

# IGMAN INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

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## Igman Initiative in 2014.

Igman Initiative started off 2014 on a busy note. At the very beginning of this year the implementation of two major regional projects has commenced: *Free Movement of Labor Force Between the Countries Signatories of the Dayton Agreement Using the Experiences of the Nordic Model of Cooperation* supported by the Danish Embassy in Belgrade and *Integrating Rom interest to the Sarajevo Housing Process* supported by the Foundation Open Society Institute.

## Free Movement of Labor Force

With support from the Danish Embassy, at the beginning of 2014, the Igman Initiative set off the implementation of the project *Free Movement of Labor Force Between the Countries Signatories of the Dayton Agreement Using the Experiences of the Nordic model of cooperation*. A diverse expert team was established consisting of independent experts and the representatives of competent government institutions from the four countries, with the task to analyze legislative framework as well as bilateral agreements concluded between the four countries in order to find the most effective model for regulating free movement of labor force and establishing regulatory framework of labor market, using the experiences of the Nordic model. As the experts needed to gain more insight into the func-

tioning of the Nordic model of cooperation in the area of free movement of labor force the Igman Initiative organized study visit to the Nordic Council Headquarters in Copenhagen at the end of May 2014. After the expert group concluded the first phase of their research a consultative session was organized on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 at the Parliamentary Assembly of B&H to on the occasion of which the representatives of competent parliamentary committees and government institutions from the four countries reviewed the expert team report. Lobby campaign for the adoption of the experts' recommendation will take place in September and October in all four countries. Expert team report will be published at the end of October.

## Civic Monitoring of the Regional Housing Programme

Within the framework of the project *Integrating Roma interests to the Sarajevo Housing*, which commenced in January 2014, the expert team worked on mapping and documenting Roma refugees, determining their housing needs as well as drafting recommendations for finding housing solutions within the RHP. After a comparative analy-

sis of the documents obtained from government bodies and data obtained from Roma rights organizations, and after the outlining of independent expert reports on state of affairs in this area the Igman Initiative organized round-tables in all four countries in order to support the authorities in their efforts to permanently resolve housing issues

of Roma refugee. Lobby campaign in all four countries is planned for September and October. In the second half of 2014 the experts of the Igman Initiative will be providing free legal aid and assistance in obtaining documents to Roma refugees. Expert team findings will be published in October.



## Special points of interest

- Igman Initiative is safeguarding the interest of Roma refugees within the Regional Housing Programme
- Experts of the Igman Initiative are accessing the applicability of the Nordic model of cooperation in the area of free movement of labor force
- Traditional session of the Igman Initiative planned for November

## Study Visit to the Headquarters of the Nordic Council

On May 12th 2014 the Igman Initiative organized study visit to the Headquarters of the Nordic Council in Copenhagen as its experts were given the task to assess the applicability of the Nordic model cooperation in the area of free movement of labor force to the Western Balkan countries. The Igman Initiative delegation included Dragica Misljenovic,

independent expert of the Igman Initiative and Ariana Nikolic, Director of the Montenegrin Directorate for Work Force and Labor Market. The host of the Study Visit was Torkil Sorensen, Senior Advisor at the Nordic Council while in the presentation of the functioning of the Nordic Council participated Johan Lindblad, Senior Advisor to the Nordic Council of Ministers,

Vilborg Hauksdottir, Senior Advisor for Health and Social Affairs and Jakob Schmidh, Senior Advisor for Freedom of Movement. The study Visit was concluded with the meeting with Petrer Bohlbro, Secretary of Financial Committee at the Danish Parliament. The Nordic model of cooperation is merely based on the exceptionally developed social dialogue. Every

year the Nordic Council identifies priority issues about which it will be making decisions. The goal is to secure the renewal of national legislation in a manner that will guarantee that the harmonization with the European Union legislation will not impose new barriers to the Nordic countries in the area of free movement of people in the Nordic region.

## Igman Initiative Session on Free Movement of Labor Force



At the Parliamentary Assembly of B&H on May 20th 2014 the Igman Initiative organized consultative session within the framework of the project focused on free movement of labor force using the experiences of the Nordic model of coopera-

tion. The representatives of competent parliamentary bodies and government institutions from the four countries were invited to participate and review the preliminary expert team report. The opening words were given by Halid Genjac Chairman of the Joint Commission for the EU integration of the Parliamentary Assembly of B&H. He highlighted that the priority issue in B&H is unemployment where unemployment rate is 40%. Mr. Genjac mentioned that the Bilateral Agreement

signed between B&H Serbia in 2011 is not being implemented properly. In his opinion the experts rightfully stressed out that it is necessary to attain the transparency in the work of institutions and suppression of grey economy. Mr. Genjac deems that the real needs of the labor market should be identified and incorporated into bilateral agreements. Dragica Misljenovic, Igman Initiative Expert stated that the countries of this region should first work on protecting domestic labor force and

improving the enforcement of the existing laws. She added that the Nordic Council was established in 1952 and it is constantly improving. Using their experience the countries of this region should define the areas in which they will allow free movement of labor force. Employment should be fostered wherever possible. One of the pillars of cooperation between the Nordic countries is mutual understanding and social dialogue.

## Round Table in Podgorica - 02.06.2014.

The first round table on housing issues of Roma refugees was held in Podgorica on June 2nd 2014. On this occasion the Igman Initiative gathered the representatives of competent government institutions, Roma organizations, international community and media. After the panel discussion the participants have

identified the following issues: 1. Insufficient involvement of the representatives of Roma population and Roma CSOs in the monitoring of RHP; 2. Insufficient capacities of local self-governments; 3. A large number of immigrants have not applied for the status of internally displaced persons hence might become illegal al-

iens; 4. Segregation and ghettoization through already approved projects; 5. Local self-governments standing for the owners of newly constructed housing units.

