ECMI NGO ROUNDTABLE

"INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE FYR OF MACEDONIA"

SECOND MEETING

Sunoor Verma and Farimah Daftary

Ohrid, FYR of Macedonia,
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I. PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since February 2001, the FYR of Macedonia has become involved in a serious crisis which has led to an increased polarization of society according to ethnic origin and which has had an almost catastrophic impact on the level of trust of the population in its leaders and also between ordinary citizens. It is our belief at ECMI that these developments have made this project more relevant than ever, as a means of ensuring continued dialogue between the various ethnic communities and of finding solutions together. Indeed, the numerous domestic NGOs have a crucial role to play, especially when governmental actors are unable or unwilling to address the situation through non-military means.

Thus, after having been postponed twice due to the crisis, the second meeting of the ECMI NGO Roundtable was finally organized on 30 June - 2 July in Ohrid by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), together with its local implementing partner, the Center for Human Rights / Center for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies (CRFMS) at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje. ECMI is particularly grateful to its Regional Representative in Skopje, Dr Sunoor Verma, for having actively pursued meetings with the participating NGOs throughout the country despite the crisis. The expertise of four Facilitators, Dr Mirjana Najchevska, Dr Natasa Gaber, Mr Nafi Sarachini and Mr Igor Ugrinovski, was also instrumental in making this a particularly stimulating event. Last but not least, we wish to thank Ms Gordana Micova and Ms Gordana Velitchkovska for their relentless energy throughout the meeting.

This report, which covers the second meeting of the ECMI NGO Roundtable, aims to highlight the main issues discussed and to summarize the results. It was written by the ECMI Regional Representative Dr Sunoor Verma, with the help of ECMI Project Leader Farimah Daftary. Thanks also go to ECMI Director Marc Weller and ECMI Balkans Project Coordinator Graham Holliday.

Farimah Daftary
ECMI Senior Research Associate
Flensburg, 23 August 2001

II.   Background and Aims of the ECMI NGO Roundtable on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The "NGO Roundtable on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the FYR of Macedonia" is an initiative launched by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in December 2000 in Flensburg as part of a series of new initiatives by the ECMI in South East Europe. The overall aim of this project is to foster constructive discussion between domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the FYR of Macedonia on the question of inter-ethnic relations in order to identify common ground for action. It thereby seeks to provide a forum for regular consultation and cooperation between NGOs who share a common interest in improving inter-ethnic communication and relations in their country. The two main planned outputs of this initiative are: (1) the development by NGOs of *joint projects* cutting across ethnic lines; this will be facilitated through (2) the establishment of an *NGO Network on Inter-Ethnic Relations*, with its own website offering information on the aims and objectives of participating NGOs and their need for partners. The ECMI will assist NGOs in the evaluation of the joint projects and in seeking sources of funding with the international community. The relevance of this initiative was assessed during a fact-finding visit to the FYR of Macedonia by ECMI Research Associate Farimah Daftary (12-19 June 2000) during which interviews with over 20 NGOs throughout the country were conducted. This project is made possible through a generous grant by the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FRESTA- Secretariat for Peace and Stability) and the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ECMI NGO Roundtable was launched on 10-13 December 2000 with the participation of 20 NGOs from Skopje and other parts of the country as well as eight international experts on minority issues and NGO networks.[1] The meeting was held at the headquarters of the ECMI in Flensburg, Germany, in order to offer a neutral environment and an atmosphere which would foster dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of ideas. This decision was also motivated by the desire of the Macedonian participants to learn more about experiences in minority-majority relations in other parts of Europe.   The lively discussions during this first meeting of the NGO

Roundtable demonstrated the great interest of the participating NGOs in each other's work, the need for increased networking between NGOs with similar interests and a similar commitment to improving inter-ethnic relations in the country, and finally, a need for support and knowledge-sharing between NGOs in project development. A major outcome was the adoption by consensus soon after the meeting of a declaration on the commitment of the participants to working together to implement joint projects with the aim of improving inter-ethnic relations and inter-ethnic communication.[2]

In February 2001, fighting broke out in the village of Tanusevci, located on the northern border with Kosovo. Since then, parts of the country have become involved in protracted guerilla warfare by the ethnic Albanian fighters of the NLA (National Liberation Army or *Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare* in Albanian). They have been met by a weak though determined Macedonian Army. Tens of thousands of citizens from various ethnic backgrounds have been displaced or have had to flee into neighbouring countries. The crisis has had a strong negative impact on the general state of inter-ethnic relations, leading to even stronger polarization along ethnic lines, with incidents of hate speech in the domestic media and ethnic rioting in the city of Bitola. Although the international community was quick and unified in condemning the actions of the NLA, calling for the resolution of the conflict through political dialogue, not violence, no concrete solutions were offered. Following repeated trips to Skopje by EU Foreign and Security Policy Advisor Javier Solana and NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, a declaration of a state of war by the Macedonian Parliament was averted and a "government of national unity" was formed in May 2001 by the main political parties in the country, including the two ethnic Albanian parties, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) and the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP). Sporadic fighting has continued, however, around Tetovo, Kumanovo and at times threatening the capital Skopje.

Due to these serious developments, the second meeting of the Roundtable, originally planned for April, had to be postponed twice. In the meantime, momentum was maintained by the ECMI Regional Representative (RR), Dr Sunoor Verma, who held

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[1] See *NGO Roundtable on "Inter-Ethnic Relations in the FYR of Macedonia"*, ECMI Report #7 (Flensburg: ECMI, February 2001) (at: http://www.ecmi.de).

bilateral meetings from February to June 2001 throughout the country with each of the NGOs which had attended the first Roundtable and also with other potentially interested NGOs. The aim of these meetings was to evaluate the activities and capacity of these NGOs and to gauge their interest in participating in this project. These meetings were also highly important in establishing a working relation and mutual trust between the RR and the NGOs. Meetings were also organized in Skopje to discuss the elements of the common website for the *NGO Network* and to discuss the sharing of responsibilities.

The following criteria were developed for including NGOs in the Network:
1. Does the NGO have an inter-ethnic relations promotion agenda?
2. Is the NGO inter-ethnic in terms of its human resources?
3. What is the size/experience of the NGO?
4. Does the management of the NGO have a sustainable vision and strategy?
5. Does the NGO want to participate in a network?
6. Are the structures in place to provide for full financial transparency and accountability?

The Regional Representative also began facilitating meetings between NGOs to develop joint projects. Two preliminary projects with four participating NGOs in each emerged. It was decided to present these project ideas at the next meeting of the Roundtable to obtain feedback and identify further partners. During this same period, the RR also held consultative meetings with experts from the FYR of Macedonia who could be potential resource persons for the project locally and also act as Facilitators during the Roundtable meeting.

