



Transitional Justice Bulletin

Belgrade, July 10, 2007

National Consultation of Youth on Regional Mechanisms of Truth-telling

There was not an empty seat in the auditorium when HLC together with the Youth Initiative for Human Rights held a national consultation of youth on regional mechanisms of truth-seeking and truth-telling in the western Balkans on Sunday July 8, 2007 in Belgrade's Vos center.



More than 30 leaders of youth organizations from all over Serbia, including the Vojvodina, the Sandžak and southern Serbia, participated in the debate on the contribution of youth to processes of truth-seeking and truth-telling in the post-Yugoslav states of the western Balkans.

In the first morning session, moderated by Andrej Nosov Executive Director of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, participants discussed the role of youth and the way in which youth can participate in initiatives aiming at dealing with the past.

In the second session, moderated by Nataša Kandić – HLC Executive Director, the discussion moved on to the issue of the significance of establishing the facts about violations of human rights and international humanitarian law for post-conflict generations, and the role of youth

in fighting against denial and relativisation of past crimes.

In the afternoon session, moderated by Marijana Toma – HLC project leader, participants exchanged views in an energetic debate on the possible roles youth can play in contributing to the process of truth-seeking and truth-telling.

The conclusions that derived from the debate attest to its success. All participants agreed that:

1. youth should assume an even greater role in processes aiming at dealing with the past
2. there is a need for enhanced cooperation between youth organisations at a regional level in the western Balkans
3. youth should pressure national governments in the region to apply instruments of transitional justice
4. youth in Serbia support initiatives aiming at establishing the truth about mass and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia
5. the process of truth-seeking and truth-telling in the region cannot be postponed
6. once established, the truth should be incorporated into official educational materials and curricula across the region but especially in Serbia





The National Consultation of Youth in Belgrade, which was funded with the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation, is one of three consultations of youth on mechanisms of truth-telling that HLC and its regional partners will implement in 2007.

On June 27, the Research and Documentation Center organised a national consultation of Youth from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. Documenta will organise a national consultation of youth from Croatia in Zagreb on July 20, 2007.

The regional partners began the consultative process in 2006, with the financial support of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a bid to expand the already existing discourse on transitional justice strategies and encourage regional governments to become actively involved in the consultation process.

The regional partners held two Regional Forums, in May 2006 in Sarajevo and in February 2007 in Zagreb. They were attended by representatives of victims, veterans and refugee associations, civil society groups, political analysts, youth organisations, historians, sociologists, members of the judiciary, and parliamentarians. In December 2006, a regional consultation of artists was held in Belgrade.

HLC, the Research and Documentation Center, and Documenta plan to hold a consultation in Sarajevo targeting media and journalists from across the region in September 2007, and another to be held in Pristina, Kosovo, targeting NGO activists from the region in October 2007. These together with the national consultations of youth are preparation for the Regional Forum that the regional partners will host in Belgrade in November 2007.

The purpose of this consultative process, which shall canvas the opinion of a broad array of stakeholder from across the region, is to identify and provide decision-makers with policy perspectives and recommendations on a truth-telling mechanism for the region. The regional partners plan to complete the consultative process by June 2009, when they will publish and share recommendations with national

governments, international organisations and the UN Secretary General.

Roundtable on Right to Education in Minority Languages in Kosovo

HLC-Kosovo launched its report *Practice of Implementing the Law on the Use of Language in the Kosovo Education Process* at a roundtable in Pristina, Kosovo, on July 9, 2007.

Article 4.4. of the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Governance in Kosovo and The Law on the Use of Language Articles 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 enshrine the rights of members of minority communities in Kosovo to education in their mother tongue at preschool institutions, elementary and high schools, and at universities. In the period from February to May 2007, members of the HLC – Kosovo research team monitored the extent to which these legal acts were implemented. The team conducted interviews with members of ethnic communities, teachers who teach in minority languages and representatives of the local and central institutions in Kosovo.

At the roundtable the HLC-Kosovo research team presented its findings to decision-makers from the municipal institutions, teachers and others working in the education sector, representatives of minority communities, and the media. The Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo was also represented at the roundtable.





HLC-Kosovo confirmed that the Law on the Use of Language is nearly fully implemented in respect of members of the Turkish, Bosniak, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and the Bosnian-speaking Gorany community since they attend schools in which the curriculum, devised by the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), is taught in Bosnian and Turkish.

In contrast, HLC-Kosovo underscored the fact that the Kosovo Government has failed to enact an educational curriculum in the Serbian language. To receive instruction in Serbian, Serbs and the Serb-speaking Gorany community are obliged to attend schools that follow the educational curriculum regulated by the Serbian Government. At the same time, HLC-Kosovo noted that Serbs have declined to cooperate with MoEST in developing such a curriculum.

Education in the Roma language is not available in either schools under the jurisdiction of MoEST or the Serbian Ministry of Education. Those parts of the Roma community who live in predominantly Albanian municipalities attend Albanian schools, while Roma who live in Serb enclaves attend schools where they are taught in the Serbian language. A smaller number of Roma children attend schools in Bosnian language.



“Findings of the report were welcomed by all participants who fully agreed with HLC-Kosovo’s recommendations. Furthermore the Prime Minister’s office representative

said the government will use the report to identify steps to address shortcomings in this matter.”

Bekim Blakaj, HLC-Kosovo Head of Office

Meeting of Olli Rehn with Human Rights Organisations

European Commissioner Olli Rehn met with representatives of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, No Peace without justice, ICTJ, OSI and HLC on July 5, 2007 in Brussels. The discussion was devoted to Kosovo and the cooperation of Serbia with the Hague tribunal. Representatives of the aforementioned organizations conveyed the jointly-held view that the government of Serbia must show its commitment to fully cooperate with the Hague tribunal before the signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). They also urged the EU not to connect the question of the status of Kosovo with the signing of an SAA with Serbia. HLC Executive Director, Nataša Kandić, told Commissioner Olli Rehn that the arrest of Ratko Mladić is vital for establishing justice in Serbia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She also said that the capture of Ratko Mladić would not result in the people of Serbia taking to the streets in protest, but would be considered, with the exception of radical supporters, a relief.

HLC-Kosovo secured witnesses in the murder of two wounded KLA members

After HLC had confirmed the identity of two wounded members of the KLA, who, according to sources close to HLC, were killed by members of a certain police unit in May 1999, HLC succeeded in convincing Kosovar Albanian witnesses to give statements to the Special War Crimes Prosecutor in Serbia so that those who are responsible can be brought to justice. Witnesses gave statements to the Serbian prosecutor on July 10, 2007, after which HLC expects a lawsuit to be brought against the Commander of the PJP group from Leskovac, which according to the testimony of police witnesses, gave the order to kill the wounded.