The following recommendations have been defined: 1. Local programs of social housing should be developed; 2. Aside

from housing units parcels of lands should be secured and used as auxiliary facilities; 3. Subsequent integration of Roma in other areas should be integral part of this process; 4. The EU Delegation to Montenegro should be engaged as it is the major partner in the implementation of the RHP.

## Round Table in Zagreb - 01.07.2014.

The second round table was held in Zagreb on July 1st 2014. Aside from the representatives of government institutions the round table was attended by the representatives of Roma organizations and the UNHCR.

After the panel talk and discussion the participants agreed on the following conclusions: 1. One of the main problems

is that the public calls to apply for housing within the RHP do not reach members of Roma community in the sense of inefficient and untimely access to information; 2. There are no regulations which would be specifically related to housing for socially disadvantaged citizens; 3. Required documentation is expensive to obtain and there are unnecessary items on the

list of requirements: 4. Roma refugees should be provided with free legal aid as well as assistance in obtaining all necessary documents; 5. One of the main issues is the lack of information on the part of legitimately elected Roma representatives in Croatia; 6. Legitimately elected representatives of Roma community are stripped of their legitimacy at national level.



## Round Table in Novi Sad - 03.07.2014.

Roundtable in Novi Sad was held on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014 and attended by the representatives of the UNHCR, the OSCE, Serbian Commissariat for Refugees, civic sector and Roma associations. The event was covered by the RTV Vojvodina, program for Roma.

After the initial address and discussion the following conclusions were adopted: 1. Census of Roma refugees within the entire refugee population should be conducted; 2.

Mapping of territorial allocation of Roma refugees should be conducted, along with the conditions in which they live; 3. The establishment of both terrain teams who will organize door to door campaigns as well as collective centers which will provide free legal aid is necessary; 4. Public campaigns about public calls from competent bodies should be comprehensive so as to assure better access to information for Roma; 5. Requirements of public calls

should be adjusted to Roma population; 6. Through interviews with most disadvantaged groups their genuine needs of housing should be determined; 7. Expert analyses should be conducted, along with lobby campaigns, so as to assure that competent government institutions are informed about numerous issues; 8. Already existing network of CSOs and Roma coordinators should be strengthened and enhanced.

**Public campaigns about public calls from competent bodies should be comprehensive so as to assure better access to information for Roma**

## Round Table in Sarajevo - 08.07.2014.

The fourth and last round table was held on July 8<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Sarajevo. The participants of the round table were representatives of competent government bodies, international community, Roma organizations, civic sector and media.

After the panel talks and the presentation of the expert analysis the participants engaged into a debate during which they

identified the following issues: 1. Due to slow bidding procedures reconstructions are usually being conducted during winter; 2. Prices of reconstruction per m<sup>2</sup> are too high; 3. Inadequate and insufficient monitoring of the Program.

Through constructive discussion the participants agreed on the following recommendations: 1. Finding solutions to the

housing issues of Roma with the status of refugees and displaced persons should be accelerated; 2. Monitoring of the implementation of the Programme on the part of competent institutions should be adequate, accurate, impartial and transparent; 3. Deadlines for filling complaints against contractors should be determined and all final beneficiaries should be informed about



these deadlines; 4. Competent Ministry should accelerate the process of resolving the issues of illegally constructed housing units for Roma population.

## IGMAN INITIATIVE

Center for regionalism  
Laze Teleckog 6/1  
21 000 Novi Sad  
Serbia

Tel/Fax: + 381 21 528 241

[www.igman-initiative.org](http://www.igman-initiative.org)

[www.centarzaregionalizam.org.rs](http://www.centarzaregionalizam.org.rs)



The Igman Initiative is an umbrella association whose projects are aimed at establishing good neighborly relations, building mutual trust and tolerance and overcoming all types of discrimination in the countries of the region. Through its numerous activities aimed at establishing stable democratic institutions and the rule of law, advocating for the full respect for human and minority rights and restoring regional cooperation, the Igman Initiative directly contributes to the advancement of the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the entire region.



## Up and coming activities of the Igman Initiative

### Lobby Campaigns

In October and November of 2014 co-presidents of the Igman Initiative will meet up with the representatives of competent parliamentary committees and government institutions in all four countries to lobby for the adoption of the expert teams' recommendations. Press conferences will be organized after the meetings to inform the public about the project as well as the results of lobbying.

### Free Legal Assistance to Roma Refugees

In the second half of 2014 the Igman Initiative experts assigned to the project *Integrating Roma interests to the Sarajevo Housing Process* will organize door to door campaigns in all four countries for the purpose of providing free legal aid and assistance in obtaining documents to the Roma refugees and internally displaced persons within the Regional Housing Programme. These campaigns will be organized in cooperation with Roma organizations, international community, Roma coordinators, CSOs, competent institutions and media.

### Annual and Thematic Session of the Igman Initiative

Co-presidents of the Igman Initiative have announced that the traditional Igman Initiative session, usually attended by the presidents of the countries signatories of the Dayton Agreement, will be held in November of 2014 on the occasion of which the results of the activities implemented within the framework of both projects will be presented to the public. Furthermore, thematic session, which should gather the presidents of the four parliaments and chairmen of parliamentary committees is planned for December. The aim of the thematic session is improvement of inter-parliamentary cooperation between the four countries in prioritized areas.