competently.

An action plan on the necessary legal reforms required for implementation of the Agreement had been drafted in January 2003, but in April of the same year, an article by former Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski proposed scrapping the Agreement altogether and replacing it with partition and population exchange. This met condemnation from the government and international organizations, but was supported by leaders of some Albanian political parties. However, ethnic Macedonian parties in government continued to stall the approval of legislation required for implementation.

By 2004, the Framework Agreement was an enduring feature in the political landscape in Macedonia and its (non)implementation had satisfied neither ethnic Macedonians nor ethnic Albanians. On the one hand, many ethnic Macedonians – including a considerable number of their representatives in parliament – viewed the document as a bitter pill foisted on them by pro-Albanian Western actors. As a result, implementation of the Agreement had been stalled

repeatedly as ethnic Macedonian deputies set new conditions to be fulfilled before implementation could proceed. This stalling led many ethnic Albanians to question ethnic Macedonians' commitment to implementing the Framework Agreement at all. Moreover, some representatives of Macedonia's smaller minorities (e.g., Macedonian Muslims, Roms, Serbs, Turks, Vlachs) expressed concern that many of the provisions of the Agreement effectively excluded them by placing them at an increased risk of discrimination in a regime emphasizing the rights of the ethnic Albanian population while neglecting other minority populations.

The Framework Agreement presented a unique opportunity for representatives of the international community to work with local leaders to restore trust between members to the conflict and to re-establish stability in the country. In the subsequent years the government coalitions have remained fractioned, and almost no concrete actions had been undertaken to demonstrate to the population that improved ethnic relations and the provisions outlined in the Framework Agreement are the key to a stable political environment and economic prosperity. Given the lack of progress made in 2002-2003, ECMI identified the need for a project to bring people together to engage in dialogue on concrete policy matters. Our hypothesis was that members of different communities have more shared interests and concerns than they realize – and that focusing on these commonalities is a way to not only improve relations, but also to formulate better policy.

ECMI identified four policy areas where problems needed to be addressed:

Education and Youth

Within the general population of Macedonia, there are great discrepancies between ethnic communities in the field of education. At the level of primary education, different ethnic groups' proportion of the total population of the country is not reflected in the student population. Ethnic Albanians, Roms, and Turks and female members of minority populations are particularly under-represented in the education system. These disproportions are even greater at the secondary and university levels. One means of combating the under-representation of minority communities in the school system is to provide education in minority languages. In Macedonia, primary education is available in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian. Additionally, optional education in Romani has been introduced in a small number of primary schools. At the secondary level, instruction is available in Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish. At the university level, however, state-funded instruction in most areas of study is available only in Macedonian, with a

few departments (e.g., drama, pedagogy) at the University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje also offering instruction in Albanian.

Among the various issues addressed in the Framework Agreement, issue of education occupies an important place. At the levels of primary and secondary education, the Framework Agreement promises instruction in students' native tongues, with uniform standards to be applied to all academic programs in the country. At the same time, the Framework Agreement and the new Law on Local Self-Government call for the decentralization of educational administration to the municipalities. With respect to university education, on the other hand, the Framework Agreement envisages state funding for instruction in languages spoken by at least 20% of the population (i.e., Albanian), as well as the application of principles of positive discrimination in admitting students belonging to Macedonia's minority communities.

Health

Since the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the state of health of the population of the Republic of the Macedonia has been on the decline. This is mostly a result of the economic decline that the country has experienced, which manifested itself through inadequate attention to healthcare both by state bodies (which can no longer afford to support extensive healthcare programmes) and individuals (who lack the resources necessary to pick up the slack left by the declining state). While this general decline affected all of Macedonia's ethnic communities, minorities, who comprise approximately one third of Macedonia's population, were particularly affected.

The declining health care system has been compounded by a rise in drug dependency, and the unwillingness the publicly address mental illness. Further, with the opening of borders and the social liberation of society, prostitution has expanded significantly, and is now considered a public health problem. However, prostitution, like many other social problems, continues to be a taboo subject and requires urgent attention in order to combat its expansion and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

Human rights, police, and justice

The large number of NGOs in Macedonia that refer to human rights in their mission statements is in itself an indication of the urgency of this issue for all of Macedonia's ethnic communities. During Macedonia's first decade of independence, abuse by Macedonian police was widespread.

While reports by international human rights organizations indicate that police beatings of suspects of all ethnicities are not uncommon, minority communities are particularly vulnerable. On the one hand, the stereotypes of particular minority communities common among the Macedonian population as a whole also permeate the police forces. On the other hand, the members of some minority communities may lack education as to their rights, making police abuse less likely to be treated as a violation of their rights.

Further, the court system presented its own set of problems, among which was the pace of deliberation in human rights cases brought by private citizens against state organs, the duration of which could be so long as to discourage those harmed from pursuing redress, compounded by the shortage of certified interpreters in the languages of Macedonia's minority communities.

Economic development and equal opportunities

As one of the less developed republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Macedonia was a net beneficiary of the state's redistributive tax system. Since its independence from Yugoslavia, however, Macedonia has been left largely to its own devices. Moreover, the embargo in place against rump Yugoslavia through much of the last decade hurt Macedonia considerably, as Yugoslavia was Macedonia's chief trading partner. Another cause of economic problems was Greece's economic blockade of the new country over the name 'Republic of Macedonia'.

While the general population of Macedonia suffers from the economic underdevelopment of the country as a whole, this underdevelopment is not evenly distributed throughout the country. The western part of the country is particularly underdeveloped, and is where most of the country's ethnic Albanian population resides. In light of the general state of interethnic relations in Macedonia, it is hardly surprising that regional economic disparities have been perceived as discrimination by considerable segments of the ethnic Albanian population.

Regardless of the geographic distribution of underdevelopment, minority communities are more economically depressed than the population on average. This situation stems in part from employment discrimination and lower levels of education amongst minority communities. Whereas the organization of the Yugoslav economy under communism provided ample employment opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the collapse of that economy

with the collapse of the common state has resulted in large-scale unemployment. Moreover, the political situation in Macedonia has been such that there is little incentive for foreign investors.

