



RECOM Process

Report

September 2012 – January 2014

During the reporting period, the Coalition for RECOM¹ achieved results beyond expectations and plans. The public actions '*RECOM for the Future*', '*RECOM for the Future of the Youth*', '*I Run for RECOM*' and '*I Support RECOM*' have shown that people in post-Yugoslav countries support the RECOM Initiative, above all because it is a regional initiative with clear objectives and tasks and originates from a local level; Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance BH (TJAR) and the Center for Democracy and Transitional Justice (CDTJ) are jointly working on the project '*Mapping the Camps in BH*', and thereby directly contributing to RECOM's commitment to listing all the camps from the 1990-2001 wars; the artistic community has established itself as a promoter of the values of empathy as a precondition for rapprochement, respect, trust and reconciliation in the Balkans; and the public advocates of the RECOM Initiative have succeeded in getting the Presidents of Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia and two Members of the BH Presidency to appoint their personal envoys to RECOM. The first meeting was held on 6 September 2013, with the envoys expressing their unreserved support for Articles 13 and 14 of the RECOM Statute proposed by the regional Coalition. At the second meeting, held on 27 October 2013, the state presidents' envoys to RECOM examined closely the articles up to Chapter VII of the Proposed RECOM Statute and passed their opinions on RECOM's powers, the election of the Selection Panels, the operation and inquiry periods, a number of specific terms and other matters concerning the legal and constitutional possibilities for the establishment of RECOM.²

¹The Coalition for RECOM brings together nearly 2,000 civil society organizations and individuals from all post-Yugoslav countries advocating the establishment of a Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and other Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the period 1991-2001.

²The next meeting is scheduled for the beginning of March 2014, when the envoys to RECOM will continue to analyse the remaining articles of the Proposed RECOM Statute.

In addition to that, the Coalition has expanded considerably during the reporting period. It now has 1,982 members. It is the largest coalition for transitional justice and has the capacity to help the states in the region of the former Yugoslavia to establish RECOM and implement its mandate as regards registering civilian and military victims, camps and prisoners subjected to torture and extrajudicial killing. The Regional Coordination (network of partner organizations) is proceeding smoothly, thanks to the members' great commitment, know-how and responsibility. Most Coalition members take part in debates on reconciliation, and the younger members participate also in street actions and online campaigns. All members of the Coalition are receiving the RECOM Initiative !Voice, which has gained the reputation over time as being a magazine for discussing topical issues of transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries. The meetings with the religious communities have shown the existence of difficulties in establishing communication and cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serbia.

1. Activities

The activities were aimed at strengthening public support for the Initiative for the Establishment of RECOM, involving the academic community and artists in the debate on transitional justice instruments and reconciliation in post-Yugoslav countries, strengthening the capacity of the newly-established organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance BH (TJAR) and the Center for Democracy and Transitional Justice (CDTJ), and transferring the RECOM Initiative from a civic to a political level.

All the aims were achieved: the public actions indicate that citizens from post-Yugoslav countries support the RECOM Initiative above all because it is of a regional character, has highly specific objectives and originates from a local level; TJAR and CDTJ are jointly implementing the project Mapping the Camps in BH, which is directly contributing to RECOM's mission to register the camps from the 1991-2001 wars; the artistic community has established itself as a promoter of empathy as a precondition for rapprochement, respect, trust and reconciliation in the Balkans; and the public advocates of the RECOM Initiative have successfully initiated the transfer of the RECOM Initiative to a political level: the appointment by the Presidents of Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia and by two members of the BH Presidency of their personal envoys to RECOM has led to the establishment of the official RECOM Regional Expert Group.

1.1. Developing Coalition's internet presentations and publishing RECOM Initiative! Voice)

The internet presentations of the Coalition for RECOM and the RECOM Initiative offer a wealth of information and are well-designed. The Coalition for RECOM and the RECOM Initiative have profiles on Facebook and Twitter. The websites (www.zarekom.org and www.perkomra.org) offer detailed information about the development of the RECOM Initiative. During the reporting period, the Facebook presentations included over 200 items and 22 photo albums relating to various actions and gatherings.³ The website⁴ featured about 250 news items, announcements and newspaper articles about RECOM in eight languages (Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Albanian, Slovenian, Macedonian and English). By the end of January 2014, the website had been visited by 23,407 social network users and accessed 100,315 times.⁵ The Coalition for RECOM has continued collecting support signatures and expanding the Coalition. Through the website www.zarekom.org, the Coalition was joined by 70 new members, while 95 individuals and organizations have signed a petition for the establishment of RECOM.

The Coalition for RECOM used the online campaigns both to announce public actions and to gather support for them. The '*RECOM for the Future*' online campaign lasted from 25 August to 22 September 2012. During the campaign, members of the public used Facebook to display their photographs⁶ and messages and urged politicians to adopt a decision on the establishment of RECOM. About 100 people posted messages supporting the establishment of RECOM, including: '*Da se ne ponovi*' ('May it never happen again'), '*Da bismo čuli jedni druge*' ('So that we can hear each other'), '*Vreme je za novi korak – za REKOM*' ('The time has come for a new move – for RECOM'). The campaign was conducted by the Dokukino agency, a member of the Coalition for RECOM, with support from partner organizations involved in the project. McCann Erickson from Montenegro produced a video album free of charge called '*RECOM for the Future*'⁷, featuring messages from and photographs of popular actors. The Facebook presentation regularly features events announcing the Coalition's activities and inviting over 3,500 Facebook users to participate.

RECOM Initiative !Voice⁸, the publication of the Coalition for RECOM, provides information to members of the Coalition, civil society in post-Yugoslav countries, international transitional

³ <https://www.facebook.com/ZaREKOM.PerKOMRA.ForRECOM>

⁴ <http://www.zarekom.org>

⁵ Information obtained from Google Analytics.

⁶ Photographs on the RECOM Initiative Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/ZaREKOM.PerKOMRA.ForRECOM?ref=hl>

⁷ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/REKOM-za-buducnost-mladih-i2557.sr.html>

⁸ <http://www.zarekom.org/RECOM-Initiative-Voice/index.en.html>

justice organizations, intergovernmental institutions and the general public about the RECOM Process and other transitional justice instruments in the region and the world. The first issue of !Voice came out in December 2011. Up to now, 17 issues have been published (7 online and 10 print issues).

During the reporting period, eleven issues of !Voice were released, including six print and five electronic issues. !Voice is published in five languages⁹. The electronic version of !Voice is sent to thousands of addresses (transitional justice organizations and researchers, embassies, donors and European Union bodies), and the print version primarily to members of the Coalition for RECOM, transitional justice researchers and national domestic institutions.

