

National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM

Podgorica, Montenegro
September 14, 2010

The National Consultation with representatives of local communities in Montenegro on the Initiative for RECOM was organized by the Center for Civic Education (CGO) in Podgorica. The key-note speakers were Tarzan Milošević, president of the Bijelo Polje Municipal Assembly, Vladimir Mrčević, vice president of the Herceg Novi Municipal Assembly, Tea Gorjanc-Prelević, Human Rights Action, and Dragoljub Vuković, PCNEN. The discussion was moderated by Dubravka Uljarević, Executive Director of the CGO in Podgorica, and Dragoljub Vuković. The consultation was attended by 27 participants – representatives of local communities, politicians, and journalists. A significant number of media outlets from Montenegro reported on the consultation: Antena M, Montenegro Radio, PRO TV, “Vijesti”TV, Mina, Montenegro TV, Radio Free Europe, In TV, the dailies Vijesti and Pobjeda, Atlas TV and MBC TV.

Opinions, Suggestions and Recommendations of the Participants

It is necessary to secure the strong support of the international community, primarily the European Union, because the EU can play an important role in cases where the RECOM process is deadlocked for whatever reason.

So, concerning Article 35, paragraph 2 of the Statute (...) “Such conclusions do not have the effect of a court decision” – what I am worried about here is that the balance between the presumption of innocence and a reasonable doubt that an accused is guilty as charged is possibly destroyed. Therefore, I think that a reasonable amount of time should be allowed for this kind of case before it is made public - the office of the prosecutor should be given sufficient time to investigate before they react. Let’s say (...) a year or two for the office of the prosecutor to react. After that period, the information should be made public. (...) However, on the same note, I think it is necessary to secure the strong support of the international community, first of all the EU (...) because the European Union can be a second-instance organ, so to speak, which will have certain direct, indirect, formal, or informal roles in all of this, so that in case the process is deadlocked, they will be around to pull some strings and unblock it. (Sergej Sekulović, member of the Municipal Assembly of Podgorica, Montenegro, National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM, Podgorica, Montenegro, September 14, 2010).

The time period allowed for the work of the Commission should be extended, because it is not possible to make a register of all important events in such a short time. Maybe it is also necessary to include examples of positive behaviour and the personal sacrifices of individuals.

I just wanted to say that I think that the time period anticipated for the work of RECOM must be extended, because it is way too short a time to list all the events of the period in question (...) I agree that we must focus on war crimes and human rights violations, but I also think that we must include examples of positive behaviour and of individual sacrifice against the backdrop of

terrible events that took place on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. I think that it would not be a problem for the commission to at least list some symbolic examples. (Braho Adrović, Vice-President of the Berane Municipal Assembly, Montenegro, National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM, Podgorica, Montenegro, September 14, 2010).

Are state organs really going to cooperate with RECOM? What makes their cooperation with RECOM mandatory?

I would like to make a comment with respect to Article 8 of the Statute - "Mandatory cooperation of states with RECOM". I am wondering if the state organs are truly going to cooperate with RECOM? What makes the cooperation of state organs of members states with RECOM mandatory, is there some sort of regulation in place? And also, can RECOM request state organs to provide certain information at any time, so that a proof can be obtained which will help punish perpetrators of war crimes. (Dragan Ivanović, Podgorica Municipality, Montenegro, National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM, Podgorica, Montenegro, September 14, 2010).

RECOM will help the societies in the former Yugoslavia lose the sense of collective guilt and help them reconcile.

I am glad to learn that there is an initiative such as RECOM, so that we can finally get rid of the theory of collective responsibility. The nations of the former Yugoslavia will not be able to achieve total reconciliation, until there is this notion of collective guilt in the media and in the mind of those running this country. (Anka Vukićević, member of the Municipal Assembly of Nikšić, Montenegro, National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM, Podgorica, Montenegro, September 14, 2010).

Is the Statute going to include the bombing of Murina?

I would just like to ask you if those responsible for the bombing of Murina and the killing of children are going to be identified and found responsible. (Vujica Lalić, member of the Municipal Assembly of Nikšić, Montenegro, National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM, Podgorica, Montenegro, September 14, 2010).

Representatives of municipal assemblies should be included in the Commission and associated with RECOM.

... all states have associations of municipal assemblies. In Serbia, it is the Permanent Conference of Cities and Municipalities, in Montenegro it is the Association of Municipalities. I think that it would be a good idea to include one representative of the municipalities, not necessarily the president - it can be anyone delegated by the association. If we have representatives of the government and representatives of the non-governmental sector, I think it would be a good idea to include municipalities in this kind of activity (...) The fact here is that you wanted to have a regional approach, but I think that the conflicts that unfolded on the territory of Slovenia and Macedonia are fundamentally different from the conflicts that happened in other parts of Yugoslavia. However, the question remains whether the inclusion of Slovenia and Macedonia can be useful or detrimental for the functioning of RECOM. I know that it gives the whole

process a regional dimension and I know that it increases the significance of it all, but I must say that it may very well result in the weakening of the Initiative. (Tarzan Milošević, president of the Bijelo Polje Municipal Assembly, Montenegro, National Consultation with Local Communities on the Initiative for RECOM, Podgorica, Montenegro, September 14, 2010).