

is the inclusion of a variety of organizations and individuals in a regional discourse, the establishment of partner relations and the assistance to society restoration efforts. Restoration process itself is very therapeutic.

Statement: Gordan Bodog, Izmir Association, Croatia, Regional consultation with academics, Zagreb, Croatia, January 10th 2009.

Truth commissions may be exclusively NGO initiatives, while interpretation must be left to historians.

I can accept the idea of non-governmental organizations creating the commission and I support it. (...) Commissions should deal exclusively with victims and perpetrators and the interpretation of facts should be left to historians who are dealing with the past on a daily basis simply by doing their job. However, I feel strongly about the fact that the Republic of Croatia has institutions and this is primarily a job for institutions.

Statement: Davor Marijan, Croatian Institute for History, Croatia, Regional consultation with academics, Zagreb, Croatia, January 10th 2009.

RECOM should have three levels: determining causes and explaining what happened, documenting war crimes, and making a list of all victims.

The real job must be done at three different levels: I understand the first level as a discussion about what caused it all and attempts to explain it, sort of a narrative approach to what happened in the past. The second level is an effort to document all war crimes committed in the recent past, while the third level is a list of victims. Having said that, I really think the regional commission needs to be understood as a form of regional cooperation.

Statement: Ivo Goldstein, Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, Croatia, Regional consultation with academics, Zagreb, Croatia, January 10th 2009.

Scientists should analyse crimes instead of counting victims. It is necessary to exchange all available data on human losses in the region.

A scientific approach to this issue should include a sociological and psychological analyses as well as a victimology analysis, to reveal general characteristics of a crime, and scientists should not be expected to be coroners counting the victims the government missed. We thought that dealing with the victims and those who suffered would primarily include

interpretation of the suffering and of war characteristics which would help answer why things like that happened to us, why to that extent, and it all turned out to be counting the dead (...) all those who are trying to document human losses on the territory of the former Yugoslavia should be connected in order to exchange information they have.

Statement: Igor Graovac, Croatian Institute for History, Croatia, Regional consultation with academics, Zagreb, Croatia, January 10th 2009.

It is necessary to make an exact list of victims belonging to all sides in the conflict.

In Croatia, just like in all other states, it is necessary to create a list of victims, first of all, belonging to both sides that took part in the war, instead of saying 'I believe there were over 18,000 victims.'

Statement: Dražen Lalić, Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia, Regional consultation with academics, Zagreb, Croatia, January 10th 2009.

24. National consultation with civil society on the Initiative for RECOM

Pančevo, Serbia,
March 28th 2009

The first consultation with civil society groups in Vojvodina was organized by the Civic Action, Pančevo (Serbia) and was attended by 27 participants, mostly representatives of non-governmental organizations, human rights activists, several journalists, two representatives of the Jewish community in Pančevo, and three representatives of political parties. The consultation was opened by Marijana Toma (Impunity Watch, Serbia), Dinko Gruhonjić (Independent Journalist's Association of Vojvodina, Serbia), Andrej Nosov (Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Serbia), and Abdullah Ferizi (Forum ZFD, Kosovo). Media who reported on the gathering were Kurir, Libertatea, Pančevac, RTV Pančevo, and Radio Vojvodina.

Participants of consultations held in Pančevo praised the initiative to create RECOM and most of them supported the idea.

The reason RECOM is needed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia is to make sure that the hatred and distrust that existed in the region and caused all these wars is not passed on to new gen-

erations. We want them to have the opportunity not to forget the past and history but to know it well and to build a sound future for themselves on the foundations of that history where hatred and wars could not happen again.

Statement: Abdullah Ferizi, ZFD Forum, Kosovo, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

I think that we don't really have to ask 'why RECOM?' It is like asking 'why do we need to drink water?'

Statement: Hrvoje Zovko, Croatian Radio-television-HRT, Croatia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

As many non-governmental organizations as possible should be included in the coalition in order to strengthen its capacity.

What I am worried about is, that the non-governmental sector does not have an articulate, critical public pool and I think that way too little non-governmental organizations are dealing with this issue (...) Now that we are talking about organizational methods, I think that one of the first steps we should make is to include more non-governmental organizations and generally speaking we should put pressure not only on governments but also on the non-governmental sector.

Statement: Virdžinija Marina Guzina, Civic Parliament Vršac, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

It is not easy to get involved in stories like this, you'll see. I really cannot see how we are going to level this down in our local environments and how we're going to create a network of non-governmental organizations in order to instrumentalize this story and maybe even bring it into local parliaments. This means that you have to help us because, I think, in the non-governmental sector there is no, how would I put this, common stance that we should enter this process.

