

Igman Initiative Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 3

29.05.2012

White Paper on Status and Property Issues



The White Paper on citizens' status and property issues caused by disintegration of former Yugoslavia in countries signatories to the Dayton Agreement with recommendations for solutions included, presents results of the months of research conducted within the framework of the project *Expert Elaboration of Unresolved Issues between Countries Signatories to the Dayton Agreement – Citizens' Property and Status Issues*, which was funded by the European Union. During the research, citizens' numerous problems in regard of their efforts to solve status and property issues in all four countries have been identified, of which following are the most frequent:

- * Non-compliance of national legislation with international citizenship rights
- * Acquisition of citizenship for citizens of other Republics of former Yugoslavia who had residence in those Republics on the date of succession
- * Naturalization of Refugees
- * Acquisition of dual citizenship
- * Problems in obtaining documents
- * Uneven regional approach in addressing property issues
- * Failure to implement the Annex G of the Agreement on Succession
- * Outstanding obligations arising from citizens' old foreign currency savings accounts
- * Restitution of private property and housing rights
- * Reconstruction of housing units and compensation of damage

- * Problems related to identifying and providing evidence for pensionable service
- * Issue of due and unpaid pensions
- * Convalidation of insurance
- * Denied labor rights

After several months of work, Igman Initiative's independent expert team: Ratko Bubalo from Serbia, Branislav Radulovic from Montenegro, Srdjan Arnaut from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Boris Knezevic from Croatia, made a list of international legal obligations, standards and norms in regard of citizens' status and property rights, as a basis for their critical analysis of these countries' national practice and regulations, which were afterwards put through a comparative analysis followed by recommendations for solutions to these issues. Cooperation with state institutions in terms of collecting necessary documentation in all four countries was established, as well as in terms of joint efforts in realization of solutions that guarantee a balanced regional approach and equal legal standards in regard of citizens' problems.

In the forthcoming period the four co-presidents of the Igman Initiative will meet with the Premiers and representatives of the competent government ministries, parliamentary boards and international community in all four countries, so as to lobby for the adoption and implementation of the expert team recommendations focused on a faster approach to citizens' status and property issues.

Latest News

- Igman Initiative website has gone through a re-design
- Igman Initiative Youth Forum is organizing a building capacity seminar

Inside this issue:

White Paper on Citizens Status and Property Issues

Igman Initiative Expert Team Stance

Up and Coming Events

Igman Initiative on Social Media



The publication has been produced with the support from EU

Igman Initiative Expert Team



Ratko Bubalo is the President of the Board of Directors of the Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT). He published over twenty papers on human rights and minority rights in the country and abroad, as well as over 100 articles in daily newspapers on various legal aspects related to refugee issues. In 2005, in cooperation with the Department of International Law at the Faculty of Law in Novi Sad, he conducted legal proofreading of over 80 various documents issued by the European Union, Council of Europe, UNHCR and by the United Nations in regard of refugee issues, issues related with asylum in general and protection of asylum seekers. Most of the documents were published by UNHCR.

"...I expect that the White Book and all activities conducted within this project will contribute to the intensification of regional cooperation for the purpose of finding fair and comprehensive solution for all disadvantaged citizens in the four countries, especially in case of refugees and displaced persons. All these activities should be a contribution to the establishment of European values in this region, primarily because of the fact that human rights are the foundation that underpins those values and the European Union as well. As a final result, this project should serve as a concrete support for regional governments in their efforts to establish the rule of law in the region, while simultaneously providing direct contribution to the normalization of relations between the countries signatories to the Dayton Agreement..."



Srdjan Arnaut is the advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He performed important functions in the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Secretary of the Sarajevo Canton Assembly, General Secretary of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Advisor at the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During his work with the Ministries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he participated in drafting of several laws; he was also a member of negotiating teams of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of drafting bilateral agreements, as well as a member of several working groups for implementation and development of various planning documents.

"...It's been more than twenty years since the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, and most of the new countries have failed to sign or ratify the border agreement, which always stands as a potential problem and a considerable threat to the relations between the neighboring countries, as well as a source of problems for the population in border areas. This is what makes this material significant; it is a summary of all the trifles that embitter the lives of former citizens of Yugoslavia. It's high time to quickly move things forward in order to overcome the impression that another generation slowly perishes away without the opportunity to fulfill their rights ..."



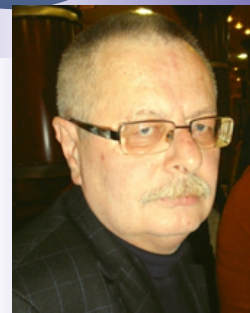
Branislav Radulovic is the Vice President of the Association of Lawyers of Montenegro and the editor-in- chief of the magazine "Legal Code". He was elected member of the Senate of the State Audit Office (SAO) in 2006. He is the examiner on the subject called Audit of the Public Sector within the SAO, as well as a member of several expert teams. He completed several specialized programs in the field of legal matters for business, electronic commerce, business communication and budget laws. He attended several training programs organized by GTZ and the German Federal Court of Auditors.

