



Del editor

Estimados amigos y amigas,

Nuevamente quiero aprovechar estas líneas mensuales para agradecer a todos la atención que prestáis a nuestro boletín.

Poco a poco, despacio pero sin pausa, seguimos aumentando la cantidad de socios y simpatizantes, y queremos seguir así. Por eso queremos utilizar nuevamente a **EGUZKI HAIZEA** para agradecer vuestros esfuerzos en la difusión de los ideales de Balkan Sunflowers.

Os recordamos que seguimos realizando las presentaciones de BSF Euskadi en diversos lugares de Euskal Herria. La próxima tendrá lugar en Elgoibar el 3 de marzo. El lugar será la Kultur Etxea, situado en la plaza Nafarroa, número 3, de Elgoibar, Gipuzkoa. Si veis la posibilidad de asistir, poneros en contacto con nosotros para que os esperemos y podamos saludarnos.

Esperamos que el año que empieza sea para vosotros un buen año solidario y de éxito en vuestros planes y proyectos personales.

Como es habitual, os hacemos llegar nuestros más afectuosos y solidarios saludos.

Michel Fernández Sáenz de Ormijana
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PROYECTO DEL MES

En febrero os presentamos el *Macedonia community building and integration support project*, es decir, un proyecto de desarrollo comunitario y apoyo a la integración. Se realizó en Shutka (Macedonia) y su principal objetivo fue su dividida y pobre comunidad roma (gitana). Martin Poletylo dirigió el proyecto. Martin es un voluntario curtido en mil batallas en proyectos en Croacia, Kosovo y Macedonia.

El proyecto fue realizado por Balkan Sunflowers en cooperación con American Refugee Committee (ARC), UNICEF, Servicio Civil Internacional (SCI), Italian Consortium of Solidarity (ICS), y la galería Stepen Gallery de Skopje. Los financiadores fueron UNICEF, European Cultural Foundation y la fundación Hivos Donner.

Macedonia Community Building and Integration Support Project

By Martin Poletylo

Description of Suto Orizari community (Sutka)

Suto Orizari Municipality is one of the biggest Roma community in the world. Containing two main groups: the local Macedonian Roma population and the mixed Albanian and Serbian speaking Roma refugee that fled from Kosovo after the withdrawal of the Yugoslavian administration from the province and the return of its Albanian majority. Some 1500 refugee are placed in the collective center and some 4000 living in the local community.



Shutka, a combination of huts and low quality housing with no sewage or services to the population.

With an uncertain future, the refugee community in Suto Orizari faces the challenge of a more than probable long stay in Macedonia, or even its final assimilation within the Macedonian society. Language and, especially, social problems make difficult the integration of both communities, and some episodes of tense coexistence have been known.



Refugees in front of their temporary (?) housing in Shutka.

The local Macedonian Roma community itself belongs to one of the lowest classes in the country, and their traditionally accepted low social status, together with a sustained absence from public life and a generally uninformed existence, handicaps quality of life and exercise of human rights in the community. In this way, the local population although sometimes available - does not perceive extremely simple things, such as birth registration, basic health services, and social aid - as a right. Universal education, the meaning of democracy in a country that not so many years ago was subjected to communist rule, and even self respect and the inherent value of all persons have not yet reached this community.



An overview of the refugee camp in Shutka.

The development of the community and the creation of new structures and resources, as well as its physical integration into Skopje's municipality have to go along with serious and continuous efforts to educate the community regarding their rights, possibilities and positive role as part of Macedonia diverse society. The younger generation of the population needs to be targeted with a view to increasing awareness of their rights and future and to give them the opportunity to break with the easy choice of conforming to the status quo of their community. Our programs in Suto Orizari, and the Community building and integration support project

in particular, are aimed specifically at this segment of the population.

Objectives

1. To integrate refugees and young people from the more isolated slums into the Roma community of Suto Orizari and into the larger, multi-ethnic society of Skopje. To encourage their active involvement in the social reconstruction of their community and the building of civil society.
2. To provide young people with creative and stimulating activities as a means to build skills, confidence, social responsibility and a greater awareness of opportunities available, as an alternative to anti-social and destructive activities.
3. To encourage, through group games and activities with younger children, cooperation, as opposed to competitiveness, and tolerance of children/youth different from themselves, whether it be in age, ability, appearance, health or social/ethnic background. To encourage them to work together with others to achieve goals.

Project initiatives

The project itself was made up of several initiatives. These initiatives were mainly based in the ROS Center, and were opened to any interested participants.

Afternoon Club

This activity was based in the ROS Center, and was opened for any interested participants.

Previously, BSF had ran the afternoon activities in the ROS center - gaming and video club. Both programs were popular with local youth who don't have appropriate places to spend free time. Thus, the Afternoon Club created a friendly space for meeting children and youth: from Sutka and the Suto Orizari collective center, international volunteers and students, an *Soncogledi* volunteers from Skopje. Five days per week, they could spend the afternoon (4 - 7 o'clock) participating in the following activities:

1. Playing games
2. Drawing and painting
3. Reading children's, youth, specialized magazines
4. Once a week watching video cartoons and movies.

The Club was a sort of reading hall, the only such place in Sutka. The literacy level in this municipality is very low, especially among youth, who

basically do not read any books or magazines. With a very low level of education, this leads to regressive illiteracy. For some of them it was also a chance to improve their skills, reading i.e. English language computer or sport magazines.