The second meeting of the ECMI "NGO Roundtable on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the FYR of Macedonia" was organized in Ohrid from 30 June to 2 July by ECMI together with its local implementing partner, the Center for Human Rights / Center for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies (CRFMS) at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje. Despite the tense situation in the country, 20 NGO representatives attended, representing the

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[2] See the "Declaration of the First Meeting of the NGO Roundtable on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the

major ethnic groups in the country (Albanians, Macedonians, Roma, Serbs, Turks, Vlachs); four leading domestic experts acted as Facilitators.[3]

A preliminary agenda was drafted by the RR, in consultation with the ECMI Project Leader Farimah Daftary. It was further developed through bilateral meetings between the RR and each of the Facilitators and finalised in a meeting with all Facilitators on 25 June (see Annex A). The basic principle behind the design of the agenda was to evoke maximum response from the participants through expert facilitation. Also, the meeting was held in Macedonian rather than English (with simultaneous interpretation for the ECMI Project Leader only) so that the discussion could flow freely.

FYR of Macedonia," ECMI Report #7, Annex A (at: http://www.ecmi.de).
[3] Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, Dr Eran Fraenkel (Search for Common Ground in Macedonia) was unable to attend as Facilitator at the last moment.

III.   THE ROUNDTABLE

Day 1:   Inter-Ethnic Relations and the NGO Sector; Cooperation between NGOs, Relations with International NGOs and Donors.

<u>Session I</u>

Project leader Farimah Daftary (ECMI Senior Research Associate, Flensburg) welcomed the participants, noting the good turnout despite the unstable political and security situation in the country. Having briefly presented the tasks of the European Centre for Minority Issues, she highlighted the urgency for citizens of the Balkan countries to take their future into their own hands for, sooner or later, donor fatigue would occur. It was thus highly important to create democratic and ethnically-inclusive structures and to fill the initiatives of the Stability Pact with life through the generation of sustainable, civil society projects. Most importantly, ownership of these projects should lie within the domestic civil society sector.

Ms Daftary then restated the aims of the ECMI "NGO Roundtable on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the FYR of Macedonia" which are to empower domestic NGOs to generate civil society projects of a high quality by inviting them to recognize the importance of representing interests rather than ethnic groups. More specifically, the objectives of the project are:

- Networking among NGOs with a common interest in resolving inter-ethnic issues
- Identification of common aims
- Joining of forces to further common aims
- Formulation of ideas and proposals for joint projects between NGOs from the FYR of Macedonia

This project therefore seeks to provide a much-needed forum for consultation, communication and cooperation. The priority task is to establish an *NGO Network on Inter-Ethnic Relations* which will facilitate the second task of generating *joint projects* which will have a better chance of obtaining international funding. For the benefit of the new participants, the results of the first meeting were reiterated, drawing attention

to the declaration adopted on the commitment of the NGOs to develop joint projects with the aim of improving inter-ethnic relations and inter-ethnic communication and to working jointly to implement the Stability Pact. She concluded by stating her belief that, with the country edging perhaps towards a full-blown conflict, this project was more relevant than ever and that NGOs should take action, especially in a context where government actors are unable or unwilling to do so.

Ms Daftary also reminded the gathering that an ECMI Regional Representative (RR) in Skopje, Dr. Sunoor Verma, had been appointed in January and that his expertise in project management was available at all times to the project participants. The participants were also informed that ECMI had concluded an agreement with the Center for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies (CRFMS) at the Institute for Sociological Political and Juridical Research (ISPJR). Under this agreement, the CRFMS will be the domestic implementing partner for the project and provide office space and logistics support. The CRFMS library is also available to the project participants for use and has titles in the areas of human rights, citizenship issues, refugee issues, migration, internal displacement, etc. The CRFMS is also building up a section on NGO management which may be of particular interest to NGOs.

ECMI Regional Representative in Skopje, Dr. Sunoor Verma, re-confirmed the tools foreseen under the ECMI project for establishing a functional inter-ethnic network of NGOs in the FYR of Macedonia with the aim of generating joint projects. The tools are three meetings of the NGO Roundtable as well as a common website of the *NGO Network on Inter-Ethnic Relations*, with individual member NGO pages. These will be developed through working group meetings on different aspects of the functioning of the Network. He also informed the participants about the bilateral meetings already held between the RR and NGOs to assess the level of interest in the project and the desire to work in the field of inter-ethnic relations. In these meetings, the NGO representatives also had the opportunity of discussing with the RR the mission of their organizations, the problems faced, and management practices which could be adopted for achieving sustainability. These meetings allowed the project organizers to set initial criteria for establishing a core group of Network founding members (see Section II). This explained the absence of some NGOs that had been present at the first meeting of the Roundtable in Flensburg. It was indeed felt that the focus in the

first stage should be on the smaller NGOs, and that the expertise of larger, more experienced NGOs and foundations would be drawn upon at a later stage, once the Network is established. It is foreseen that its membership base will grow and will be open and inclusive in nature. The invitation for the second Roundtable was also extended on the basis of the interest demonstrated by the NGOs in the interim period.

The RR then briefly explained to the participants how the project had progressed through the bilateral meetings with individual NGOs to assess their needs and their capacity. Two meetings of the initial Flensburg NGO group were organized to discuss elements of the Networking strategy. Meetings with existing local NGO networks were also held. In addition, the participants were requested to provide material for the upcoming website of the Network and the components of this website were discussed. The RR also informed the participants about the two preliminary joint project proposals which had been developed through these facilitated meetings. Four NGOs are involved in each proposal. During this interim period, some NGOs had also used the library and computer facilities at the CRFMS-ISPJR.

The RR then introduced the Facilitators and presented the Agenda of the meeting (Annex A). He emphasized that it had sought to take into account the results of the first Roundtable and the issues raised by the NGOs in the bilateral meetings. Instead of speakers, Facilitators were invited who have been working specifically with the Macedonian NGO sector. These are well-known domestic experts who have often played a consultative role to the NGOs and have demonstrated their commitment to the cause of improving inter-ethnic relations in the FYR of Macedonia.

An introductory session followed with the aim of introducing the participants to each other in a rather informal way. Participants were paired up and prepared to answer the following questions: (1) Who is your partner? (2) Which NGO do you represent? (3) What is the field of your NGO's work? (4) What are your expectations from this meeting? And (5) What is your favourite expression? The fourth question yielded the following responses:

Responses of participants to the question "What are your expectations from this second meeting of the Roundtable?

- Make progress/headway as an individual NGO worker and as a group
- Develop women's awareness
- Preparation of joint projects
- Share personal and professional experiences
- Formation of a Network
- Unity
- Learning to face professional problems
- Improvement of inter-ethnic relations
- Introduction to each other and each other's work
- Exploring possibilities of cooperation
- Work in an atmosphere of cooperation
- Friendship
- Harmonization
- Organization
- Results
- Exchange of knowledge
- Resolution of problems
- Success

Session II: "Inter-ethnic Relations - A Source of Insecurity in the Republic of Macedonia. Results of a Research Study performed for the UNDP Development Report"

- ▪ Facilitator: Dr Mirjana Najchevska (Director of the Center for Human Rights, Center for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies, ISPJR, Skopje; President of the Macedonian Helsinki Committee, Skopje).
- ▪ Aim: This presentation is expected to demonstrate the current state of inter-ethnic relations and the reasons for insecurity as perceived by different ethnic groups. This may demonstrate to the NGOs the gaps and the concerns of the citizens. These "gaps" or issue areas could serve as directions in which joint inter-ethnic projects may be generated.