1.2. Marking International Day of Missing Persons¹⁰

On the occasion of the International Day of Missing Persons, the Vojvodina Civic Centre (VCC) on 30 August 2012 organized a panel called '*Odgovornost (NE) nestaje*' (Accountability does - NOT - 'disappear'). RECOM's potential to help clarify the fate of missing persons was discussed by the public advocates for the RECOM Initiative Dinko Gruhonjić, Željko Stanetić and Jovana Kolarić (all from VCC), while Nada Bodić, a member of the Coalition for RECOM (Association of Families of Killed and Missing Serbs in Croatia) talked about the problems of families of missing persons.

1.3. 'RECOM for the Future'¹¹

'*RECOM for the Future*', the action involving the sending of postcards to the presidents of the states in the region, was conducted in Zagreb, Pristina, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Ljubljana and Skopje on 22 September 2012. The citizens who wrote the postcards were very keen to put their messages across and stressed the importance of addressing all the presidents of the states in the region of the former Yugoslavia. Each President was sent 100 postcards bearing citizens' personal messages and appeals to take concrete steps and decisions and support RECOM.

⁹ Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian edition and editions in Albanian, English, Macedonian and Slovenian.

¹⁰ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Tribina-Vojvodjanskog-gradjanskog-centra-povodom-Dana-nestalih.sr.html>

¹¹ <http://www.zarekom.org/gallery/REKOM-za-buducnost-predsedniku-ima-ko-da-pise.sr.html>

1.4. Confronting the future – ‘Why the Time is Ripe for RECOM’

The Center for Civic Education (CCE) organized in Podgorica on 18 October 2012 a panel discussion on confronting the future in the context of the question, ‘*Why the time is ripe for RECOM*’. Participants in the debate included some thirty activists of civil society organizations. Speaking on the panel were Professor Žarko Puhovski PhD, lawyer Tea Gorjanc Prelević and public advocate of the RECOM Initiative Dragoljub Duško Vuković, with the BH Ambassador in Montenegro also taking an active part.

1.5. ‘RECOM for the Future of the Youth’¹²

The action ‘*RECOM for the Future of the Youth*’ was conducted on 24 October 2012 in Banjaluka, Sarajevo, Pristina, Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana, Podgorica and Skopje simultaneously. During the action, 1,421 people signed the petition for the establishment of RECOM and 57 became members¹³ of the Coalition for RECOM. Coalition for RECOM activists handed out ‘*RECOM for the Future*’ leaflets outlining the development of the RECOM Initiative and copies of the latest issue of the RECOM Initiative !Voice.

Under the title ‘*RECOM for the Future of the Youth*’, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights Serbia (YIHR) organized panel discussions and the collection of signatures in six Serbian cities: Novi Sad on 12 November 2012, Kragujevac on 14 November 2012, Zrenjanin on 19 November 2012, Pirot on 20 November 2012, Subotica on 22 November 2012 and Niš on 23 November 2012. At the discussion panels, the RECOM Process was explained by Coalition members. The objective was to acquaint young people in smaller cities with the RECOM Initiative, as well as to make it possible for people living outside the capital to support the RECOM Initiative directly and learn more about it in the process.

1.6. The commemorative action¹⁴

On the occasion of All Saints Day, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights Croatia (YIHR Croatia) on 1 November 2012 organized an action to commemorate victims in Dr Franjo Tuđman Square in Zagreb. Participants wrote the names of missing persons on little slips of paper and attached them to trees in the park, with the object of preserving the memory of people who died or

¹² <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/REKOM-za-buducnost-mladih-i2557.sr.html>

¹³ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/57-new-Members-join-the-Coalition-for-RECOM.en.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Koalicija-za-REKOM-prisjetila-se-zrtava-rat-u-Hrvatskoj.sr.html>

went missing in the 1991-1995 war in Croatia, stressing the importance of establishing RECOM in order to name all the victims who had lost their lives. The slips of paper remained in place for over a month, attracting the attention of citizens but not of the media.

1.7. Debate on reconciliation in Macedonia

The Centre for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) and public advocate Professor Biljana Vankovska PhD organized in Skopje on 30 November 2012 a panel discussion called '*RECOM and the reconciliation process in Macedonia*'. The panel, which brought together 65 intellectuals and members of the Coalition for RECOM, was addressed by public advocates of the RECOM Initiative Professor Biljana Vankovska PhD, Nataša Kandić and Professor Zdravko Grebo PhD, and also by Professor Dimitar Mirčev from Skopje University, and member of the Coalition for RECOM Suad Misini. The participants' main conclusion was that a debate on what happened in the past was necessary in Macedonia.

1.8. The debate on reconciliation and justice from the point of view of the academic and artistic communities¹⁵

The Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), YIHR Croatia and TJAR organized debates on reconciliation from the point of view of artists and the academic community.

A debate in Sarajevo was organized on 7 December 2012 by TJAR and in Belgrade on 13 December 2012 by the HLC.

A debate in Zagreb was organized on 28 February 2013 by the organizers of the ZagrebDox documentary film festival.

The debate was particularly lively among the artists, who talked about ways of using their art to acquaint the citizens with the topics and problems of transitional justice. The artists adopted the view that empathy is a precondition for bringing closer together various truths, points of view, memories and reconciliations with the past, and for ceasing to regard others as enemies.

¹⁵ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/The-Coalition-for-RECOM-hosts-a-debate-on-reconciliation.en.html>

1.9. Documentary movie on the campaign of signature collection¹⁶

The YIHR Serbia produced a documentary movie on the campaign of signature collection held in April and May 2011 in support of RECOM, when 543,000 signatures were collected. The movie was made available via the website.

1.10. 'A look into yesterday – a step towards tomorrow'¹⁷

The Vojvodina Civic Centre (VCC) produced nine programmes called '*Pogled u juče – korak ka sutra*' ('A look into yesterday – a step towards tomorrow') broadcast by Radio Novi Sad from January to March 2013. The programmes presented the RECOM Initiative. The Initiative and other instruments for dealing with the past were discussed primarily by young people from the region, as well as by researchers, professors and transitional justice practitioners.

1.11. Transitional Justice in Post-Yugoslav Countries 2010/2011 Report¹⁸

The HLC, in collaboration with TJAR, CDTBH, YIHR Croatia, CRPM in Macedonia, Civic Link in Slovenia and the Humanitarian Law Center Kosovo (HLC Kosovo) carried out research on the state of transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries by investigating the progress of institutional reforms, criminal justice, reparations and truth-telling initiatives. The results are published in the Transitional Justice in Post-Yugoslav Countries 2010/2011 Report.