Doing the clothes Shutka style. Power supply is inefficient, and home appliances, other than TVs, scarce.

For the video projections, as it was in BSF previous project, bringing children from Momin Potok and Klanica slums area was organized, giving them the opportunity to meet their friends from Sutka. Projecting cartoons and movies adopted to the children's age and interests were also a chance to practice Macedonian language, which is an important issue especially for slums children. Presence of international volunteers gave the youngsters an opportunity to practice English in a relaxing, informal atmosphere.

During the duration of the project the Children's Video Library was completed and it is still used for further activities in the ROS Center.

Afternoon Club was also a space to arrange activities along the interests of participants.

Creative art workshop

This part of the program was also based in the ROS Center. Led by Mladen Tunic 3rd year student of Art Academy in Skopje, together with one international volunteer. The program contained learning and practicing the basic art techniques as well as some history of art lectures, including excursions to the art galleries, museums and exhibitions. The workshop was an introduction to the universal values of the world art and culture.

During the project, there were two three-month courses. During each course there were two groups of 10 youngsters, half refugee, half local Sutka ones. Each group met three times a week for 1,5

hours. The pupils were 14-18 years old. Twice a month there was an excursion to Skopje, visiting art galleries, museums, ruins and exhibitions.

The first month, the activity was focused mostly on different techniques of drawing, using pencils and charcoal. Pupils practiced drawing models, body parts, portraits, architecture, still lives, landscape. The second month working with clay and plaster was started - in the beginning practicing, exercising easy forms (i.e. parts of the face), then making simple form casting and sculptures. At the end, the kids would make their own forms and go through the whole process. During the third month, work was mainly concentrated on doing sculptures (and still drawing exercises). Pupils were free to express their own ideas, create own sculptures. The course was finished with exhibition of works in Suto Orizari, and in "Stepen" Galery in Skopje.

Monthly Youth Newsletter

This activity was located at the Babylon community center in Suto Orizari.



A Roma child plays with some make up in the marketplace.

Previous to the project implementation, Balkan Sunflowers international volunteers together with local volunteers hosted a meeting at the Babylon Center that was attended by around 15 young people, of which approximately half were refugees. At the meeting, the possibility of creating a newsletter produced by residents of Shutka and the refugee camp was discussed enthusiastically.

Among issues discussed were article ideas including writing on Shutka ecology, education, drug problems in Shutka, personal stories of Kosovar refugees, Roma theater, music, poetry, life and activities in the refugee camp. The language issue was discussed, and the consensus is that a multi-lingual production is necessary to meet the needs of Romani and Albanian speaking people and that such a multi-lingual production could serve as a valuable educational tool. There was also an interest in producing an on-line version of the prospective publication. Several *Soncogledi* (BSF Macedonia) volunteers, students of journalism, expressed their interest in helping with graphic design, writing, and editing, and the Babylon Center offered the use of its computers and space in exchange for advertisement of its activities and events.

The program included computer hardware and software training, journalism techniques instruction (ethics: the necessity of honest reportage), and usage of the Internet. The pupils of the ongoing BSF Integration Photo Workshop at the time were included in the program.



Computer classes at the ROS Centre.

The newsletter was printed in two bilingual versions: Albanian/Romani and Macedonian /English. It was delivered free in Suto Orizari municipality and in several places in Skopje. The publication itself was a size A4, 16 page magazine in two colours. Every issue had 1,000 copies, 500 in each bilingual version.

Music classes

Another ROS Centre based initiative. Led by Ljubomir Tasev, twice winner of first place in classical guitar competitions in Macedonia, together with one international volunteer. The activity consisted of two parallel classes: (1) classical guitar and (2) singing/reading notes. Two courses, each of 3 month duration was run consecutively.



Ashkelia (Roma) women from Shutka.

1. Classical guitar

Five children, from 7-12 years of age attended this class two times a week (individual classes for 45 minutes). They learned notation in classical, Spanish and folk compositions and practice playing.

2. Singing, note-reading

Once weekly class-duration 3 hours. The children learned singing, note-reading, and orchestra composition. We offered individuals who were interested, the chance to have additional practice outside class times, under supervision of an international volunteer. At the end of the course there was a performance in Shutka and in "Stepen" Galery in Skopje, in combination with exhibition of works from other *Soncogledi* programs (photo and art workshop). *Soncogledi* facilitated further study for talented pupils after completion of the course.

The main target group of the project was the Roma youth and children of Suto Orizari municipality: local and refugees, living in the refugee camp and in the local community. The volunteers were recruited from Roma and the wider Macedonian community.

All *Soncogledi* volunteers had weekly meetings reporting on and evaluating ongoing programs in addition to planning and discussing future activities.

We enjoy close cooperation and communication with the communities in which we work; feedback from our beneficiaries is an important part of our evaluations, helping us to modify our projects to better suit their needs. During and after each program or activity we consulted with the participants, and where appropriate, their parents and the wider community to obtain their views.

This project was one example of the ongoing activities BSF Macedonia runs. We have concentrated on the Shutka community and the refugee population of the Skopje area, where programmes of a similar nature continue.

¿Cómo puedo colaborar con Balkan Sunflowers?