This topic was selected because at the Flensburg Roundtable all participating NGOs without exception had in one way or another expressed a desire to develop projects in the field of Human Rights. The majority of the NGOs also refer to human rights in their Mission Statement. Professor Najchevska was therefore invited to share with the participants her findings on the "Sense of insecurity among the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and its relation to the inter-ethnic relations in the country." Professor Najchevska is a well-known human rights expert in the FYR of Macedonia who has been working very closely with minority and marginalized sections of the population. She was particularly well-qualified to conduct this session due to her involvement with the Macedonian NGO sector since its inception and her intensive interaction with NGO activists in the country.

In a short presentation entitled "Insecurity Derived from Unsettled Ethnic Relations," based on the results of a study conducted by the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research (ISPJR) for the United Nations Development Project (UNDP),[4] Professor Najchevska recalled the fact that inter-ethnic relations are a continual source of tension between people in the FYR of Macedonia. The problem can be examined from three different aspects:

1. Insecurity, which comes from the inter-ethnic nature of the country, which is based on the specific personal relations and perceptions of those belonging to different ethnic groups (this results in mistrust and a feeling of insecurity).

2. Insecurity originating from belonging to a particular ethnic group, which is accompanied by visible differences in status and may also be manifested in greater or lesser social exclusion and insecurity.

3. Specific social and broader exclusion of those belonging to the Roma nationality.

Mistrust based on ethnicity can be identified at a very early stage in all ethnic groups: already at the age of ten, children have well-defined prejudices and negative stereotypes concerning persons belonging to other ethnic groups. The study also shows that a significant part of the population of the FYR of Macedonia does not feel comfortable with the multi-cultural structure of the country. Members of different

ethnic groups have a feeling of inequality, discrimination and unfair treatment by the state. A strong sense of mistrust, fear and negative stereotypes also exist between representatives of different ethnic groups. She also cited the various reasons for insecurity forwarded by members of the ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian communities.

The proposed solutions could consist of the following:

1. Theoretical and legal strengthening of the civic model, in which tolerance, respect for differences, and multiculturalism will be in accordance with the international conventions signed by the state.

2. Legal regulation of the use of minority languages in the Republic of Macedonia.

3. Legal regulation of the use of the symbols of ethnic groups and the development of civic symbols.

4. Development of a humane population policy oriented towards the interests of the child, and not towards satisfying the interests of separate ethnic groups.

5. Raising the educational level of persons belonging to different ethnic communities to reach the national average.

6. Development of a multiculturally-oriented state administration.

These substantiated, objective and methodically-obtained results were of great interest to those present and triggered a lively discussion. One participant commented that the most worrying aspect was the negative perception of other ethnic groups already in the minds of schoolchildren, and concluded that more inter-ethnic projects targeted at children should be developed. Another participant supported this idea, emphasizing that, often, children can act as a corrective to their parents' prejudices. Professor Najchevska also drew the attention of participants to the trend demonstrated in the study of consistent discrimination against the Roma population. One NGO stressed that it was trying to develop projects for the Roma population in specific areas, as recommended by the UNDP study, rather than general projects in the area of human rights. Participants from women's NGOs expressed their desire to use the findings of

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[4] The study is entitled "Sources of Insecurity in the Republic of Macedonia" and is due to be published by the UNDP in September 2001 (see also http://www.undp.org.mk).

this study to design inter-ethnic projects targeted at women given the importance of the attitude of women in shaping attitudes in the family.

Session III: Issues of Concern in the development of the Macedonian civic society sector: (1) NGO relations with Donors; (2) Relations with the State; (3) Relation with Clients; (4) Relations with other NGOs.

- Facilitator: Dr Natasha Gaber, Senior Researcher at the Center for Ethnic Relations, ISPJR; Member of the Board of the Macedonian Center for International Co-operation (MCIC), Skopje.
- Aims: To demonstrate the current deficiencies in the sector and emphasize that they can be addressed more effectively as a Network than as individual organizations.

Dr Gaber is regarded as a leading expert in the FYR of Macedonia in the field of NGO law and related issues, and was a key member of the team which drafted the Macedonian NGO Law. Dr Gaber shared with the participants the "Compact Agreement" presented at the "NGO/Government Partnership" conference organized by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, Washington D.C. (Croatia, 27-28 April 2001). A four-page summary in Macedonian of this "Compact Agreement" was distributed to all participants. Dr Gaber expressed the hope that this document would generate a discussion of the issues to be addressed by the Macedonian NGO sector. She also hoped to demonstrate the efficiency of networks and lobby groups in addressing issues and taking up causes and of the benefits of NGOs and Government considering one another as potential partners. A 'Compact' could be perceived also as a process of building trust between NGOs and different levels of government in order to overcome mutual suspicion.

The main ideas of the "Compact Agreement" were explained as follows:
- The term "Compact" describes a broad agreement, which is made between the governmental bodies of a country and the non-governmental sector. This concept may also be used to cover the process of negotiation, formulation of the text of the agreement, defining the elements of collaboration for inclusion

in the agreement as well as determining the basic principles on which this agreement will be based.

- This agreement emerged from the needs of the non-profit sector in Croatia to be officially recognized as a serious partner of the state and also to have an institutionalized channel of collaboration with the government.

- It is a mutually-beneficial agreement, where the NGOs have the feeling of being involved in influencing policy-level decisions while the state has access to their expertise, knowledge and readiness for action.

- The emergence of this agreement is directly related to the development of new perspectives for the non-profit sector in relation to society and the citizens.

- To date, four 'Compacts' have been signed in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; Canada, Estonia and Ghana are in the process of signing similar agreements. These agreements range from expressing a political will for collaboration to agreements with defined parameters for collaboration.

- A 'Compact' may be expressed in the form of an agreement or a document aimed at policy formation. The topics covered are usually:
  - Mutual recognition
  - Representation
  - Partnership
  - Resources, implementation and development

- It is desirable that a maximum number of partners be included in the process and that it be widely publicized.

- Finally, 'Mini Compacts' may also be signed between NGOs and individual ministries.

The presentation provoked many questions and comments. Reservations were expressed by some participants on the potential of implementing a Compact agreement in the FYR of Macedonia for it was felt that the Government does not take the NGOs seriously, as well as due to perceived strong feelings of mistrust towards NGOs by citizens. Participants also felt that appreciation for their work was rarely shown. A participant suggested that suspicion and mistrust could be overcome through the creation of networks such as the one being formed by the ECMI project; these could function as pressure groups and at the same time set internal standards for members. Another participant expressed optimism that 'Compact' could work,

provided that the mistrust between NGOs could be overcome, and suggested that the NGOs present organize a meeting of mayors and discuss with them the idea of "Compact" at the local level. The participants generally agreed upon the importance of cooperation with local government and mayors and the need to increase such cooperation through joint lobbying. One example of successful lobbying at the municipal level regarding a project for the Roma community were given. Based on the good performance of the NGOs involved, the municipality authorities asked those NGOs to collaborate with them on similar projects. They also expressed their optimism that, if these efforts are succeeding in Croatia, then it could happen in the FYR of Macedonia too.