The report was presented at press conferences in all the states of the former Yugoslavia by representatives of the partner organizations and public advocates.

The first presentation was held in Pristina on 22 March 2013. Public advocates of the RECOM Initiative Nataša Kandić and Adriatik Kelmendi, DocuFest Director Veton Nurkollari and HLC Kosovo Director Bekim Blakaj spoke about the state of transitional justice, while the Deputy Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Kosovo, Gëzim Kasapolli, and the President of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation, Dhurata Hoxha, spoke about the work of the group.

¹⁶ The movie is available at <http://www.zarekom.org/Signatures-collection-campaign.en.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.zarekom.org/radio/index.sr.html>

¹⁸ The Transitional Justice in Post-Yugoslav Countries 2010/2011 Report is available at <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Transitional-Justice-in-Post-Yugoslav-countries--Report-for-2010/2011.en.html>

At the press conference in Banja Luka¹⁹ on 2 April 2013, the main report findings were presented by the public advocates of the RECOM Initiative, Professor Žarko Puhovski PhD and Igor Mekina, while Professor Miodrag Živanović, member of the CDTJ Managing Board, spoke about the situation in BH.

The report was presented in Zagreb²⁰ on 8 April 2013 by Nataša Kandić, Professor Žarko Puhovski, Sven Milekić (local advocate, YIHR Croatia), Vesna Teršelič (Director of Documenta) and Mario Mažić (Director of YIHR Croatia).

The presentation in Belgrade²¹ took place on 9 April 2013. The speakers were Nataša Kandić, Denisa Kostovicova (Senior Lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science), Sandra Orlović (HLC Director) and Mario Mažić.

The report was presented in Podgorica²² on 10 April 2013, with Professor Žarko Puhovski, Nataša Kandić, Mirela Rebronja (local advocate of the CCE) and Daliborka Uljarević (CCE Director) discussing the state of transitional justice in Montenegro.

The report was presented in Skopje²³ on 12 April 2013 by Professor Zidas Daskalovski, Director of CRPM, Biljana Vankovska, public advocate of the RECOM Initiative, Bekim Blakaj (Director of HLC Kosovo) and Oliver Stanoeski (local advocate, CRMP).

The report was presented in Ljubljana²⁴ on 19 April 2013 by Igor Mekina, publicist Spomenka Hribar, PhD, former Ombudsman in Slovenia Matjaž Hanžek, Sergej Flere, PhD, Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Maribor and President of the Centre for the Study of Post-Yugoslav Societies, and Jelko Kacin, Slovenian Member of the European Parliament and the European Parliament's Rapporteur for the Western Balkans.

The last presentation, in Sarajevo on 15 May 2013, was held by Nataša Kandić, Dino Mustafić (theatre producer and public advocate of the RECOM Initiative), and Midhat Izmirlija (President of the TJAR Managing Board).

The Transitional Justice Report was distributed by partner organizations to members of the Coalition for RECOM, civil society organizations, state institutions, libraries, EU institutions,

¹⁹ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Public-debate-on-Transitional-Justice-hosted-in-Banja-Luka.en.html>

²⁰ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Report-on-Transitional-Justice-in-Post-Yugoslav-countries-for-2010/2011-was-presented-in-Zagreb.en.html>

²¹ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Judicial-justice-does-not-acknowledge-the-victims.en.html>

²² <http://www.zarekom.org/press/Nalogodavci-su-i-dalje-zasticeni.sr.html>

²³ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/Tribina-na-REKOM-go-prezentirase-lzvestajot-za-tranziciona-pravda-vo-postjugoslovenskite-zemji.mk.html>

²⁴ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Predstavljen-lzvestaj-o-tranzicionoj-pravdi-u-Ljubljani.sr.html>

embassies, educational institutions, researchers, members of the epistemic community and interested individuals at their request (about 1,000 copies).

1.12. Conference on ‘the erased’²⁵

The Coalition for RECOM actively supported the ‘erased’ residents of Slovenia in exercising their right to have their revoked rights restored. The members of the Coalition for RECOM in Slovenia – Civic Link, the Initiative of Erased Residents of Slovenia (CIIA) and the Association of the Erased of Slovenia – were especially active in informing the ‘erased’ about the deadline for instituting proceedings before Slovenian institutions and in urging them not to miss it. According to official figures by the Slovenian Ministry of the Interior, Slovenia has unlawfully ‘erased’ 25,671 residents originating from other republics of the former Yugoslavia. By the end of 2013, some 8,000 ‘erased’ residents had succeeded in having their rights restored (or had at least applied for their restoration). In other words, more than 18,000 ‘erased’ residents are yet to exercise their right to compensation and return.

All these matters, as well as the need to compensate the victims of ‘erasure’ and determine the background of the violation of their human rights through the agency of RECOM, were discussed by numerous panellists at the conferences organized by Civic Link and other members of the Coalition for RECOM in Ljubljana (19 April and 28 June 2013), Belgrade (9 July 2013)²⁶ and Sarajevo (17 July 2013)²⁷.

The participants in the conferences in Ljubljana had serious objections to the government’s compensation proposal. They pointed out that the amount of ‘non-material compensation’ of only €40 a month was too small. “The ‘erased’ residents had more of their rights violated than persons detained without cause. In addition to being deprived of their health and pension insurance, the right to work and many other rights, they were also denied the right to freedom of movement, which in turn violated their right to family life”, warned Sergej Flere PhD, professor at the University of Maribor and a member of the Coalition for RECOM.

Igor Mekina, a public advocate of the RECOM Initiative and the Executive Director of Civic Link, said at the conference in Belgrade that the information available on the websites of the

²⁵ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/The-Coalition-for-RECOM-Helps-the-Erased.en.html>

²⁶ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/lzbrisanima-konacno-vracaju-prava.sr.html>

²⁷ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Conference-in-Sarajevo-the-Erased-Requirements-for-Redress-and-Indemnification-from-the-State-of-Slovenia.en.html>

Slovenian Embassies in all the countries in the region was incomplete, indicating that the Slovenian government continues to avoid fulfilling its obligations to 'erased' residents by denying them information concerning the procedure for regulating their status.

At the conference in Sarajevo, Aleksandar Todorović, who founded the CIIA, described the state authorities' treatment of their non-Slovenian residents. "They would 'punch' [and thus destroy, invalidate] all your documents, after which you no longer existed and they could throw you out of the country," he said.