- Trabajando como voluntario en nuestros proyectos en Kosovo, Albania y Macedonia. Si dispones del tiempo y las circunstancias, pídenos una solicitud.
- Apoyando nuestros proyectos económicamente. Puedes enviarnos un cheque o transferir cualquier cantidad o ingresarla directamente en la cuenta de BSF Euskadi de Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa:
2095 0114 60 9105130418
Código Swift (para transferencias internacionales):
BASKE S2BXXX IBAN ES71
- Colaborando con nuestras iniciativas, charlas, eventos, etc. Te mantendremos informado. Y si deseas poner en marcha alguna iniciativa de recaudación de fondos, información, etc., ponte en contacto con nosotros y te ayudaremos.

HISTORIA DE UN VOLUNTARIO

Como hicimos en el anterior número de **EGUZKI HAIZEA**, os ofrecemos un nuevo testimonio de un voluntario internacional que ilustra la labor de estos voluntarios de Balkan Sunflowers. En este caso el voluntario y conocido juglar británico "Devil Stick" Peat nos cuenta sus vivencias en Bathore, Albania.

Bathore

By "Devil Stick" Peat

Ever wondered where entertainers go in the winter? Here is what I have been up to, as told in my own unique style...

I was laying on the ground, curled up like a ball, trying to protect my manhood. Around me, children were hitting, kicking and fighting each other, all trying to get to me. And the ones who got to me were really going mad, scratching, biting, punching, gouging, anything to get at my balloons.

Luckily for me, our two translators had both served in the army during the civil unrest. So they knew how to handle the situation, they just waded in and threw the kids off of me. John helped me up to my feet and dusted me off. "Are you ok?" he asked. I was bruised and shaken, my head hung to one side and hurt. "I can't move my head" I said.

John saw the cause of the problem and removed the 5 year old who was hanging from my hair with one hand, the other was busy trying to get into my pocket.

I had come to the Balkans with Childrens World International, an NGO formed by Lady Allabella Churchill. We were going to spend one week in Albania, followed by 3 weeks in Kosovo. We lived

with an NGO called Balkan Sunflowers. And this was one of their other projects.

It was my first time ever in sector 6, Bathore, Albania. And that night, as I sat on the balcony of the house, smoking a cigarette, I thought about the history of the place and the people.

With the fall of communism, all land returned to its original owners. This and the state owned farms going bankrupt caused a major influx of internal migrants. Most of them headed for the capital, Tirana, and ended up living in an old state farm called Bathore. Bathore has somewhere between 30 and 40 thousand inhabitants living in 9 sectors. The poorest sector is sector 6. Here around 2,000 people (over half of them, under 19) live in the remains of cattle sheds built to house 800 cows. There are no toilets, no sewer, no clean water and very little hope. The hospital for these people is an 8 foot by 20 foot metal box. The type that workmen in England use to keep tools in.

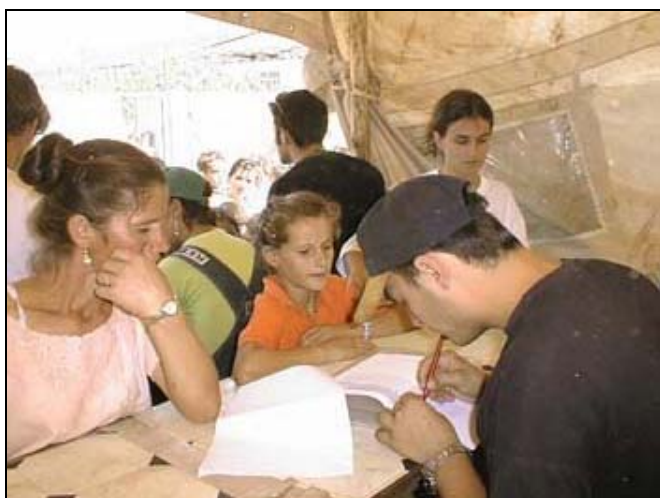


The "Hospital", we set up in Bathore, the only medical facility for some 40,000 people.

Madeleine (a young American girl) came out to speak to me. "Well, what did you think of Bathore?" she asked. "They scared me" I replied. She nodded sagely as I continued to talk. "I've never been scared by kids before! Over 13 years I've worked with problem kids, and these are the first ones to ever actually scare me. It was brilliant! I've never felt anything like it". "You ENJOYED it?" she asked in surprise. "You don't understand. In all that time I've never felt real fear. These are the only kids who'd ever done that. And that makes them so special, it really does. Tell me more, I want to know why they're like that." Madeleine's face took on a different look as she realised she had found a fellow ally in her fight for these kids. Her eyes

shone and a big grin appeared on her lips. "Look" she said "It isn't their thought. Poverty isn't just lack of money. It's lack of hope, lack of self respect. It's drug and alcohol abuse. It's violence, both social and domestic, and it's the kids who suffer. If they'd been born in England, they'd be doctors and lawyers, but they weren't. They were born here."

"We handed out blankets in Bathore the other week." She continued "It was all arranged with the village elder, Fatmir. We turned up, entered the warehouse, and tried to get the people to line up. NO CHANCE. They were fighting each other to get as many blankets as possible. We ended up locked inside the warehouse as guns were fired outside! These are the parents, the people those kids look up to. The ones who teach them the social rules of life. Is it any wonder that they would kill you for a balloon?" "So what do we do about it? How do we teach them another way?" I asked. "We lead by example, and that example is love."



Distribution in Bathore by name. It is difficult to do distribution with some order in an environment of extreme poverty.

Three hours later, we were still sitting on the balcony talking, when Jamie McGoblin (an amazing clown) came out.

"Peat" he said "you're grining like a idiot and your eyes have the look of a religious fanatic. Don't get involed, we're only here for a few days."