Another concern raised in the discussion was that an agreement such as the proposed 'Compact' could be a risky proposition as it raises the following issues:

1. Can the NGO sector maintain its independence and objectivity after concluding such an agreement?

2. Could this lead to the state preparing a list of favoured and "convenient" NGOs?

3. The local government changes every four years and brings in new players who are most often unaware of the NGO sector and its features. If an agreement were to be made every four years, there would be discontinuity.

Dr Gaber responded to these questions by underlining that 'Compact' is a broad agreement and based on a spirit of partnership and complementation of competencies. It may also be perceived as a process in which stakeholders come to perceive each other as partners. This agreement needs to be concluded between the real NGOs and the state. She also emphasized that, in order to gain the trust of their clients and partners, NGOs in the FYR of Macedonia will have to learn to play by the rules, which includes operational transparency, genuine expertise in the area of activity, and regular reporting to clients, boards and funders. The agreement could be started at the micro level and then later moved on to the central government level. She also suggested that unbiased organizations such as ECMI facilitate the process of negotiating a compact agreement. Another Facilitator stressed the importance of perceiving the state as a partner in the seeking of funds and implementation of certain

projects. In conclusion, the Project Leader called the attention of the participants to the "Stability Pact Declaration on NGO-Government Partnership in South-Eastern Europe", adopted in Bucharest on 27 October 2000 and which could serve as a useful instrument in enhancing NGO-Government partnership in implementing the Stability Pact. In this document, the participating governments (including that of the FYR of Macedonia) make a commitment to help NGOs and civic initiatives in the region to strengthen their capacities.[5]

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[5] This Declaration may be found at: http://www.cyclacadeur.org; it is also reproduced in ECMI Report #7, Annex C (http://www.ecmi.de).

Day 2: NGO Network on Inter-Ethnic Relations

Session IV: Donors' view on Inter-Ethnic Network of NGOs; Advantages of network applications vs. individual NGO project proposals.

- Facilitator: Mr Nafi Sarachini, Program Officer, Assistance Section, Delegation of the European Commission, European Union, Skopje.
- Aims: Overview of the trends and practices in the Macedonian NGO sector. Emphasis on networking for the generation of inter-ethnic projects.

A sociologist by training, Mr Nafi Sarachini has long been involved in the development of the NGO sector in the FYR of Macedonia and is a board member of some of the leading NGOs in the country. In his introductory remarks, Mr Sarachini presented a brief history of the development of the Macedonian NGO sector in order to explain some of its features and problems:

- The large influx of refugees from Bosnia in 1993 and from Kosovo in 1999 (and subsequent proportional influx of international NGOs and international organizations) resulted in the formation of predominantly humanitarian NGOs involved in the distribution of aid.
- At the onset of the first refugee influx, there were no "pure" NGOs. The first NGOs which appeared in 1991 were affiliated with the government. There was also no specific NGO law in place, and NGOs were registered as "associations of citizens". (An NGO law has now been adopted.)
- The Macedonian NGO sector is a major employer, which is an important factor in a country with a very high unemployment rate.
- Foreign donors account for 99% of the funding of the domestic NGO sector. If they withdraw, the NGO sector will collapse (as illustrated in 1993-1994 when the foreign donors began to withdraw and Macedonian NGOs were left on their own).
- International donors implement their programs through local/domestic partners. They do not like to work with "one-man" NGOs and they like transparency. They are also often reluctant to work with newer NGOs.

Thus, until now, the environment for good NGO functioning had not been created. Mr Sarachini then presented a typology of NGOs and NGO projects in the FYR of Macedonia:

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- The main aim of a number of NGOs is to survive by attracting funds. There are numerous NGOs who do not represent the interests of any particular group but are mere "grant hunters".

- Since most domestic NGOs are dependent on foreign donors, they are active in those areas in which the donors are interested and which they believe are important for they FYR of Macedonia (human rights, inter-ethnic relations, humanitarian affairs, education) and they follow what the foreign donors ask them to do. They have thus turned into mere service providers. The desirable process would be the opposite, starting from the needs of citizens.

- Most of the project proposals submitted for funding are oriented at tackling the consequences of the problem instead of addressing root causes. Another problem is that projects have a short-lived impact. Also, many projects are overlapping.

He also commented that Professor Mirjana Najchevska's presentation was very valuable because it demonstrated how to prepare project proposals based on analysis of the issues. Mr Sarachini then opened the discussion by asking the participants why the NGOs in the country were organized on an ethnic basis and, while in their programme they state that they will pursue the rights of all citizens, in reality they address the rights of one group only. One participant offered the explanation that an ethnically organized NGO was perceived as having better chances of obtaining funding while another stated that it was not surprising that civil society reflected ethnic divisions in a country where the state structures and political parties were formed on an ethnic basis. If the concept of a civil society were realized in the state, then the NGOs too would be able to function on that basis. Another interesting explanation was offered by a participant who looked for the cause of this ethnic division in the way the NGO sector was formed, pointing out that, initially, like-minded friends belonging to the same ethnicity created an NGO.

One Roma woman's NGO responded that it had decided to work with Roma women because their level of awareness was lower than that of women from other ethnic backgrounds and because it believes that Roma women are better qualified to train Roma women. Several other participants confirmed the belief that there were

problems specific to each ethnic community, which only members of that community could understand. They also recognized that there were needs which cut across communities.

Several NGOs gave positive examples of collaborative projects, e.g. a program in Bitola for street children regardless of ethnicity, and called for Roma NGOs to make greater efforts to work with Albanian NGOs and vice-versa because the problems which affect one community also affect the other. The positive benefits of cooperation in the area of women's rights on common problems was also recognized.

As an example of how to generate their own funds for greater sustainability, one NGO explained that it had set up a trading company.

One participant felt that the NGOs are so busy providing services that they do not know of each other's existence. At this point, one of the participants concluded that networking of the NGOs would bring about a quality change in the sector. She added that it was time the NGOs pooled their resources. She reminded others that this opportunity of creating a strong inter-ethnic network of NGOs should not be missed. A representative of a local NGO network in Gostivar shared her experience of working with other NGOs. While at the beginning her network was mono-ethnic, after many trainings and seminars they started developing multi-ethnic projects.

In conclusion, Mr Sarachini reminded the participants that there is a need for a holistic approach, defining the global interests of the NGO sector with the interests of citizens in mind. He emphasized the need for the sector to devise a strategy and develop guidelines, which in turn should be shared with donors. He also stressed the need for greater communication between NGOs and the need to network and join forces. He also called for positive examples to be shared on a more regular basis. Mr Sarachini noted that it was a sad situation that foreign donors had to insist that NGOs find ethnic partners on projects and that such collaboration should happen spontaneously. He also called for the establishment of a body to provide information on NGOs which have abused their non-profit status.