The Framework Agreement provides some general guidelines for educational reform in Macedonia, and calls for the decentralization of health care to the municipalities. More recently, the new Law on Local Self-Government has repeated this call. However, it is crucial that the decentralization of health care does not mean that the state simply passes on to the municipalities a set of responsibilities that it is currently capable of fulfilling. The Agreement promises to improve the human rights situation in Macedonia in a number of ways. Central to the set of reforms in this area is an overhaul of Macedonia's police forces, through the decentralization of the police by endowing municipal councils with the authority to select local heads of police from a list of candidates provided by the Ministry of Interior, and ensuring that the composition of the police forces will reflect the composition and distribution of the population of Macedonia. Further to this, the Framework Agreement guarantees to all parties involved in any criminal or civil judicial proceeding the right to translation at the expense of the state, and invites the international community to assist in training lawyers, judges, and prosecutors from Macedonia's minority communities. Finally, in relation to the thematic areas of ECMI's project, in addition to promising rigorous application of the principle of non-discrimination with respect to employment in public administration and public enterprises, the Framework Agreement envisages the decentralization of local economic development to the municipal level (as does the new Law on Local Self-Government).

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project was premised on the belief that members of all communities in the Republic of Macedonia have many common concerns and interests, the fulfilment of which can help to build trust between residents, to strengthen ties between representatives from different sectors and regions, to improve the quality of discussion on policy matters and to make concrete recommendations that benefit all people regardless of region, ethnicity, religion and gender, and contribute to the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

The role of the ECMI was to facilitate a process whereby members of government and major political parties, leaders in the NGO sector and professionals in the private sector met on a monthly basis during the course of 2004 in order to identify priority needs and to craft recommendations that should and can be addressed by the appropriate institutions in the fields of economy, education, health care and human rights and justice. The project had three principal aims:

- To increase the frequency and improve the quality of contact between leaders from different communities who are active in the governmental, professional and NGO sectors;
- To enable political stakeholders to reframe the political agenda to address the shared interests and concerns of all people, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion and gender, thereby improving communication, building trust and ensuring more responsive policies.
- To develop concrete policy recommendations that will improve the quality of life of people from all communities.

From these aims, the project progressed with many activities, which are detailed below, the outcome of which were the following:

The generation of expert groups cutting across ethnic and gender lines which focused on technical issues affecting the general population of Macedonia. The multiethnic and interdisciplinary composition of the expert groups placed them in a unique position both to devise strategies for the implementation of the Framework Agreement and to demand direct action toward the

implementation of those strategies. The groups were supported by international experts in their thematic areas, thus transferring knowledge and building capacity of local actors.

The creation of a standing interethnic forum for dialogue and the development of practical policies related to the requirements of the Framework Agreement. The participation of a consultative body outside of the government framework is critical for ensuring that implementation of the Framework Agreement brings concrete benefits to all communities - on the one hand, such bodies allow their members to relate to one another in a non-adversarial setting, and on the other hand, the requirement that consultative bodies charged with implementing the Framework Agreement be multiethnic means that the members of Macedonia's various ethnic communities will meet in a forum emphasizing technical issues affecting all communities.

Improved civil society access to policy-making bodies. Insofar as NGOs and government officials will participate in the expert groups, the project encouraged regular interaction between civil society organizations and policy-making bodies. This interaction in turn contributed to the establishment of self-sustaining channels of communication between government and non-government sectors.

Concrete benefits for disenfranchised communities. Implementation of the provisions of the Framework Agreement taken on by the expert groups initiated the improvement equity in the distribution of education, healthcare, justice, and economic development - areas in which tangible improvements are most needed.

A consensus that the Framework Agreement is preferable to conflict. Whereas the project's emphasis on technical issues affecting all communities reassures ethnic Macedonians that the Framework Agreement is in its interest, the provision of benefits to disenfranchised communities will convince those communities that the Framework Agreement constitutes a genuine improvement over the previous state of affairs in Macedonia.

Political stability. While the Framework Agreement itself seeks to bring long-term political stability to Macedonia, political stability is also necessary for the Agreement to be implemented. This project sought to promote such stability by demonstrating to all ethnic communities that Macedonia under the Framework Agreement is preferable to Macedonia in conflict.

The departure from ethnic politics to interest-based politics. The formation of cross-ethnic coalitions on concrete issues affecting all ethnic communities is a first step towards the de-ethnicizing of political issues, and de-emphasize ethnic affiliation in the presence of more general concerns.

METHODOLOGY

The inter-disciplinary approach was based on several premises:

(1) A gradual approach yields more positive results. The success of the initiative hinged upon the ability to create an environment in which members of the working groups trust the facilitator (ECMI), have trust in the process, and feel safe to speak and listen to other members in their working groups. This trust was built gradually.

(2) In addition, ECMI's role was to make process and content observations that would challenge members of the working groups to question their attitudes towards members of other communities, and to listen to information about the living conditions and concerns of members from different communities. We also ensured that the working group members did not engage in lengthy digressions or in other practices of work avoidance, in other words, we ensured that members remained focused on the items on their agenda.

(3) ECMI's aims were not only to ensure that participants worked towards formulating recommendations in support of the provisions in the Ohrid Agreement, but also, and more importantly, to provide members of the working groups with the opportunity to see the damaging consequences of the ways in which they have communicated with one another in the past, and to see that there are ways in which to build more constructive and inclusive relationships with one another.

(4) The ECMI team elected not to propose specific topics for discussion as it believed this would unnecessarily limit the expression of genuine concerns by members of the group; instead they propose what most interests them. Members of the working groups had enough relevant experience within their fields of expertise to propose topics for discussion and to express their personal fears and needs as well as the fears and needs of their communities. Members of the working groups were more likely to take ownership of the issues if the proposals for conversation topics came from themselves. They were also more likely to advocate for and work on the

implementation of recommendations since they had been involved in defining the agenda from the outset.

(5) The diversity within the working groups (the fact that they were a representative sample of the larger population) ensures that issues in connection with the provisions in the Ohrid Framework Agreement were brought to the table for discussion.

WORKING GROUP PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES

As mentioned above in the methodology used for this project, each working group identified its own priority areas.