It was true. Childrens World Internatinal were only in Tirana for a week. Then we were off to Kosovo to work with the kids there, but these kids, these sweet violent kids... it was too late, I was hooked.

I went there maybe 5 times and got punched in the "you know whats", robbed and threatened with a knife. I loved it.

Three months later I was back in Albania. This time as a Balkan Sunflower volunteer. It had taken 3

days to get there, and I was so tired I could hardly keep my eyes open. I was showed to a dorm and layed down to sleep. Someone entered the room. "Hey, Sari!" they said to a friend "come on, Its time to go to Bathore." I was wide awake again. "Can I come too?" I asked.



The minibus arrives to Bathore for another day of activities with the BSF volunteers.

As the minibus took us there all the old memories returned to me and I wondered if the kids would remember me. Probably not I thought, and if they do, they might resent me for abandoning them. The minibus pulled up and we got out. I had taken 3 steps and then heard my name being called. A kid came running up to hug me, another was making juggling motions to a friend. The little... darlings remembered me. I think that is when I fell in love with them.

Officialy I had come back to work on a Mine And Weapon Awareness Campain called MAWAT but Bathore had become my love. Every spare moment I had was spent there. I couldn't believe the difference in these kids. They had stopped hitting us (although there was a incident with a hand grenade, but he was just showing off). They didn't rob us so often, They were interacting with each other WITHOUT violence. We were winning. By leading by example we were making a difference.

Then Sari (the Australian project coordinator) said that she was leaving to travel elsewhere in the Balkans. This left us with a problem. Who was going to take it over. I spoke with Leentja, our boss here. "I've thought and thought about it" I said "and I can't think of anyone here who can take it over."

"Well let's take a look at it" she said, and we sat down at the computer. She typed everyone's name into the computer and one by one we went through

them, deleting the names as we found a reason why they couldn't do it.

"You see" I said, looking at a now blank screen "There's no-one left to do it."

"There is one name I forgot to write on the screen" she said. I looked at her and realised that she had a strange smile on her face. I had got to know her well enough by now to hate and fear that smile. It meant "you ain't going to like this, but I will".

Still I couldn't think of who she meant, then the coin dropped. "Oh no!" I said "no way, not me, I'm too busy with MAWAT; I haven't the time, I've never done anything like it before, NO WAY".

The next week I took over the project. Organizing the team. Who works where, are they safe etc. One of my first jobs was to get the tent back up and running. One of the kids had cut the ropes over Christmas, and the whole thing had collapsed. The tent was given to us by UNICEF and was important as it was the only place to play when the weather was bad. Fatmir (the village elder) sent 4 older boys to help me, but they didn't, they just stood and watched. Then Elson, Fatmir's youngest son came and helped. He is only 4 or 5 years old and more of a nuisance than anything, but he tried. We spent 4 hours putting up that tent and by the end of it we were good friends. You should not have favorites in this trade, but we all do, and mine was Elson. He would approach every problem with the mentality of the incredible Hulk, i.e. use enough strength and it will move, if it does not, use more strength.



Peat in action surrounded by some of his Bathore kids.

I spent a total of two and a half months working with those kids. Each day my love and respect for them just grew and grew. I got to know names and characters. To win their respect as a person.

Then the brown stuff hit the fan. I had known since I first got there that we had money troubles. Now we had no more money. The projects had to close. On our last day in Bathore I had a talk with my team. "We don't know what the mood will be today. It might be that they will act normal, it might be that they will try to rob everything before we leave. Whatever the mood, we have to smile, NO TEARS. We leave in a happy, positive mood. We have to do it for their sake."



The parachute games was a favourite for the kids, especially for the younger ones.

Like I said earlier, they had improved so much since I first met them, but even so, this day they were so well behaved. There were only 2 fights, and they were only little ones. It just made saying goodbye even harder.

As we walked out of Bathore for the last time, a little girl came up to my interpreter and said that she would like to say something to me. This girl (aged around 13) hates men, especially men in authority. I stood there expecting her to say F**k you or something, instead she sang a song for me. Till the day I die I will never know how I managed to walk out of there with dry eyes, but I did.

Four days after the project closed I was on my way home for a month leave. As soon as I got there I started to raise funds for Bathore. One month later, I was back in Albania. This time I was to help to run a big show for MAWAT, where the kids would have a chance to tell the world what they want for the future, then I was to go to Macedonia to work with the gypsy kids there.

I helped with the show (which went well) but in my spare time I was in Bathore, talking with Fatmir, telling him what I was doing to get us back there. At the same time that the MAWAT show finished

the international meeting of BSF was due to start in Kosovo. This was a big meeting of all the big names in BSF. I was offered the chance to go and jumped at the offer, it was the chance I needed to fight for Bathore.



Some of the BSF'ers that attended the international meeting in September 2000 in Kosovo, where Peat proposed the upkeep of operations in Bathore.

It took over 10 hours in a minibus to get over the mountains, a lovely trip that offers great views of all the minibuses that had slipped off the road and down, down, down, down into the valleys below. Not a trip for the faint hearted.

At the meeting I tried to state my case for Bathore, and why we needed to be there. I was tired from the journey the day before and could not think straight. I remember thinking that I had messed up the only chance those kids had. Then, during a tea break a woman came up to me with tears in her eyes.