Session V: Elements of the NGO Network

- ▪ <u>Facilitator</u>: ECMI Regional Representative Dr. Sunoor Verma
- ▪ <u>Aims</u>: To encourage the Group to generate the rules for the network which should lead to a sense of belonging among the members.

The RR opened the session by sharing his experience in working in the development sector with NGOs and their networks. Many networks which have been created are driven by donor agendas, where ground rules for participation and work are pre-determined by the donor. Most of these networks have not gone past the formation stage or have collapsed after the withdrawal of the donor. In the bilateral meetings held between the RR and NGOs, many had expressed their disappointment with the networks in which they have been participating. The purpose of networking is the sharing of know-how and information; if this is to be achieved at all, participants need to have a sense of belonging to the network. This can only come about if the participants generate the ground rules through open discussion and consensus on main issues, and if the members share responsibility. Sustainability of the network has to be addressed at the very outset.

The participants then broke off into four working groups, each generating proposals on the four elements of the NGO Network:

1. Mission / Aims
2. Criteria and Rules for Participation
3. Decision-making and Implementation
4. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between participating NGOs

The groups worked during the two hours foreseen, most also using the lunch break.

Working Group I	Working Group II
▪ Roma Community Center "DROM" ▪ Turkish Women's Organization of Macedonia MATUKAT- Ohrid ▪ FELIX ▪ Macedonian Media Institute ▪ Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesecina"	▪ Organization of Turkish Youth of Macedonia ▪ Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesecina" ▪ Association of Roma Women (ESMA) ▪ DAJA Roma Women's Organization ▪ Turkish Women's Organization of Macedonia MATUKAT
Working Group III	**Working Group IV**
▪ Union for the Culture of the Vlach in Macedonia ▪ ARKA Forum for Roma Rights ▪ Association of Human Rights Protection of Roma ▪ Inter-Ethnic Project (IRG) - Gostivar ▪ Association for Human Rights of Roma "Avutnipe"	▪ Organization of Serbian Women of Macedonia ▪ Association for Human Rights of Roma "Avutnipe" ▪ Inter-Ethnic NGO Network Kumanovo - "Majka" ▪ Association for Development of Media on Turkish Language

Session VII: Consolidation of Ideas on the Elements of the NGO Network

- Facilitator: Mr Igor Ugrinovski, Research Assistant, Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje.

- Aims: Each working group will make a presentation followed by discussion and preparation of a draft document. The Facilitator will provoke maximum and representative responses from the group members.

Rapporteurs from each group presented their work and all ideas were put down on a flipchart, as follows:

► Ideas:

1. AIMS / MISSION OF THE NETWORK

- Strengthening of inter-ethnic relations through support and strengthening of NGO initiatives for the development of multi-ethnic dialogue in the Republic of Macedonia.

- Coordinated approach of the non-governmental sector and strengthening of mutual cooperation in order to implement joint projects that will contribute to the improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the Republic of Macedonia.

- Increase of the impact/influence of the NGOs that are included in the network for development and advancement of network.

- Reduction of inter-ethnic barriers

- Finding ways for the resolution of problems of mutual interest

- Identification of problem areas in inter-ethnic relations

- Analysis of inter-ethnic relations

- Determination of the priorities and direction for action and decisions towards improving inter-ethnic relations

- Joint implementation of projects

- Building and development of NGOs for inter-ethnic relations

- Defending human rights, enhancing tolerance, encouraging inter-ethnic dialogue, identifying opportunities for capacity development of NGOs who will work on the improvement of inter-ethnic relations

- Improve the quality of overall (NGO) strategy, to increase awareness and understanding of the non-governmental sector on the part of the state and the public

2. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO THE NETWORK

- Mutual interest in the resolution of inter-ethnic problems
- Expression of mutual trust
- Experience
- Personnel (Human Resources) and technical capacity.
- Multiethnic composition
- Preparedness to promote cooperation and to implement projects with other ethnic groups.
- No support to NGOs affiliated with political parties
- Acceptance of network rules
- Legally-registered NGO
- Signatory to "Statement for Cooperation" (MoU)
- Development of equal opportunities for individuals and their communities.
- Inclusion of more NGOs with similar visions from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- Every NGO should sign a statement saying that it will work according to the highest standards of quality and efficiency, and that it will perform regular and thoughtful evaluation how its programs fit its strategy, mission and aims.
- Every NGO member must respect all persons irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic status.

3. DECISION-MAKING IN THE NETWORK

- The participating NGOs will form a council which will give directions for the complete realization of the strategy, mission and aims of the Network.
- The Council will choose a Board that will be composed of smaller group of members which will make the decisions.

4. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE NETWORK

- A document which all members of Network will honour.
- Elements of the MoU:
    - Aims
    - Field of work
    - Structure of Network management
    - Process of decision-making
    - Monitoring and evaluation of results

- Arbitration of conflicts within the Network
- Financing
- Tasks and responsibilities
- Written document
    - Written consent
    - Final principles
- All NGO members of the network must respect all aforementioned criteria and rules.
- Members of the network must realize activities in the spirit of partnership and wider application of best practices.

Session VIII: Consolidation of Ideas on the Elements of the Network (Continued)
- <u>Facilitator</u>: Mr Igor Ugrinovski, Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project.
- <u>Aim</u>: Draft documents for Network

Following an intense discussion, the participants succeeded in defining by consensus the Mission Statement of the Network and its Aims.

Mission Statement

Building and development of an NGO network dedicated to the improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the Republic of Macedonia.

Network Aims
1. Promotion of mutual cooperation through exchange of all available resources.
2. Initiation and implementation of joint projects.
3. Increasing the influence (of NGOs) in the community.
4. Creation and development of a joint strategy for the improvement of inter-ethnic relations.
5. Expansion of the network.

The discussion in this session revolved around the following questions:

1. Does the Network need to be registered by the court as a legal entity? The group appeared divided on this issue. Those supporting legal registration felt that this would provide legitimacy to the Network and make its work more effective. Others felt that

this might make the functioning of the network too formal and rigid. A compromise was proposed that the Network begin functioning and, if successful in achieving its aims, it could then seek legal registration.

2. How can the group avoid admitting NGOs not serious about the inter-ethnic agenda of the Network? One participant proposed that the applicant NGO should be initially granted an "Associate Member" status for a test period of 3-6 months, which may or may not mature into full membership. Another proposal was made that admission to the network be made following a recommendation by two members of the network. In this case, the sponsoring NGOs would be responsible for updating the new entrant and assisting it. This would also allow for the participation of smaller and relatively new NGOs. The concern of the participants on this issue is reflective of the state of affairs in the NGO sector in the FYR of Macedonia. With a total population of just two million, there are over 3,500 registered NGOs, many of which are "phantom NGOs" that create unfair competition for serious NGOs.

3. Should Network membership be restricted to NGOs active exclusively in the field of inter-ethnic relations? Most participants expressed the feeling that, given the ethnic mix of the country and the stagnant economy, any genuine project aimed at improving any element of life in the country is bound to have a positive influence on inter-ethnic relations. One participant emphasized that ecology, health, nutrition, shelter, etc., are issues which cut across ethnic lines.