1.13. '*I Run for RECOM*'²⁸

Preparations for participating in the half marathons in BH and Croatia and the marathons in Montenegro and Slovenia began in July 2013, with the making of silicone bracelets, and the printing of T-shirts and posters bearing the words '*Trčim za REKOM*' (I Run for RECOM), and also leaflets about the RECOM Initiative in the BCMS languages and in Slovenian.

On 7 and 14 September 2013, TJAR organized two street actions, in which it called on citizens to take part in the '*I Run for RECOM*' race on 15 September 2013 as part of the 5 km '*Pleasure Run*'. Fifteen Coalition for RECOM activists from Serbia and about 150 people from BH took part in the '*I Run for RECOM*' race²⁹. T-shirts displaying the 'RECOM' acronym were worn by about 170 participants in the Sarajevo half marathon. The director of the Sarajevo race, Erol Mujanović, said that the event had been marked by support for the RECOM Initiative.

The action '*I Run for RECOM*' was presented in Ban Josip Jelačić Square in Zagreb on 21 and 28 September 2013. In the citizens' race as part of the Zagreb marathon on 13 October 2013, about 100 participants wore T-shirts displaying the words '*I Run for RECOM*'³⁰.

In Ljubljana and Podgorica, the '*I Run for RECOM*' action took place as part of the marathons run on 27 October 2013. In Podgorica, T-shirts bearing the message '*I Run for RECOM*' were worn by secondary school pupils.

²⁸ <http://www.zarekom.org/i-run-for-REKOM/index.en.html>

²⁹ Photographs: http://www.zarekom.org/gallery/i-run-for-RECOM-Sarajevo-15_09_2013_.en.html

³⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.597940660269986.1073741833.575721612491891&type=3>

1.14. 'I support RECOM'

On the occasion of International Peace Day, 21 September 2013, the Coalition for RECOM organized a street action called '*I support RECOM*' in Banjaluka, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Ljubljana, Podgorica, Pristina, Zagreb and Skopje³¹. Coalition for RECOM activists handed out over 3,000 '*I support RECOM*' leaflets³² and collected 783 signatures in support of establishing RECOM³³. The activists took the opportunity to inform the citizens that the first meeting of the envoys to RECOM of the presidents of states in the region had already been held (on 6 September 2013), and that all the envoys were supportive of Articles 13 and 14 of the RECOM Statute, but that the third Member of the BH Presidency (from Republika Srpska) and the President of Slovenia had not yet appointed their personal envoys.

In Sarajevo, the action was held as part of Peace-Building Week³⁴; in Skopje the day before, public advocate Professor Biljana Vankovska PhD and the CRPM held a press conference at which they spoke about the RECOM Initiative as a peace-building instrument (*Activity 2.4. Press conference in Skopje*); in Podgorica, citizens wrote messages of peace and support for the establishment of RECOM as a peace-building instrument³⁵.

1.15. The Coalition for RECOM meeting in Macedonia³⁶

Members of the Coalition for RECOM in Macedonia held a meeting in Skopje on 19 October 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to analyse the past activities of the Coalition in Macedonia, as well as the problems it was encountering in its operation and its promotion of the idea for the establishment of RECOM.

The civil society's general weakness (the polarization along ethnic and political lines, and its competition for projects) is an obstacle to more vigorous activity and greater commitment to the attainment of the common goal – the establishment of RECOM. The most active members of the Coalition are the associations of veterans and of victims' families. The Coalition concluded that the support it receives from the state institutions is merely declaratory, and called on President Ivanov to confirm his support for the RECOM Initiative through the active

³¹ Photographs: <http://www.zarekom.org/gallery/index.sr.html>

³² <http://www.zarekom.org/documents/I-Support-RECOM-leaflet.en.html>

³³ The most signatures, 272, were collected in Banjaluka (Republika Srpska, BH)

³⁴ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/Dan-mira-u-BiH-Svaka-osoba-trebala-bi-postati-mirotvorac.sr.html>

³⁵ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/U-Podgorici-obiljezen-Dan-mira.sr.html>

³⁶ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Sastanak-clanova-Koalicije-za-REKOM-u-Makedoniji.sr.html>

participation of an appointed envoy to RECOM in the work of the Regional Expert Group for RECOM.

The members of the Coalition for RECOM again underlined the role of the media in rallying greater public, societal and political support for RECOM, and called on the media to pay more attention to the voice of the victims.

1.16. Informative consultations with representatives of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities³⁷

On 28 October 2013, the Humanitarian Law Centre Kosovo, Integra and the Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication (CRPD) organized in Prizren (Kosovo) informative consultations with representatives of the RAE communities on the RECOM Process and dealing with the past.

The consultations were attended by 30 representatives of these communities as well as by members of the 22nd May Association of Victims' Families from Vučitrn/Vushtrri, which is a member of the Coalition for RECOM. Participants in the debate noted the great scarcity of written sources concerning the suffering of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, and pointed out that obtaining testimony from survivors and members of victims' families was linked with problems. The participants called on the RAE communities to establish an association of families of missing persons and on members of the Coalition for RECOM to help document the suffering of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.

1.17. Debate on dealing with the conflict past in Macedonia

Round tables entitled '*Challenges of Dealing with the Conflict Past in Macedonia*' were organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Centre for Research and Policy Making and the Coalition for RECOM, and held in Tetovo on 4 October 2013,³⁸ Skopje on 17 October 2013,³⁹

³⁷ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Integrating-the-Roma-Ashkali-and-Egyptian-communities-into-the-process-of-dealing-with-the-past.en.html>

³⁸ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Round-Table-Challenges-of-Dealing-with-the-Past-Conflict-in-the-Republic-of-Macedonia.en.html>

³⁹ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Okrugli-sto-lzazovi-suocavanja-s-konfliktnom-prosloscu-u-Republici-Makedoniji-i2636.sr.html>

and Prilep on 8 November 2013⁴⁰. The conferences, whose object was raising public awareness of and rallying support for the RECOM Initiative, were attended by over 100 representatives of non-governmental organizations, participants in the 2001 conflict, representatives of victims' associations, professors, intellectuals, students and members of the Coalition for RECOM.

Professor Zhidas Daskalovski PhD spoke about the multiculturalism of divided societies. Albert Hani of the Training Centre for Management of Conflicts spoke about the memorialization of the past in an intercultural environment, with special emphasis on the culture and policy of remembrance, as well as on the phenomenon of glorifying war heroes in a post-conflict period.

The representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for Macedonia and Kosovo, Daniela Popovska, spoke about the need to deal with the past in the context of the German experience.