"I have never been to Bathore" she said "but the way you spoke about it was beautiful, we'll go back there, we will." She was our international coordinator at the time, the one who decides who works where. Several other people came up to me over the next week and pledged their support for Bathore, and I felt a bit more confident. It was agreed that there should be a change of plan. Instead of going to Macedonia, I was to go back to Tirana for a week, to tie up some loose strings and do some work on Bathore. After this I was to tour around all our projects in all the countries, teaching games, etc.

I took the bus back over the mountains (again) and spent a week in Tirana. My time was divided between sitting in front of the computer, updating reports on Bathore and trying to write a project proposal to get us funding. (I had never tried to write one before, this and the fact that I am dislex... deslax... deslix... I cannot spell, made it a

dounting task) and trying to find other NGOs to work there.

One NGO called "Enfants du Monde" arranged for a children's doctor to go there. He arranged to spend 2 hours there, but he stayed at least 6, at the end of which he had seen over 150 children and still could not find one that was not sick. The main cause of the illnesses there is the water, it is poisoned and polluted and horrid. He now goes there every week and Franko (the director of Enfants du Monde) sorted out a limited fresh water supply for Bathore. Then, my time was up, I went over the mountains, back to Kosovo, and to my next job. For a month I worked on project shake up, teaching my way of playing and why it works. Then, it was time to take one last trip over the mountains to Tirana, where I would take a plane home, to England.

Again I traveled over the mountains, but this time I took a different route. At one point we came to a ferry that sailed the length of a dam. I had never been this way before, never seen this dam before, but all the same, the moment I saw it, I knew it. As I will say further ahead, the dam was very familiar to me.

It took 3 hours to cruise the length of the dam, so I just sat on the top deck and watched the views. For 8 years I had no home. I just traveled around Europe, my pack on my back. In the daytime I would busk on the streets, making money as a clown and juggler. At night I would party on Mediterranean beaches under warm, moonlight skies. I have woken up to see the sunrise over the Alps. Slept in lovely green woods. Seen the sunset into the sea so often, it seemed like nothing special. But this place. It was truly a sight worth seeing. If we could see rather than hear love songs, this place, with its green slopes and stark, grey cliffs, would be the greatest love song ever, it really would.



Some of the kids in the Bathore settlement, how could we forget their smiling faces?

Years ago, Fatmir lived on a farm in the north of Albania. He said it was a beautiful farm set in some of the most beautiful mountains in Albania. Then, one day a man from the government came along and told all the farmers that they had to build a dam at the end of the valley. When the dam was built the farmers were told to pack up and leave. Fatmir and his people had no choice, they left their wondrous and clean valleys and ended up in Bathore, and shit.

We sailed where eagles once flew, but all the time I could not get rid of the sadness that filled my heart. To think that this Eden, this paradise was not only lost to fatmir and his people, but replaced by Bathore. It just does not seem fair.

I arrived in Tirana for the last time. One more week here and then I was off home. I met with the new country coordinators and answered their questions on Bathore. They told me that they wanted to start up work there again. They wanted to run circus schools and art classes etc. I agreed with them but told them that these things should come second. You cannot build the first floor until you have built the foundations. In this case the play group. They were not happy with this, so I arranged to take them up there, to see Bathore for themselves.

It had been arranged with another NGO that on international children's day, I would perform at a school in another part of Bathore. I took our new country coordinators with me. After the show we went to sector 6, where I most often worked.

By the end of the day, they agreed with me, you cannot have the specialist classes without something that every kid can join in with, otherwise they would be jealous and wreck it.

People from the international meeting kept their word and found us 4 months funding, to pay rent, food, etc. At last the day came for me to fly back to England. I did not cry, I did not have to. I had done what I set out to do. I got the project restarted.

Nor dira BSF Euskadi?

BSF Euskadi elkarte 2002 urtetik inskribatua da Eusko Jaurlaritzaren Elkartearen Erroldan, AS/B/09572/2002 zenbakiaz.

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- ... eniándonos tus comentarios, preguntas, etc.
- ... compartiendo sus contenidos con otras personas.
- ... animando a otros a asociarse a BSF Euskadi.

Puedes contactar con nosotros por correo:

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INFORME SOBRE LA SITUACIÓN DE LAS MINORÍAS EN KOSOVO (PARTE I)

Comenzamos en nuestro boletín de febrero de **EGUZKI HAIZEA** la primera parte de una serie de artículos en la que ofrecemos el informe de la OSCE sobre la situación de las minorías en Kosovo. BSF trabaja mucho en el terreno de las minorías, y creemos que este informe servirá para que nuestros lectores, socios y simpatizantes puedan hacerse una idea sobre las condiciones en que estas personas viven. No dudéis en poneros en contacto con nosotros si deseáis más información al respecto.



Tenth Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo

This report is the tenth in a series of Assessments of the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo, conducted jointly by the OSCE and the UNHCR. This tenth Assessment provides an update on the conclusions and recommendations put forward by the last Assessment. It covers the period of time from May to December 2002. Acknowledging the significant developments in the legal framework and decision-making processes in Kosovo during the reporting period, the report also includes discussions on developments which have affected the situation of minority communities in Kosovo.

The ninth Assessment published in April 2002 identified and scrutinised key areas of concern for the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo: security and freedom of movement, access to essential services, participation in political and civil structures, incentives to inter-ethnic dialogue, and patterns of the return process. At the time, the Assessment noted the positive trends of increased security and mobility of minorities in Kosovo, but remained critical of the slow and inconsistent progress in guaranteeing minorities stable access to the judicial system and other services and a protective framework for their property rights. The Assessment also included an insight into the parallel structures existing in the northern Kosovo Serb-dominated municipalities. These were seen as a detrimental factor for the integration and interaction of minorities with the majority population, and also as a significant deterrent to the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) towards ensuring sustainable institutions and structures for all communities throughout Kosovo.