Human Rights

Involvement of state institutions in violations of human rights;

Unresolved cases regarding citizenship;

Unlawful deprivation of freedom of movement;

Discrimination in obtaining documents

Denial of rights of national minorities/ ethnic communities;

Disrespect for rule of law

Weak mechanisms for defence of rights

Health Care

Lack of National Strategy for reform of health sector;

Lack of qualified health care managers;

Financially unsustainable system;

Insufficient quantities of medicine;

Lack of access for certain segments of population.

Education

De-politicization/Professionalization (management)

Improvements to infrastructure and equipment

Improvements to training colleges (improving quality of instruction)

Decentralization of Education

Re-introduction of “socialization component” of education

Economy

Micro level: Encouraging Economic growth/development
Support to small and medium enterprises
Infrastructural support

Macro level: Structural changes
Encouraging Economic growth/development
Harmonization of laws

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the project was carried out in four phases over 15 months.

I. Formation of Working Groups and preliminary meetings (January – April 2004)

This phase consisted of three main activities: interviews with leaders in the different sectors, the selection of individuals for inclusion in the initiative and initial group meetings with each of the four working groups.

ECMI presented its work plan to over seventy persons on an individual basis. The aim of these individual consultations was to learn about the person's background and skills, to make an assessment on whether he or she would be able to make a contribution to the working group, and to explain the philosophy behind the approach.

After making these assessments, approximately fifty people representing different ethnic groups, genders, professional and political affiliations were selected to take part in the initiative. All members, except for those nominated by the political parties, went through the interview and selection process. The political party nominees were also interviewed, but their inclusion was based upon their nomination. Once the individuals had been selected, preliminary meetings of the working groups were held.

II. Problem Identification, Analysis and drafting of Recommendations (May – August 2004)

Each working group followed the same process of problem identification, prioritization and analysis. At the first two group sessions members spoke of their backgrounds, their professional interests and their policy concerns. At the third session they devised criteria by which to assess which problems each group would focus on and thereafter members of the groups ranked the problems (by secret ballot) and ECMI tallied the results. The fourth and fifth sessions of the working groups were used to gather more information on the selected topics, analyzed this information, and map out the different stakeholders, their points of view and the obstacles to the status quo preventing the resolution of these problems (in other words: *why hasn't this issue been solved already? Are the barriers due to incompatible values, attitudes or behaviour?*).

III. Finalization of Recommendations and initial meetings with stakeholders (September – mid-November 2004)

In the third phase individual members of the working groups took the lead in drafting recommendations based on the discussions during the previous sessions. In the group meetings participants reviewed, critiqued and proposed changes to the draft recommendations. At this stage the rate at which the groups made progress differed substantially. The Education Working Group, for instance, was able to complete its recommendations in the middle of October, whereas it was necessary for the Economy and Health Care Working Groups to meet several additional times in November in order to review and revise the recommendations.

The Health Care Working Group took a slightly different path from the other working groups as well. Each of the working groups had originally selected three or four priority areas to be the focus of their work. The Health Care Working Group's priority areas were: management of health institutions, financial sustainability of the health care system, and the need for a national strategy on health care. Through their discussions, though, members of the group realized that recommendations on individual topics would represent only piecemeal solutions. It became apparent that everything depended on the development of a national strategy – and that the persons responsible for the development of the national strategy would need to take into account the other two issues (enhancing capacity of health managers and measures to ensure financial sustainability).

Once the recommendations were drafted by all four groups, members engaged in discussions about strategies for presentations of the recommendations (*To whom? In what format? Who needs*

to change in order for there to be movement on this particular topic? What is the best way to persuade them?). Each working group decided separately on the approach it felt it should adopt within its specific policy field.

IV. Presentations and National Press Conference (mid-November 2004 – March 2005)

The remaining three working groups (health, human rights and economy) finalized their recommendations in November. Presentations were organized for each of the working groups in addition to the final press conference, where one member of each group presented an overview of that group's work. These presentations took place in the form of 'Local Forums' in cooperation with the ECMI NGO Network (2001-2005), and occurred in Kumanovo, Bitola and Tetovo. Working Group recommendations were sent to all relevant government officials, and the Education Working Group recommendations on multiculturalism were presented on an Albanian-language TV programme.

3. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPACT ON INITIATIVE

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Republic of Macedonia experienced a politically turbulent year in 2004, and into 2005. These events directly influenced the implementation of the project, particularly in scheduling activities, dealing with local elections and a changing political climate.

At the end of February 2004 President Boris Trajkovski, his advisors and the crewmembers all died in a plane crash near Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. This had the potential to destabilize the country – particularly as President Trajkovski’s strong leadership had played a significant role in bringing the parties to the conflict to the negotiation table and concluding the Framework Agreement. Fortunately, during the period following his death there was no visible rise in ethnic tensions and no threat to the political stability of the country. The Speaker of the Parliament, Ljupco Jordanovski, assumed the position of President on a temporary basis, as foreseen in the Constitution.

On 14 April 2004 the first round of elections were held. The four candidates were: Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM candidate)¹; Saso Kedev (VMRO-DPMNE candidate); Gezim Ostreni (DUI) and Zidi Xhelili (DPA). As none of the candidates received more than fifty percent of the vote in the first round, citizens of Macedonia voted in a second round, held on 28 April, between the two candidates with the largest percentage of votes (Crvenkovski and Kedev). In the second round Crvenkovski won over Kedev (62% to 37%). The general assessment from international and domestic monitors was that the elections were carried out with few voting irregularities.

The election of Crvenkovski necessitated the appointment of a new Prime Minister and the reformation of the government. Crvenkovski appointed Hari Kostov, hitherto Minister of Interior, to form the government. Although there were not many changes, this process of negotiations took most of May 2004. In addition to changes in the Ministry of Interior, the most noticeable change

¹ Political party affiliations are in parentheses. The two main ethnic Macedonian parties are the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE). The two main ethnic Albanian parties are the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). SDSM and DUI are coalition partners.

was at the National Bank, which saw Petar Gosev, former Finance Minister, elected by the Parliament on 21 May 2004 to become the Governor of the Bank.

At the beginning of August 2004 Parliament adopted amendments to the laws on the elections and to the territorial re-organization of the country, which were part of the package of decentralization laws foreseen by the constitutional amendments enacted following the signing of the Framework Agreement. The laws on territorial reorganization, which foresaw the reduction of the number of municipalities, aroused resistance amongst many ethnic Macedonians, who argued the law would consolidate the division of municipalities along ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian lines. There were several street protests, some of which, in the towns of Kicevo and Struga, turned violent. The World Macedonian Congress, along with one of the factions of the political party VMRO, led a campaign against the territorial re-organization. These stakeholders collected more than the required number (150,000) of signatures and thus forced a referendum on the issue of municipal boundaries. The referendum was scheduled for 7 November 2004.