The local advocate for the RECOM Initiative in Macedonia, Oliver Stanoeski, outlined the background of the RECOM Process, with special reference to the transference of the initiative from a civil society level to a political and intergovernmental level as a unique achievement of the regional cooperation of the civil societies from the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

The RECOM public advocate, Professor Biljana Vankovska PhD, spoke about transitional justice from theoretical, comparative and national points of view. She pointed to the specificity of the situation in Macedonia which, in her opinion, calls for the implementation of special activities.

2. Informing the public about the institutionalization of the RECOM process

During the reporting period, the public advocates and other Coalition activists held several press conferences in order to promote the idea of establishing RECOM.

2.1. Press conference in Sarajevo⁴¹

On the occasion of the regional action entitled '*RECOM for the Future*', the Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance Association in BH, in cooperation with public advocates and artists, organized a press conference in Sarajevo on 20 September 2012. The speakers were

⁴⁰ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Challenges-of-Dealing-with-the-Conflict-Past-in-the-Republic-of-Macedonia.en.html>

⁴¹ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/lzvjestaj-sa-konferencije-za-stampu-povodom-akcije-REKOM-ZA-BUDUCNOST.sr.html>

Professor Zdravko Grebo, journalist Dženana Karup Druško, actor Ermin Bravo and the president of the Association's managing board, Midhat Izmirlija.

Professor Grebo said that the RECOM Initiative alone could make it possible to establish at a regional level the facts about the war crimes committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the human losses and the missing persons. He called on the presidents of the states in the region and the members of the Presidency of BH to take responsibility for the establishment of RECOM.

Dženana Karup Druško stressed that the facts that are to be established will also pertain to the circumstances in which the crimes were committed.

Midhat Izmirlija said that the Coalition for RECOM is made up of more than 1,800 civil society organizations concerned with various aspects of democracy and human rights, and that all of them share the view that a regional body would have the potential to promote acknowledgement of the injustice inflicted on the victims with a view to developing a culture of solidarity and compassion.

Actor Ermin Bravo called on the citizens to join the action and thus show their readiness to make a personal contribution to a better future.

2.2. Press conference in Podgorica

On the occasion of the action entitled '*RECOM for the Future*', public advocate Dragoljub Duško Vuković, local advocate Mirela Rebronja and theatre producer Branko Baletić spoke at a press conference organized in Podgorica on 21 September 2012 by the Centre for Civic Education.

Mirela Rebronja announced a new phase of the RECOM Process, aimed at transferring the civil initiative to a political level. She emphasized that the support for the RECOM Initiative of artists and marketing firms had met with wide public approval.

Speaking from a personal standpoint, theatre producer Branko Baletić focused on the need to establish the facts about everything that had taken place in the past for the sake of the future and the generations to come.

Leka Dedivanović from the McCann Erickson agency said that the success of the photographs promoting the RECOM Initiative reflects the agency's awareness of the social importance of the idea⁴².

2.3. Press conference in Skopje

At a press conference in Skopje on 21 September 2012, International Day of Peace, public advocate Professor Biljana Vankovska addressed the media and the public about the importance of RECOM for dealing with the past in Macedonia.

The conference was opened by the Director of the Centre for Research and Policy Making, Professor Židas Daskalovski, with a brief account of the RECOM Process.

Professor Vankovska pointed out that it was no coincidence that the conference had been scheduled for the day on which the whole world was marking the International Day of Peace, because the process of reconciliation and dealing with the conflict past is a necessary part of the peace process and the democratization of every society. Speaking about the institutionalization of the RECOM Process, Vankovska commended the support of the President of Montenegro, Filip Vujanović, who had written to his opposite numbers in the region urging them to start concrete work on establishing RECOM.

Professor Siljanovska-Davkova spoke about the importance of RECOM for the future development of both the region as a whole and of the state of Macedonia.

Local advocate Oliver Stanoeski called on the citizens to support the '*RECOM for the Future*' action by signing postcards that would be sent to the presidents of the states in the region.

2.4. Press conference in Skopje⁴³

A year later, on 20 September 2013, again in the context of the International Day of Peace, public advocate Professor Biljana Vankovska addressed a press conference concerning the RECOM Initiative as a peace-building instrument. She focused on the start of the transference of the initiative from a civic to a political level and on the tasks of the Regional Expert Group for

⁴² <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/REKOM-za-buducnost-mladih-i2557.sr.html>

⁴³ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/REKOM-VREME-E-ZA-INSTITUCIONALIZACIJA-NA-INICIJATIVATA.mk.html>

RECOM, which had held its first meeting early in September. She recalled that the President of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, was the first head of state to appoint a personal envoy to RECOM.

Speaking at the conference were members of the Coalition – General Ilija Nikolovski, representative of the Association of Macedonian Security Forces Veterans, and Raim Limani, representative of the Association of War Veterans of the Albanian National Army. They stressed the support of their members and called on the media and the citizens to extend their support to RECOM regardless of their ethnicity.

2.5. The public advocates call on Republika Srpska to join the RECOM Process⁴⁴

On 12 December 2013, the public advocates of the RECOM Initiative, Professor Žarko Puhovski, theatre producer Dino Mustafić and coordinator of the RECOM Process Nataša Kandić, held a press conference in Banjaluka, organized by the Centre for Democracy and Transitional Justice (CDTP). The public advocates called on RS President Milorad Dodik and Member of the Presidency of BH Nebojša Radmanović to join the presidents of Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia and the other two members of the Presidency of BH in their formal support for the initiative to establish RECOM.

They told the media that the Regional Expert Group for RECOM, which is made up of the personal envoys of the presidents of states in the region and of the Presidency of BH, had held two meetings so far, and that participation by the third (Serb) member of the Presidency of BH in the work of this official group would be in the interests of the victims in Republika Srpska.

2.6. Public advocates for RECOM call for developing a culture of compassion, solidarity and respect for victims⁴⁵

At the press conference held in Belgrade on 24 January 2014, the public advocates for the RECOM Initiative, Professor Žarko Puhovski, theatre producer Dino Mustafić, journalist Adriatik Kelmendi and RECOM Process coordinator Nataša Kandić, appealed to post-Yugoslav countries

⁴⁴<http://www.zarekom.org/news/The-public-advocates-call-on-Republika-Srpska-to-join-the-RECOM-Process.en.html>

⁴⁵<http://www.zarekom.org/news/Public-advocates-for-RECOM-call-for-developing-a-culture-of-compassion-solidarity-and-respect-for-victims.en.html>

to develop a culture of compassion, solidarity and respect for the victims of the wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia⁴⁶.