Statement: Snežana Baralić-Bošnjak, Women's Peace Group, Serbia, National Consultation With Civil Society, Pančevo, Serbia, 28 March 2009.

In its investigations RECOM should be guided by the facts established by the ICTY and International Commission on Missing Persons.

In order to avoid cardinal mistakes we should use the knowledge of others, in this case the facts established by the ICTY and the International Commission on Missing Persons which has done a

very good job so far for the entire region.

Statement: Janja Beč Neumann, a sociologist and a writer from Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

I think that RECOM should decide in advance which previously established facts it is going to take in consideration as a starting point because RECOM would be a unique institution in the sense that it would have the benefit of cases and judgements issues by the Hague Tribunal and various national courts, which is not common in other contexts. I personally believe that RECOM should not challenge the judgements which have been hitherto issued by these courts.

Statement: Marinika Čobanu, Civic Action Pančevo, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

Public hearings of victims and victims' family members should be held at a local level: this opens up a possibility for victims and the local community to hear each other and work together in order to overcome the negative legacy of the past.

I would like to hear a more detailed description of public hearings, so that we can gain more support, to include more people and implement it at the local level. To organize mini-forums in smaller communities, to document them and make it possible for as many people as possible to hear and see it because every individual counts.

Statement: Marinika Čobanu, Civic Action Pančevo, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

Veterans' associations should be included more actively in the consultations process. Public hearing of perpetrators who are willing to talk about their participation in certain events should also be considered.

I think that the entire region will be specific, that everybody will recognize this initiative in their own way and they will certainly enter this whole story from their own perspective and with their own experience. But it's perhaps good that in Vojvodina that we don't have associations going around saying: "My God, Serbia didn't take part in the war". Serbia kept denying it the whole time and now we have these poor veterans asking for their pay. So we should probably hear those who participated in the war and those who were against it.

Statement: Snežana Baralić-Bošnjak, Women's Peace Group,

National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

I think that it would be very interesting to hear public hearings of perpetrators, too, of course if they agree to that.

Statement: Branislav Ramjanc, Civic Action Pančevo, Serbia, National consultations with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

There are many of those who took part in the bloody events in the former Yugoslavia simply because they were forced to. Those are primarily younger people who were uniformed members of the unfortunate Yugoslav Peoples Army (JNA) and who were simply shipped to harshest war zones. They are, in fact, the first echelon soldiers asking to be recognized as participants but also as victims of war.

Statement: Gojko Mišković, Open Lycée, Serbia, National consultations with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

RECOM members should be individuals who enjoy the respect of every community in the region. During the consultations process it is necessary to collect nominations for RECOM commissaries and create a list of potential commissaries.

It is important that the selection of the members of the commission are people known for their long-time engagement in dealing with the past, people who contributed with their own efforts to make a contribution in their own micro-space.

Statement: Snežana Baralić-Bošnjak, Women's Peace Group, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

These [individuals] should be the best of us, people sensitive to the suffering of others, responsible, honest, and those willing to deal with these unpleasant and difficult issues.

Statement: Gordana Perunović-Fijat, Kikinda Club, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

RECOM should name war crime perpetrators.

I think that war crimes perpetrators should be named and the rest should be left to state institutions and judiciaries to take action or not.

Statement: Gordana Perunović-Fijat, Kikinda Club, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

Before it begins its work, RECOM must define what a victim is. The definition should clearly

and precisely define who can be considered a victim.

I can hear that we are talking about victims here, but I don't see any preset criteria determining who can be considered a victim. We know that civilians are for sure victims, but we need some criteria determining it more clearly.

Statement: David Montijas, president of the Jewish Municipality in Pančevo, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

RECOM should also make public positive experiences of solidarity and friendship among members of different communities during armed conflicts.

In Jewish culture we pay a lot of attention to such examples because it helps the healing process, stories about somebody helping somebody. There are many examples like that and it is important that the example of Vojvodina is made public because there are 200,000 deserters who risked their lives to help others and it is important to see who they helped.

Statement: Janja Beč Neumann, a sociologist and a writer from Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

The idea is to hear the positive stories through RECOM because whenever we talk about the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, we keep forgetting a large number of people who were able to demonstrate their humanity and who remained honourable in difficult situations.

Statement: Andrej Nosov, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Serbia, National consultation with civil society, Pančevo, Serbia, March 28th 2009.

25. Local consultation with associations of victims on the Initiative for RECOM

Bijeljina, BiH,
April 11th 2009

The first national consultation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized by the non-governmental organization Povratak i održivi opstanak Association (BiH) and was attended by 26 representatives of non-governmental organizations, mostly victims of war associations, and other associations of citizens. Three of the present people were journalists, at the same time members