"...Example of Nordic cooperation could serve as a model for the countries established on the territory of former Yugoslavia. Establishment of this kind or similar kind of cooperation would not be a violation of these countries' sovereignty, it would serve as a means for a very visible improvement of the quality of life for their citizens, especially for those who are, by nature of their profession or by their background, bound to two state entities. Also, it would be a strong message for Brussels that proves actual commitment to the establishment of European values. A network of CSOs from Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia gathered around Igman Initiative gave their strong support to this process. The Igman Initiative White Paper, indicates that many of problems related with citizens' status and property issues can not be solved if proper regional cooperation based on mutual understanding and trust is not functioning. Especially having in mind that nowadays around 200,000 people still struggle with unresolved problems related to their status or property..."

Igman Initiative Expert Team

Boris Knežević

was born in 1954 in Ravna Gora, Gorski Kotar, Croatia. He has been living in Zagreb since 1961, where he went to school and graduated in 1979 from the Faculty of Law. He worked at the Department for Legal Affairs in the "Tvornica duhana Zagreb" factory, Basic Court of Associated Labor, Institute for Employment. For a while, he worked for private law firms. He works as the associate of the Citizens' Committee for Human Rights in the sphere of legal counseling and legal assistance, writing constitutional complaints and petitions to the European Court of Human Rights. He is a member of the Bar Association of Croatia.



"...Hundreds of thousands of people were uprooted from their homeland during insane wars that were never declared on any side by any side, which did not make them any less real and horrible. Since 1995 and onward, situation was "normalized" in the meantime, as political jargon in high level politics describes. However, lives of hundreds of thousands of displaced people are far from normal. 'State's reasoning' did not include prioritization of these issues; I hereby especially refer to the authorities in Croatia. Rigid citizenship rules, pseudo-legal takeover of tenancy rights, regulations about reconstruction that openly favor ethnic Croats and neglect Croatian citizens of Serbian nationality, compensation for the damage of property caused by terrorist acts, issues of unpaid pensions, etc. None of these issues were systemically addressed. Therefore, Igman Initiative's project is beneficial and even necessary for the ruling political elites, because it reflects the reality of consequences resulted from their inconsistent policies, and serves as an encouragement to expedite solving of those problems..."

Anti-fascistic encounter

On May 13th, on Fruskagora Mountain, the Igman Initiative organized a traditional anti-fascistic encounter. This informal event is an opportunity for people to see each other, exchange opinions and information, plan how to foster friendly and partner links necessary for the realization of activities and ideas, primarily of the Igman Initiative, but of other important networks founded or co-founded by the Centre for Regionalism as well. The event gathered more than 50 friends and associates from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Kosovo, including representatives of government bodies, international community, NGOs, public institutions and media. The event was featured on national TV Network RTS 2.

Upcoming Events

Capacity Building Seminar

Igman Initiative Youth Forum is organizing a four day capacity building seminar from 31st of May till 3rd of June on Zlatibor Mountain. The event will gather about 20 young regional leaders from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Throughout the seminar resident as well as newly recruited members of the IIFYF will redefine their further strategy. Stay tuned for their upcoming events and initiatives.

TV Debates

As part of the activities within the project *Expert Elaboration of Unresolved Issues between Countries Signatories to the Dayton Agreement – Citizens' Property and Status Issues* 4 TV Debates will be produced and broadcast on national TV networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Representatives of EU, competent public institutions as well as government bodies from all 4 countries, along with Igman Initiative representatives, will take part in these studio TV debates, for the purpose of opening up an interactive dialogue focused on subjects covered by the subject Igman Initiative study. To view the footage from the TV Debates and watch many other interesting videos and footages related to our events, projects and TV appearances please visit our Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/igmaninitiative.





Igman Initiative on Social Media

The Igman Initiative has started to tap into the world of social networking, especially having in mind that Social networking sites have recently showed a value in social and political movements. Visit our pages

on:



www.facebook.com/Igmaninitiative
www.facebook.com/Igmanskainicijativa



www.youtube.com/igmaninitiative



and follow us on @igmanska

Also, our official website has gone through a re-design! Last week we launched the new version with additional features, such as a platform for the Igman Initiative online social networking community. Visit our new pages and tell us what you think.

Igman Initiative

Zeleznicka 35
21000 Novi Sad
Serbia
tel/fax +381 21 528 241
e-mail: office@igman-initiative.org

