

Thematic meeting at Vinica

Two-day thematic meeting named *Improvement of the dialogue between Roma ethnic community and local governments in the North-Eastern part of Macedonia* was held in Vinica on 27 and 28 June 2008, organized by NGOSC Kratovo. Total of 25 participants (representatives of Roma Advisory Groups from Rankovce, Kratovo, Probitip, Vinica, Pehcevo and Berovo, public servants on ethnic issues in Vinica, Kocani and Stip, local NGOs and representative of ZELS) attended the meeting. The aim of the meeting was to establish methods and build up cooperation for regular dialogue with institutions for solving problems of ethnic communities on local level. Facilitator of the workshop was Mario Veljkovik, individual expert. The workshop was co-facilitated by Erol Ademov, participant in the ToT program.

At the beginning, Ismail Ljuma, representative of ZELS spoke about the necessity of regular communication with institutions, the role of public servants working on minority's issues, and the role of ZELS in advocating the interests of institutions on national and international level.

The two days of the workshop passed in a good working atmosphere, accompanied by discussions and positive examples for next activities. Group work was a tool for locating different types of mechanisms for an active dialogue with institutions.

The conclusions of the workshop were: to establish a civil advisory committee as a form for regular dialogue with institutions; to organize a meeting where Roma discrimination will be discussed; to prepare local action plans of Roma advisory groups; to create an annual program which will be submitted to the Municipality Councils where Roma advisory groups are established; to organize a workshop *Roma education and possibilities and challenges of obligate primary and secondary school* and to organize a meeting with ZELS titled *Importance of existing Commission for Inter-Community Relations and public servants working on minority issues*.

On the participants recommendation the conclusions were sent to ZELS in order to deepen the existing cooperation and improve the situation on local level.

Participants on the meeting in Vinica initiated and promoted establishment of models for regular dialogue with institutions (Roma Advisory Groups, civil advisory committee, public servants on ethnic issues) in order to deepen the existing cooperation and improve the situation of minorities on local level in municipalities of North-Eastern part of Macedonia.