Professor Puhovski spoke about the importance of the communication established by the public advocates with the state presidents and stressed that 'RECOM is a step away from becoming an intergovernmental, parliament-appointed organ'.

Nataša Kandić informed the reporters about the course of the transference of the RECOM Initiative from a civic to a political level and expressed satisfaction with the achieved degree of regional cooperation in the context of dealing with the past, the concretization of political support for the establishment of RECOM, and the establishment and good work of the official Regional Expert Group for RECOM.

Dino Mustafic spoke about the importance of empathy, without which there can be no respect for the victims, while Adriatik Kelmendi, stressed the need for documenting the suffering of all victims with narratives from personal experience⁴⁷.

3. Regional events

3.1. The regional meeting of the Coalition for RECOM

The regional meeting of the Coalition for RECOM was held in Belgrade on 8 September 2012 and attended by 60 members of the Coalition. For the first time, members of the Coalition talked not only about the war but also their personal recollections from the war (the session '*What we memorized and what we remember*', published in issue No. 10 of the RECOM Initiative !Voice).⁴⁸ The participants included victims who spoke about their war experiences for the first time, and young people who knew about war crimes mostly thanks to their participation in the RECOM Process.

⁴⁶ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/Izgradimo-kulturu-solidarnosti-i-postovanja.bs.html>

⁴⁷ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/Kosovska-sveska-Usporič-porodice-Radevic.sr.html>

⁴⁸ <http://www.zarekom.org/RECOM-Initiative-Voice/RECOM-Initiative-Voice-10-2012-ENG.en>.

3.2. Meetings with leaders of religious communities

In order to obtain greater support from religious communities for the RECOM Initiative, the CIRPD organized eight meetings with high-ranking representatives of the Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic communities, as well as with smaller religious communities.

Representatives of the Coalition for RECOM met the Archbishop of Belgrade, Stanislav Hočevan, and the Chief Rabbi of Serbia, Isak Asiel, on 27 February 2013, and the Mufti of the Islamic Community of Serbia, Muhamed Jusufspahić, on 18 March 2013.

In Sarajevo, a delegation⁴⁹ of the Coalition for RECOM met the Archbishop of Vrhbosna, Vinko Puljić, on 16 May 2013⁵⁰. On the same day, the same delegation had a meeting with the Rector of the Sarajevo Old Church (SPC), Father Vanja.

In order to strengthen the support of the churches and religious communities for the Coalition for RECOM, a RECOM delegation⁵¹ on 11 June 2013 paid visits to Metropolitan Jovan of Zagreb and Ljubljana at the seat of the Metropolitanate of Zagreb and Ljubljana in Zagreb, the Archbishopric of Zagreb, the Islamic Centre and the Mufti of Zagreb, Aziz-effendi Hasanović⁵².

3.3. The IX International Forum for Transitional Justice⁵³

The IX International Forum for Transitional Justice, entitled *'Reconciliation in Post-Yugoslav Countries'*, was held on Mount Jahorina in BH on 17-18 May 2013. The Forum was prepared technically and programmatically by a team of local advocates under the direction of the RECOM Process Coordinator, Nataša Kandić. The Forum was attended by 220 activists of civil society organizations, including associations of victims, families of missing persons and veterans, artists, members of the academic community and representatives of state institutions of BH and from the region, international institutions and religious communities. The

⁴⁹ The meeting was attended by regional coordinator of the RECOM Process Nataša Kandić, Nikola Knežević (CIRDP), theatre producer and public advocate Dino Mustafić and member of the Coalition for RECOM Nuna Zvizdić (director of Women to Women).

⁵⁰ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Cardinal-Puljic-emphasizes-the-importance-of-forgiveness-trust-and-reconciliation-founded-on-truth.en.html>

⁵¹ The meeting was attended by Nataša Kandić, Nikola Knežević, Olivera Jovanović (Sarajevo Old Church, communications coordinator with religious communities in BH), Vesna Teršelič (Documenta) and Katarina Kruhonja (member of the Coalition for RECOM).

⁵² <http://www.zarekom.org/news/RECOM-Initiative-delegation-pays-visits-to-Zagreb-religious-communities-Report.en.html>

⁵³ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Reconciliation-in-post-Yugoslav-countries-9th-International-Forum-for-Transitional-Justice-Report.en.html>

participants were provided in advance with panellists' texts on reconciliation in the BCMS languages and in English. The Forum was opened by Dino Mustafić, public advocate of the RECOM Initiative, and then welcomed and addressed by Željko Komšić, Member of the BH Presidency.

The Forum discussed the results achieved in establishing transitional justice in post-Yugoslav countries, the experience of Northern Ireland, reconciliation from the point of view of states, religious communities, the scientific community, the community of artists and culturologists and civil society organizations, as well as the legacy of the Hague Tribunal in the service of reconciliation. The speeches and discussions were recorded, and the Forum organizers will publish a transcript of the debate and the Forum preprints, in the form of collected papers to be discussed by members of the academic community, artists and others, during planned debates on reconciliation from the point of view of the victims.

The Forum featured prominently in the BH media as well as in the region. The Forum was reported in the portals of B92 and *E novine* in Serbia, the daily *Novi list* in Croatia, *Mladina* and *Večer* in Slovenia and a great many web portals in BH - radiosarajevo.ba, sutra.ba, source.ba, citaj.ba, frontal.ba, the *Fena* news agency, the Federal television channel, the weekly *Dani*,⁵⁴ the dailies *Oslobođenje* and *Nezavisne*, and the regional web portal of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), the portal of *Deutsche Welle*, the TV 1 Channel of Montenegro and other media outlets. Ten days after the Forum, the organizers published a summary of the debate which is available on the website of the Coalition for RECOM.

3.4. The Sixth Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM

The Sixth Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM was held on 17 May 2013 on Mount Jahorina in BH. The Assembly was attended by 80 members of the Coalition for RECOM, including 62 representatives of non-governmental organizations and 18 individuals from Macedonia, BH, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Kosovo. The Assembly adopted a report on the activities of the Coalition for RECOM and its public advocates, but did not adopt the Proposed Minimum Principles for support of the official RECOM (*Proposed minimum principles to be respected in establishing RECOM*). The delegates concluded that the Coalition should adopt a position on minimum principles after obtaining the opinion of the states on the Proposed RECOM Statute adopted by the Coalition on 26 March 2011.