The present report describes the movements in these areas over the reporting period and assesses to what extent the recommendations put forward in the ninth Assessment have been implemented and what effect such actions have had on the conditions of minority communities within Kosovo and the returns process. Recognising and promoting the right of every individual, regardless of ethnic or other status, to return to their homes, the Assessment aims to assist UNMIK and the PISG with recommendations on how to further develop conditions for sustainable return. To this aim, the report creates a teleological link between the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo and the returns process. Accordingly, it analyses the effect that each development or setback of the policies and practices has on encouraging or discouraging returnees to restart their lives in the communities they were forced or induced to leave. As displaced persons are given a free and informed choice to return, the factors influencing them concern the progress achieved in the areas addressed by this report: security, freedom of movement, property, essential services, participation in civil and political structures, and inter-ethnic dialogue.

The report attempts to provide an objective overview of the security situation and freedom of movement in every area of Kosovo where minority

communities are present. The Assessment notes that during the reporting period a limited increase in the level of security in some areas for minority communities was observed. The gradual decrease in ethnically motivated crime, the removal of KFOR checkpoints and the adoption of more flexible and less intrusive security arrangements, the increased participation of minority members in the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and the judiciary represent signals that the situation of minority communities gives some grounds for encouragement. The Assessment finds, however, that minority communities continue to face varying degrees of harassment, intimidation and provocation, as well as limited freedom of movement.

GLOSSARY

ABC	Advisory Board on Communities
AoK	Assembly of Kosovo
CCK	Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohia
CEC	Central Election Commission
CoE	Council of Europe
CSW	Centre for Social Work
DJA	Department of Judicial Administration
DOJ	Department of Justice
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
HPCC	Housing and Property Claims Commission
HPD	Housing and Property Directorate
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPWGHHR	Inter-Pillar Working Group on Human Rights
JIS	Judicial Integration Section
KCA	Kosovo Cadastral Agency
KCB	Kosovo Consolidated Budget
KEK	Kosovo Energy Corporation
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KFOR MNB	KFOR Multi-National Brigade
KJPC	Kosovo Judicial and Prosecutorial Council
KPS	Kosovo Police Service
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
LCO	Local Community Officer
LWG	Local Working Group
MCO	Municipal Cadastre Office
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MHC	Municipal Housing Committee
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MPS	Ministry of Public Services
MWG	Municipal Working Group
OCA	Office of Community Affairs
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLA	SRSG Office of the Legal Advisor
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
ORC	SRSG Office for Returns and Communities
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self-Government
PTK	Post Telecom Kosovo
RAE	Roma/Ashkaelia/Egyptian
RIG	Regional Implementation Group
RWG	Regional Working Group
SGA	Specific Geographical Areas (UNMIK Regulation 2001/17)
SPU	Special Police Unit
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN SCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMA	UNMIK Municipal Administrator
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
WHO	World Health Organisation

With respect to access to justice, the Assessment examines the progress made in integrating the judiciary, including minority employment in the courts, as well as the level of physical access that minorities have to courts and detention facilities. It also discusses parallel structures. The report finds positive signs. Some progress has been made in integrating minorities into the judiciary and weakening the parallel court system during the reporting period. Still, the Assessment found that many minorities lack confidence in the UNMIK judicial system.



Children from Gracanica, the largest Serb enclave in Kosovo.

This Assessment examines issues of discrimination pertaining to minority communities in Kosovo, in the particular areas of access to education, employment, social services and health care. It finds that, whether direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional, discrimination continues to represent a significant obstacle to the ability of minorities to live reasonable lives in Kosovo. While the Advisory Board on Communities (ABC), which was established prior to the release of the last Assessment, has begun to examine issues of discrimination at a high policy level, the report finds that discrimination has not been adequately addressed at lower levels. Access to education, social services and health care has not consistently improved for minorities throughout Kosovo. Access to public sector employment has seen measured improvement during the reporting period, but an affirmative action policy, approved in principle, has yet to be implemented and overall levels of minority employment at central and municipal levels remain unsatisfactory. It is hoped that the promulgation and subsequent implementation of the new Administrative Direction implementing UNMIK Regulation 2001/36 will improve this situation. In highlighting some of the results of efforts made to

recognise, eliminate and provide effective remedies against discrimination, the report identifies the draft Omnibus Anti-discrimination Law as a key step in combating discrimination as a general phenomenon, relevant for both minority communities and the majority population. The expediency of considering and adopting this Law by the PISG and UNMIK is an essential element for the promotion and enforcement of anti-discriminatory practices in Kosovo.

