

ECMI  
**REPORT**



 EUROPEAN CENTRE  
FOR  
MINORITY ISSUES

**DYNAMICS OF INTEGRATION  
IN THE OSCE AREA:  
NATIONAL MINORITIES  
AND BRIDGE BUILDING**

Flensburg, December 2016

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Report is the main output of a project executed by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in cooperation with the European Academy Bolzano/Bozen (EURAC) and independent researcher Dr. Nina Bagdasarova. The project was developed at the request of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) in response to the priorities set by the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship. The project covered the period from March to December 2016, and preliminary results were presented at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting 10-11 November in Vienna while the final results were presented in a side event at the Ministerial Council 8-9 December in Hamburg. The research team would like to thank members of the HCNM office and OSCE missions for assisting it with dissemination of questionnaires, data collection and follow up as well as review of the Report. Any mistakes should be attributed to the research team, not the OSCE or HCNM staff.

### THE RESEARCH TEAM:

Prof. Dr. Tove H. Malloy, ECMI Director  
 Dr. Zora Popova, ECMI Senior Research Associate  
 Ms. Sonja Wolf, ECMI Project Assistant  
 Ms. Caitlin Boulter, ECMI Project Assistant  
 Prof. Dr. Jens Woelk, EURAC Senior Researcher  
 Dr. Carolin Zwilling, EURAC Senior Researcher  
 Dr. Greta Klotz, EURAC Senior Researcher  
 Dr. Alice Engl, EURAC Senior Researcher  
 Dr. Nina Bagdasarova, Independent Researcher

### TRANSLATION OF REPORT:

Ms. Viktoria Martovskaya, ECMI Project Assistant

### WITH THANKS TO:

Hanna Vasilevich, Mindaugas Kuklys, Tamari Bulia, Raul Cârstocea, Oana Buta, Trim Kabashi, Lazlo Bugyi, Björn Hess, Christina Prassa, Pietro Scartezzini, Zdravko Veljanov, Dilara Shayegan, Tereza Machovičová, Stefan Lukáč, Nataša Vuckovic and Marija Petkovic, as well as the OSCE Offices in Yerevan and Tajikistan, for their assistance with the translation of questionnaire materials.



Presented in cooperation with the European Academy  
 Bolzano/Bozen.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report has been compiled in support of the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship's focus on "the situation of national minorities in times of crisis, their positive contribution to social integration and their potential to build bridges in international relations." The Report presents 24 positive initiatives at bridge building taken throughout the OSCE area, including seven examples of legal instruments in cross-border regions and 17 examples of projects covering a number of themes identified in the political, cultural and socio-economic sectors. The examples were selected on the basis of three objective selection criteria:

- Involvement of more than one group of actors (public or private)
- Active involvement of a minority
- Visible intentions to bridge gaps/divides between minorities and majorities

The Report does not aim to compare the examples, nor does it offer comprehensive normative, sustainability or impact evaluation of the initiatives in their respective political settings; rather, the purpose is to discover, describe and present examples of positive cooperation among diverse actors aimed at overcoming cultural divides.

The underlying assumption of the research has been that bridge building exists across the OSCE area, but examples involving national minorities have not been visible in the current debates on social integration and international relations. While there is good knowledge about the legal and policy frameworks promoting national minority protection, there is little known evidence that members of national minorities participate in dialogue initiatives taken under such frameworks. This Report shows that even where legal and policy frameworks do not yet exist, initiatives are taken to overcome divides and to cooperate across divides for common goals. Bringing attention to the bridge building role of national minorities is not only useful for governments, civil society and national minority organizations alike, it is instrumental in combatting conflict and division within and between mainstream societies. By increasing the visibility of the positive initiatives of collaborations between public and private actors at several levels, this Report highlights the potentials for fostering intercultural dialogue and harmonious cooperation in diverse societies and among states.

The protection and inclusion of national minorities in all spheres of public life has been an integral part of the OSCE's human dimension work since the 1990 Ministerial Council in Copenhagen. The Council's Concluding Document as well as norms set out in the HCNM's various soft-law documents, such as the Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life, the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations and the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, governs the OSCE participating States' obligations with regard to national minorities. These documents also form part of an emerging *acquis* of norms within international organizations that aim to secure the rights and protection of minorities.

In this Report, bridge building is examined at three levels of cooperation, the macro, the meso and the micro levels. Macro level initiatives span across territorial borders, whereas

meso level initiatives exist within state boundaries. Micro level initiatives are found at the grass-root level and cover both cross-border initiatives and intra-state initiatives. The macro level represents the governance framework that enables initiatives to be taken at all levels. This includes legal recognition and frameworks of cross-border cooperation (CBC) (bilateral agreements and cross-border programmes), international public law instruments (Council of Europe and European Union), private law instruments (associations and Euro-regions), informal instruments and practices (networks) as well as kin-state relations. The meso level represents the vertical relationships within the state that emerge from formal as well as informal cooperation and dialogue. Formal relationships may include permanent and *ad hoc* institutions of dialogue, while informal relationships may involve networks formed to address specific and topical issues facing local communities. The micro level represents bottom-up initiatives and is thus the most diverse level in terms of relationships. Initiatives at the micro level include self-driven networks and innovators, who seek to foster change in the way society is addressing specific issues.

However, data collection showed that not all initiatives are clear-cut, as institutions and actors cooperating in initiatives are interconnected in the complex systems of national and international socio-political and economic relations. They intersect in the fields of politics, economy, education, media, social services, and culture and hence allow for thematic categorization in the context of the different fields and sectors. A total of 191 initiatives were examined, and 104 initiatives were identified as positive. They fall into the specific thematic fields of political participation, institutional infrastructure, economy (including tourism and environment), education, media, culture, intercultural communication, and health care and social services.

The 24 examples of positive initiatives discussed in this Report cover cooperation between or within 29 participating States of the OSCE. All examples have been identified on the basis of involving national minorities. The governance examples include multilateral initiatives involving five countries and their border regions, good neighbourly cooperation, legal entities of territorial groupings, economic cross-border cooperation, bilateral and trilateral environmental cooperation and bilateral cooperation in the areas of education and culture. The political participation examples cover advisory and consultative bodies as well as umbrella organisations representing minorities. The institutional infrastructure example promotes personal safety in a mixed community, while the economic examples promote equality and non-discrimination of national minorities in regional development as well as examples of entrepreneurship. The education examples promote the right to mother tongue education and culture in kin-state relations, while the intercultural dialogue examples promote cultural traditions and protection of cultural heritage. Finally, the health and social services examples develop projects that promote basic needs in mixed communities.

The Report concludes that it would appear that national minorities work in their home communities to help maintain not only cultural heritage and cultural traditions but also to improve infrastructure and basic services, the environment, and access to education. It argues, therefore, that peaceful and constructive cooperation across participating State borders is becoming an integral part of national minority activities, and therefore an important contribution to friendly and good-neighbourly relations and international peace.

The Report offers a number of recommendations to participating States in order to continue supporting this development. Among others, it encourages participating States:

- To take political action that enhances the visibility of national minorities in national, regional and local governance in order to stimulate a more positive image of national minorities and counter the view that national minorities are a risk factor to peaceful societies, by recognizing publicly that they promote peaceful dialogue, inclusion and social cohesion.
- To recognize that cooperation on the basis of kin-state/minority relations is, by and large, not a threat to national integrity and sovereignty; fostering positive contacts and cooperation at the international political level can be beneficial for all communities, and trans-frontier cooperation between local and regional authorities and minority communities can contribute to tolerance and prosperity, strengthen inter-state relations, and encourage dialogue on national minority issues.
- To create governance frameworks and cooperation infrastructure (CBC, bilateral, multilateral agreements), if not already in existence, and continue to update with new norms while ensuring inclusion of all minority groups in these cooperation schemes. Bridge building also requires establishing platforms of communication between national minorities and authorities while ensuring the inclusion of national minorities in policy-making through consultative mechanisms. This will promote trust and social cohesion among all actors while also securing peace and stability.



# Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	9
Opportunities for inclusive democratic processes .....	9
Conceptualizing “bridges” .....	11
Methodology .....	13
PART TWO: THE DYNAMICS OF BRIDGE BUILDING.....	17
Macro-level .....	17
Meso-level .....	19
Micro-level .....	20
PART THREE: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN BUILDING BRIDGES.....	21
Governance and key topics of cross-border cooperation .....	21
Political Participation.....	24
The Economy .....	28
Health and Social Services .....	30
Media .....	33
Education .....	34
Culture and Intercultural Dialogue .....	37
PART FOUR: CONCLUSIONS .....	42
Recommendations.....	43
SOURCES .....	45
ANNEX I.....	49



## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

The 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship developed its work programme under the headline Dialogue, Trust and Security, putting a strong focus on national minority issues. Addressing the Permanent Council on 2 July 2015, the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier emphasized that dialogue among people and civil society should be strengthened: “Minorities should be protected in modern States so that these States bring societies together rather than dividing them, and we absolutely must not permit minorities to be instrumentalised in conflicts.” On 21 September 2015, at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, the Special Representative of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the OSCE Chairmanship 2016, Gernot Erler, underlined in his speech the intention of the German chairmanship to highlight the capabilities of national minorities as bridge builders and agents of reconciliation between participating States and within States. Subsequently, the Chairmanship’s priorities for the Human Dimension specifically stressed the need to address “the situation of minorities in times of crisis, their positive contribution to social integration and their potential to build bridges in international relations.”

This Report examines the capabilities of diverse national minority groups (broadly defined along national, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or cultural lines) to participate in bridge building and reconciliation initiatives between states and within states, and provides OSCE participating States with recommendations based on positive examples of national minorities and their institutions working productively in collaboration with national and local authorities.

### Opportunities for inclusive democratic processes

With the adoption of the Concluding Document of the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension in 1990 in Copenhagen, Europe took its first step towards recognizing the importance of national minorities as equal members of society. The participating states declared that respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is part of universally recognized human rights and an essential factor for peace, justice, stability and democracy. They agreed to adopt, where necessary, special measures for the purpose of ensuring full equality between persons belonging to national minorities and other citizens in the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and they recognized the particular importance of increasing constructive cooperation among themselves on questions relating to national minorities. Such cooperation should seek to promote mutual understanding and confidence, friendly and good-neighbourly relations, international peace, security and justice. Participating states would promote a climate of mutual respect, understanding, cooperation and solidarity among all persons living on their territories, without distinction as to ethnic or national origin or religion. These goals were repeated again in the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies issued in 2012 by the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), which highlight the need to communicate and interact across ethnic divides.

In the decades since the Copenhagen Conference, national minorities have become an integral part of society in many countries, and a good number contribute positively to the democratic structures that form the pillars of modern societies. They are increasingly seen contributing to international, national and local fora addressing societal issues and development. From the improvement of local infrastructure to the coping with global challenges, national minorities have become partners with both public and private actors working for the improvement of democracy and social integration. However, they often remain very invisible in these processes; few governance structures and programmes are designed specifically with national minorities in mind. Consequently, the image of national minorities-as-a-risk-factor has usually stayed at the forefront of the perception of inter-ethnic relations; national minorities are often viewed through a security prism when in reality they participate in programmes aimed at peaceful exchanges that work to improve society for all.

In some regions, the role of national minorities in promoting and creating links across ethnic and cultural divides has been acknowledged. By drawing on their intercultural knowledge and social capital, members of national minorities have initiated cooperation across state borders as well as within communities where several groups live side by side. Being bilingual and conversant in several cultures, minority actors can identify issues and areas where joint action across borders or cultural divides will benefit the whole of society. In such cases, they have been referred to as “bridge builders” and even innovators. The concept of bridge building thus takes its point of departure from the actions that individuals and groups, members of minorities as well as majorities, take when looking for opportunities to improve their society either through formal or informal institutions or networks. These opportunities often lie in the variety of connections between diverse communities and states, which can be built upon to promote peace, security and economic development in diverse societies both within and between states. National minority communities often have an array of such connections available through their knowledge and understanding of two or more societies and their corresponding cultures, languages, and other characteristics. They tend to make use of these connections to open up paths to cooperation, dialogue, and peace-building, thus building bridges between communities and states.

Unfortunately, the participation and contributions of national minorities to such governance networks have not been catalogued and studied comprehensively. Examining structures and programmes requires exploring policies, mechanisms and institutions as well as grass-roots initiatives. It requires large-scale surveys, participatory data gathering and analyses of projects as well as fact checking and comparison. Most importantly, it requires well-framed indicators and benchmarks, which have not been developed so far. In addition, numerous challenges exist in the area of minority studies, including matters of how to define a minority, data collection while respecting the right to self-identification, ethical data handling, and appropriate models for comparison, among others. For these reasons, this Report is not an exhaustive overview of national minorities and bridge building, nor is it a comprehensive analysis of the impact of bridge building initiatives. The Report merely seeks to inform and provide a better understanding of the, heretofore, invisible roles of national

minorities in governance networks, in the hope that it will contribute to making national minorities more visible as actors and participants in modern democratic processes.

