

## Public debate at Struga

On 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, a public debate on topic *Multiethnic life – challenge in education* was held in Struga, organized by Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia in cooperation with NGO Support Center Struga. Total of 41 participants (1 member of Commission for Inter-Community Relations, 3 representatives of Struga Municipality, 2 Councilors of Struga Municipality, 8 high schools students, 7 professors, 2 psychologists from high schools, 2 Parents' councils representatives, 14 NGO representatives and 2 media representatives) attended the event. Simultaneous translation into Albanian language was provided. The aim of the public debate was to encourage communication between the involved parties in order to prevent interethnic conflicts in high schools in Struga in the future and to decrease the gap between high schools students from different ethnic groups. Following speakers took part in the debate: Sejfula Hani, President of the Struga Municipality Council, Anita Zhaku and Jasmina Markoska, psychologists in high schools „Ibrahim Temo”and „Niko Nestor” - Struga, Berat Sela and Visnja Duracovska, representatives of Parents' council in high schools „Ibrahim Temo”and „Niko Nestor”, Adriana Loga from Association *Citizens' Democracy*, Dejan Jovcevski from Local Youth Organization “Galeb” and Agim Dauti, President of the Commission for Inter-Community Relations in Struga. Following are the conclusions from the debate:

- communication of relevant stakeholders involved in the conflict and high schools students has to be open and sincere;
- free activities with students from different ethnic communities (sports, cultural, ecological events) need to be organized;
- cooperation of family with schools and society is needed;
- measures for increasing security in two high schools in Struga (Niko Nestor and Ibrahim Temo) have to be provided;
- high schools have to prepare program for building multiethnic life, that will be financed by Struga Municipality;
- measures against students that provoke conflicts have to be undertaken.

All participants agreed that division in ethnic schools should not be allowed, beside requests from professors, but a mutual solution has to be found in order to build multiethnic life in Struga. High schools students proposed to organize a workshop where they will identify mutual problems and possibilities for improving communication between students from different ethnic groups.

Media showed great interest for the debate and short overviews were broadcasted on TV *Alsati-M*, TV *Kanal 5*, TV A1 and local TV station TVM Ohrid.