From the perspective of access to property rights, this Assessment again analyses the level of effective realisation of property rights enjoyed by minority communities as well as the impact of this on the ability of minorities to return sustainably. Access to property and realisation of property rights are assessed through a threefold test: awareness of legal rights, physical access to relevant adjudicative and executive bodies, and, once access is gained, the ability of the relevant organs to effectively guarantee the enjoyment of such rights. To do so, the report assesses the effectiveness of the Housing and Property Directorate (HPD) and Housing and Property Claims Commission (HPCC) mechanisms, the access of minority communities to cadastre services and reconstruction assistance, as well as the implementation of UNMIK Regulation 2001/17. The report finds that the level of access to property rights in these areas remains inadequate, despite some progress since the last Assessment. In particular, the report finds that despite encouraging trends, the operation of the HPD and HPCC requires continued attention to ensure effective protection of minority's property rights. Problems for minority communities continue in gaining access to cadastre services in relation to both the provision of and physical access to municipal services and the lack of a fully functioning and complete cadastre. The report also finds that UNMIK Regulation 2001/17 does not appear to have had a significant impact on sales of minority property, and that the implementation of it has proven problematic. Problems related to sales and access of agricultural land are also highlighted. With regards to reconstruction, the report concludes that minorities' access to such assistance appears to have improved, but that the protection of minorities' property rights depended upon the utilisation of the mechanisms in the UNMIK Housing Reconstruction Guidelines 2002. When not utilised, either within the Municipal Housing Committee or

return process-related structures, property rights were endangered. Within the chapter, the new return process structures also are examined.

After the political deadlock that followed the November 2001 Kosovo wide Elections, this reporting period witnessed the launch and the manifestation of Kosovo wide provisional institutions on the political arena. At this point, some positive signals of engagement of the local political structures have been noted in inter-ethnic dialogue, though the full engagement of all political entities and structures will require much effort and support of the international community. In this vein, the report also highlights that as confidence-building encompasses a fundamental qualitative change in the political and social relations between ethnic groups, it requires active involvement and support from all possible actors, including all levels of the PISG, all local communities, the IDPs and potential returnees themselves, UNMIK, as well as involved international and local NGOs and the donor community. The report scrutinises the results of the October 2002 Municipal Elections and the potential effects that the new proportions of minorities in the municipal assemblies may have on the situation of minority communities in Kosovo. Confidence and tolerance building exercises are addressed in the context of efforts invested by both the international community and local NGOs towards achieving a strong civil society in Kosovo, which is then expected to undertake a major role in ensuring a system of checks and balances for the local political arena.

Considering the overall situation described in this report, the changes noted during the reporting period are not yet fundamental enough to conclude that conditions would exist for large scale return of ethnic minorities in the near future, underscoring the continuing need for international protection for members of ethnic communities, in particular Kosovo Serbs, Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Security and freedom of movement

The ninth Assessment put forward a set of recommendations regarding security and freedom of movement. Progress on implementing these recommendations should continue.

- As this Assessment documents that limitations on freedom of movement for minority communities are many times based on perceptions as well as on the actual security situation, the UNMIK Community

Police Unit should be further involved in confidence-building initiatives in all minority communities, in parallel with awareness raising campaigns with regard to their mandate, functions and benefits for the community.

Justice

- The ongoing efforts by UNMIK to dismantle the parallel structures in the northern municipalities of Kosovo should be continued, in co-operation with the relevant Belgrade authorities. This relates to (1) parallel criminal proceedings as they create a risk of double jeopardy and can impact the fairness of trials and (2) parallel civil proceedings as they create an environment of legal uncertainty and prevent the integration of minorities into the judiciary.

- A public information campaign informing the members of minority communities about judicial integration and the establishment of the new courts would be welcome as a step toward encouraging these citizens to use and rely on the new courts. Such campaign could be organised by Pillar I, Pillar III, and/or any non-governmental organisation.

- The OSCE reiterates its recommendation that, in the future, cases should not be allotted on grounds of ethnicity. All sensitive cases involving judges and defendants of different ethnicities should be closely monitored by the OSCE and any judge displaying bias or discrimination should be disciplined through the Kosovo Judicial and Prosecutorial Council.

Education

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) should, in co-operation with KFOR, UNMIK Police and KPS, develop a comprehensive plan to improve equal access to education to all community members in Kosovo. This plan should also provide security for minority students, which should also include secure bus transportation.

- UNMIK and MEST should organise and implement a plan to provide for minority language education in accordance with international human rights standards.

- International GOs and NGOs have had some success in organising projects, which provide remedial education for members of the Kosovo RAE communities. UNMIK and MEST should study the "best practices" of these projects to duplicate and implement them Kosovo wide, in cooperation with international experts and NGOs.

Employment

- The Ministry of Public Services must ensure the implementation of the Administrative Direction 2003/2 on the implementation of UNMIK Regulation 2001/36 on Kosovo Civil Service, and place a particular emphasis on the provisions enabling Community Proportional Representation (an affirmative action plan). Such a plan should include training for all civil servants on the scope of the A.D, in particular on the provisions relating to affirmative action. Further, an efficient internal system to monitor implementation will be crucial.
- In light of this new A.D, all hiring practices should be internally re-evaluated once the policies and procedures are established at all levels, as that will ensure fair hiring practices throughout the Kosovo Civil Service.
- The Omnibus Anti-discrimination Law should be approved by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), enacted by the Assembly and then implemented by the PISG. The implementation and enforcement mechanisms within the draft Law would provide effective remedies for members of all communities, for all forms of discrimination, in particular in cases of employment discrimination.
- The OPM, in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Services, should implement a Kosovo wide minority employment outreach programme to attract qualified persons of minority communities.

Social services

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare should develop a comprehensive policy to further strengthen measures providing co-operation and flow of information between Centres for Social Work (CSWs) employees working in majority and minority areas. Initiatives such as regular information sharing meetings and common training sessions should be implemented by the CSWs Directors and supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.
- Sustainable outreach strategies, entirely run by the CSWs employees, should be developed with particular attention to those homebound minorities living either in urban or in remote rural areas.
- The CSWs should provide proportional allocation of social protection officers to areas where inhabited by minority communities.