## Conceptualizing “bridges”

This section outlines the methods used to delineate the geographic and thematic scope of the research and to gather data for the study. It discusses the examination of CBC as a facet of bridge-building, and explains the questionnaires used to identify case studies in kin-state, diaspora, intra-state and regional/international cooperation. Although a variety of approaches were applied, all were focused on answering the guiding questions of the study:

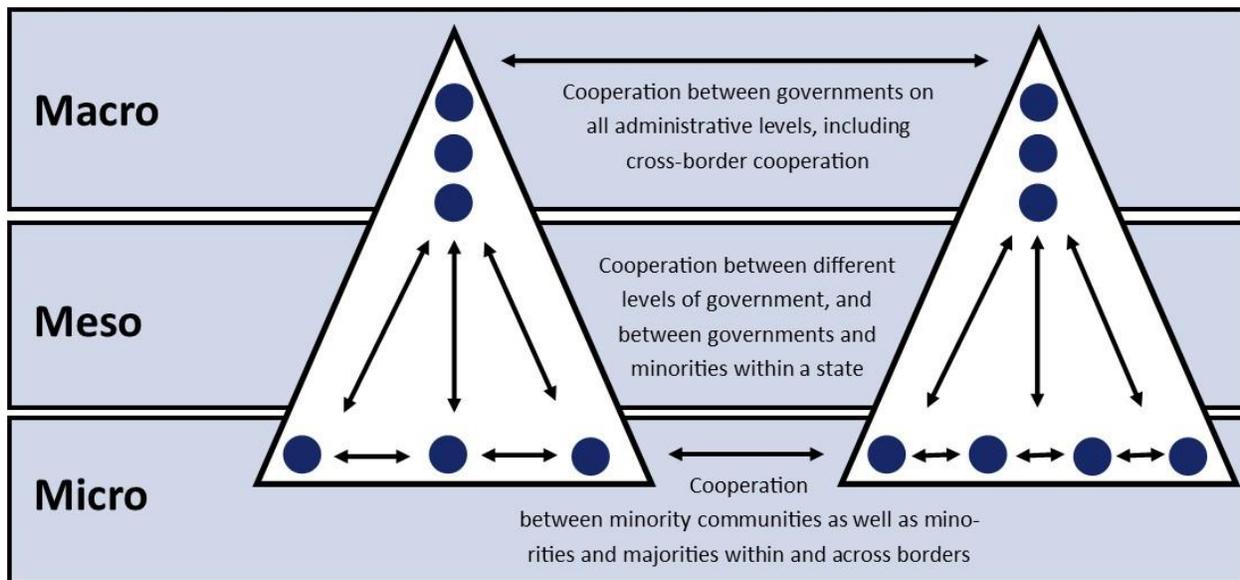
- To what extent do relations between governments and national minorities create opportunities to build bridges between and within states to promote peace, security and economic development?
- What experiences exist on the governmental and non-governmental level on initiatives where minority-majority relations had/have a bridge building function?
- Which norms and policies have been adopted and which actions have followed?

In other words, the aim was to ascertain whether national minorities can contribute to the cohesion of diverse societies and hence to sustainable peace and development in Europe by playing a positive role in connecting governments, societies and people across borders. Moreover, if there are positive initiatives and processes, how might these be supported so that their impact becomes significant, maximized and multiplied, i.e. are there local mechanisms, initiatives and processes that can inspire the development of new regional, national or transnational policy models?

Three “bridges” have been identified in the search for examples of the positive role that national minorities can play in the processes of societal integration and international cooperation:

- Large-scale bridges (**MACRO level**) across borders both in terms of legal instruments and activities between national and/or regional governments, between public institutions from two or more states, and between kin-states and kin-minorities (since such cooperation cannot function efficiently without the consent of the host-state)
- Bridges within states (**MESO level**): between national and local governments and between governments and citizens, and
- Bridges at grass-roots level (**MICRO level**): between people both within and across states

Figure 1 below indicates the various dimensions of bridge building cooperation.



**Figure 1:** Dimensions of bridge building

It is important to note that while this framework can be expressed in relatively simplistic terms, actual cases fit into this structure in complex ways, and may reflect aspects of more than one level. The bridges have a horizontal (peer-to-peer) and a vertical (between actors of differing status) aspect at all three levels. In contrast to the macro and micro level bridges however, where some of the initiatives can be categorized as cross-border cooperation, the meso level has no international dimension. This is due to the fact that when the institutional/political actors are bridges across the borders, a formal consent of the state is always required. Hence this (sometimes silent) support at international level qualifies such a bridge as a macro one.

All types of bridges are interconnected in the complex systems of national and international socio-political and economic relations. They intersect in the fields of politics, economy, education, media, social services, and culture and hence allow for thematic categorization in the context of the different fields and sectors.

Adopting a structural approach according to these fields enables not only the outlining of the scope and key agents of bridge-building activities, but also the identification of the structural challenges that need to be addressed and the potential measures that can support processes and foster positive developments. Cultural differences in practices and traditions, historical backgrounds, and specific socio-political arrangements (e.g. free movement within the EU) are other crucial aspects that were taken into consideration when seeking positive examples of bridge-building initiatives involving national minorities.

Acknowledging the geopolitical dimensions of cultural diversity, five regions were outlined initially purely for the purposes of systematisation of data although data collection was not possible in all OSCE participating States:

- **Balkans** – covering Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia (due to the recent accession, the examples from before 2015 have been considered as examples from the Balkans),

Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Kosovo\*, Serbia and Turkey (in the examples of interaction with the Balkan countries)

- **Caucasus** – covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia (and Turkey in the case of examples of interaction with the Caucasus countries)
- **Central Asia** – covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan
- **Eastern Europe** – covering Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation
- **Western Europe** – covering the EU member states, Norway, and Switzerland

## Methodology

The methodology of the project involved a two-pronged approach to the investigation of bridge-building – the examination of governance and cross-border cooperation frameworks that facilitate minority involvement in bridge-building, and an exploratory study of bridge-building initiatives implemented either by or with a particular focus on minorities.

### Mapping governance frameworks

To gather the data for analysis of governance frameworks and instruments for cross-border cooperation, 29 bilateral and six multilateral regions were examined, covering 26 countries in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Western Europe. Each region was examined in order to identify legal instruments, associations, informal instruments and practices, and state-diaspora or kin-state relations that allow for or support bridge-building activities. Subsequently, a mapping of the existing legal and policy framework was carried out with regard to CBC. Legal documents (constitutions, laws), scientific literature (monographs, collected works, articles in journals) and online resources were used. The mapping provided an overview of what kind of cross-border instruments, mechanisms and initiatives are applied in border regions. Furthermore, it showed which countries have a well-developed legal framework and where this should be completed and updated in order to make full use of the potential offered by cross-border cooperation.

The selection of relevant instruments, some of which are presented in Part Three of this Report, was based on two criteria:

- Border regions within OSCE participating States, and
- Border regions with a significant number of minority groups as part of the local population.

Based on the forms of legal and informal instruments for cooperation, the relevant instruments were first systematised under the following five main categories and ten sub-categories:

1. **Legal recognition** and framework of cross-border cooperation
  - a. Bilateral agreements

---

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

- b. Domestic recognition, e.g. external powers of sub-state entities
- c. EU neighbourhood policy programmes to promote cross-border cooperation

## 2. **Public law instruments**

- a. Euro-regional Cooperation Groupings of the 3rd Protocol of Madrid Convention
- b. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)
- c. INTERREG V Area

## 3. **Associations** and Euro-regions (low degree of formalisation, private law)

## 4. **Informal instruments** and practices

- a. Soft law procedures, e.g. coordination meetings and common offices
- b. Grass-roots network
- c. Programmes and projects (e.g. macro-regional strategies, INTERREG)
- d. Other

## 5. **Other relations** based on state-diaspora/kin state cooperation

### Collecting data on bridge building initiatives

The invisibility of national minorities in peace building initiatives is due primarily to the fact that raw data and information about their activities and involvement is scarce and largely missing throughout the OSCE area. Thus, to gather the data for analysing project and institution-based instances of bridge-building within and across countries, questionnaires were distributed to national and local authorities dealing with national minority governance as well as to minority and civil society organisations focusing on minority issues, cultural cooperation as well as regional development. Two questionnaires were developed – one directed at national and local authorities, and one for minority and civil society organisations. Each questionnaire contained nine questions, covering eight fields of cross-border cooperation: intercultural communication, social services, education, media, culture, economy (including trade, tourism and employment), institutional infrastructure, and political participation. Additionally, the questionnaire for national minority and civil society organisations contained a question on cooperation with local authorities and/or across borders in other fields and a question inviting the respondents to share examples of cooperation projects or initiatives of which they were particularly proud. The questionnaire for national and local authorities asked specifically for instances of particularly successful cooperation on projects or initiatives involving minority communities in their municipality or region. In parallel to the participatory data gathering through surveys, fieldwork research was performed in several regions.

The questionnaire distribution was initially focused on the same regions identified in the mapping of governance frameworks, however it was expanded with the assistance of partners and associates in a number of locations, such as field offices and various research networks. As the recipients of the questionnaires were also encouraged to further distribute the questionnaires to other potential respondents. As such, the coverage of the countries

within the five regions outlined in the scope of this project is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, and instead represents an initial, exploratory investigation.

From the number of completed and returned questionnaires (77 replies), 51 contained relevant information, which was further processed. The initial examination of the responses, along with the fieldwork reports, resulted in identifying a total of 191 initiatives. They were organised in several categories: by region, by theme, and their intersection - by theme in each of the five regions. Table 1 below presents the total number of completed questionnaires from the five regions, the overall number of initiatives identified, and the distribution of the reported cases by region and by thematic field. It should be noted that 35 of the initiatives involve countries and minorities that belong to two or more of the five regions, and, therefore, the total number of initiatives does not correspond to the numbers in this table.

**Table 1: Questionnaires received**

Field/Region	BLK	CA	CCS	EE	WE
Number of completed questionnaires received	22	24	1	3	27
Total number of reported projects per region	54	15	10	22	125
Overall number of reported initiatives	<b>191</b>				

The replies have been analysed under the thematic categories of political participation, institutional infrastructure, economy (including tourism and environment), education, media, culture, intercultural communication, and health care and social services. Table 2 below shows the distribution of projects per region and per thematic field. In 25 of the cases, the project objectives and activities allow classification in more than one category. The fact that so many initiatives fall into multiple categories of region, theme and level accounts for the difference between the total number of cases and the totals in the tables.

**Table 2: Initiatives by theme**

DISTRIBUTION OF INITIATIVES PER THEMATIC FIELD						Total
Field/Region	BLK	CA	CCS	EE	WE	191
Political Participation	4	0	1	2	16	23
Institutions	6	5	0	4	12	27
Economy, Tourism, Environment	5	1	3	1	10	20
Education	18	3	2	6	32	60
Media	2	2	0	1	6	11
Culture	10	2	2	8	16	38
Intercultural Dialogue	16	2	3	5	39	65
Health and Social Services	5	2	0	2	8	17

An interim analysis resulted in outlining 104 initiatives that can be considered positive examples of bridge-building initiatives. In order to be selected, the examples had to fulfil three criteria:

- The initiative involves more than one group (i.e., it does not simply benefit one minority or community)

- The initiative includes the active involvement of a minority in its initiation or implementation, or is implemented as a direct result of the minority’s presence or needs
- The initiative bridges a border, obstacle or gap in some way, by bringing communities together or fostering communication and cooperation between minorities, majorities and authorities.

Applying the developed typology of “bridges” to the 104 positive examples, it was revealed that 14 initiatives operate at the macro level, 37 at the meso level, and 54 at the micro level, and one can be addressed to more than one level. There are also six initiatives that fall into more than one region and four that fall into more than one theme, which again accounts for the difference between the total number of initiatives and Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Positive initiatives by region, level and theme**

Field/Region	BLK			CA			CCS			EE			WE		
Level	MC	MS	MI	MC	MS	MI	MC	MS	MI	MC	MS	MI	MC	MS	MI
Political Participation	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	8	1
Institutions	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	2
Economy, Tourism, Environment	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	3	1	-	1	2	1	5
Education	1	4	2	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	3	-	4
Media	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1
Culture	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	1	5	1	2	7
Intercultural Dialogue	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	3	3
Health and Social Services	-	-	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-
<b>Total per level</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Total per region</b>	<b>25</b>			<b>12</b>			<b>10</b>			<b>16</b>			<b>47</b>		

Although the list of positive initiatives is not exhaustive, examples that can serve as models for the bridge-building role of minorities were identified at all three levels of “bridges.” A selection of these cases was then made on the basis of ensuring a variety of regions and themes, and in particular cases in which there was sufficient information available to present a more detailed description of the activities, goals and – in some cases – outcomes of these initiatives. Particular attention was paid to examples in regions where there has been a notable lack of visibility of minority issues, or where there are particularly difficult divides to overcome. Cases were also selected with the aim of illustrating the diverse forms and scope that such bridge-building initiatives can take. This selection of more detailed case studies is presented in Part Three of this Report.

## PART TWO: THE DYNAMICS OF BRIDGE BUILDING

Bridge building activities and actions do not occur in a vacuum. Legal and institutional frameworks and programmes must be in place to facilitate interaction between actors within societies and across state borders. In Europe, an *acquis* of legally binding standards and policy promoting norms that aim to secure the rights and protection of national minorities has emerged since the Copenhagen CSCE Conference in 1990. International organisations, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE, have taken the lead in setting the standards and norms respectively, while national governments have worked to implement these. At the same time, Europeanization policies aimed at territorial cohesion within the Council of Europe and the EU have contributed to the opening of state borders and the promotion of peaceful inter-state relations. The convergence of the minority rights regime and cohesion policies has created a space where persons belonging to national minorities are more likely to become empowered to participate in politics and public affairs. If empowered through special rights and good governance schemes, they may seize opportunities to identify policies, mechanisms, institutions and actions, which can transform potential paths for cooperative action into reliable, robust bridges.

However, the scope of opportunities for national minorities is not clearly defined, nor it is easily identifiable. It is thus necessary to study the policy frames within which national minorities act and become active. The perspective offered by the bridge building approach allows for a closer look at the scope of opportunities and to identify policies, mechanisms, institutions and actions, which can transform potential paths for cooperative action. The responsibility for bridge building actions is thus shared between state authorities and national minorities, with governments carrying the duty to ensure good frameworks for public and private actions, and national minorities empowered to make use of the opportunities offered through such frameworks.

Applying the methodology described in Part One, this Part discusses the dynamics of bridge building at the three levels of cooperation: macro, meso and micro.

### Macro-level

As introduced earlier, macro-level bridges were identified in terms of various forms of cooperation between two or more states, including not only particular activities, but also legal instruments that provide the framework for and enable such a cooperation to occur and develop. The fact that a CBC between local and/or regional governments and institutions can be established only with the consent of national authorities has been accepted as a marker that the bridges should be regarded as macro-level, even if there is no direct state-level involvement. The two types of macro bridges, namely the legal instruments on one hand, and the specific initiatives on the other, are rather different and do not allow a comparative analysis. Therefore, in the following sections the Report addresses the two sub-types separately and presents relevant examples.

