

## **Public forum on the RECOM Initiative**

Split, Croatia,  
November 26, 2009

The Croatian Academic Community organized a public forum on the creation of RECOM. The forum was attended by 44 participants: human rights activists, journalists, representatives of the Academic Community, representatives of the Catholic Church in Croatia, and members of the public. Vesna Teršelič and Eugen Jakovčić (Documenta, Zagreb, Croatia) and Suzana Kunac (B.a.b.e., Zagreb, Croatia) gave introductory speeches. The discussion was moderated by Ivan Grubišić (Croatian Academic Community, Split, Croatia).

### **Review of Opinions, Suggestions, and Recommendations of the Participants:**

**War crimes related documentation is being destroyed, witnesses are dying, and we don't even have a database yet.**

*While investigating war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I was able to see for myself how justified and urgent this initiative is. When I first tried to obtain documents testifying about war crimes... when I first began searching for official documents, I was rejected and greeted with mistrust as if they were saying: "This man is looking for information about the crimes committed against Croats by Muslims – what happens if he starts looking for other kinds of information, too? ... The archives on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in different places all over the world, and so are the documents testifying about those crimes. I have visited the State Archives of the Republic of Croatia and searched through the entire part titled "The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina" stored in as many as 74 trunks. Now, after a careful examination, I can tell you that the material I found during my first visit to the archives was no longer there when I went back... So, the documents are being destroyed or they simply disappear. At the same time, the witnesses are dying and we don't even have a database. (Ivica Mlinovčić, journalist, Split, Croatia. Public forum on the RECOM Initiative, Split, Croatia, November 26, 2009).*

**The Church should be the first to be included in this Initiative, but they chose to simply turn their head away from the truth. Those who believe they own the absolute truth don't need dialog.**

*In accordance with the adopted procedure, at the next meeting of the Council of the Association we are going to discuss whether to join the Coalition for RECOM or not. But I can tell you one thing, we are certainly in favour of establishing the facts and we will do our best to give our contribution to that effort. ... I believe that the Church should be the first to be included in this initiative, but there is a series of their explanations, which are essentially Utopian or which simply illustrate the fact that they are turning their heads away from the truth. I am afraid, and I wish I was wrong here, that they will act in the same manner now, 19 years after those events [the end of communism] as before,. A lustration process needs to be conducted in our society and that the next president of the Republic must unequivocally be on the side of the victims of communism and condemn the crimes committed against them... The problem lies is that we are not under the same umbrella where they are able to control and supervise everything that is*

*going on and decide what the next steps should be. That is their mental structure and I believe that it's not only the way they think, it is their intellectual maxim.. Those who believe that their truth is the absolute truth need no dialog. And that is the whole problem this mentality creates. However, I am hopeful that civil society is evolving, becoming aware of its potential, and I think it is gaining momentum. At this point we have to be patient. I am personally always very enthusiastic about being included in programs pushing the Mosor region forward. I find it very challenging and I believe that this initiative will also help push Mosor forward. (Don Ivan Grubišić, Academic Community Split. Public forum on the RECOM Initiative, Split, Croatia, November 26, 2009).*