The US Administration announced, immediately following the US Presidential Election on 2 November 2004, that it would recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name (“Republic of Macedonia”) instead of name Greece had insisted on (“Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”). The timing of this announcement, coming on the eve of the referendum on the territorial reorganization, was seen as a clear message by the Macedonian population that the United States supports the territorial integrity of the country and EU integration and therefore would not tolerate disputes along ethnic lines.

The referendum was held on 7 November, and according to the State Election Commission turnout was well under the 50% required to force a change in the laws. The low turnout was attributed to several factors, including poor weather and the US recognition of the constitutional name of the Republic.

One week later, on 15 November, the Macedonian government received yet another shock when the Prime Minister, Hari Kostov, announced that he would resign. In his resignation letter he pointed to his coalition partner (DUI), arguing that DUI had practiced nepotism and tolerated corruption and blackmail because of party interests. Investigations into these allegations were initiated. Kostov further argued that DUI was only interested in equitable representation (in the state administration, for example) for the Albanian minority community, and not for other

communities. As a result of the resignation, President Crvenkovski, for the second time in six months, appointed a new person, this time Defense Minister Buckovski, to form a new government. Negotiations on the new government took a full month, with the new appointments being announced in the third week of December 2004. Of the 18 ministerial posts, 11 new appointments were made. Two members of the ECMI working groups were appointed to senior positions in December 2004. Fatmir Besimi is the new Minister of Economy and Radka Kuljan is the new Secretary of State for Health in the Ministry of Health.

In March and April 2005 Macedonia held local elections which were widely considered a test of the country's political stability as it prepares to move ahead on the road to EU accession. Voting went peacefully, and the country's Prime Minister, Vlado Buckovski, hailed the process as a "model" for the future. International observers also praised the peaceful conduct of the elections, but said there was evidence of irregularities during all three rounds. According to OSCE monitors, these included group voting, ballot stuffing, stolen ballots, intimidation and violations of voter privacy. The organization criticized authorities for not addressing the problems adequately.

Following voting on 27 March 2005, the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) rejected most complaints, and 76 appeals were made to the Supreme Court. The majority were dismissed on procedural grounds regardless of the gravity of the alleged irregularities. In many cases, neither the MECs nor the Supreme Court acted to remedy obvious cases of electoral irregularities. The election preparations were adequate, despite the late resolution of complaints and appeals and decisions about subsequent re-runs. The State Election Commission (SEC) remained reluctant to remove MEC Chairpersons who performed poorly during previous rounds. Some changes were made in the composition of Electoral Boards where the results were invalidated, generally on the initiative of the MECs. No additional training to address procedural errors was undertaken between rounds.

The period between the rounds was marked by an increased lack of engagement in the process among both party activists and the public. There was little campaign activity, apart from some get-out-the-vote efforts. The atmosphere was one of general mistrust and decreased confidence in the electoral process.

IMPACT ON THE INITIATIVE

Following the death of President Trajkovski and during the periods leading up to the elections and to the referendum, ECMI had to reschedule the regular meetings of the working groups. Moreover, while awaiting the appointments of the new ministers in December, it was decided that it would be prudent to delay presentations because the persons to whom the presentations would be made would in the near future no longer be in position to make decisions about the recommendations.

In addition to these delays (out of respect and with the recognition that people would be unlikely to be able to fit any additional meetings into their schedules), some members of the working group were unable, as a result of all the political turbulence and their busy schedules, to attend meetings as frequently as was foreseen. While the majority of absences were excused, the group as a whole would have benefited from the contributions of those members.

It is important to stress that the working group meetings offered one of the few (if not the only) regular venues for members from different political parties and representatives from all sectors to discuss policy matters in a confidential and informal setting. This enabled people of different ethnicities the opportunity to see that agreements can be made about specific recommendations in a broad range of policy matters.

Given the vicissitudes of governmental life in the Republic of Macedonia, ECMI now believes that any further initiative should focus on building working relationships with institutions, such as Parliament, where representatives have longer mandates, rather than any individual Minister or Deputy Minister.

4. OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

The practice of policy analysis and dialogue is somewhat foreign to the Republic of Macedonia. While this has presented difficulties for ECMI, the precise reason for the development of our initiative was to build this capacity. ECMI encountered challenges, both external and internal, that made the implementation of the project more difficult. External difficulties include the lack of legal harmony (contradictory provisions in certain laws and regulations), the lack of transparency in state institutions' process of decision-making, the failure of state institutions to disseminate information, the high rate of turnover in those institutions and the lack of ownership (in state institutions as well as in the programs sponsored and implemented by international organizations). Internal difficulties have included the low analytical capacity of some members of the working groups (this difficulty is not unique to the working groups, rather it is emblematic of the capacity within the country) and scheduling.

Lack of Legal Harmony

Factors that make policy formulation and implementation more difficult are the existence of contradictory laws, the failure to observe laws because of those contradictions, and the inability to implement policy due to competing understandings of the law. The Human Rights Working Group examined several contradictory passages in the legislation. For example, there are different interpretations of procedures outlined in the law governing the apprehension and detention of citizens.

The Constitution identifies the court as the responsible authority for determining whether a person's freedom can be restricted: "No person's freedom can be restricted except by a decision from the court or in cases and procedures determined by law" (Article 12, Paragraph 2). However, the Law on Criminal Procedure (Article 188, Paragraph 3) enables the Ministry of Interior to detain persons for up to 24 hours, without first having obtained a court decision, in exceptional circumstances, although there are no criteria defining those exceptional circumstances. After 24 hours the Ministry of Interior is given the discretion to release the individual (without bringing the detained person before the court).

This allowance of discretion, however, contradicts Article 12 of the Constitution, which reads further: "The person deprived of freedom, must be immediately, or within a maximum of 24

hours from the moment of deprivation of freedom, brought before the court, which, with no delays, will decide on the legal character of the deprivation of freedom.”