The construction of a cross-border space depends on multiple dynamics that can be grouped in four dimensions:

1. A structural dimension that relates to spatial characteristics, such as urbanization, economic activities and social composition;
2. A functional dimension which includes any kinds of cross-border flows, related for example to economic activity, leisure, tourism and also communication networks;
3. An institutional dimension that highlights the networking of actors and the institutionalization of cross-border cooperation;
4. An ideational dimension that touches on elements that are linked to individual and collective representations, such as the sense of belonging to a cross-border living area, identifying with common memories, images and symbols as well as other perceptions of actors, or people on the cross-border integration issue.

The Council of Europe's 1980 Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation marks a paradigm recognizing CBC (by sub-national entities) not only as legitimate and tolerated, but as positive and desirable. Although national minorities very often live in border regions, their active involvement in cross-border activities cannot be taken for granted due to real or perceived risks for national security and the integrity of borders, especially if this cooperation involves entities of the kin-state of the respective minority.

The bilateral, multilateral and other forms of CBC agreements between states or regional governments are among the most evident examples for the first sub-type of macro level bridges between states. Although the dividing line is often a state border, CBC activities transcend economic, social, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. Connecting areas and/or actors that belong to different political and legal systems, CBC is a complex process that can face a number of challenges but that can also transform a border region into a special area of social, cultural, economic and political fluxes and exchanges. The Gruber-Degasperi-Agreement (1946) between Austria and Italy and the Bonn-Copenhagen Declaration (1955) for the Danish-German border area are important examples of bilateral agreements between States which make reference to cross-border contacts and relations with regard to minority populations in border areas; since the 1990s, they have been followed by bilateral agreements in Central and Eastern Europe addressing the cross-border dimension of cultural, linguistic and economic relations. Nowadays, two European instruments provide an alternative for the linking and bridging of different domestic spheres - the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) and the Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (ECG).

Often, CBC involving national minorities takes the form of a cooperation of minority representatives or organizations with entities or organizations of the respective kin-state, but minorities may also become involved in CBC activities between majorities. The latter form is less frequent but a promising and interesting facet of CBC, opening the potential for fully-fledged cross-border integration of the overall border region and its population. However, the participation of minorities and their representatives in such territorial cooperation needs to be assured, e.g. through forms of 'inclusive decentralization'. The territorial approach and the potential it offers for the 'indirect' empowerment of minorities as well as for the dialogue on minority issues is highlighted by Article 16 of the OSCE HCNM Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations (2008), which acknowledge that transfrontier

cooperation between local and regional authorities and minority self-governments can contribute to tolerance and prosperity, strengthen inter-state relations and encourage dialogue on minority issues.

As far as the second sub-type is concerned, the macro bridges have been defined as any cross-border activity that involves at least one actor representing a national, regional or local public authority or institution. To classify the identified positive cases, a thematic approach based on the field in which the particular initiative develops has been adopted.

## Meso-level

The meso-level bridges in this study refer to the vertical interactions that are occurring between national, regional and local institutions within a state or between the respective public institutions/authorities and the minority communities and civil society. The extent to which such cooperation is two-way varies from state to state depending on the degree of decentralisation of the state. As noted above, this level has no international dimension. While meso-level bridges emerge only within a state, they are nevertheless seen as an element of the democratic governance ideals promoted by international organisations, such as the OSCE, Council of Europe, and the European Union, aimed at ensuring active cooperation between the various stakeholders within a country and hence contributing to internal peace and stability.

At this level, the convergence of the *acquis* on minority rights protection and policies on territorial cohesion interact dynamically to create spaces for politics where initiatives for bridge building activities can emanate both from authorities and from national minority actors. Public and private actors may be driven by common motives to do with the development of society, democracy and good neighbourly relations to the benefit of the whole of the population. Motives may be socio-economic or cultural and at times ideological regarding the future of a region or a homeland. Networks of public/private governance within a state are allowed to emerge if good policy frameworks are in place.

The closeness of local authorities, combined with the degree to which they are embedded in the administrative structure of the state, equip them in an ideal way to be responsive and accountable partners in initiatives that aim to build bridges between authorities and minority communities as well as between institutions, not necessarily concerned with minority issues. Such initiatives feed into the democratic profile of the state by empowering civil society and minority communities and enabling community participation. The meso bridges that national minorities and public authorities establish are the key infrastructure of such governance networks and constitute pathways to overcoming cleavages and divides. To outline the wide spectrum of activities at the meso level, good practice examples will focus on various policy areas (education, media, institutional cooperation, tourism, the economy and more) highlighting concrete bridge building initiatives that have resulted from the successful networking and cooperation between national minorities and local, regional or national authorities.

## Micro-level

Building bridges at all levels between governments and societies are preconditions for preventing conflicts and ensuring possibilities for dialogue and cooperation. Unfortunately, history has shown that notwithstanding political agreements, hatred, mistrust and acts of violent aggression against the 'Other' persist years after the official end of conflicts. Ensuring sustainable peace and development requires trust in society, tolerance and mutual understanding between people and between the different communities within the state and across borders. The building of trust often starts at the micro-level, and the freedom of association to engage in constructive cooperation is a necessary prerequisite for micro-level action. For this reason, building bridges at the grass-roots level should be enabled and supported by states, but it cannot occur in the absence of civic activism and without focused engagement of stakeholders from the public and private sectors. Civil society, in the broadest sense, including non-governmental organizations, special interest groups and academia, contributes to the creation of mutually benefitting relationships between communities within and across states and hence to the development of multiple level social capital.

Targeted development of social capital through the support of people-to-people or community-to-community interactions is a strategic investment in the process of ensuring peace and stability. Social capital is a change-generating mechanism that can bridge and mitigate exclusive relations, complement provisions of basic protection or safety nets, bring about greater safety, social inclusion, and economic participation, or substitute for state and market failures. Social capital has the capacity to generate benefits and facilitate collective action. Trust, networks, and norms of reciprocity play an essential role in forming people's opportunities and choices, and hence influence their behaviour and development.

Acknowledging that civil society actors play an important role by providing input on integration policies based on grass-roots experience, the Ljubljana Guidelines point out among other that private sector actors of various fields should be encouraged to realize their potential contribution by devising and delivering integration policies alone and in partnership with other actors. Facilitating opportunities for effective participation of all groups and communities in public affairs and all the aspects of social, economic and cultural life is, therefore, an essential precondition for enabling people to bridge diversities and to work jointly towards a better future.

The section on micro-level examples will therefore look at the different bridges that minorities have established throughout the OSCE participating States connecting various stakeholders in a number of fields, and contributing not only to processes of societal integration and cohesion, but also to cross-border and regional stability and cooperation.

## PART THREE: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN BUILDING BRIDGES

More than 20 years after the end of the armed ethnic violence in Europe, significant progress has been achieved both at the political and grass-roots levels thanks to the targeted protection and promotion of minority rights and intercultural cooperation. The *acquis*, which emerged in the 1990s, consists of a number of key documents and newly established institutions that have laid a solid base for the protection of national minorities and their rights. In 1992, alongside the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE) established the position of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). In the following years, the Council of Europe 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), and the HCNM's instruments such as the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations, the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies, and the Hague Recommendations on Education contributed to the formation of the *acquis*.

Despite the fact that respect for diversity and tolerance have been recognized as key European values and that many states have ratified and implemented the provisions of the FCNM, mistrust of and prejudices against the 'Other' are still dividing societies, sometimes leading to subtle discrimination and violations of rights, and sometimes to acts of aggression, racism, xenophobia or open hate-speech. Therefore, to foster the process of intercultural dialogue and cooperation, of tolerance and understanding, and of social cohesion, it is crucial that the positive aspects of diversity become visible and recognized. Combatting hatred and prejudices are challenges that are set before all societies and governments that want to ensure a sustainable peace within and across states. However, reducing negative stereotypes requires solid arguments to ensure the basis for rebuilding trust among and across communities, societies and governments.

This Part introduces the core findings of the study, selected positive examples drawn from the five regions of the study, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern and Western Europe. The first examples examine governance and cross border examples, as outlined in Part One. Following that are examples of positive initiatives, presented according to the thematic categories outlined in the methodology. The presented examples are but a short selection of cases and are not to be understood as an exhaustive list. Annex I offers a long-list of examples identified from the questionnaires.

### Governance and key topics of cross-border cooperation

Since the 1990s and following the experience of Western European countries (e.g. the Gruber-DeGasperi Agreement or the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations), bilateral/multilateral agreements have also been reached in Eastern Europe addressing the cross-border dimension of cultural, linguistic and economic relations of minority groups. One example is the Convention between Hungary and Croatia on the Protection of the Hungarian Minority in the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Minority in the Republic of Hungary (signed in

1995). This agreement provides for a mixed Hungarian-Croatian Committee at the governmental level that meets once a year and is in charge of minority related issues. Another example is the Polish-Lithuanian Parliamentary Assembly that includes the representatives of minority organizations, the Polish-Lithuanian Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Minority Issues and the Polish-Lithuanian Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Cross-border Cooperation, which illustrates the inter-state relations on minority issues in this geographical region.

Like all inter-state cooperation efforts, specific CBC, whether legally binding or less formal, is subject to the general political climate of both regional and bilateral relations at any given time. The initiatives presented in this section are, therefore, not analysed on the basis of sustainable outcomes but rather on the ability to keep dialogue open between states and parties involved in the cooperation initiatives. Although this dialogue is occasionally intermittent, the initiatives selected demonstrate lasting commitment to dialogue. Six positive initiatives are presented below according to character of instrument and/or thematic description.

### Private law instruments (Hungary-Poland-Romania-Ukraine-Slovakia)

Bridge level: MACRO

CBC activities are very often realized in the form of initiatives under private law. A widespread example is the so-called Euro-regions, which are often organized as associations under private law. The Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euro-region (Hungary-Romania) is characterized by the presence of several minority groups, besides Hungarians and Romanians, such as Roma, Ukrainians, Slovaks and Jews. The territories concerned are also included in the Carpathian Euro-region, a multilateral cooperation between HU/PL/RO/UA/SK that is considered as having been successful in preventing conflicts based on ethnicity. It contributed to decreased mistrust between national and ethnic groups and fewer linguistic problems and, as a consequence, helped the reduction of inter-ethnic distance and strengthened ethnic tolerance. With their specific language skills and cultural backgrounds, minorities can act as bridge builders in the tourism sector, which has been selected as one of the priorities to be addressed by both Euro-regions.

### Legal recognition (Hungary-Slovakia)

Bridge level: MACRO

The Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations and Friendly Cooperation between the Republic of Hungary and the Slovak Republic demonstrates the influence of such bilateral treaties. This Treaty does not aim to simply implement the obligation to sign such treaties according to the Madrid Framework Convention, but rather wants to guarantee the protection of minority groups and recognize the State borders. Therefore, this Treaty defines the principles of inter-state relations and the potential content of cross-border collaboration, without concrete regulations for legal instruments or institutionalized forms of CBC on a regional or local level. However, Article 7(2) states that conditions for cooperation in border regions shall be created both at a regional and local level. Hungarian and Slovak minorities

are explicitly referred to in Article 15 and are granted several rights. The process of implementation was not without its problems, however; Slovakia has been criticized for not complying with measures on minority rights, especially in the aftermath of the adoption of the new controversial state language law in 2009. A Joint Commission for the Issues of Minorities acts as supervisory body and monitors compliance with the Treaty.

### Public law instruments (Hungary-Romania, Italy-Slovenia)

Bridge level: MACRO

The legal instrument of an EGTC has often been chosen as a tool for reconciliation, and in general for successful regional development in sensitive border areas, allowing a better implementation of common cross-border Euro-regional strategies for economic development as well as – often as a consequence and hand-in-hand with prosperity – for enhancing a common Euro-regional citizenship. A high number of EGTCs is located along all Hungarian borders, mainly focusing on the protection of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries. In 2014, the Gate to Europe EGTC at the border between Hungary and Romania was awarded with the prize “Building Europe across Borders” which is attributed by the EU’s Committee of the Region to EGTCs generating growth and jobs. The EGTC in question obtained the award for its project “Together without borders”, which provided young entrepreneurs with new skills, developed an agricultural organization (Agricultural Cluster) to solve problems of land fragmentation, and developed new brands in the area. The Gate to Europe EGTC was registered in 2012 between 20 local authorities from Hungary and 16 from Romania, aiming at establishing a platform allowing mayors to work together on CBC programs. Another important example is the EGTC Go (registered in 2011) at the crossroads between several different Germanic, Slav and Italian cultures, which aims at reunifying the towns of Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica in Slovenia. One of its cooperation objectives is to reinforce social cohesion.

### Economy (Poland-Lithuania, Hungary-Slovakia)

Bridge level: MACRO

International infrastructure projects often cross the state border and, as a secondary step, foster the economic situation of the entire local population, including those parts belonging to minority groups on both sides of the border. One interesting initiative is the “Rail Baltica Project”, which is implemented by the Baltic States, allowing for a better connection between Finland, the Baltic States, Poland and Western Europe by harmonizing the gauge. There is also “Gas Interconnection Poland-Lithuania - GIPL” that builds an electric power bridge between Poland and Lithuania to end the isolation of the Baltic States from the power grid of the rest of Europe.

The reconstruction of the Maria-Valeria Danube Bridge in 2001, connecting the minority inhabited cities of Esztergom in Hungary and Štúrovo in Slovakia, is a bridge-building infrastructure project in both a literal and figurative sense. This successful cross-border initiative formed one of the first steps towards the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Ister-Granum (registered in 2008 as the second EGTC in the EU), and

today it prominently benefits the local area in the fields of industry, tourism, labour market, health care, energy policy, public transport, communication and civil society.

## Environment (Croatia-Hungary, Germany, Czech Republic, Albania-FYROM-Greece)

Bridge level: MACRO

The environment is usually a common concern for populations on both sides of a given state border, since environmental problems do not stop at state borders. Close ethnic and intensive socio-economic relations have helped to further amplify the already existing cooperation at the Croatian-Hungarian border along the river Mura. This multi-ethnic area has seen a qualitative transformation from a previously alienated border area to a complex and institutionalized cooperation, which has taken the form of an EGTC since 2015. For nearly 20 years, the Regional Development Association of Nationalities Along the Mura River has implemented several successful projects with positive results on minority, cultural and educational interactions, but without effective economic results. The recently founded EGTC aims at the implementation of environmentally sustainable projects and eco-tourism.