4. What strategy should the network adopt against the entry of NGOs with a political agenda? In the recent past, there has been a very strong correlation between political party affiliation and rewards. NGOs which have opted to keep away from such affiliations claim to have suffered at the local government level. Most of the participants felt that "political NGOs" erode whatever little goodwill exists towards the Macedonian NGO sector. It was suggested by one participant that, prior to inclusion, the background of the NGO be studied carefully. Another proposal was to first accept an NGO as an Associate Member (see above). However, the group unanimously expressed the opinion that the Network should be open and inclusive in spirit.

Session IX: Network Implementation Timetable and Responsibilities

- ▪ <u>Facilitator</u>: ECMI Regional Representative Dr. Sunoor Verma
- ▪ <u>Aims</u>: Establishing a time frame for the finalization of documents and making the network functional.

The participants proposed the formation of a task force consisting of one representative of each ethnicity and the RR to fine-tune the Criteria for Admission to the Network and to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The following members were unanimously chosen:

► <u>NGO Network Task Force</u>:

Union for the Culture of the Vlach in Macedonia	Mirjana Nikolovska
Organization of Serbian Women of Macedonia	Suncica Miljkovic
Turkish Women's Organization of Macedonia MATUKAT	Sadika Aga
FELIX	Dijana Georgievska
Inter-Ethnic Project (IRG)-Gostivar	Yllza Ademi
Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesecina"	Samet Skenderi
ECMI Regional Representative	Sunoor Verma

It was decided that the Network Task Force would convene its first meeting right after the session to choose a coordinator and to decide on a timetable for the completion of work. The following decisions were also made:

- ▪ By 1 September 2001, all participating NGOs would submit their materials for the website.
- ▪ The website would be launched by the time of the third meeting of the Roundtable.
- ▪ A draft MoU would be circulated by the Task Force to all members. All proposals would be collected and the document would be signed at the third Roundtable.
- ▪ It was also proposed that NGOs continue to work on the joint project proposals with the aim of submitting them for Stability Pact funding at the second regional funding conference in Bucharest (25-26 October 2001). The

RR reminded the participants of his availability for consultation on project proposal development.

- The participants also proposed that the time remaining until the next Roundtable be utilized by drawing in other NGOs, especially ethnic Albanian ones, as their participation has not been very visible since the beginning of the crisis.

The RR opened the first meeting of the Network Task Force in the evening by inviting the group to select a coordinator. The group proposed the RR for this position but the RR emphasized that, in the interest of the sustainability of the Network, it was important that responsibility be taken by the participating NGOs, while reiterating his availability for consultation and support. The group then chose the representative of the Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesecina" as its Coordinator. The Coordinator proposed that the group divide into two teams, one on the MoU, the other on the Aims / Mission and Criteria for Admission. For logistical reasons, it was suggested that the three members from Gostivar be in one group and the rest in the second. The next meeting of the Network Task Force was scheduled for 9 July at the office of the CRFMS in Skopje.

Day 3:   Collaborative Project Proposals

Session X: Presentation of Project Proposals

- ▪ Facilitator: ECMI Regional Representative Dr. Sunoor Verma
- ▪ Aims: Presentation of inter-ethnic project proposals, which could provoke new ideas of collaboration among participating members.

During this session, four project proposal were presented by the following NGOs:

1. Association for Human Rights of Roma "Avutnipe"
2. Union of Serbian Women
3. Multimedia
4. Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesecina"

Avutnipe's project concerns the *education of minority citizens on the upcoming national census*.[6] The project foresees a door-to-door campaign educating citizens on the way the census is conducted. Avutnipe has determined that, due to fear of losing social security and other benefits, significant numbers of Roma tend to identify themselves as (ethnic) Macedonians. This presents an inaccurate picture, which later hinders advocacy for improved conditions and rights for the Roma. The Union of Vlach Culture also feels that the Vlach in the FYR of Macedonia do not identify themselves as such in the census for various reasons. This, too, leads to problems when advocating the preservation of the Vlach culture and language. The proposal foresees the training of 60 volunteers who will run the door-to-door campaign, publication of leaflets with texts and illustrations in different languages and monitoring of the census procedure in the minority locations. Avutnipe had originally developed the plan with Skopje in mind, but seized the opportunity to propose that NGOs present at the Roundtable join the project proposal for implementation in their respective cities. Avutnipe has initiated contact with the authorities responsible for conducting the census who have promised support for this project.

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[6] Originally scheduled for May, the census was postponed to the fall, although, due to the crisis and mass displacement, it is doubtful that it will be conducted. There is a possibility that it might be rescheduled for the end of 2001. The last census was conducted in 1994.

The **Union of Serbian Women (USW)** presented their project proposal "*Inter-Ethnic Tolerance Promotion Campaign*". The proposed area of activity is media and the target group is women of different ethnicities. USW see women as the driving force in the family and in the community. Addressing tolerance campaigns at women, they feel, is an effective means of addressing inter-ethnic relations. Activities proposed activities under this project include the organization of roundtables, seminars and workshops for women on the topics of "Tolerance" and "Respecting Differences". These events will be facilitated by experts with the aim of generating "text lines", jingles and campaign themes on the afore-mentioned topics. TV and Radio spots will be generated in six languages (Albanian, Macedonian, Romani, Serbian, Turkish and Vlach). These will be aired on regional, national and cable TV and radio channels. USW is negotiating with NGOs representing other ethnic groups the joint implementation of the program. The USW has media experts as members whose expertise will be used for the design and implementation of the project. With effective implementation in mind, the USW plans to approach the National Radio and TV Committee, the Association of Private Broadcasters and the Association of Film Theater Owners for support.

Multimedia presented their project proposal for establishing a *Debate Center*. Multimedia is an NGO working in the area of culture promotion and management. Their user base is very different than that of the other participating NGOs. Multimedia is working more at the policy level; whereas the other members are primarily field NGOs. The Macedonian Ministry of Culture has enacted a new Law on Culture, which was one of its first priorities in this field. However, one of the problems that the country faces is not with the legislative framework for a certain sphere but with the implementation of the law. Thus, the Law on Culture, according to many important players, is very unclear, leaving a lot of space for personal interpretation. Because of the new law and because of centralized decision-making, the NGO sector and the non-institutional sector are almost completely marginalized. Multimedia therefore feels that the FYR of Macedonia should become involved in a new movement called Culture Policy with the following priority objectives: decentralization of power, reconstruction of the Ministry of Culture, development of a market-oriented culture and art, education of highly professional managers, denationalization of cultural institutions, reconstruction of operating system in cultural institutions, civil society

and democratization, establishing new values that will reflect those tendencies. The civil society sector should play an important role within the process of creating cultural policy. Through this project, Multimedia hopes to create a space where people can express themselves honestly and freely and learn from others through, e.g., roundtables, training programs, etc.. It also seeks to create a space for finding possible solutions to inter-ethnic problems.

