

Regional meeting at Tetovo

On 26 June 2008 in Tetovo, a meeting between the Ombudsman - regional office Tetovo and the Commissions for Inter-Community Relations from Tetovo, Gostivar, Vrapciste, Jegunovce, Zelino, Brvenica, Bogovinje, Mavrovo and Rostushe was held, organized by NGO *Common Values*. Four of these municipalities¹ established Commissions for Inter-Community Relations according to the Law on Local Self-Government; four of them² have established Commissions even it is not their obligation. 39 participants were present on this meeting: 18 representatives from local governments, 5 representatives from the Ombudsman's office in Tetovo, one representative from ZELS, and 8 representatives of NGOs and 7 journalists. Following speakers took part on the meeting: Suncica Kostovska Petrovska, project manager; Marina Obadik, Deputy Ombudsman from the regional office in Tetovo; Natasa Vrteska, representative of ZELS; Afrim Sinani, representative of Municipality of Tetovo. Representatives of all Commissions for Inter-Community Relations had presentations of the structure and work of the Commissions. Moderator of the meeting was Igor Tasevski from *Center for Civic Initiative - Prilep*.

Following conclusions came out as result from the meeting: citizens should be acquainted with the role and activities of the Commissions and the Ombudsman, as well as with the benefits arising from the existence of these bodies; Commissions should work on promotion of diversity and cooperation between ethnic communities; Government should pay more attention to the recommendations from the Ombudsman; cooperation between Commissions for Inter-Community Relations and the Ombudsman should be improved.

¹ Tetovo (23.16% Macedonians), Jegunovce (43.02% Albanians), Brvenica (37.52% Macedonians), Mavrovo and Rostushe (31.10% Turks, 17.21% Albanians)

² Gostivar (66.68% Albanians, 19.59% Macedonians, 9.86% Turks, 2.76% Roma), Vrapciste (83.08% Albanians, 12.34 % Turks, 4.10% Macedonians), Zhelino (99.02% Albanians), Bogovinje (95.23% Albanians, 4.08% Turks)