Other examples of CBC in the field of protection of the environment in border areas are cross border national parks, like the Saxon Switzerland National Park (Germany) and Bohemian Switzerland National Park (Czech Republic) or the trans-boundary Prespa Park which links Albanian, FYROM and Greek nature reserves along the one-time Iron Curtain. In these cases, minority groups participate from a cultural and economic point of view and enhance regional development.

## Education (Poland-Lithuania, Poland-Czech Republic)

Bridge level: MACRO

With regard to services, an important question is how to provide education for minority groups residing in the border area. Poland and Lithuania have developed extensive collaboration not only as CBC on a regional level but also on a state level. A high number of initiatives related to schools and universities for the respective minority groups as well as the strong commitment of both national governments and local self-government institutions demonstrate the positive impact on local minorities. Furthermore, the Polish-Czech border region shows intensive collaboration in organizing numerous educational projects and cultural events. The Euro-region Silesia has implemented projects such as a cross-border sport academy or the cultural initiative for education and science "Together/United for the border region" by a Polish Business School and the Polish Cultural and Educational Union in the Czech Republic.

## Political Participation

Dialogue through political participation in democratic processes should arguably be a primary goal in any democratic society and thus constitutes a potential sustainable method of building bridges between national minorities and majorities. Moreover, the right to

political participation is enshrined in international public law, such as Article 15 of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), and is promoted through international soft law instruments, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the OSCE Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life.

In practice, political participation requires special institutions safeguarding the rights of national minorities. Examples of strong political participation might be direct participation in coalition governing or power-sharing mechanisms, while weaker levels of participation involve numerous types of institutions promoting more or less inclusion of national minorities in the democratic and political processes of decision-making, such as reserved seats in legislatures, exemption from thresholds to enter electoral processes, advisory and consultative bodies/assemblies, and designated representatives tasked with keeping dialogue open and constructive.

Like inter-state relations, intra-state relations between governing elites and non-dominant minority groups experience ups-and-downs or on-and-off dialogue. Consultative bodies may be open to manipulation and neglect; in some cases, they may constitute mere symbolic accommodation. However, the extent to which a mechanism is permanent is highly relevant for the possibility to keep dialogue open no matter which government is in power, while the degree of inclusiveness determines its legitimacy even if reaching decisions and consensus can be challenging. Bodies involving only one national minority are more likely to come under pressure and be co-opted. Bodies that are both permanent and inclusive are, therefore, a likely indicator of sustainable dialogue and could be seen as a willingness to build bridges across divides in modern societies. It goes without saying that such bodies and all mechanisms designed to promote political participation should be closely monitored.

In this section, three examples of permanent and inclusive dialogue are described in detail. These represent the institutionalization of political participation. All three are permanent bodies and thus represent a degree of sustainability. Ascertaining their long-term impact has not been possible within the present study. Additional examples are referenced in Annex I.

## Minority Council (Germany)

Bridge level: MESO

The Minority Council is an advisory body, concerned with the issues of the four recognised minority communities of Germany: the Frisian group, the Sinti and Roma community, the Sorbian minority, and the Danish minority. The Council is the representative institution of the minorities with the German Federal Government and the Federal Parliament since 2005. The Council works to pool the communities' voices in common political claims and to coordinate relevant topics into common statements. It lobbies in particular for the consideration of the four national minorities in the German Basic Law, for an active regional policy that ensures the survival of the minorities in their homelands, confirmation and

stability of financial support through the federal government, and the promotion and protection of minority languages and cultures. The Council furthermore discusses and monitors the implementation of the FCNM and the ECRML, informs and participates in legal initiatives related to minority policy, and works for good communication between the minority communities. The main achievements of the Council include the installation of a working committee of the minorities with the Federal Parliament, the organisation of a conference on the ECRML languages in Germany (2014), and the support of the civic Minority Safepack Initiative (a set of international civic actions and legal acts to promote and to protect the autochthonous, national minorities and the regional or minority languages within the EU).

The Minority Council is a positive meso level example, building bridges not only between the four recognised minorities in a number of ways but also between the minorities and the federal authorities. First, it is a space for interaction between the four minority communities represented by their umbrella organisations, which themselves bridge the minority interests in the various sectors and spheres of life. Second, it is a platform for communication, exchange of ideas and opinions, and support for common initiatives and action. Thirdly, it is a mechanism that contributes to societal cohesion and a positive example of intercultural cooperation. Fourthly, it fosters civic activism and empowers the minorities (as a group and/or as different communities), facilitating their access to decision makers at a central level. The Council is a tool used by minorities and their civil society structures to take agency over issues concerning them and to make their voices heard where they have the most relevant and significant impact.

## Kazakhstan Assembly of Peoples (Kazakhstan)

Bridge type: MESO

Kazakhstan Assembly of Peoples (APK) is a special body of minorities' representatives within governmental structures. The Secretariat of APK is a separate department in the Presidential Administration. It was established 1995 by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev. APK is an umbrella organization for the minorities' cultural associations, experts, mediators and journalists working within the scope of minorities' rights and inter-ethnic relations. It consists of 33 ethno-cultural Associations and 16 territorial branches (Small Assemblies) in each province of Kazakhstan. The main goal of APK is to provide the opportunity for all groups to be represented within the political space and to have a platform to promote their interests and gain support. Political inclusion of this kind aims to provide the proper level of well-being for all citizens of the country and decrease the risk of interethnic conflicts. In order to reach its goals, APK conducts monitoring and research activity, and supports cultural and educational programs and media for minorities.

APK plays a significant role in the political life of the country. The Head of the Assembly is the President of Kazakhstan. APK Deputies elect 9 members to the Majilis (lower house of Parliament) of Kazakhstan. APK supervises the following structures:

- 88 schools where teaching is conducted entirely in Uzbek, Tajik, Uighur and Ukrainian languages.

- 108 schools with the languages of 22 ethnic groups of Kazakhstan as a separate subject.
- 195 specialized linguistic centres, where not only children but also adults can learn the languages of 30 ethnic groups.

Besides Kazakh and Russian theatres in all provinces, at the country level four national theatres – Uzbek, Uighur, Korean and German – operate through the support of APK.

In the information field there are:

- 35 ethnic newspapers and magazines, which are available in 11 different languages, and the six largest ethnic/national newspapers operate under government support.
- radio programs operating in 8 languages
- TV shows operating in 7 languages.

APK is a positive example because it builds bridges between all ethnic groups in Kazakhstan in different ways. Firstly, it is a major institution maintaining cultural diversity in the country at the level of policy development and practical implementation of various projects by state support. Secondly, by providing inclusive policy APK supports social cohesion and productive interactions between different minorities and the majority group. Thirdly, it is a mechanism of permanent political participation and effective representation of minorities' interests. And finally, it is a platform for groups' cooperation in the scope of education and cultural development.

### Council of National Minorities (Georgia)

Bridge type: MESO

The Council of National Minorities (CNM) is a collaboration of the different minority communities of Georgia and the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia, which is a main institution of Georgia monitoring the implementation of human rights, including the rights of national minorities. It was established in 2005 as a permanent body and involves 85 representatives of minority organisations. The Council's main function is to act as a platform for dialogue and consultation between national minorities and governmental agencies. It also aims at improving and supporting civil integration and the inclusion of national minorities; to involve representatives of national minorities in the on-going policy-formation processes; to draft recommendations on minority related issues; to respond and act if minority rights are violated and/or conflicts occur; to draft recommendations for the Public Defender of Georgia or any other officials for the purpose of national minority protection; and to support national minorities in the preservation of their cultural heritage. The CNM periodically conducts meetings with different government officials and cooperates with the Council on Tolerance and Civic Integration under the President of Georgia, the Office of the State Minister on Reintegration Issues, and other state agencies concerning national minority protection.

The CNM is a positive example on the meso level because it builds bridges between minorities and other relevant actors, including national and local institutions and authorities. It is a space for interaction between the different minority communities, as well as between the minority communities and public authorities. During the briefings and

meetings, governmental officials and the CNM minority representatives have the opportunity to openly discuss very specific challenges in peripheries and raise awareness about issues affecting them. The CNM meetings are usually reported on by the media and attract public attention, thus raising awareness about minority groups and their challenges within Georgia.

## The Economy

Development of local and regional communities is increasingly becoming a multi-actor sector, and national minorities are often involved due to their concern about the economic development of their local communities. Due to their bilingual and bi-cultural identities, members of national minorities monitor economic developments not only in their own community but also in their kin-state communities, and they may spot gaps or lack of policy making earlier than local authorities precisely because of their bi-cultural knowledge. Participation in local and regional development is part of the right to socio-economic participation, which is protected by the same international legal and soft law instruments that protect political participation. Unfortunately, this is an area where national minorities are almost entirely invisible, as their contributions are often subsumed into general monitoring of regional development programmes. They do not appear in programme descriptions as eligible for grants or participation, and unless the policy has included specific minority aspects, such as people-to-people dialogue, their participation is unlikely to be known; even people-to-people grant programmes rarely mention national minorities as target groups. Thus, the voluntary initiatives of members of national minorities to act bottom-up and to initiate cooperation with local authorities on common urgent matters is a likely indicator that inter-ethnic strife can be overcome and thus bridges may be built for future cooperation.

In this section, two examples of positive initiatives promoting socio-economic participation of members of national minorities are described. Both initiatives represent awareness raising activities about the rights of national minorities to participate equally in socio-economic life as well as capacity building among minority members to increase their potential for socio-economic participation. Additional examples are referenced in Annex I.

### **SIMPLE (Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Albania, Slovenia)**

Bridge level: MACRO

SIMPLE (Strengthening the Identity of Minority People Leads to Equality) was a project established in the Adriatic Region, aiming at promoting the region's socio-economic sustainable development by enhancing the social cohesion between majority and minority communities. Flexible and replicable governance models and services and targeted sensitization strategies, able to improve the life quality and the competitiveness and attractiveness of the territory, were employed to support this cohesion. The overall objective of the project was to elaborate joint strategies and approaches in the Adriatic countries for the promotion of a culture of equality and non-discrimination, as a basic value for the peaceful coexistence of all people residing in the region, without distinction as to race,

religion or ethnic origin. The project ran from March 2011 until February 2014 and included five countries in the Adriatic Sea Region: Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, and Slovenia. It was funded by the EU through the IPA Adriatic CBC Programme.

Project activities included trainings on different levels to raise awareness of cultural differences, conferences, national campaigns concerning diversity, the creation of a web platform, research Reports, the establishment of the Adriatic Permanent Observatory on Minority Communities, governance guidelines for minority and diversity issues, the establishment of a Multiethnic Economic Development Agency, guidelines concerning the establishment of an intercultural education support agency, the establishment of a Minority's Women Protection and Non Discrimination Agency, and many others.

SIMPLE is a positive example of bridge building on the meso level in several ways: it connected majority populations and minorities, as well as minorities in different countries, majority populations in different countries, and local and regional authorities working together across borders and with the minority populations. It included issues of a range of sectors, including economy, education, social services, and institutions, and approaches different dimensions of minority issues, including ethnicity and gender. By involving these various dimensions, sectors, and levels of minority issues, SIMPLE increased the visibility of minorities and promoted cooperation between minorities, minorities and majorities, and between authorities across borders. The project thus has had an impact on anti-discrimination, tolerance, and equal opportunity debates in the Adriatic Region. The establishment of institutions to carry on this work also means that it is sustainable and will likely have long-term effects on minority issues in the region.

### Indigee (Sweden, Finland, Russia, Norway)

Bridge type: MACRO

Two Indigee projects were conducted in the Barents Sea region, and included indigenous participants from Saami, Nenets, Veps and Komi communities in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Given that these are small minority communities, the number of beneficiaries was limited but nonetheless substantial in relative figures. The Indigee 1 project ran from 2010-2012, and the Indigee 2 project ran from 2012-2014. Initiated by the International Barents Secretariat, the Indigee projects sought to promote indigenous entrepreneurship in the Barents region by gathering young people together to develop business proposals and enterprises focusing on indigenous culture and traditions. The projects were based on the principles of strengthening regional development by means of contributing to economic development of the indigenous communities in these regions and provided opportunities for indigenous peoples to achieve financial independence through entrepreneurship.

Indigee was implemented by the International Barents Secretariat, the Saami Association of Sweden, the Norwegian Saami Association, the Saami Association of Finland, and the BEAC Working Group of Indigenous Peoples, along with several indigenous organisations in the Russian Barents region. Both projects were funded by the INTERREG IVA Nord programme, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Norrbotten County Council, the Saami Parliament of Norway, Region Västerbotten, Finnmark County Council, Troms County Council, Nordland

County Council, the Saami Parliament of Sweden and the Saami Council, with the Foreign Ministries of Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden also funding the Indigee 2 project.

The evaluation of the first phase of the project showed that 47% of participants had clearly increased their income/profits as a result of their participation in the Indigee project; all of the participants stated that they had increased their business competence; 45% had established an enterprise; 57% had started to sell a new product or service; 47% had launched a concrete cross-border business cooperation; 69% had set up concrete cooperation with another Indigee participant as a result of their participation in the project. The Indigee 2 project provided over 900 hours of one-on-one consulting delivered (on average, one hour per month per participant), with home assignments and business fairs, along with a business contest.

The Indigee projects are an important example of initiatives targeting both multiple minority groups within a region, and transnational minorities across borders. A focus on young entrepreneurs and fostering financial stability is beneficial to local economies in all four countries, and the projects' ability to facilitate cooperation between participants is a clear example of positive bridge building. Its bridge building aspect is multifaceted: it includes the involvement of all four foreign ministries from the participant countries, the involvement of federal governments and regional organisations with local councils and NGOs, and the cooperation between participants as well as the initiative taken by the minority groups themselves.

## Health and Social Services

Lack of services is an issue that often transcends cultural and ethnic boundaries. Although access to basic services is a universal human right, many governments are not able to deliver in all areas of service provision. In such cases, civil society organisations may have to step in to help governments deliver services. Innovative types of relationships, often based on public/private networks, may emerge. Some may take over the delivery of services, while others create the political spaces for improvement of policy making to address the perceived lack of specific services. Such initiatives may initially begin at the micro level but eventually become meso bridges of cooperation between authorities and civil society; they may also become macro level initiatives, if national governments get involved. National minorities have taken on such roles in a number of countries and have been agents of change in areas such as delivery of healthcare services and social services as well as public goods, such as water supply and community security and safety. Since delivery of services is of concern to all groups in societies where such is lacking, mobilizing around procuring new or better services will often rise above cleavages in diverse societies. Thus, bridges are built around common issues and the need to find common solutions to basic problems, such as delivery of services.