⁵⁴ <http://www.zarekom.org/press/Kako-ukloniti-rusevine-proslosti.sr.html>

3.5. Functioning of the Regional Council of the Coalition for RECOM

The network of partner organizations coalesced into the Regional Council of the Coalition for RECOM comprises the HLC, HLC Kosovo, YIHR Croatia, YIHR Serbia, CDT, TPOS BH, CGO, Civic Link, CRPM and CIRPD. The Regional Council is an efficient implementation body which reaches agreement easily and carries out agreed activities fully. Local advocates belonging to partner organizations are recognized by their communities as promoters of transitional justice and the RECOM Initiative.

During the reporting period, the Regional Council held three meetings: on 6 September 2012, 1 June and 14 December 2013. The meetings analysed the activities and results so far and drew up new activity plans. They discussed future activities in the context of the need to strengthen the public support and transfer the RECOM Initiative from a civic to a political level.

3.6. Meetings of public advocates of the RECOM Initiative

The Regional Team of Public Advocates (RTPA) was set up in October 2011, launching the preparation of a new stage in the RECOM Process – the transference from a civic to a political level (for further information, see 4. *Political advocacy for the establishment of RECOM*). During the period September 2012–end of January 2014, the public advocates held three meetings (on 7 September 2012, 18 June 2013 and 24 January 2014).

Proceeding from the fact that the Proposed RECOM Statute is the starting document for reaching a minimum consensus for a debate at an official level, the public advocates adopted a strategy for and defined the objectives of their public advocacy. At the meetings, the public advocates analysed the political situation in the post-Yugoslav countries in the context of the frequent elections and political changes, which oblige the Coalition for RECOM to seek repeatedly political support for the establishment of RECOM.

Special attention was paid to the establishment and work of the Regional Expert Group of the envoys to RECOM. At the 18 June 2013 meeting, the public advocates decided to delegate Midhat Izmirlija, member of the Coalition's Statute Working Group, and Nataša Kandić, public advocate and Coordinator of the RECOM Process, to participate in the work of the Regional Expert Group. Their participation is limited to providing an authentic interpretation of the provisions of the Proposed RECOM Statute.

4. Political advocacy for the establishment of RECOM

At the proposal of the partner organizations, the Regional Team of public advocates comprises: Zdravko Grebo, Professor at the Faculty of Law in Sarajevo, Dino Mustafić, theatre producer, and Dženana Karup-Druško (BH), Žarko Puhovski, Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb (Croatia), Biljana Vankovska, Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje (Macedonia), journalist Igor Mekina (Slovenia), journalist Dragoljub Vuković (Montenegro), journalist Adriatic Kelmendi (Kosovo), journalist Dinko Gruhonjić and human rights activist Nataša Kandić (Serbia).

The public advocates' task is to use their authority as individuals and professionals to start the process of institutionalization of the RECOM Initiative. To that end, the public advocates have held numerous meetings with representatives of domestic state institutions, particularly in Macedonia and Slovenia, given that the RECOM consultative process began in these two countries later than in the rest.

Professor Biljana Vankovska PhD held eight meetings⁵⁵ with representatives of the state institutions, political parties and EU institutions and ambassadors in Macedonia. She met President of Macedonia Gjorge Ivanov on 24 October 2012⁵⁶ and again on 30 November 2012, with public advocates Professor Zdravko Grebo and Nataša Kandić present at the latter meeting.⁵⁷

Igor Mekina had eight meetings with Slovenian European Parliament members and representatives of state institutions and foreign embassies in Slovenia.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ She met the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Macedonia Gordana Jankulovska, on 30 November 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikola Poposki on 3 December 2012, Ermir Mehmeti-Devaja of the Parliamentary Committee for Relations with the International Community and Talat Džaferi, MP, of the Democratic Union for Integration on 10 December 2012, the Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia Aivo Orav on 10 December 2012, and Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European affairs Teuta Arifi on 17 December 2012; (<http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Saopštenje-Arifil-sa-sastanka-sa-javnim-zagovaracem-REKOM-a.sr.html>) and with Parliament Speaker Trajko Veljanoski on 17 January 2013 (<http://www.zarekom.org/news/Meeting-between-the-President-of-the-Parliament-of-the-Republic-of-Macedonia-Trajko-Veljanoski-and-RECOM-Public-Advocate-in-the-Republic-of-Macedonia-Prof-Biljana-Vankovska.en.html>).

⁵⁶ <http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Predsednik-Republike-Makedonije-prof-dr-Djorge-Ivanov-razgovarao-sa-javnim-zagovaracem-Inicijative-REKOM-prof-dr-Biljanom-Vankovskom.sr.html>

⁵⁷ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/President-Ivanov-meets-with-representatives-of-the-Regional-Coalition-for-RECOM.en.html>

⁵⁸ He had a meeting with Jelko Kacin, member of the European Parliament and the European Parliament's Rapporteur for the Western Balkans on 23 November 2012 (<http://www.zarekom.org/news/Jelko-Kacin-The-Moment-is-Right-for-RECOM.en.html>), with Ivo Vajgl, a European Parliament MP (4 December 2012), with Tanja Fajon, a European Parliament MP (5 December 2012), with Nataša Goršek Mencin, Head of the Presidency of the European Commission in Slovenia (15 December 2012), with human rights protector Zdenka Čebašek Travnik (24

Adriatik Kelmendi met numerous representatives of state institutions and of the EU in Kosovo⁵⁹. On 8 October 2012, in the highly popular '*Rubicon*' show of the private TV channel '*Kohavision*', Kelmendi conducted an interview with the President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, on various matters including the RECOM Initiative.

The team of public advocates in BH had four meetings⁶⁰ with representatives of BH institutions, one meeting with the EU Delegation and one with the US Ambassador in BH.

Professor Žarko Puhovski PhD was in frequent communication with the President of Croatia and his advisers.

On 22 April 2013, Nataša Kandić and the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vučić, discussed the RECOM Initiative and the start of the institutionalization of the process with the appointment of personal envoys by the presidents of states in the region. Vučić promised full political support for a regional approach to dealing with the past.

4.1. Institutionalization of the RECOM Process

The efforts of the public advocates has resulted in the formation of RECOM's Regional Expert Group, comprising the personal envoys of the presidents of states in the region; the President

December 2012) (<http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Slovenacka-zastitnica-ljudskih-prava-ce-se-licno-angazovati-da-REKOM-bude-osnovan.sr.html>), with Gregor Virant, President of the Civic List (7 February 2013) (<http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Gregor-Virant-o-REKOM-Humana-inicijativa-koju-sa-radoscu-podrzavam.sr.html>), with Joseph A. Mussomeli, the US Ambassador, (12 February 2013) (<http://www.zarekom.org/vesti/Joseph-Mussomeli-ambasador-SAD-Kljucna-uloga-Slovenije-u-pomirenju-na-Balkanu.sr.html>) and with President of Slovenia Borut Pahor (17 February 2013).