Healthcare

- The Ministry of Health must take action towards the implementation of an integrated healthcare

system, able to serve majority and minority communities alike, supporting those facilities already serving mixed communities and duplicating best existing practices. Coordinated efforts and the dialogue between the Ministry of Health, UNMIK and the Ministry of Health in Belgrade should lead to a sustainable solution to the ongoing presence of parallel healthcare systems in Kosovo.

- The Ministry of Health should promptly issue the "Charter of Patients Rights", currently under draft form, which includes a provision on access to healthcare without discrimination.
- The Ministry of Health must continue its efforts in raising awareness about available healthcare services among minority communities, with a special focus on Kosovo RAE communities.

Housing and property rights

The ninth Assessment put forward a set of recommendations regarding housing and property rights as they relate to minority communities. The follow-up on those recommendations, conducted by the OSCE, has shown that there has been no significant development on some of the areas touched upon by the last Assessment. Therefore, the OSCE would not restate those recommendations.

- Previous recommendations regarding resource-allocation to HPD/HPCC, increased awareness raising activities and enhanced case-management remain valid and should be addressed with priority.
- The HPD should re-establish its field office in Podgorica (Montenegro) and open an office in Skopje (FYROM) to facilitate access of minority claimants displaced outside of Kosovo.
- Every municipality should have staff in appropriate positions trained on the mechanisms and competencies of HPD mechanisms. This person should act as a contact person for the HPD within the local self-government body.
- The complementary legislation required to implement UNMIK Regulation 2002/22, creating the immovable property rights register, should be passed by the Assembly and approved by UNMIK promptly. Work towards making the cadastre fully functional should continue to be a priority of UNMIK and the PISG.
- Municipal officials and law enforcement officials should take appropriate action to remedy and prevent illegal construction and illegal use of

agricultural and residential land of minority property right holders.

Return-related Reconstruction

- Future Housing Reconstruction Guidelines should be enacted in the form of Administrative Directions. The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) should draft laws to present to the Kosovo Assembly outlining non-discriminatory allocation criteria, transparent selection processes, and mechanisms providing accountability and the right to appeal.

- Future forms of the Guidelines should not only assess a community's overall vulnerability as criteria for reconstruction assistance, but also provide for mechanisms addressing individual assessments of vulnerability.

- NGOs operating as Municipal Housing Committees' (MHC) implementing partners, should be held accountable by both the MHCs and MESP for their conduct toward minorities. Future forms of the Guidelines should establish appropriate mechanisms accordingly. Every municipality should appoint a representative to the evaluation/assessment process of the NGO and to report any irregularities to the MHC respectively to the MESP.

- The ongoing turn-over of responsibility to municipalities from UNMIK should be accompanied by the establishment of an effective interim monitoring mechanism, such as monthly reporting, to create an acceptable level of accountability of the relevant Directorates and the MHCs toward both UNMIK and MESP.

- Municipalities and the implementing partners should ensure that beneficiaries of reconstruction assistance vacate the properties which they illegally occupy thereby enabling others to return from displacement. The HPD/HPCC and the courts should be actively involved in remedying illegal occupation.

- Municipalities and implementing partners have to ensure that property rights are confirmed prior to reconstruction. The HPD should be actively involved in this confirmation process.

- UNMIK, specifically the Office for Return and Communities, should continue its efforts to ensure coherence, transparency, and consistency in decision- and policy-making structures pertaining to returns at municipal and regional level.

Return

- The International Community and the PISG should continue to develop solutions for returnees of all

ethnicities. They also should continue to strengthen all structures which have been established to respond to returnee needs.

- Activities related to inter-ethnic dialogue and tolerance-building are key to the creation of conditions for return. Given the influence of the PISG on local attitudes, it is strongly recommended that they intensify their active involvement in such activities throughout Kosovo.

- The PISG should increase their engagement in the return process. At the same time, UNMIK should lend strong support to all return-related activities carried out by the PISG, including those related to political dialogue and consensus building.

- The central PISG and UNMIK should encourage municipalities to actively participate in the return planning process and in the implementation of return projects.

- The PISG, UNMIK, donors and other relevant actors should ensure the efficient functioning of the MWGs, as they are main co-ordinating bodies and discussion forums for minority returns.

- Coordinated efforts should be made to disseminate timely and accurate information to IDPs as developed through the UNMIK/UNHCR Information framework for IDPs. The responsibility of the Kosovo media in promoting inter-ethnic dialogue should be fully recognised.

Ideario de BSF

Balkan Sunflowers envía voluntarios procedentes de todo el mundo a trabajar como vecinos y amigos en la reconstrucción y recuperación sociales. Al organizar actividades sociales y culturales fomentamos el entendimiento, la transformación no violenta de los conflictos y la riqueza vital y cultural de la región balcánica.

Los voluntarios, mediante su trabajo por unas pocas semanas o muchos meses, contribuyen sus habilidades, experiencia y entusiasmo a sociedades exhaustas por el conflicto, y los voluntarios mismos se enriquecen al implicarse en el desarrollo comunitario.

Las actividades de Balkan Sunflowers se dirigen a la consecución de resultados concretos y a animar y preparar a los participantes y a sus comunidades para la continuación de los programas. Mediante los juegos, el arte, los deportes, el trabajo y la celebración de eventos, en respuesta altruista a experiencias traumáticas, servimos a las comunidades en las que vivimos.