In this section, three positive examples of initiatives taken by national minorities to secure better services are described. The aim is not to indicate sustainability of initiatives but to demonstrate that when basic services are at stake, cultural and ethnic divides are often pushed to the background or even neglected entirely in the name of securing common, public

goods. Additional examples of cross-cultural efforts to procure social services in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies are referenced in Annex I.

## OTWM-DERYA (FYROM)

Bridge type: MICRO/MESO

The Organization of Turkish Women in FYROM (OTWM-DERYA) is a civil society, not-for-profit, multicultural organization established in Skopje in 1999. The members of the organization consist of about 500 volunteers of diverse religious and ethnic origins. DERYA'S mission is to defend human, minority, and women's rights, respect their voice, encourage their emancipation and enable integration in all social aspects as well as to provide education on various issues, such as medicine and health, gender, democracy, strengthening of civil society and conflict resolution. The organisation has so far implemented 31 projects, including:

- “Enhancing Employability of Women in Minority Communities through profiling/assessment, training programmes and job counselling”, a project financed by the European Commission and aiming at improving the employability of women from ethnic minorities in FYROM (i.e. Turks, Roma, Serbs and Bosnians, but also Macedonian and Albanian women).
- “Combat cancer, be a healthy woman”, a project funded by the Ministry of Healthcare in that offered free medical checks to all women from the different ethnic groups.
- Project to prevent early marriages – a CBC project implemented in cooperation with partners from Kosovo\*, which raises awareness against the early marriages of young girls from both of the countries. The project was implemented with the support of OXFAM.
- Transfer of knowledge to Moldova – the organization was invited to share experience to local NGOs.
- Successful cooperation with local administration, including the municipality of Čair, which involved implementations of projects financed by the municipality. The municipality has offered office premises to the organization to support their activities. The organisation has also cooperated with the municipality of Radoviš, where the Turkish community is of significant size.
- 2014-2016 Craft-festival for all ethnic groups organized by DERYA in Gölcük Municipality, Turkey; DERYA has also established close cooperation with the municipality of Keşan in Turkey.

The activities of the organisation are a positive example of the bridge building role of minorities not only at the micro level, but also at the meso level through their good cooperation with the local authorities, and at an international level through CBC with local authorities in Turkey. With the targeted support to minority women of various communities, DERYA promotes not only bridge building but also inclusion and social cohesion through

---

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

intercultural dialogue and gender equality. Through its CBC activities, the organisation fosters international civic cooperation on topics of common interest and of benefit to various communities.

### Cooperation for clean water (Kyrgyzstan)

Bridge type: MESO

The leaders of the Turkish community in Kyrgyzstan together with the Turkish Center of the Kyrgyz Assembly of People initiated fundraising in 2015 for a project to repair and reconstruct an out-dated and damaged water-supply system of several villages in Yurievka and neighbouring municipalities. They identified donors and helped to implement the project in cooperation with local authorities, and as a result this system was rebuilt and became operational in Yurievka, Kenesh and three other villages. The financing for the project (over 10.000 EUR) was received from TICA (the Turkish Governmental Agency – 7.500 EUR) and collected among Turkish Centre members (2.500 EUR). The local community contributed to the project by in-kind construction work, with about 150 local community members of different ethnicities volunteering to do the work. In April 2016, the project rebuilt 1.5 km of the 45-year old water supply system in Yurievka and Kenesh villages. As a result, people in five villages of Yurievka and Krasnaya Rechka municipalities gained access to drinking water of high quality, and according to the interviews with local community members this significantly improved their quality of life.

This project is a positive example of bridge-building as it demonstrates that minorities care about the quality of life in their municipalities and communities and take action to improve it. It is a strong example of social mobilization conducted by leaders of the local Turkish community, involving not only fundraising and receiving support from the minority kin-state, but also a significant amount of work in coordinating the populations of several villages, gathering people together around common objectives and ensuring productive interactions between people with various ethnic backgrounds.

### Securing community safety (Kyrgyzstan)

Bridge type: MESO

The Turkish Centre of the Kyrgyz Assembly of People initiated negotiations with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) about the need for a local police station in the Yurievka municipality. There was a high level of inter-ethnic tension and regular conflicts between young people and adolescents of Turkish and Kyrgyz ethnicity (sometimes including others) within the municipality. The nearest police station was in the Rayon centre, about 50 kilometres from Yurievka, which provided insufficient coverage for the area, particularly in emergency situations requiring a swift response. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was able to provide police officers for the area using their human and financial resources, however it did not have the funds to build the station itself. The Turkish Centre found the necessary resources and helped to build a small station with basic equipment. Local authorities provided support for infrastructure and facilities.

The project aimed to prevent tensions and interethnic conflicts in the context of building a peaceful and productive environment for all local community members. The new

police station was badly needed for the whole area, which was experiencing severe unrest and conflict. Two police officers (male and female for working with women, children and adolescents) are now working in the area. According to police statistics and interviews with people in local communities, the regular crises have instead become rare occurrences in the area. The young people and adolescents experiencing behavioural problems, along with their parents, receive constant support from the special officer working at the new station.

The organization of a police station for the local community through support of the Turkish Centre and the MIA is a positive example of meso bridge-building because it demonstrates that minorities are effective partners in working with state structures for the benefit of all community members. The people living in the area had serious concerns about the regular tension between youth of different ethnicities. Many of them considered young Turks as troublemakers for local communities, and these beliefs supported negative stereotypes and prejudices that threaten interethnic relations. After the Turkish Centre's initiative and its help in establishing the police station, public opinion has changed radically. The attitude towards minority organisations and the whole atmosphere in the area is now much more positive and supportive for interethnic cooperation and productive interaction.

## Media

The media sector is important to bridge building for several reasons. First, the media sector is a key tool in protecting and promoting diversity and in ensuring the representation of existing pluralities within societies. With the proliferation of media use in daily life, the media is arguably a main tool to build good relations between diverse groups. Access to media is thus an important minority right, which must be safeguarded. Unfortunately, international standards and norms dealing with access to the media for national minorities are somewhat limited. A strong standard is Article 9 of the FCNM, which is the operative provision under which governments undertake to ensure that members of minorities are not discriminated against in their access to the media. Moreover, they are required to ensure that national minorities are granted the possibility to create and use their own media. In terms of soft law, the OSCE Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in the Broadcast Media provide governments with suggestions of how to ensure the rights of national minorities in the area of broadcasting.

Secondly, media is important as a means of promoting minority identities within minority communities through amplification of minority cultures and cultural traditions as well as minority languages. Thus, it also has a function of maintaining and revitalising minority languages. At the same time, since media can promote minority language usage, it can have an impact on equitable access to the media and on the individual right to receive information. The right to information ensures that knowledge about other cultures is available potentially resulting in better understanding of other cultures and a desire to build bridges.

In this section, one example of a positive initiative promoting diversity and pluralities within a society home to several communities is described. The example has been selected

due to its sustainability and emerging impact in the region. Additional examples of media cooperation are referenced in Annex I.

## Unter Nachbarn – Cross-border media cooperation (Germany, Denmark)

Bridge level: MICRO

Unter Nachbarn is the title of media cooperation between four major newspapers in the Danish-German border region. The newspaper of the German minority in Denmark “Der Nordschleswiger”, the newspaper of the Danish minority in Germany “Flensborg Avis”, the regional German newspaper “Flensburger Tageblatt”, and the regional Danish newspaper “Jydske Vestkysten” have launched a common holding in order to share regional news and photographs among each other. Initiated by these minority media outlets in 2013 in order to increase the knowledge of each other’s communities on both sides of the border, the project enables journalists of the respective newspapers to access a sharing platform, provided by a major German news agency, through which daily news and corresponding photographs are made available to use among them. While the newspapers used to harden the lines between Germans and Danes in the region, some of them since their foundation before the Danish-Prussian War in 1864, this cooperation aims at providing the readership with information about current issues in both countries and increasing the mutual communication and understanding.

This cooperation on the micro-level, with no government involvement, works to normalize cross-border cooperation and communication. Through the daily information of the readers about current issues across the border, the understanding between the inhabitants of the region on both sides of the border will likely be increased. Additionally, the individuals involved directly work together in sharing their stories and photographs, thus building connections between themselves.

## Education

Education is arguably the most important aspect of preserving and promoting national minority cultures and thus one of the cardinal rights of the European minority rights regime that must be respected. According to European standards, minority education must include teaching in both the minority language and the majority language(s) as well as teaching about both minority and majority cultures. Articles 12 and 14 of the FCNM provide the strongest legal protection of these rights, while the OSCE’s The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities provide the soft law guidance in this area. Bilingualism and bi-culturalism are, therefore, among the cornerstones that enable bridge building across ethnic and cultural divides in diverse societies.

Since the education sector is important to bridge building, it is important that minority educational services and programmes are adequate and on par with national norms as well as international norms on intercultural teaching. Procuring good education and teaching materials often involves cooperation between the home state and the kin-state of

national minorities. Good neighbourly relations are thus another important aspect of providing good minority education; it is one of the main areas considered legitimate for agreed and approved kin-state relations according to the OSCE Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations. By securing agreement among home states and kin-states, national minority education is de-securitized and legitimized.

In this section, three positive initiatives of inter-state cooperation on education for national minorities are described. All three involved good neighbourly relations through mutual agreements to deliver good and expanded education for members of national minorities. Further examples are referenced in Annex I.

### **Transcarpathian Minority Education (Hungary, Ukraine)**

Bridge type: MACRO/MESO

The Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute in Berehovo/Beregszász, Ukraine, is an autonomous nationally recognized institution of higher education in which all courses are offered in Hungarian. The college was founded by a charity fund and with support of different public organizations in 1996 and is funded by the government of Hungary, by the Foundation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Institute, and by external independent grants.

The institute aims at addressing the needs and issues of the Hungarians living in Transcarpathia and to enhance the intellectual, cultural and scientific growth of the community. The institute and college offer a wide variety of educational programmes and are currently working towards the establishment of the new training programme in Nursing and Patient Care in cooperation with the University of Debrecen, which has been under development since 2015. The course will train 20 nurses and medical assistants per year prepared to support the Hungarian community with coping with the Ukrainian health care system in their native language, thus addressing the shortage of qualified medical staff in the region. In addition to being a centre of formal education, the institute seeks to be a civil society hub with the primary goal of strengthening societal ties. Measures to reach this goal include activities with Hungarian-speaking students from the region and the offers of versatile, non-formal activities to the college and institute students.

The Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute is a good example of bridge building at the macro level, as it connects the Hungarian community in Ukraine with its kin-state in that the Hungarian state acts as a service provider for the minority. At the same time, it operates with the consent of the Ukrainian authorities at the meso level in that especially the planned Nursing and Patient Care course addresses various issues that affect not only the Hungarian community but the wider public in the Transcarpathian region, enabling the Hungarian community members to become assets in their local communities.

## Kin-state support for teaching materials (Bulgaria-Hungary-Romania-Serbia)

Bridge type: MACRO

In the beginning of 2016, the Government of Serbia adopted an Action Plan for national minorities as part of the Action Plan for Chapter 23 of the EU association negotiations. The Ministry of Education participated in the creation as members of the working group and, in cooperation with other stakeholders, defined section (6) related to education. Among the activities that will be undertaken, as envisaged by the Action Plan, is fostering cooperation with the minorities' kin states. The Ministry of Education (MoE) of Serbia approached the governments of six relevant kin-states, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania with the initiative to foster cooperation in the field of education and to sign bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). By mid-2016 three of the governments replied positively: Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. The MoE of Serbia is cooperating closely with the National Councils of National Minorities across Serbia and sees the minorities as bridges for cooperation with the relevant kin-states.

The initiative of signing MoUs between the MoE of Serbia and the respective governmental authorities of the relevant kin-states aims to foster CBC through a mutual agreement on a basic document for the improvement of education in the languages of national minorities in three fields: quality translation of textbooks, initial education of teachers, and teacher training. One important goal of the MoE of Serbia is to ensure the quality of translation of manuscripts of selected textbooks that are used in institutions of pre-school, primary and secondary education using the respective minority (kin-state) language.

This is a positive macro level example of how to foster CBC and communication between countries tied through their national minorities and on the basis of common interests: to support kin-state minority education; to ensure that the rights of national minorities are protected; and to ensure that nationals from minority origin will receive adequate education of adequate quality. Although the Serbian MoE's initiative develops at the international level, the direct beneficiaries are in fact the national minorities in Serbia whose minority rights in education will be addressed adequately and whose contact with their kin-states will be facilitated. At the same time, the MoUs are expected to contribute to an increase in quality of the education that minorities in Serbia receive, and hence to provide for better societal integration and social cohesion.

## Educating diaspora (Kyrgyzstan, Turkey)

Bridge type: MACRO

The Turkish Centre of the Kyrgyz Assembly of People in cooperation with the University of Kutakhya Dubukunay in Turkey offers students the opportunity to take the Turkish National Matura Exam (Yoslik). The scores of this exam can be used in 74 universities in Turkey, and it allows young people from Kyrgyzstan to obtain access to state scholarships in major internationally recognised Turkish universities. The joint initiative originated at the grass-roots level, as a result of negotiations between the Turkish Centre's activists and representatives of Turkish universities. Professors from Turkey come to Bishkek and

conduct all necessary procedures for holding the Turkish National Matura Exam in Russian for young people from Kyrgyzstan. While the target group may be Turkish diaspora in Central Asia, the programme is open on an equal basis to all potential candidates. Thus, each year young people from Kazakhstan also join this initiative, meaning that students with various ethnic backgrounds (Russian, Dungan, Uygur, etc.) and nationalities are participating in the programme. Each year, about 70-80 people study in Turkey as a result of project. In 2015, 97 young persons passed the exam (of which 18 were of Turkish origin), and 72 passed the exam. The majority of them took up the opportunity to study in Turkey.