Therefore, one of the recommendations of the Human Rights Working Group is to harmonize the texts so there is no room for the Ministry of Interior to interpret the law in such a way that it violates the Constitution. Closing this loophole will increase the accountability of the Ministry of Interior and allow human rights NGOs and lawyers to better protect the rights of those detained who have been denied of their right to have the court decide on their case.

Lack of Transparency and Failure to Disseminate Information

Political agreements and laws are passed behind closed doors, and policy decisions at the ministries are made by a handful of elites (and often as a result of foreign pressure and insistence). The campaign for the referendum on the territorial reorganization was led, in part, because many recognized that more transparency and adherence to rule of law is essential for the formulation of inclusive and just policy. The resignation of Prime Minister Kostov was also ostensibly a response to his frustrations with corruption and a lack of transparency in the workings of the political parties and different ministries. Due to a lack of information dissemination and a poor understanding of the demands of implementation, once formulated, policies at the highest level are not conveyed, in the form of strategies and operational plans, to professionals in the respective fields.

The working groups can indirectly work on the issues of lack of information dissemination and lack of transparency in state institutions through their recommendations, and also through undertaking efforts to find out more about the institutions that make decisions that affect their lives. Group members have been actively involved in identifying and interviewing people who were involved in the development of previous strategies that were never implemented. ECMI believes it is important to understand the reasons for those failures – so the same mistakes are not repeated.

For example, as part of their research, members of the Health Care Working Group have turned to look at the most recent effort to develop a national strategy on health. In 2000-2001, the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, with the approval of and support from the Ministry of Health, formed a committee of health professionals to review the state of affairs and to develop a national health care strategy. The results were published in 2001 (“Strategy for Improvement of

Health Protection of the Population in the Republic of Macedonia”), but the strategy, which was supposed to be effective until 2010, was subsequently ignored. By the time the Health Care Working Group began meeting the previous strategy was not only completely obsolete, but also, and even more surprising, completely unknown. In other words, health professionals *may* have heard that such a committee was formed to develop a strategy, but were never informed of the content of that strategy once it had been completed.

High Rate of Turnover

In the past twelve years there have been ten Ministers of Health. While other ministries have had less turnover, to varying degrees, the personnel changes that follow every election have not only stopped any reform effort in its tracks, they have also demonstrated a clear, albeit rather short-sighted and destructive, lesson. In a society where top positions are rotated almost once a year, members of opposition political parties have learned that obstruction pays well. They have learned it is better to wait a year or two until one’s own party is in the coalition government. While members of all political parties recognize this vicious circle, every political party, once in power, repeats the same mistakes.

There is little that ECMI can do to address this external challenge – other than to talk openly about how this practice hurts the governance of the country, and, as a result, all citizens of Macedonia. Often in the meetings, members of the working groups complained about this practice. It is important to emphasize that some members of the working groups come from political parties, and they are well-positioned to discuss the conclusions from ECMI meetings with other leading members of their own political parties.

The Education Working Group, with its recommendation on professionalization, addressed this directly, as did the Health Care Working Group in its guidelines on the formation of a new committee to draft a national health care strategy. In the other two working groups this problem was given recognition, which is the first step for any change.

Lack of Ownership

The issue of lack of dissemination of information and the high rate of turnover are connected to the issue of ownership. The problem of the lack of ownership is expressed in two ways. First, many in state institutions are not as involved in decisions on the development and implementation of programs as they can and should be. This characteristic has made ECMI cooperation with state

institutions more difficult. Second, in partnerships between international organizations and local institutions, often the international organization dominates (despite language to the contrary) and dictates to the domestic partners what needs to be done. As one member of the working group on education, talking of the failed strategy for the development of education, put it: “because many strategies don’t involve local people, the implementation fails as soon as the donors leave.” Unfortunately, many international organizations come in with “one-size fits all” approaches to their programs (see below, analysis of economic recommendations, for one example).

On the other hand, ECM designed the project for the Macedonian context and precisely to encourage members of the working groups to provide input and to be involved in making decisions on the development of the program. It is ECMI’s belief that this is the best way to ensure sustainable change.

Low Capacity for Policy Analysis

Political parties are essentially cults of personality that demand loyalty based on ethnicity. The major political parties have not demonstrated the capacity to formulate policies on major issues such as health care and education. To cite but one example: the National Strategy on the Development of Education, which was prepared by the Ministry of Education in 2001, offers a web of confusing language, unclear priorities and no instruments by which to implement (let alone monitor) measures to improve the quality of education.

The official English translation of the Ministry of Education’s National Strategy for Development of Education 2001-2010 illustrates the level of understanding of policy and organizational matters at the highest level, “*Bearing in mind the fact that the system has been established and operational for a long time and there is no educational system standardized structure, there is no need of its overall reorganization.*”

The translation omits a clause and thereby renders the text unintelligible. A more accurate translation of the original would read: “*Bearing in mind the fact that the system has been established and operational for a long time and that there isn’t a standardized structure for educational systems in the world, there is no need to (undertake) its overall reorganization.*”

In other words, since there is no accepted global standard, it is not necessary to think about the need to change. While the corrected translation, at least, makes sense, it reveals a startling lack of

analytical capacity, self-reflection and responsibility. The lack of capacity underscores the need for the establishment of working groups, such as our own, to begin to strengthen the ability of local leaders to think critically, creatively and more generously (beyond the confines of the needs of one's ethnic group).

Scheduling

Finally, scheduling was a difficulty, in part because of the political events and in part because of the time commitments ECMI required of the members of the working groups. This was especially difficult for members who had to travel up to three hours, each way, to attend meetings. Thus the meetings had the effect of adding nine hours of work to their day. ECMI appreciated their commitment and remains convinced that attendance by people from different regions of the country contributed significantly to the quality of discussions and the final outcomes, the recommendations.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

This project was designed to be self-sustaining at the level of process as well as in its outcomes. Through the establishment of an expressly interethnic policy community with an indefinite life expectancy, the project contributed to the implementation of the Framework Agreement through concrete policy measures designed with an eye toward durability.

As is the case with other ECMI projects, this project aimed to establish local ownership of project outcomes. From the establishment of the Working Groups in January 2004, ECMI's primary role in the project was that of facilitator. Moreover, linkages with local structures were literally built into the Working Groups themselves, with the project drawing not only on ECMI's network of contacts with local authorities, but also on ECMI's work in establishing a network of NGOs around visibly inter-ethnic cooperation.