Mesecina-Gostivar presented their project *Option for better Multiethnic Cooperation Dialogue*. This is a civil society development project whose implementation is proposed to be in collaboration with four other NGOs from Gostivar (representing Turk, Albanian, Roma and Macedonian Nationalities). The general aim of the project is the improvement of inter-ethnic relations in the Gostivar region. The project proposes to achieve this through building a volunteer pool of members from different ethnicities who will work on improving communication and thus cooperation between Gostivar-based NGOs. Four phases of activity are foreseen:
- Phase 1: 20 volunteers from the five participating NGOs will undergo training in communication skills, basics of human rights, conflict resolution, role of the NGO sector in public awareness.
- Phase 2: establishment of a project partner NGO net. All net members will be encouraged to establish their own smaller nets.
- Phase 3: publication of an eight-page newsletter in five languages (Albanian, English, Macedonian, Roma, Turkish)
- Phase 4: establishment of a Working Group for the development of a ten-year strategy for NGO cooperation in Gostivar aimed at improving inter-ethnic relations.

Mesecina has also proposed a sustainability strategy for this project.

Both the projects of Avutnipe and the Union of Serb Women include an NGO of Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roma and Macedonian ethnicities as partners in project implementation. In their respective presentations, each NGO expressed their willingness to include additional NGOs.

Session XI: Brainstorming on Project Ideas

- <u>Facilitator</u>: Mr Igor Ugrinovski
- <u>Aim</u>: Facilitated generation of topics for projects and formation of task forces to further develop ideas.

The participants were divided into four groups and were asked to brainstorm on possible inter-ethnic projects. While most grasped the idea behind the exercise and generated possible areas of work, a group of participants merely generated names for projects. This could be attributed to the donor-driven style of functioning not uncommon for the NGO sector in the FYR of Macedonia, where emphasis is on the packaging of projects and not on content. Some of the possible themes / issues generated for possible inter-ethnic projects were:

Brainstorming on Project Ideas:

- Campaign emphasizing the importance of education
- The citizen in the constitutional framework
- Human rights for all ethnicities
- Cultural mingling of young people from different cultures
- Modification of legislation for housewives
- Sports activities with ethnically mixed teams
- Promotion of equal rights in employment
- Universities without quotas
- Health education
- Training for handicrafts
- Basic literacy programs
- Study trips within the country to better understand each other's culture and living style
- Joint radio and TV production by different ethnic groups
- Workshop for journalists from different ethnic groups
- Regional institute for the preservation of culture
- Campaigns and roundtables on inter-ethnic tolerance
- Camp for ethnic closeness
- Learning the languages of all ethnic groups as well as English
- Cultural and art associations including all ethnic groups; Exhibition of artist from different ethnicities; poetry evenings of ethno-cultures
- Group of disabled peoples from diverse ethnic groups

- Psychosocial centres for children of all ethnicities
- Education of parents on how to present other ethnic groups to their children
- Education of nationalists
- Creation of media for all nationalities; Newspapers in all languages of the FYR of Macedonia with the same content
- Joint parties and concerts; Mixed marriages
- Sports events (meetings); Games without borders
- Mutual celebrations of religious and national holidays; Introduction to the religion and customs of other ethnic groups
- Building of multiethnic centres on the local and national level
- Inter-ethnic Internet cafe; Inter-Ethnic Youth centre
- Building of children's amusement parks
- Multi-ethnic law centre
- Campaign on the topic of human rights in kindergarten and elementary (school) education, drugs, AIDS, alcohol.

Session XII: Wrap-up

In the final session, the RR addressed the issue of expectations versus achievements. The group re-examined the flipchart with the expectations of the participants generated at the outset of the Roundtable and was unanimous in the opinion that all expectations had been met. Assessment sheets were given out to the participants to fill out.

The Project Leader then thanked all the participants for their active participation and for the lively and open discussions and especially thanking them for having travelled to Ohrid for this event despite the tense situation in the country.

CONCLUSION

The second meeting of the ECMI "NGO Roundtable on Inter-Ethnic Relations in the FYR of Macedonia" was judged successful for several reasons. The participants agreed that, because of the current crisis, it was more important than ever for the NGO community to develop cooperation and to devise means of strengthening inter-ethnic communication. The group strictly followed the agenda of the Roundtable and all present contributed to the lively discussions. The Facilitators were successful in evoking optimal responses in each session. The meeting also led to the establishment of the foundations for an NGO Network which would generate inter-ethnic projects by domestic NGOs. The organizers greatly regretted that they could not persuade more ethnic Albanian NGOs to participate, especially given that they had previously expressed their commitment to attend. It was also noted that the climate of insecurity might have been the major deterrent to travel to the meeting, even though it was held as close as possible to the cities of Tetovo and Gostivar where most of the Albanian NGOs are located. It should also be highlighted that there has generally been a very poor attendance of ethnic Albanians at other conferences concerning the FYR of Macedonia since the beginning of the crisis. This is an indication of the urgency of putting in place the structures which will ensure that the Albanian community does not further isolate itself and lose trust in the potential of resolving conflict through dialogue. A positive sign was that the other NGOs present at the Ohrid meeting themselves suggested using their own contacts with ethnic Albanian NGOs to relay to them the results of this meeting and to encourage them to participate.

The assessment sheets filled out at the end of the event indicated that the participants were satisfied with the serious and systematic approach of this initiative. Most shared the feeling that, despite participating in numerous networks, this was the first time that they had participated in a meeting where network issues were discussed so thoroughly. They felt that, combined with the fact that they themselves generated all the ideas, this would ensure the success and sustainability of the Network. They also expressed their satisfaction with the choice of Facilitators and their appreciation of the presence of the ECMI Project Leader at the Roundtable when most countries had issued travel warnings to their citizens.

The next event is scheduled for late September in the FYR of Macedonia during which the *NGO Network on Inter-Ethnic Relations* and its website will be officially launched. The Memorandum of Understanding for the Network will be adopted, as will the Criteria for Membership in the Network. In parallel, project proposals will be prepared for the upcoming regional funding conference of the Stability Pact for South East Europe (Bucharest, 25-26 October 2001). The needs of participating NGOs for additional training, e.g. on project management, proposal writing, fundraising, organizational sustainability, are also being discussed in the meantime.

ANNEX A

**ECMI NGO ROUNDTABLE "INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE FYR OF
MACEDONIA"**
(Second Meeting, Ohrid, 30 June - 2 July 2001)

*Organized by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), Flensburg,
in cooperation with the Center for Human Rights/Center for Refugees and Forced
Migration Studies, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Skopje.*

AGENDA

**Day 1: Inter-Ethnic Relations and the NGO Sector; Cooperation between NGOs,
Relations with International NGOs and Donors.**

12:00   Arrival and check-in of participants at Hotel Granit, Ohrid.

12:15-13:30   Lunch

14:00-15:30   ***Session I***
                     - Welcome and Overview of the Project Aims by Farimah Daftary (ECMI
                     Senior Research Associate, Flensburg)
                     - Introduction of the Facilitators by ECMI Regional Representative Sunoor
                     Verma (CRFMS, Skopje)
                     - Participants interview each other with 5 predetermined questions and
                     present their interviewee.
                     - Participants' expectations from the event (Facilitator: RR)
                     - Group rules for work during the event.