This project is a positive example of bridge-building because it demonstrates the opportunity for inter-state cooperation between states home to the Turkish diaspora. The programme, despite being organized by the Turkish Centre of the Kyrgyz Assembly of People, provides benefits not only for young Turks but also for people from various ethnic backgrounds. It also shows that these kinds of initiatives are rooted in the activism of local national minorities that dedicate a significant amount of time and effort in order to mobilize resources. The Ministries of Education of both countries provide formal recognition for this activity.

## Culture and Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is arguably one of the most important aspects of bridge building. Promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding is also a value promoted by international standards of national minority rights. Article 6 of the FCNM requires governments to ensure good conditions and legal basis for intercultural dialogue and understanding. The OSCE Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies underline the importance of intercultural dialogue as a prerequisite for good integration. Securing communication between cultures also requires respect and understanding of each other's cultures. Lack of understanding of unknown cultures promotes insecurity and fear, which in practice may result in parallel societies. In a modern world of inter-connectedness, separation between cultures living side-by-side does not promote peace and stability; rather, it puts that society at risk of living in permanent tension and fear of the 'Other.' The right to enjoy and preserve one's culture has been an international minority rights standard since 1966 and the adoption of the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 27, and it is enshrined in Article 5 of the FCNM requiring governments to promote and support the preservation of national minority cultures, including cultural heritage and cultural traditions.

Governance frameworks that include both the right to culture and promotion of intercultural dialogue are necessary as the two are mutually dependent in societies that wish to build bridges across cultural and ethnic divides. However, the five examples described in this section show that lack of governance frameworks does not stop local communities from engaging in intercultural dialogue with a view to protect minority cultures. All five very diverse examples promote respect for minority cultures and intercultural dialogue under conditions that are very limiting to cultural expression and bridge building. They have been selected not due to their potential as sustainable bridge building but to demonstrate that

local and regional actors – both public and private – may see the need for intercultural dialogue much more clearly than national and central governments.

### **Municipality of Stara Zagora (Bulgaria)**

Bridge type: MESO

The Municipality of Stara Zagora has a significant record of initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding among the majority and the eight different ethnic groups living in the Municipality: Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Turks, Russians, Poles, Hungarians and Roma. The goal of the Municipality of Stara Zagora is to establish and maintain a positive attitude towards ethnic diversity in the region. Over the years, local authorities have addressed this despite political changes within the administration. Hence, over the past decade, a number of initiatives have been implemented, among which are:

- Annual Concert of Ethnicities (since 2004)
- Memorandum of Understanding with the Club of Ethnicities (2008)
- Museum of Religions (2011)
- Alley of Ethnicities and the Monument of Inter-Ethnic Tolerance (2012)
- International Tolerance Day

This example of local authorities' engagement with the protection of cultural heritage and promotion of tolerance and respect for diversity is a significant one, not only because it enables cooperation between the communities and the local government, but also because it fosters dialogue among the ethnic groups and between the various communities and the majority. It is a particularly positive example also due to the fact that although Bulgaria does not officially recognize any national minority, a good political will has resulted in mechanisms that create bridges among the communities, between the communities and the majority, and between the communities and the authorities. Another positive aspect is that the Municipality overcomes the general trend of limiting the involvement of local authorities' support of cultural initiatives in that it has signed an MoU with the NGO representing ethnic diversity in the region.

### **Karjala is Our Home (Russia)**

Bridge type: MESO/MACRO

“Preservation of the Unity of Peoples and Ethnoses of the Republic of Karelia in 2012-2016 (Karjala Is Our Home)” is a programme run by the government of the Republic of Karelia in Russia. The main goal of the programme is to secure conditions for steady ethno-cultural development of the indigenous peoples of the Republic and the preservation of civil harmony, as well as strengthening inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony in Karelia. The project marks the first time that the government has placed a specific task-oriented focus on the preservation and development of the traditional cultures of the people residing in the regions of Zaonezhie, Pudozh, and on the White Sea coast.

Two of the projects that have received funding under the “Karjala Is Our Home” programme are:

- “My nation, my culture – our world”, a project aimed at preserving inter-ethnic harmony in the Republic of Karelia
- The National Vepsian Celebration “Tree of Life”, which attracts visitors and delegations particularly from Finland

“Karjala Is Our Home” is an example of bridge building at the meso level, with the government of the Republic of Karelia engaging with local organisations to promote harmony among communities in the various regions where minorities are located. It is also an example of macro level bridge building due to the involvement of Finnish and Polish partners. The programme’s goal of fostering peaceful relations between diverse groups within the region through socio-economic support is particularly interesting, and subsequent reports after the completion of the Karjala programme are worth exploring for the insight they may offer on bridge building.

### The Dungan Network (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan)

Bridge type: MICRO

*Dungan* is a term used in territories of the former Soviet Union to refer to a Muslim people of Chinese origin. The Dungan in the former Soviet republics are the people who fled China in the aftermath of the 19th Century. In the censuses of the now independent states of the former Soviet Union, the Dungans, who are enumerated separately from Chinese, reside in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia, and still practice elements of Chinese culture in cuisine and attire, including Chinese traditions, which have disappeared in modern China. The preservation of language and traditions is very important for the Dungan people, and they strive to build an effective network to support these kinds of activities, including publishing a newspaper, Internet resources and regular three-yearly conferences and festivals.

The Dungans’ cultural centres in the Assembly of People of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (including so called “Small Assemblies” at the south of the country) are involved in this work together with NGOs, specifically the Ethno-cultural Association of the Dungans of Uzbekistan and the Dungan cultural foundation “HUIZU” based in the Kyrgyz National Academy of Science. The newspaper “HuiZU” has risen in popularity and was launched as part of regional Central Asian media in 2006 by the Dungan Cultural Centre of the Assembly of People of Kyrgyzstan. It was funded by members of the Dungan community, and between 2006 and 2010, fundraising allowed the Centre to hire local reporters in different countries and organize the circulation of up to 6.000 newspapers in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. The funds for printing newspapers have since been reduced, but there are still about 4,000 copies circulating in the region twice a month. Newspapers are issued in Russian and Dungan. At the same time the new Internet media organized by the Foundation “HUIZU” is present in all popular Russian language social networks.

This network of NGOs and Dungan Cultural Associations is a good example of bridge-building because it brings people together in several ways. Firstly, the Dungan people have an opportunity to preserve and develop their culture across regional borders, which is particularly important due to the fact that they do not have a kin-state to support this type of activity. The newspaper “HUIZU” plays a major role in this. Secondly, the cultural and

academic events organized through the network provide access to the cultural traditions of the Dungan people for many people, including scholars, artists, historians and others interested in the issue. And finally, the Internet resource “Dungan newspaper”, which is issued in Russian, is a good source of information about Dungans in the region. The use of Russian as a lingua franca of the region makes the materials at this source accessible for great number of people.

### Cultural Heritage protection (Armenia, Azerbaijan)

Bridge type: MICRO

An agreement was made in 1989 between the villagers of Kerkenj (Azerbaijan) and Dzyunashogh (then known as Kyzyl-Shafaq, Armenia) in which they agreed to exchange populations and settled the conditions of their population exchange. The objective of the agreement was to preserve the cultural heritage in both villages, specifically the cemeteries and sacred structures. Additionally, the agreement aimed at making sure that the new settlers would be able to support themselves in their new environment. Due to the intensifying tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the inhabitants of Dzyunashogh/Kyzyl-Shafaq, who were ethnic Azerbaijanis, decided to relocate to Azerbaijan in the late 1980s. Their elders set out to find an Armenian village in Azerbaijan with which to negotiate an exchange, under the condition that the new settlers would protect their local cemeteries and cultural and religious sites in order not to lose their cultural heritage. An agreement was signed with the villagers of Kerkenj in Azerbaijan, establishing that both communities would have the same responsibilities for the protection of each other’s cultural heritage.

The agreement provided that some inhabitants should remain in each village for some time to teach the newcomers about the environment, the specifics of agriculture in the region, and their subsistence economy, alongside the provisions concerning the protection of the respective cultural heritage. This agreement is still in force, and the cultural heritage of the previous inhabitants in both villages is still cared for. As proof of their efforts, the villagers take pictures of the cemeteries and cultural sites and send them to their counterparts. This agreement is not only a good example of bridge building at the micro level, as it connects the two village communities on a very personal level through reciprocal support in settling in the new place, it is also an innovative method of showing solidarity among diverse cultures placed in the same situation due to geopolitical issues which they cannot influence. As such, the agreement secures the preservation of cultural heritage while also promoting intercultural understanding and sensibility.

### Home for Cooperation (Cyprus)

Bridge type: MICRO

Since its establishment in 2003, the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) has worked to promote its vision of a society in which issues of history, historiography and history education hold a prominent position. Dialogue surrounding these subjects is welcomed as an integral part of democracy and is considered essential in encouraging

critical thinking. The AHDR also aims at contributing to advancement in historical understanding amongst the public, and specifically amongst youth and educators.

“Home for cooperation” was a three-year project of AHDR (2013-2015) aimed at supporting the development of the centre as a place for dialogue and cooperation that would contribute to the bridge-building between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in Cyprus. The project covered activities under three pillars with Pillar II focusing specifically on the support of AHDR ventures to develop a dialogue on history teaching. This included the organization of three international conferences in the UN Buffer Zone in Nicosia, Cyprus. It also oversaw the development and publication of a trilingual guide on how to introduce gender in history teaching, as well as of a research project regarding the history of Nicosia.

In the divided island of Cyprus and in the environment of persisting inter-ethnic tensions, the project of AHDR is a positive example of grass-root level activities that aim at bringing people together both socially and intellectually. Enabling the communities to meet and interact, to discuss issues of common interest and to cooperate is an important step towards rebuilding trust and fostering cooperation. At the same time, especially valuable in the initiative is the targeted efforts of AHDR to pull down the existing mental walls, projected in the history teaching, that keep people apart.

## PART FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

National minorities play an important role in building bridges between their communities and the majority through a complex dynamic of interplay between policy frameworks that allow local mobilisation and social capital that fosters networks for change. This convergence of forces at macro, meso and micro levels is evidenced in the selection of positive examples culled from the five regions outlined for the purposes of this study. Opportunities for building bridges and improving cooperation across current and former divides have been identified in several policy areas, such as culture, education, the environment, the economy, health and social services as well as the political sphere. Unfortunately, national minority participation and initiatives in such cooperative efforts are often overlooked or not visible. While not exhaustive, the good practice examples in this Report show that when policy mechanisms and instruments are specifically examined for national minority participation, they reveal that national minorities are both engaged and proactive in numerous policy areas.

Conditions for good practice not only include policy frameworks and minority activism but also political will, trust, openness, courage, innovation, agency, and passion. At the macro-level, efficient structures and political will are the foundations for peaceful cooperation across divides while trust is the overall condition required. This is evidenced in the examples of consultative bodies at the political level in Germany, Slovakia, Kazakhstan and Georgia as well as the CBC projects in the Central and Eastern participating states, among others. The CBC projects also demonstrate that peaceful cooperation across sovereign borders can be beneficial to all involved.

At the meso-level, an important aspect of good practice is openness among actors towards cooperation on common goals, including common goals across borders. Trust among actors and is thus a fundamental requirement. Issues addressed at the meso-level are often very practical issues that affect all communities but may not easily be resolved by one actor alone, and usually are not resolved by central governments. This is evidenced in the examples of projects addressing the provision of services in education, the economy and healthcare. At this level, the involvement not only of national minorities but also of multi-level actors and institutions furthers cooperation in most of the regions surveyed.

At the micro-level, innovation and courage are often essential in taking steps towards cooperation that overcomes macro-level divergences that may have had negative ramifications at the local level. Trust among communities is what brings actors together at this level. Actions aim to resolve local community issues, such as basic services or intercultural dialogue vital for the survival of cultural heritage. This is evidenced in the examples of projects seeking to preserve culture under difficult conditions in South Caucasus and Central Asia. At this level, national minorities show that the “us/them” dichotomy can be mitigated for the sake of cultural survival.

Overall, it would appear that national minorities work in their home communities to help maintain not only cultural heritage and cultural traditions but also to improve infrastructure and basic services, the environment, and access to education. Therefore, this

study indicates that peaceful and constructive cooperation across participating State borders is becoming an integral part of national minority activities, and therefore an important contribution to friendly and good-neighbourly relations and international peace.

## Recommendations

OSCE participating States are invited to consider applying their efforts towards the following political, policy and technical recommendations.

### Recommendations for political action:

1. Recognize publicly that national minorities promote peaceful dialogue, inclusion and social cohesion;
2. Recognize that national minorities do care about life in their municipalities, and continue to support all peaceful initiatives with good governance frameworks and by being sensitive to grass-roots initiatives;
3. Enhance the visibility of national minorities in national, regional and local governance with the aim of changing attitudes among the general populations that national minorities may be a risk factor to peaceful societies;
4. Promote tolerance and respect for diversity at all levels in society, specifically among communities in regions where national minorities reside;
5. Support the maintenance of pluralism in the public debate and be sensitive to positive changes in public opinion and attitudes towards national minorities;
6. Acknowledge that personal human interaction fosters peace, and that interference with peaceful grass-roots level bridge building initiatives goes against basic democratic ideals;
7. Recognize that education is closely linked to the integration of societies and social cohesion;
8. Recognize that cooperation on the basis of kin-state/minority relations should not be considered as a threat to national integrity and sovereignty; fostering positive contacts and cooperation at the international political level can be beneficial for all parties, and trans-frontier cooperation between local and regional authorities and minority communities can contribute to tolerance and prosperity, strengthen inter-state relations, and encourage dialogue on minority issues.
9. Promote trust among all actors (between authorities and minorities, between states, between people) and avoid using the “us/them” dichotomy for political purposes.

