

25 September 2012



September 2012, Warsaw

Dear Sir/Madam,

Since 2010, Group 484 has been coordinating a network of civil society organisations within the project "Fostering NGO Human Rights Network towards Durable Solutions for Refugees and IDPs in the Western Balkan Region." The goal of the project is to support regional civil society initiatives, provide a forum for the development of joint strategies in addressing specific issues of concern, and for launching joint advocacy initiatives.

In 2012, the network has focussed its work on issues related to rights of those displaced from Kosovo¹ as a consequence of the 1999 conflict. Network members, including civil society organisations from Kosovo, participated in the thematic meeting dealing with issues pertaining to access to civil registration, health insurance, employment, access to justice and protection of property rights.

The joint initiative of the NGOs resulted in a document that identifies obstacles faced by IDPs in exercising their rights in places of origin and places of displacement. As a result, a set of conclusions was adopted followed by recommendations for the improvement of the situation of IDPs.

The document emphasises the need to remove, as soon as possible, all remaining obstacles that IDPs face and that impede or completely prevent them from exercising their economic, social, and cultural rights in both their places of displacement and places of origin. It is particularly important to remove the obstacles mostly affecting the displaced persons of Roma ethnicity and other vulnerable groups among displaced persons.

Additionally, the numerous issues related to the realisation of IDP's right to the peaceful enjoyment of property and access to courts in the place of origin in Kosovo were elaborated in the Conclusions. In this regard, civil society organisations emphasised a need to enable equal access to justice and courts to all groups by increasing the efficiency of the judicial system in Kosovo in order to enhance the protection of rights. Civil society organisations placed particular attention to the restitution and protection of property and property rights as a necessary prerequisite for the return of displaced persons to their homes, including the protection of their right to freely dispose of their property.

Civil society organizations calls on EULEX Mission in Kosovo, as well as all other international organizations and their partners to remain committed to ensuring the respect of international norms and principles for the protection of human rights in preventing discrimination, protecting the rights of displaced persons as well as securing the return and protection of their property.

¹All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

Civil society organisations underscore that the respect for human rights and fulfilment of human rights obligations require the removal of the existing obstacles faced by those displaced from Kosovo as a consequence of 1999 conflicts in exercising their rights. Solving the problems faced by the displaced from Kosovo will definitely result in the political stabilisation of the society and lead to stability of the region as a whole.

You may find the complete text of the Conclusions in the files that have been delivered for this session and on the web site of the Group 484 [www.grupa484.org.rs] and the regional web resource centre Migracije [<http://migracije.org>].

Thank you for your attention.