Additional contributions to the local ownership of project outcomes were generated by the Working Groups' contacts with international experts. The result of these contacts meant the development of local expertise, leaving local actors better positioned to address the problems they designate as priorities. Further, repeated contacts among members of the Working Groups resulted in the establishment of an overarching expert community in Macedonia capable of attending to the technical issues affecting the population of Macedonia as a whole. This community is able to sustain itself on the basis of common interests transcending ethnicity.

With the ultimate result, recommendations for concrete policy measures contributing to the implementation of the Framework Agreement, the long-term impact of this project on the beneficiaries and the wider community is considerable. In education, this project promoted the decentralization of Macedonia's system of education and improved access to education for female members of minority communities, as well as increases in the number of qualified minority-language instructors, the availability of minority-language education, and the overall level of education of Macedonia's minority communities. The effects of this project's contribution to relevant policy measures concerning public health, on the other hand, include improved access to health education for youth and minority communities; increased awareness of contemporary public health issues such as mental illness, chemical dependencies, and prostitution; and attention to the adequate distribution of healthcare infrastructure.

The project's long-term impact on the administration of justice in Macedonia includes the uniform enforcement of a police code of conduct, human rights education for police and minority communities, and an increase in the availability of minority-language court interpreters, as well as equity in both the administration of justice and the representation of minorities in the judiciary and the police. In similar fashion, the project promoted equity in the economic sphere by contributing concrete policy measures designed to result in equitable hiring practices, equal access to public financing, regional economic development, adult occupational training, and foreign investment.

APPENDIX 1: WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The working groups selected the topics according to their own interests and concerns in each of the fields. Three groups came up with four priority areas each; while the Health Care Working Group selected one over-arching problem with six sub-components.

ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

Members of the working group on economy divided into two groups in order to look separately at micro-economic and macro-economic issues. With regard to the macro-economic topics, adjustments in the monetary, exchange rate and fiscal policies as well as structural reform were deemed to be the most pressing matter of concern. Members of the working group asserted that the restrictive policies (in accordance with IMF and World Bank terms) have created a stable, but economically stagnant economy. With regard to monetary policy, members felt that indirect market instruments and mechanisms need to be developed to help achieve a stable currency. Other measures include introducing short-term interest rates as operational targets that will lead to an optimal level of liquidity and will reduce the role of the National Bank in the money market. Second, with respect to the exchange rate, if the Macedonian currency were allowed to fluctuate (the Macedonian denar is pegged to the Euro) within a certain range, this would lead to moderate inflation, but would also lead to macroeconomic stability and higher growth. Third, fiscal policy measures should look to reduce the amount paid for salaries in the public sector, to make selective reductions in expenditure programs, and to increase the amount allocated to capital investments. Finally, as regards structural reform, there needs to be adjustments in the production structure that would enable more efficient utilization and activation of available resources and to modify the orientation of the economy to make improvements in the capacity for exports the top priority.

The micro-economic experts focused on measures to enhance the capacity of small and medium enterprises and to improve training and business education. A more concerted, systematic and comprehensive approach to support small and medium enterprises is essential to facilitate entrepreneurship. This would create job opportunities for many people, although ECMI believes special consideration needs to be given to those who are marginalized in society.

Secondly, efforts to establish business training and education programs need to be pursued more rigorously. Members of all communities in Macedonia would benefit from more updated

curricula and from programs offered by international schools. These recommendations were presented at an Economic Forum held on December 9, 2004.

EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

The Education Working Group originally selected three topics of focus (strengthening teacher training institutions, infrastructure and equipment and professionalization/depoliticization).

After members of the group had already begun drafting these recommendations, the group decided they had overlooked a fourth, and crucial, topic, namely instilling the value of multiculturalism in the school system. Once the whole group agreed that this topic needed to be included, ECMI scheduled extra meetings to discuss and develop an approach to multiculturalism.

The working group posits that the educational system has the obligation to recognize, and to instruct teachers and students about, the diverse communities that exist in the Republic of Macedonia. Thus far, the working group asserts, the educational system through its divided, ethnocentric and traditional approach, has failed to do this. It recommends that linguistic/ethnic parallelism be overcome by learning the languages of others, by the introduction of alternative bilingual education and by joint extra-curricular activities. Ethnocentrism can be addressed by the introduction of new contents in history and culture, by removing ethnic stereotypes and prejudice from instruction and by presenting the principle of multiculturalism in a positive light. Finally, the traditional approach needs to be supplanted by a more interactive approach, which encourages students to develop their capacity to engage in critical and creative thinking.

Strengthening teacher training institutions goes hand in hand with the recommendation on multiculturalism. Reform of the curricula during pre-service training and supplementary instruction (in courses on democracy and multi-cultural values for example) during in-service training would improve the preparedness and the ability of teachers to present lessons in an open manner free from prejudice and stereotypes.

The third topic, professionalism, focuses on ways in which to ensure that decisions on the hiring, promotion and dismissal of principals and teachers are based on merit and not political affiliation. The education and health sectors have suffered as a result of the politicization of this sector of the

Macedonian society – which has made common the practice of numerous and significant personnel changes following every new government. Bodies that develop criteria and standards and that assess performance need to be independent and rely on objective and measurable indicators. Moreover, the assessment process needs to be transparent.

Finally, the working group feels that the poor level of infrastructure and equipment hampers the ability of teachers to provide quality instruction and makes it more difficult for students to learn. The working group feels that the establishment of resource centres at the national and local level would enable the Ministry of Education to have a more comprehensive picture of the conditions in different schools and their needs; the Ministry would also be in a better position to compare different schools and thereby ensure a standard quality of instruction and equitable conditions.

The Education Working Group gave presentations of their recommendations to representatives of the international community, the Parliamentary Committee on Education, representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Bureau for Development of Education and the World Bank's Education Modernization Project.

HEALTH CARE WORKING GROUP

The Health Care Working Group identified the most pressing need in the health care sector to be the development of a national health care strategy under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. The Health Care Working Group reviewed, analyzed and made recommendations in relation to six central questions related to the need for the development of such a strategy:

- What were the reasons for the failure to implement the health care strategy that was developed in 2001?
- What topics should be looked at by a new committee to develop a health care strategy?
- What sources of information should this committee consider?
- What should be the composition of this committee?
- What should be the strategy for implementation of reforms?
- What monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be in place?