### Recommendations for policy action:

10. Create frameworks and cooperation infrastructure, if not already in existence (CBC, bilateral, multilateral agreements) and continue to update with new norms and to ensure inclusion of all minority groups;

11. Initiate cooperation across international frontiers within the framework of friendly bilateral and multilateral relations on a territorial basis rather than on an ethnic basis;
12. Establish platforms of communication between national minorities as well as between the authorities and national minorities;
13. Create consultative mechanisms with national minorities in all policy fields to ensure inclusive processes in policy-making, and take into account all three levels of bridge building (macro, meso and micro);
14. Ensure that the interplay between the three levels of bridge building is clear: macro-level instruments must support both meso and micro-level action while also respecting the right to free assembly and freedom of expression at the micro-level;
15. Establish and fund programmes that promote bridge building ideas and initiatives;
16. Support initiatives that seek to resolve specific service provisions to communities where national minorities reside.

#### Technical recommendations:

17. Create reporting on national minority participation in bridge building efforts at all governance levels, with clear indications of level, main actors, aims, and goals of bridge building, as well as follow up plans;
18. Support further research in this area with a view to improve monitoring tools and knowledge gathering.

## SOURCES

### Bibliography

#### *Books*

- Arp, Björn (2008), *International Norms and Standards for the Protection of National Minorities*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden/Boston.
- Bloed, Arie and Van Dijk, Pieter (1999), *Protection of Minority Rights Through Bilateral Treaties. The Case of Central and Eastern Europe*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague/London/Boston.
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, *Regionalisation trends in European countries 2007-2015* (ed. by Francesco Merloni).
- Crepaz, Katharina (2016), *The Impact of Europeanization on Minority Communities*, Springer VS, Wiesbaden.
- Lantschner, Emma (2009), *Soft Jurisprudence im Minderheitenrecht*, Nomos, Baden-Baden.
- Palermo, Francesco and Sabanadze, Natalie (2011), *National Minorities in Inter-State Relations*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden/Boston.

#### *Scientific Articles and Reports*

- Boman, Julia/Berg, Eiki (2014), "Identity and Institutions Shaping Cross-border Cooperation at the Margins of the European Union", *Regional & Federal Studies*, 17:2, 195-215.
- Peter Bußjäger, Anna Gamper, Esther Happacher, Jens Woelk (Hg.) (2011), „Der Europäische Verbund territorialer Zusammenarbeit (EVTZ). Neue Chancen für die Europaregion Tirol-Südtirol-Trentino“, *Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Föderalismus* 113, (Wilhelm Braumüller, Wien)
- Council of Europe (2003), "Comparative Summary of Bilateral Agreements for the Protection of National Minorities", prepared by Emma Lantschner and Sergiu Constantin, European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen, as Part of the Stability Pact Project Concerning Bilateral Agreements, SP/BA(2003)002.
- De Sousa, Luis (2013), "Understanding European Cross-Border Cooperation: A Framework for Analysis", *Journal of European Integration*, 35:6, 669-687.
- Durand, Frédéric (2015), "Theoretical Framework of the Cross-Border Space Production— The Case of the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai", EUBORDERSCAPES Working Paper 9.
- Engl, Alice (2016), "Bridging borders through institution-building: the EGTC as a facilitator of institutional integration in cross-border regions", *Regional & Federal Studies*, 26:2, 143-169.
- Engl, Alice and Mitterhofer, Johanna (2015), "Bridging National and Ethnic Borders: The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation as a Space for Minorities", *European Yearbook of Minority Issues – EYMI*, 12, Brill/Nijhoff, Leiden, 5-32.
- Engl, Alice and Woelk, Jens (2008), "Crossborder Cooperation and Minorities in Eastern Europe: Still Waiting for a Chance? A Summary and Evaluation of the Four Case

- Studies”, *European Yearbook of Minority Issues – EYMI*, 6, Brill/Nijhoff, Leiden, 235-247.
- Gál, Kinga (1999), “Bilateral Agreements in Central and Eastern Europe: A New Inter-State Framework for Minority Protection?”, ECMI Working Paper 4.
- Lantschner, Emma (2004), “Bilateral Agreements and their Implementation”, in Morawa Alexander (eds.), *Mechanisms for the Implementation of Minority Rights* (Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2004).
- Malloy, Tove H. (2010), “Creating New Spaces for Politics? The Role of National Minorities in Building Capacity of Cross-border Regions”, *Regional & Federal Studies*, 20:3, 335-351
- Medve-Bálint, Gergő and Svensson, Sara (2012), “Explaining Coverage: Why do Local Governments in Central Europe join (or not join) Euroregions”, in Dorte Jagetic Andersen, Martin Klatt and Marie Sandberg (eds.), *The Border Multiple. The Practicing of Borders between Public Policy and Everyday Life in a Rescaling Europe* (Ashgate, London), 219-243.
- Palermo, Francesco and Woelk, Jens (2002), „Die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit der italienischen Regionen und das Beispiel Euregio Tirol-Südtirol-Trentino“, *Jahrbuch für Italienisches Recht* (vol. 15/16), 2003 (C.F. Müller Verlag, Heidelberg), 333 - 362
- Palermo, Francesco (2005), “Trans-Border Cooperation and Ethnic Diversity”, in Kühl Jørgen and Weller Marc (eds.), *Minority Policy in Action: The Bonn-Copenhagen Declaration in a European Context 1955-2005*, Institut for Grænsregionsforskning, Syddansk Universitet Aabenraa, 161-185.
- Strazzari, Davide (2011), “Harmonizing Trends vs Domestic Regulatory Frameworks: Looking for the European Law on Cross-border Cooperation”, *European Journal of Legal Studies*, 1.
- Svensson, Sara (2015), “The Bordered World of Crossborder Cooperation: The Determinants of Local Government Contact Networks within Euroregions”, *Regional & Federal Studies*, 25:3, 277-295.
- Turnock, David (2002), “Cross-border Cooperation: A Major Element in Regional Policy in the New East Central Europe”, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 118:1, 19-40.

### *Online sources*

Constitutions:

<https://www.constituteproject.org/>

European Charter of Local Self-Government:

[http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list//conventions/treaty/122/signatures?p\\_auth=QNoryg5h](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list//conventions/treaty/122/signatures?p_auth=QNoryg5h)

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages:

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148>

Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities:

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/157>

EU Cross-border programs (EU):

[http://www.interact-eu.net/etc/etc\\_2007\\_13/4/14950](http://www.interact-eu.net/etc/etc_2007_13/4/14950)

Lund Recommendations:

<http://www.osce.org/hcnm/32240>

OSCE Copenhagen Document:

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14304>

Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations:

<http://www.osce.org/hcnm/33633>

Ljubljana Recommendations:

<http://www.osce.org/hcnm/96883>

National Legislation:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/index\\_en.htm](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/n-lex/index_en.htm)

## Project and initiative sources

### *Questionnaires submitted by minority organisations*

Albanian Helsinki Committee, Albania

Agriculture - Livestock Research Institute, Greece

Здружение на Србите во Македонија, FYROM

BKZ Bosnjak Cultural Community, FYROM

Council of Germans of Ukraine, Ukraine

Derya, FYROM

Deutsche Gemeinschaft – Landsmannschaft der Donauschwaben in Kroatien, Croatia

Deutscher Verein St. Gerhard Serbien, Serbia

Drom, FYROM

Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans, Greece

Erfolg, Latvia

Svenska Finlands folkting, Finland

Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség, Ukraine

Ida-Virumaa Integration Centre, Estonia

Istituto di Cultura Cimbra, Italy

Istituto Ladin de la Dolomites, Italy

KHAM Delcevo, FYROM

Kroatischer Kulturverein Burgenland, Austria

Manjinske-Organizacije – Kozak, Serbia

Nacional Presencia Gitana, Spain

Nansen Dialogue Centre Skopje, FYROM

Shoqata Maqedonase Ilinden-Tiranë, Albanina

SLORI, Italy

Svenska-nu, Finland

Sweden Finnish Delegation, Sweden

Sydslesvigsk Forening, Denmark

Union of Vlachs, FYROM

Verband der deutschen sozial-kulturellen Gesellschaften in Polen, Poland

Бахтияр Ирисметову, Kazakhstan

### *Questionnaires submitted by local authorities*

Aabenraa Kommune, Denmark

ARLeF, Italy

Asht, Tajikistan  
 Ayni, Tajikistan  
 Devashtich, Tajikistan  
 Directorate promotion Community Culture, FYROM  
 J.Rasulov, Tajikistan  
 Javni-Funkcioneri - Grad Prijedor, Serbia  
 Kancelarija za pitanja romske nacionalne manjine, Serbia  
 Korkunoni-ma omoti-davlati, Tajikistan  
 Kuhistoni Mastchoh, Tajikistan  
 MLSP, FYROM  
 Municipality of Rankovce, FYROM  
 Narva City Office, Estonia  
 Ombudsman Office, FYROM  
 Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, Finland  
 Shahrison, Tajikistan

*Project Websites*

Minority Council Germany,  
<http://www.minderheitensekretariat.de/minderheitenrat/>  
 SIMPLE,  
[http://www.progettisociali.it/site/pse/page/project\\_simple](http://www.progettisociali.it/site/pse/page/project_simple)  
 Indigee,  
<http://www.beac.st/en/Working-Groups/Working-Group-of-Indigenous-Peoples/Indigee>  
 Cultural Heritage cooperation,  
[https://ge.boell.org/sites/default/files/village\\_exchange\\_publication.pdf](https://ge.boell.org/sites/default/files/village_exchange_publication.pdf)

## ANNEX I

Name	Countries	Level	Theme	Region	Initiating & implementing partners
"Karjala is our home": "Preserving the unity of the peoples and ethnic communities of Karelia (for 2014-2020)"	Russian Federation (+ guests from Finland and Poland)	Macro/ Meso	Culture	Eastern Europe	Government of the Republic of Karelia, Ministry of the Republic of Karelia on National Affairs Relations with civil society, religious organizations and media; National-cultural NGOs of Indigenous peoples of Karelia (Karelians, Vepsians, and Finns); National-cultural NGOs of the Indigenous Russian population of Pomorye, Pudozh, and Zaonezhye; National-cultural NGOs of other ethnicities (especially, Cossacks)
Suns	Italy	Meso	Culture	Western Europe	minority community, local government, external actor
Mindretallenes Hus (House of Minorities)	Germany	Meso	Culture	Western Europe	Sydslesvigsk Forening
Dansk-tysk biblioteksforum	Germany, Denmark	Macro	Culture	Western Europe	Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig
Project "Ukrainian National Minority in City of Prijedor"	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Micro	Culture	Balkans, Eastern Europe	minority community
Preservation of heritage Nagorno-Karabakh	Armenia, Azerbaijan	Micro	Culture	Caucasus	Local communities in Nagorno Karabakh
Dungan cultural festival	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russian Federation and China	Micro	Culture	Central Asia	Dungan minority centre
A year of Vepsian culture	Russian Federation; Finland	Micro	Culture	Eastern Europe	Karelian regional NGO "Vepsian Culture Society"; Finnish cultural foundation "Juminkeko"
Cultural festival	Estonia, Belarus, Russian Federation	Micro	Culture	Eastern Europe	
German Song Festival	Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	German communities of the Baltic states, ERFOLG, minority organisations
Dream Academy Norden	Sweden, Finland	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	minority community
Traditional sarakatsani fair	Bulgaria	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	Federation of Cultural and Educational Societies of the Sarakatsani in Bulgaria (FCCESSB)
First World Assembly of the Sarakatsani Youth "Return to the roots and reviving our traditions"	Greece	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	Panhellenic Federation of Sarakatsani Societies; incl. Bulgarian Sarakatsani Society
The National kitchen of Ida-Virumaa	Estonia	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	Local national communities, the Integration Centre of Ida-Viru County of Estonia
folkBALTICA	Germany, Denmark	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	Sydslesvigsk Forening
Protection and enhancement of Cimbrian language and culture	Italy, Austria, Germany	Micro	Culture	Western Europe	minority community
Festival visit	Turkey	Micro	Culture	Balkans	Shuto mayoral office
Festival visit	Turkey	Micro	Culture	Balkans	DERYA MK
Eastern Partnership Minorities Network	Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,	Micro	Culture, institutions	Eastern Europe, Caucasus	ECMI Caucasus (BE, BY), Analytical Center for Interethnic Cooperation and Consultations (GE), Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC) (AM), No Borders Project / Social Action Centre (UA), Roma National Center /

	Ukraine, Moldova				Centrul National al Romilor (MD), Minorities Rights Group - Europe
House of Nationalities	Russian Federation	Micro	Culture, institutions	Eastern Europe	Around 100 NGOs in the area of Moscow
Indigee	Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russian Federation	Macro	Economy	Western Europe, Eastern Europe	The Saami Association of Sweden (SSR), the International Barents Secretariat (IBS), the Norwegian Saami Association (NSR) and the Saami Association of Finland (SSG)
Regional cooperation based on Frisian culture and language	Netherlands, Germany	Macro	Economy	Western Europe	Dutch provinces Groningen, Fryslan and Drenthe in NL, and Schleswig-Holstein in Germany
Addressing common challenges in youth employment through cross-border tourism development	Armenia, Georgia	Micro	Economy	Caucasus	Youth Cooperation Center of Dilijan (NGO), Armenia, Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), Armenia, Inter-ethnic Unit of Kvemo Kartli, Georgia
"Komotini Agriculture-Food-Livestock-Packaging Sectoral Meeting 22 April 2016"	Greece, Turkey	Macro	Economy	Balkans	Thrace Development Agency of Turkey
Korean language courses	Kyrgyzstan	Meso	Economy	Central Asia	Korean minority centre, Korean cultural centres (language courses)
Transcarpathian Tourism Council	Ukraine, Hungary	Micro	Economy	Eastern Europe	Transcarpathian Tourism Council (Kárpátaljai Turisztikai Tanács, KTT)
Croatian Economic Agency in Burgenland	Austria	Micro	Economy	Western Europe	Minority (Burgenland Croats)
AGROMIN - Minorities' agriculture - Detection and enhancement of the cross-border typical products	Italy, Slovenia	Micro	Economy	Western Europe	Self-administered Community of the Italian National Group (Izola), Giuseppe Tartini Italian Community (Piran), Santorio Santorio Italian Community (Koper - Capodistria), Beekeepers' Consortium of Trieste Province, Cooperative "Dolga Krona" (S. Dorligo della Valle - Dolina) Olive Growers' Association of the Slovenian Istria (Izola), Association of Vine-Growers and Wine-Makers of the Slovenian Istria (Marezige), Forestry and Agricultural Institute - Forestry and Agricultural Chamber (Celje), Koper-Capodistria Municipality, MOISIR - Committee for the Enhancement of the Dairy Products Manufactured in the Kras Plateau of Trieste Province, Občina Izola - Comune di Isola, Piran Municipality, SKGZ - Slovenian Cultural and Economic Union (Trieste), SSO - Confederation of Slovenian Organizations (Trieste), TERGESTE DOP - Committee for the Enhancement of Trieste Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Trieste), Italian Union (Koper - Capodistria)
Best practices for the setting up and the development of handicraft areas in the cross-border territory	Italy, Slovenia	Micro	Economy	Western Europe	Self-administered Coastal Community of the Italian National Group (Koper - Capodistria) EIC SI 753 - Euro info centre (Science and Research Centre - University of Primorska) (Koper - Capodistria) Koper-Capodistria Municipality Občina Izola - Comune di Isola Piran Municipality Handicraft Chamber of the Republic of Slovenia - Izola Regional Chamber Handicraft Chamber of the Republic of Slovenia - Koper - Capodistria Regional Chamber Handicraft Chamber of the Republic of Slovenia - Piran Regional Chamber RRC - Regionalni razvojni center Koper - Centro regionale di sviluppo Capodistria Servis S.r.l. (SDGZ Service Bureau - Trieste) SKGZ - Slovenian Cultural and Economic Union (Trieste) SSO - Confederation of Slovenian Organizations (Trieste) Italian Union (Koper - Capodistria)