Photographs: <http://www.zarekom.org/news/President-of-Slovenia-Borut-Pahor-RECOM-is-necessary-for-reconciliation-and-confidence-building-among-peoples.en.html>

⁵⁹ With German Ambassador Peter Blomeyer on 29 November 2012. Kelmendi had meetings regarding the appointment of a personal envoy with Ramush Tahiri and Arber Vllahiu, personal advisers of the President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga (18 October 2012), and with Gerentina Kraja and Arber Vllahiu (14 January 2013) (<http://www.zarekom.org/news/The-German-Ambassador-to-Kosovo-expresses-his-support-for-the-RECOM-Initiative.en.html>), with Swiss Ambassador Krystyna Marty on 8 February 2013 (<http://www.zarekom.org/news/Ambassador-Krystyna-Marty-Support-For-Regional-Approach-in-Dealing-With-Past.en.html>), with Croatian Ambassador Zoran Vodopija on 17 February 2013 (<http://www.zarekom.org/news/Ambassador-Vodopija-Croatia-supports-RECOM-with-a-view-to-better-inter-neighbour-relations-in-the-region.en.html>), with Selim Selimi, personal envoy of the President, on 8 April 2013, and Dominic-Haydn Braithwaite, political regional adviser and adviser on conflict prevention at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on 17 April 2013.

⁶⁰ With Haris Bašić, adviser to the Member of the BH Presidency Bakir Izetbegović (28 January 2013), with Member of the BH Presidency Bakir Izetbegović (21 February 2013), with Aljoša Čampara, personal envoy of Member of the BH Presidency Bakir Izetbegović (1 March 2013), and with Željko Komšić, Member of the BH Presidency (25 March 2013).

of Slovenia and the Member of the BH Presidency from Republika Srpska have not yet appointed their envoys to RECOM. Their task is to analyse the proposed RECOM Statute and pass their legal opinions on the provisions concerning the establishment of RECOM and its terms of reference, and the obligations of states in the context of their national constitutions and legislations.

President of Croatia Ivo Josipović appointed Zlata Đurđević, Professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb, on 25 January 2013; President of Macedonia Gjorge Ivanov appointed Luben Arnaudovski, Deputy General Secretary for Legal and Organizational Affairs at the Office of the Macedonian President, on 25 January 2013; President of Montenegro Filip Vujanović appointed the Dean of the Faculty of Law in Podgorica and his personal Adviser on Minority and Human Rights, Sonja Tomović-Šundić, on 28 January 2013;⁶¹ President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga appointed her personal Legal Adviser, Selim Selimi, on 25 March 2013;⁶² Željko Komšić appointed Goran Mihaljević, a lawyer and liaison officer with the Hague Tribunal, on 25 March 2013; and Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegović appointed the Deputy Mayor of Sarajevo and lawyer Aljoša Čampara, on 21 February 2013; President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić appointed Judge of the Appellate Court in Belgrade Siniša Važić, on 30 June 2013.⁶³

The first meeting of the presidents' personal envoys was held in Zagreb on 6 September 2013, with the participation of public advocates of the RECOM Initiative and a member of the Working Group of the Coalition for RECOM, which had prepared the Proposed Statute. The envoys of the presidents of the states in the region and the public advocates agreed that the Proposed RECOM Statute, which was adopted by the Coalition for RECOM on 26 March 2011, represents the basic document for building minimum consensus for an official-level discussion. The envoys fully supported Articles 13 and 14 of the Proposed RECOM Statute laying down the objectives and functions of the Commission. They were of the opinion that certain issues (such as the fate of missing persons and reparations) cannot be solved within the framework of one state. In their opinion, a regional commission is a better framework for that and has greater potential.

At the second meeting, held on 27 October 2013 in Zagreb, the envoys to RECOM closely examined the articles contained in seven parts of the proposed RECOM Statute, and presented

⁶¹ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Presidents-of-Croatia-Macedonia-and-Montenegro-Appoint-Personal-Envoys-to-RECOM.en.html>

⁶² <http://www.zarekom.org/news/The-President-of-Kosovo-appoints-personal-envoy-to-RECOM.en.html>

⁶³ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Serbian-President-appoints-Judge-Sinisa-Vazic-his-personal-envoy-to-RECOM.en.html>

their opinions about RECOM's competences, the selection of the Selection Panels, the operation and research time-frames, and specific terminological and other matters concerning the legal and constitutional possibilities for the establishment of RECOM.⁶⁴

After the end of the work of the Regional Expert Group for RECOM, the Regional Council of the Coalition for RECOM and the public advocates will convene an Assembly of the Coalition for RECOM, to state its position on the legal and political opinion of the Regional Expert Group for RECOM and the possible amendments to the Proposed RECOM Statute.

5. International support

In their joint statement of 19 March 2013, the delegations from the European Parliament and the Committee for European Integration of the Republic of Serbia called on the authorities of the Republic of Serbia to continue to support the RECOM Initiative as an important mechanism for the process of reconciliation. They also urged the presidents of the states which have not yet appointed their representatives for RECOM to do that without delay, in order that the process of formal establishment of RECOM can commence.⁶⁵

The European Commission (EC), in its *Serbia 2013 Progress Report*, stated that the EC will continue to support the RECOM Process. In the *EU Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014*, which was released on October 16th 2013, the EC welcomed the first meeting of the Head of State Representatives for RECOM.

6. Enlargement of the Coalition for RECOM

At the end of January 2014, the Coalition for RECOM had 1,982 members. The Coalition for RECOM is a unique regional coalition for transitional justice which has developed the capacity to help the states in the region of the former Yugoslavia to establish a regional approach to dealing with the past, as well as to provide expert assistance in establishing RECOM and completing its mandate as regards the listing of civilian and military casualties, camps and prisoners. Viewed by states, the Coalition has 407 members in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 164 in Montenegro, 50 in Slovenia, 191 in Croatia, 404 in Kosovo, 72 in Macedonia and 694 in Serbia.

⁶⁴ The next meeting is scheduled for the beginning of March 2014, when the envoys to RECOM will continue to analyse the remaining articles of the Proposed RECOM Statute.

⁶⁵ <http://www.zarekom.org/news/Delegations-of-EP-and-Committee-for-European-Integration-of-Republic-of-Serbia-supported-RECOM.en.html>