It is important for the composition of a new committee to develop a strategy on health care to be representative of the wider population, i.e. reflect the diversity within Macedonia in terms of ethnicity, regional affiliation, gender balance and broad professional expertise.

It is important for the process of selection to the committee to be transparent, and more careful consideration needs to be given to what stakeholders and what expertise is needed in order to craft a strategy that is of high quality and is likely to be implemented. The new committee needs an accurate picture of the structure and the functionality of the health care system as a base from which to set priorities. The members of the working group have repeatedly questioned the reliability of data – and thus data collection and analysis services must be improved in order to define the major health care problems, determine trends and forecast illnesses, costs and revenues. A second major topic concerns management and financing, especially in light of the decentralization process, which will make municipalities responsible for tertiary health care. A new strategy needs to include practical and concrete considerations – and needs to provide a timeline that will indicate when steps need to be taken, who needs to be involved, and how their efforts should be coordinated. The working group believes that one year should be sufficient for the formation of a new committee, the development of the strategy paper, official endorsement and the beginning of implementation according to the directions outlined in that new strategy paper.

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

The Human Rights Working Group has reviewed four topics: personal right to liberty, citizenship, and two state institutions (ways to improve the ability of Ministry of Interior and the Judiciary to protect human rights).

In the review of the personal right to liberty, it was asserted that there is a lack of clarity regarding the terms “deprivation of liberty” in the Constitution and in laws. The Ministry of Interior is thus given the authority to interpret the law as it sees fit – and that interpretation can contradict provisions in the Constitution and in international covenants signed by the Republic of Macedonia. The Human Rights Working Group recommends preparation of amendments to the existing laws and bylaws that would provide a clear definition of the aim of the lawful deprivation of liberty (as bringing someone before the competent court authorities) and would harmonize domestic legislation with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Additional measures of protection need to be provided to persons who have been detained. These include guarantees that the person deprived of liberty will have the right to see a lawyer, to communicate in one's mother tongue and to have a medical examination by a doctor.

With respect to citizenship, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) should adopt bylaws (guidelines) to facilitate the implementation of provisions in the Law that was amended in the spring of 2004. Publishing bylaws in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia will ensure equal access to information for employees at the MoI as well as for other interested parties. Moreover, the MoI, and its local units should respect strictly Article 15, Paragraph 19 of the Law on Administrative Taxes (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 17 from 26 March 1993). People who receive social assistance and other benefits should be exempt from the payment of administrative taxes when filing request for rulings on citizenship. The MoI should have a more flexible approach toward persons filing requests to have their citizenship regulated who are long standing permanent residents (Article 14 of the Law) and elderly (those over sixty) who do not have fluent knowledge of Macedonian. The MoI should shorten the duration of procedures for acquiring citizenship of the Republic of Macedonia; especially the part of the procedure that is under the jurisdiction of the State Security Service. Finally, a well-organized information campaign should be implemented through: a. Printed and electronic media; b. Organizing round tables and conferences with state representatives, members of Parliament, representatives of international organizations, journalists, human rights activists, NGOs etc.

The final two topics concerned strengthening two state institutions (Ministry of Interior, Judiciary) that have the responsibility to protect human rights. With respect to the former, members of the working group believe the MoI should prepare and make available at police stations and elsewhere, in cooperation with NGOs, brochures on the rights of citizens and the codex on police behaviour. The working group recognized and support the training programs offered by international institutions (OSCE, Proxima, etc.), but emphasized that the MoI needs to institutionalize the trainings – and to ensure that they are long-term and that priority trainings be given to those police officers who are on patrol in the former conflict regions, since the greatest potential for violence and abuse exists there.

Moreover, the MoI needs to activate and improve the efficiency of mechanisms for investigating the responsibility of police officers and others in state institutions who have been involved, allegedly, in the violation of human rights. With regard to the judiciary, the working group

applauded the judicial reform efforts by the Ministry of Justice. However, some legislative reforms should be undertaken. First, omissions in the laws on procedure, especially with regard to procedural rights, need to be addressed. Second, the service for the delivery of court summons and documents needs to be more efficient and the provisions on access to information need to be simplified. Third, the Law on Executive Procedures needs to be amended to allow for faster implementation of the courts' verdicts. Fourth, the ECHR principles, which have been ratified by the Republic of Macedonia, need to be incorporated in domestic legislation, first in the Constitution and then in the laws on procedure. Finally, the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court should be expanded to cover all freedoms and rights guaranteed in the Constitution, not just those specified in Article 110.

Other topics of concern, which have not been covered adequately in the Ministry's reform, include combating corruption and ensuring independence of the judiciary. One way to encourage citizens to bring forth cases of corruption would be to have the state cover the court costs of those cases. Another step would be to strengthen the mechanisms for the investigation of allegations of corruption. As for the independence of the judiciary, there needs to be amendments to the procedures and the development of apolitical criteria for the selection, appointment, promotion and dismissal of judges in such a way as to limit the degree of political influence on the judiciary. On a related matter, enough funds need to be set aside in the budget to enable the efficient functioning of the courts.

ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Leading members of the Bureau for the Development of Education publicly have supported the 'PDI recommendations'. In his letter to the press following the December 2004 press conference, the Deputy Director of the Bureau Konstantin Petkovski explained that precisely because it considered the recommendations to be important, the Bureau forwarded the recommendations to the Expert Team, which has considered ways in which to incorporate them in the final draft of the National Program.

At the various presentations and at the press conference the recommendation that generated the most interest was the Education Working Group's recommendation on multiculturalism. The Parliamentary Committee on Education, on the basis of our presentation before Parliament, asked the working group to make follow-on presentations, focusing on multiculturalism, to Parliament

during the first five months of 2005. In addition, it was foreseen that working group members would be invited on visits by parliamentarians to schools in the former crisis region, and will take part in the selection of pilot schools and the development of multi-cultural curricula. ECMI also talked about the possibility of engaging legal experts to assist in the process of drafting amendments (to incorporate the value of multiculturalism) to the law on education.