Website Donaudreieck.org	Croatia, Serbia, Hungary	Micro	Economy	Western Europe, Balkans	German minority organisations in all three countries
Charming Highland	Armenia, Georgia	Micro	Economy	Caucasus	Journalists Club «Asparez» NGO, Armenia; Association of Civil Development Future Corps, Georgia
Kutika textile manufacture and gastronomy	Hungary, Slovakia	Micro	Economy	Western Europe	Partnership between the organisation MINORMA and the Hungarian Romani Design supported by the Cultural Centre Dunaj Bratislava and the Art-Eco Civic Association
Better Together: Joint Action for Conservation of Javekheti –ShirakEco–Region	Armenia, Georgia	Micro	Economy	Caucasus	Meghvik NGO, Armenia; Paros NGO, Georgia
Turkish State Exam	Kyrgyzstan, Turkey	Macro	Education	Central Asia	Turkish minority centre, University of Manas (Bishkek - Turkish university)
JEZIKLINGUA	Italy, Slovenia	Macro	Education	Western Europe	IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007-2013 Associazione degli appartenenti alla Comunità Nazionale Italiana - Unione Italiana (Italian Community Members Association - Italian Union) Slovenia, Comunità Autogestita Costiera della Nazionalità Italiana Capodistria - CAN Costiera (Koper Italian Nationality Coastal Community) Slovenia, Centro Italiano di Promozione, Cultura, Formazione e Sviluppo "Carlo Combi" (Carlo Combi Italian Promotion, Culture, Training and Development Centre) Slovenia, Biblioteca centrale "Srečko Vilhar" (Srečko Vilhar Central Library) Slovenia, Comunità Autogestita della Nazionalità Italiana di Capodistria - CAN Capodistria (Koper Italian Nationality Community) Slovenia, Università del Litorale - Facoltà di studi umanistici di Capodistria (University of Primorska - Faculty of Humanities of Koper) Slovenia, Università' degli studi di Udine - Centro Internazionale sul Plurilinguismo (University of Udine - International Centre for Multilingualism) Italy, Università' degli studi di Trieste - Dipartimento di letterature straniere, comparatistica e studi culturali (University of Trieste - Department of Foreign Literatures, Cultural and Comparative Studies) Italy, Consorzio Universitario del Friuli (University Consortium of Friuli) Italy, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) Italy, Centro Studi Jacques Maritain (Jacques Maritain Research Centre) Italy
Educational inter-state cooperation	Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary	Macro	Education	Western Europe, Balkans	Serbian Ministry of Education, Serbian National Councils of National Minorities, Hungarian government, Bulgarian government, Romanian government
Inter-governmental Agreement on the mutual support of minority culture and education	Slovakia, Hungary	Macro	Education	Western Europe	Government of Slovakia, Government of Hungary, and the Local Organisations: Pazmany Peter Fund, the Alliance of Hungarian Teachers, the Alliance of Hungarian Parents in Slovakia,
University of Novi Sad	Serbia	Meso	Education	Balkans	University of Novi Sad, Ministry of Education Serbia, OSCE HCNM
Educational integration of minorities	Georgia	Meso	Education	Caucasus	Georgian government
Unity in Diversity	Kyrgyzstan	Meso	Education	Central Asia	UNICEF, OHCHR, Kyrgyz authorities - in particular MoES, Department on Ethnic, Religious Policy and Interaction with Civil Society of the President Administration, Agency on LSG, Agency of State Language, State Commission on Religious Affairs and SLC
Nansen Model for Integrated Education (Regional)	FYROM	Meso	Education	Balkans	Nansen Dialogue Skopje, Ministry of Education and Science in Macedonia
Nansen Model for Integrated Education (Regional)	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Meso	Education	Balkans	Nansen Dialogue Mostar and the Ministry of Education of the region Herceg-Neretva

Integrated education project	Serbia	Meso	Education	Balkans	Local Nansen Dialogue Centre in partnership with the respective organisations or municipalities and schools
Joint History Project	several	Micro	Education	Balkans	Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in South-East Europe
Women's employment and vocational education	FYROM	Meso/ Micro	Education	Balkans	DERYA MK in partnership with German organisation IBE International, mayor of Radovice
Nordisk benchmarking	Sweden, Finland	Micro	Education	Western Europe	minority community
Summer camp for BG and GR children from Sarakatsani origin	Bulgaria	Micro	Education	Western Europe	Federation of Cultural and Educational Societies of the Sarakatsani in Bulgaria (FCESSB)
ROMUP!	Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Ireland, Belgium	Micro	Education	Western Europe	
South Caucasus Regional Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief	Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan	Micro	Education	Caucasus	ECMI Caucasus
School of Neighbouring languages	Russian Federation	Micro	Education	Eastern Europe	School of Neighbouring languages
DIÁKHÁLÓZAT- STUDENT NETWORK	Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary	Micro	Education, institutions	Western Europe	Hungarian minority, Government Office of the Slovak Republic SK and Bethlen Gábor Fund HUN, Sapientae Hungariae Foundation, Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources Ministry, Bethlen Gabor Fund HUN, National Cooperation Fund HUN, Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources
Transcarpathian Minority Education (Nurse Training Programme)	Ukraine, Hungary	Macro/ Meso	Health	Eastern Europe	Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute, University of Debrecen
Transcarpathian Hungarian Society of Health Workers	Ukraine, Hungary	Micro	Health	Eastern Europe	Kárpátaljai Magyar Egészségügyi Dolgozók Társasága (Transcarpathian Hungarian Society of Health Workers)
Project "Be Cleverer than Cancer - Be a Healthy Woman"	FYROM	Meso/ Micro	Health	Balkans	DERYA MK
Healthcare access	Kyrgyzstan, Turkey	Micro	Health	Central Asia	Turkish minority centre, Ministries of health in Turkey and Kyrgyzstan
Circumcision support	FYROM	Meso/ Micro	Health	Balkans	DERYA MK
Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan	Meso	Institutions	Central Asia	Kazakh government
Carpathian Borderland Municipalities Association	Ukraine, Hungary	Macro	Institutions	Eastern Europe	Carpathian Borderland Municipalities Association (Kárpátaljai Határmenti Önkormányzatok Társulása)
Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities	Germany	Macro	Institutions	Western Europe	Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany
State Committee for Minorities	Albania	Meso	Institutions	Balkans	local government
Network for conflict prevention	Kyrgyzstan	Meso	Institutions	Central Asia	Dungan minority centre
Minority Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein	Germany	Meso	Institutions	Western Europe	Minority Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein, regional government, minority
SIMPLE - Strengthening the Identity of Minority People Leads to Equality	Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Albania, Slovenia	Macro	Institutions	Western Europe, Balkans	IPA Adriatic CBC Programme 2007-2013 Region of Abruzzo (Italy), Ministry for Human and Minority Rights in Montenegro, Municipality of Durres (Albania), Social Projects Ltd, Italian Union Koper-Capodistria, Italian Union of Fiume-Rijeka, Cooperation and Development Institute (Albania), Institute of International Sociology Gorizia (Italy)
German National Council	Serbia	Meso	Institutions	Balkans	Deutscher Verein "St. Gerhard", local government and minority community

National Assembly of Sarakatsani in Bulgaria	Bulgaria	Micro	Institutions	Western Europe	Federation of Cultural and Educational Societies of the Sarakatsani in Bulgaria (FCESSB)
Roundtable of Hungarians in Slovakia	Slovakia	Meso	Institutions, political participation	Western Europe	Hungarian minority, Government Office of the Slovak Republic, Department of Human Rights and Equal Treatment, Hungarian Ministry of Public Administration and Justice Department, and Pazmany Peter Fund - Hungary, Information Centre Forum, Gramma Linguist Office
Women and Culture 2006	FYROM	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Balkans	DERYA MK
Photography competition - Intercultural dialogue from the point of view of youth	Azerbaijan	Meso	Intercultural dialogue	Caucasus	Jointly organised by UNAOC, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Museum of Religions	Bulgaria	Meso	Intercultural dialogue	Western Europe	Regional Historic Museum Stara Zagora, local/national government
"To clean the hatred"	Bulgaria	Meso	Intercultural dialogue	Western Europe	Bulgarian Jewish Organisation SHALOM; American Joint - Bulgaria, Regional organisation of the Jews in Bulgaria - SHALOM; Central Israeli Spiritual Council, Foundation Ethnopalette; Foundation Ronald Lauder - Bulgaria, Federation of Zionists, local and national authorities
"Peace starts with us"	Tajikistan	Meso	Intercultural dialogue	Central Asia	NGO "AZIT", Local administration (Bobojon Gafurov district) and Kyrgyz participants
Charter of Reconciliation project	several	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Western Europe	Civic Association Charta XXI
PRO-Buducnost	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Balkans	Catholic Relief Services, Mozaik Foundation, Caritas of the Bishops' Conference of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BK BiH), Forum of Tuzla Citizens (FTC) and Helsinki Citizens Assembly (hCa)
Minority Fest 2015	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Balkans	minority communities
REPAIR - Armenian-Turkish Platform	Turkey, Armenia	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Caucasus	French Armenian NGO Yerkir Europe, Turkish Foundation Anadolu Kültür
The integration of ethnic minorities in Latgale region: cooperation possibilities of NGO for the solution of problems	Latvia	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Western Europe	ERFOLG, youth organisations through Erasmus+
Alley of ethnic communities	Bulgaria	Meso	Intercultural dialogue	Western Europe	Club of ethnic communities (in Stara Zagora) and Municipality of Stara Zagora
Home for Cooperation	Cyprus	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Western Europe	The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR)
Cafe as a place of integration (Uzbek cafe)	Russian Federation	Micro	Intercultural dialogue	Eastern Europe	Dialogues about integration (Ethnic minorities of Central Asian origin) Moscow
Dungan newspaper	Kyrgyzstan	Micro	Media	Central Asia	Dungan minority
TV Programme "Friendship"	Kyrgyzstan	Meso	Media	Central Asia	All the minority communities, government
Kós Károly Kollégium	Ukraine, Hungary	Micro	Media	Eastern Europe	Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség (Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association), MTVA (umbrella organization for Hungarian public service media)
Friulian language in Italian public media	Italy	Meso	Media	Western Europe	regional government
Minority in broadcasting board	Poland	Meso	Media	Western Europe	national government
Danube Delta	Serbia, Hungary, Croatia	Micro	Media	Balkans	Deutscher Verein "St. Gerhard", minority community, external actors
Cultural, Media and Minority cooperation on both sides of the river Mura and wider	Slovenia, Croatia	Micro	Media	Balkans	Zavod Roka, Zavod za projektne management, Črnelavci Inštitut za napredne tehnologije in komunikacije Murska Sobota Autonomni centar – ACT Udruga za promicanje kulture i kulturne svijesti

					"Media" Čakovec Slovensko kulturno društvo Nagelj
Unter Nachbarn	Germany, Denmark	Micro	Media	Western Europe	- Flensburg Avis (Danish minority in Germany) - Der Nordschleswiger (German minority in Denmark) - Flensburger Tageblatt (Germany) - JydskeVestkysten (Denmark)
Tisza ETT - Tisza Limited European Territorial Association	Ukraine, Hungary	Macro	Political participation	Eastern Europe	Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg County Assembly and Transcarpathian County Council
Framework Convention on Economic Commercial, Technical, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation	Ukraine, Hungary	Macro	Political participation	Eastern Europe	Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg County Assembly and Transcarpathian County Administration
Council of National Minorities	Georgia	Meso	Political participation	Caucasus	State
Kosovo's Consultative Council for Communities	Kosovo	Meso	Political participation	Balkans	CoE, State
Sønderjyske Coordination Committee	Denmark	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	minority community, local mayors
Minority Self-Governance in Hungary	Hungary	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	State
Ethnic Group Advisory Council	Austria	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	Minority
DialogForumNorden	Germany	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	DialogForumNorden, regional government
City Councillor	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Meso	Political participation	Balkans	Grad Prijedor
Most-Hid Political Party	Slovakia	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	Hungarian minority
SLOMAK	Italy, Slovenia	Micro	Political participation	Western Europe	minority community
Minority Council	Germany	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	Minority Council
Advisory board of representatives of non- governmental organizations of national minorities at the Ministry of Culture	Latvia	Meso	Political participation	Western Europe	
Water supply system	Kyrgyzstan	Meso	Social services	Central Asia	Turkish minority centre and local government
Promoting community safety (Police station)	Kyrgyzstan	Meso	Social services	Central Asia	Ministry of Interior Affairs, Turkish minority centre
German Ministry support for Serbian social services (Danube Swabians)	Serbia, Germany	Micro	Social services	Balkans	Deutscher Verein "St. Gerhard", minority community, external actors
Opolski Senior	Poland	Micro	Social services	Western Europe	minority community