15:30 – 16:30   ***Session II*** *(Presentation followed by group discussion)*

Topic	Facilitator
Inter-ethnic Relations: A Source of Insecurity in the Republic of Macedonia. Results of a research study performed for the UNDP Development Report	Dr Mirjana Najchevska, Director, Center for Human Rights, Center for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies; President, Macedonian Helsinki Committee, Skopje.

16:30 – 17:00   Coffee Break

17:00- 19:00   ***Session III*** *(Facilitated group discussion)*

Topic	Facilitator
Issues of Concern in the development of the Macedonian civic society sector 1. NGO relation to Donors 2. Relation with the State 3. Relation to Clients 4. Relations with other NGOs	Dr Natasha Gaber, Center for Ethnic Relations; Member of the Board of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, Skopje.

20:00 Supper

Day 2: NGO Network on Inter-Ethnic Relations

07:00- 08:30 Breakfast

08:30 – 10:00   *Session IV (Facilitated group discussion)*

Topic	Facilitator
Donors' view on Inter-Ethnic Network of NGOs. Advantages of network applications vs. individual NGO project proposals.	Mr Nafi Sarachini, Program Officer, European Union, Delegation of the European Commission, Skopje.

10:00 – 10:30 Coffee Break

10:30 – 12:45   *Session V (Facilitated group discussion followed by division into four working groups).*

Topic	Facilitator
Elements of the Network 1. Mission / Aims 2. Criteria and rules for participation 3. Decision-making and implementation 4. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between participating NGOs	ECMI Regional Representative Dr. Sunoor Verma

12:45- 13:30 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00   *Session VI (Facilitated group discussion)*

Topic	Speaker/ Facilitator
Consolidation of ideas on the elements of the network	Mr Igor Ugrinovski, Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project, Skopje.

16:00 – 16:30   Coffee Break

16:30 – 18:30   *Session VII*

Topic	Speaker/ Facilitator
Consolidation of Ideas on the Elements of the Network	Mr Igor Ugrinovski Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project

18:30 – 19:30   *Session VIII*

Topic	Speaker/ Facilitator
Network implementation timetable and responsibilities	ECMI Regional Representative Dr. Sunoor Verma

20:00 Supper

Day 3: Collaborative Project Proposals

07:00 – 08:30 Breakfast

08:30 – 10:30   ***Session IX:*** *Project proposal presentations*

Topic	Speaker/ Facilitator

Project proposal presentations by
    5. Avutnipe & Partners
    6. Union of Serbian Women & Partners
    7. Multimedia
    8. Mesecina
	ECMI Regional Representative Sunoor Verma

10:45 – 11:00   Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30   ***Session X:*** *Brainstorming*

Topic	Speaker/ Facilitator
Project Ideas	Mr Igor Ugrinovski

12:30 – 13:00   ***Session XII:*** *Wrap up*

Topic	Speaker/ Facilitator
Expectations vs. Achievements	ECMI Regional Representative Sunoor Verma
Thank you and Closure	Ms Farimah Daftary, ECMI Senior Research Associate

13:00 – 14:30 Check-out, lunch, departure.

ANNEX B
ECMI NGO Roundtable "Inter-Ethnic Relations in the FYR of Macedonia"
(Second Meeting, Ohrid, 30 June - 2 July 2001)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- **Macedonian NGO Experts:**
1. Yllza ADEMI, Inter-Ethnic Project (IPG) (Gostivar)
2. Sadika AGA, Turkish Women's Organisation of Macedonia MATUKAT (Gostivar)
3. Yldaz ALI, Turkish Women's Organisation of Macedonia MATUKAT (Ohrid)
4. Gjultena BEKIRI, Association of Roma Women (ESMA) (Skopje)
5. Biljana BOSILLJANOVA, Macedonian Media Institute (Skopje)
6. Diana GEORGIEVSKA, FELIX (Bitola)
7. Lidija ILIEVSKA, MAIKA / Inter-Ethnic NGO Network (Kumanovo)
8. Ahmed JASHAREVSKI, Roma Community Center "DROM" (Kumanovo)
9. Dilbera KAMBEROVSKA, DAJA Roma Women's Organisation
10. Feat KAMBEROVSKI, ARKA Forum for Roma Rights (Kumanovo)
11. Nikolina KENIG-BOGDANOVSKA**, Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project (Skopje)
12. Suncica MILJKOVIC, Organisation of Serbian Women of Macedonia (Skopje)
13. Rejhan MUHAMED, Organization of Turkish Youth of Macedonia "RUMELI" (Skopje)
14. Memed MEHMETI**, "MULTIKULTURA" (Tetovo)
15. Olga MURDZEVA-SKARIK**, Women's Center of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje)
16. Bujar OSMANI**, Albanian Youth Association of Macedonia "Fan S. Noli" (Skopje)
17. Mirjana NIKOLOVSKA, Union for the Culture of the Vlach in Macedonia (Skopje)
18. Šenaj OSMANOV, Association of Human Rights Protection of Roma (Stip)
19. Lejla SELMAN, Association for the Development of Media in the Turkish Language
20. Violeta SIMJANOVSKA, MULTIMEDIA (Skopje)
21. Afrdita SKENDERI**, Organisation of Women in Development (Tetovo)
22. Samet SKENDERI, Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesečina" (Gostivar)
23. Beti SODIC**, Center for Multicultural Understanding and Cooperation (CMUC) (Skopje)
24. Dragan STOSHIC, Association for Human Rights of Roma "Avutnipe" (Skopje)
25. Severdjan SULEJMAN, Association for Human Rights of Roma "Avutnipe" (Skopje)
26. Muhamed TOCI, Humanitarian and Charitable Association of Roma "Mesečina" (Gostivar)

- **Facilitators:**
27. Mr Eran FRAENKEL**, Executive Director, Search for Common Ground in Macedonia (Skopje)
28. Natasa GABER, Center for Ethnic Relations, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University (Skopje)
29. Mirjana NAJČEVSKA, Head, Center for Human Rights, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Sts. Cyril and Methodius University; Director, Macedonian Helsinki Committee (Skopje)
30. Nafi SARACINI (pronounced Sarachini) , Programme Officer, Assistance Section, European Union, Delegation of the European Commission (Skopje)
31. Igor UGRINOVSKI, Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project (Skopje)

- **Organisers:**
32. Farimah DAFTARY, ECMI Research Associate (Flensburg)
33. Gordana MICOVA, Conference Manager, CRFMS (Expenses covered by the CRFMS) (Skopje)
34. Darko PUTILOV (Interpreter)

35. Gordana VELITCHKOVSKA, ECMI Project Management Assistant, Center for Refugees and Forced Migration, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Sts Cyril and Methodius University (Skopje)
36. Sunoor VERMA, ECMI Regional Representative, Center for Refugees and Forced Migration, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Sts Cyril and Methodius University (Skopje)

** Did not attend