The Health Care Working Group's recommendations differ from the remaining groups insofar as they focus on one issue (lack of a national strategy for health care). The working group endeavoured to provide answers to the central questions – as a way of providing guidance to the Ministry of Health. Given the dissolution of the government in November 2004 (following the resignation of Prime Minister Kostov), members of the working group considered it to be more appropriate to present its recommendations after the appointment of the new Minister of Health (Vladimir Dimov). This appointment was officially confirmed on 17 December 2004. The Minister Dimov expressed his interest in meeting with the working groups to discuss the recommendations. It was a particularly auspicious time given his mandate had just begun (and the obvious need for such a strategy to be developed and implemented). It should be noted that one of the members of our working group, Radka Kuljan, was appointed the secretary of state for health care.

The Human Rights Working Group selected three topics (citizenship, reform of the judiciary, strengthening MoI) that have received a great deal of attention and therefore been addressed, in part, by international organizations and domestic institutions. With respect to citizenship, a new law was passed early in 2004. The Human Rights Working Group, nonetheless, found a way to make further progress on this issue by pointing out some of the shortcomings of the law, and by raising attention to the fact that there has been little effort to inform the general public, let alone the subset of the population directly affected by the amendments, about the window during which people can request to have their citizenship regulated. The Ministry of Justice has undertaken many steps on the reform of the judiciary and has received guidance from organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), EU Special Representative, American Bar Association and the Council of Europe. As with the citizenship issue, the working group's effort is best understood as pinpointing the oversights by, and inconsistencies within, the reform effort, and as proposing concrete remedies in the form of legislative and structural/organizational reform. International organizations, such as OSCE and Proxima, have built working relationships with the Ministry of Interior – and have been engaged in organizing

trainings for police officers. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Working Group has identified inconsistencies between the codex of police behaviour and the practices of the police. If these are addressed and a public information campaign is organized to inform the population of their rights and of the behaviour of the police they have the right to expect and demand, these steps will help the police gain the trust of the citizens. The final topic reviewed, the affirmation of the personal right to liberty, has not been addressed by other international organizations. The Human Rights Working Group has identified the inconsistent use of terms in the Constitution and the laws that outline the responsibilities and obligations of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior. As with the Health Care Working Group, the Human Rights Working Group felt it would be better to wait, given the changes at the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Ombudsman, for the Human Rights Working Group to organize presentations for January 2005.

The Economy Working Group's micro-economic recommendations have a greater likelihood of being accepted than the macro-economic recommendations. While we believe the macro-economic report analyzes the problems accurately and provides well-thought out recommendations, the difficulty lies with the obligations the government and the National Bank have undertaken through their agreements with IMF. Members of the working group have noted that countries that have chosen not to enter into agreements (such as Argentina) have outperformed those countries that have made agreements with IMF.² A renegotiation of the IMF agreement would be required in order to implement the main recommendation of the macro-economy working group. This is, unfortunately, unlikely in the near future. On the brighter side, one of the members of the Economy Working Group, Fatmir Besimi, was appointed Minister of Economy. With respect to the micro-economic recommendations, there is a greater likelihood that the Ministry of Economy will be able to strengthen the departments (through greater financial and human resources) that have the responsibility to support entrepreneurs active in the small and medium enterprises.

² It should be noted that the IMF's standard approach to its agreements is applied to all countries regardless of the unique features of any given national economy. Their failure to take into adequate account the circumstances and specific strengths and needs of any particular economy has frustrated and angered members of the working group, who argue that Republic of Macedonia would be better off without the involvement of the IMF.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Education Working Group

The Education Working Group's membership comprises university professors, Parliamentarians, officials from the Ministry of Education, NGO activists, and professionals. Their work has focused on instilling the value of multi-culturalism in the school system, encouraging the professionalization / depoliticization of the sector, identifying needs in infrastructure, and making recommendations to improve the training at the teachers' colleges.

Participants

Dragan Nedeljkovic	Shabani Arafat
Emil Popovski	Sonja Arsovska
Fadil Hoca	Vebi Bexheti
Jusuf Arifi	Venera Novakovska
Konstantin Petkovski	Violeta Petroska - Beska
Methodius Stanojevski	Xheladin Murati
Miroslav Stojanov	Zoran Matevski
Snezana Ademeska	Coseva Slobodanka

Health Care Working Group

The Health Care Working Group is a coalition of university professors, NGO activists, representatives from governmental bodies, and professionals. Their discussions have focused on the development of a national strategy for health care, developing ways to ensure the financial sustainability of the health care system and improving the quality of training in management provided for health care professionals.

Participants

Aleksandar Blazevski	Sefien Feratii
Doncho Donev	Suzan Sulejman
Dijana Gjorgievska	Teuta Demjaha
Natali Dimovska	Vladimir Lazarevik
Nevzet Elezi	Verica Puzderlieva
Ratka Kuljan Zografski	Zlate Sulevski
Raim Thaci	

Human Rights and Justice Working Group

The Human Rights and Justice Working Group comprises university professors, Parliamentarians, officials from different branches of government, NGO activists, and professionals. They have looked at ways to strengthen the capacities of institutions that have the mandate to protect human rights, and key issues such as citizenship and unlawful deprivation of liberty.

Participants

Abdylagim Ademi	Senat Bekiri
Ardit Mehmeti	Shpend Devaja
Gulsefa Kurtesi	Suzana Saliu
Iljaz Halimi	Zlatko Sarev
Mirjana Najcevska	Fatmire Lumani
Nikola Iliev	Marija Mirceska
Filip Siljanovski	Zarko Trajanovski

Economy Working Group

The Economy Working Group has members from different professional backgrounds, including university professors, graduate students, and experts from the Ministry of Economy, Institute of Economics and National Bank. The working group has looked at macro-economic issues (monetary and budgetary policy, structural reform) and micro-economic issues (primarily support to small and medium enterprises).

Participants

Besnik Fetai	Tihomir Jovanovski
Blajoga Nanevski	Cvetko Smilevski
Emanuela Efremovska	Dejan Pendav
Fatmir Besimi	Goran Kormusoski
Fani Naumovska	Marija Zarenzankova-Poteva
Goce Bozinovski	Todor Kralev
Ruzdi Ibrahimov	Vesna Stojanova