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**Building Bridges Within and Across  
Diverse Societies:  
The Role of States**

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# Building Bridges Within and Across Diverse Societies: The Role of States

*Can national minorities be successful in bringing societies together by linking communities within and across state borders if states are not supportive to their initiatives? To open a discussion on the topic, the current issue brief focuses on the actor behind the scenes – the state – and its role in the establishment of a socio-political environment that if not supportive, as a minimum would not impede their efforts. By identifying and analysing several types of roles that a state can play, the paper introduces analytical models aiming to provoke a critical reflection and to emphasise that understanding complex phenomena needs a comprehensive approach and a focus both on content and structure but also in the dynamics of their interplay.*

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## INTRODUCTION

*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.*

Intentionally or not, with his words delivered in a speech before the Permanent OSCE Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015, the then German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, became the flagman of thematic line that the OSCE Chairmanship programmes focused on over the next three years. The emphasis put on the need for strengthening the intercultural dialogue

among people and between civil society and states was shaped by the upcoming German Chairmanship and the “*the situation of minorities in times of crisis, their positive contribution to social integration and their potential to build bridges in international relations*”<sup>1</sup> became a priority of the 2016 Human Dimension agenda.

The ECMI research on the bridge-building role of national minorities<sup>2</sup> has shown that good political will is the crucial element for any positive grass-root initiative to come into being<sup>3</sup>. The current issue brief will focus on the other partner in this dynamic tango – the states. Analysing the collected data from this perspective, the roles of states



will be outlined as models to reflect the advantages, prospects, and challenges to social cohesion and to the process of building bridges within and across national borders. Such an approach would enable better understanding of the context and the environment in which similar grass-root level activities can lead to different outcomes.

## **THE FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework presented below (see note 4) visualises the interplay between the different types of actors at or across three general societal (power) levels.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the concept of ‘bridges’ refers to the complexity of relations and attitudes between and among groups belonging to similar or different social, economic, and/or power structures, which link them in a dynamic net of exchanges. When activated, these links can channel positive energy to bring in advantages and material benefits to both sides.

With respect to the actors involved, three different levels of bridges were established – macro, meso and micro bridges. The micro level bridges are horizontal – they connect grass-root level actors within and/or across national borders. Cooperation established between minority communities or between minority and majority civil society are examples of micro-bridges; such are the transnational links between civil society actors / minority communities. The meso level bridges can be both vertical and/or

horizontal. The vertical bridges connect actors across the levels (grass root, local government, and national institutions) – for example, cooperation between a minority community and local authorities, while the horizontal meso-bridges can be established among regional/local authorities within the borders of the state. The macro bridges connect states (governments) across national borders through their endeavours to cooperate with respect to providing and protecting the rights of their minorities. Cross-border cooperation initiatives with focus on national minorities are an example of macro-bridges.

In contrast to the 2016 ECMI research, which focused on minorities as key actors in the process of activating positive societal energy and drivers of initiatives that bring people, communities and societies into win-win interactions, the current paper examines the agency behind the enabling or disabling contexts of these initiatives and interactions – the states. Besides their active role in establishment of bridges across national borders, public authorities (referred to in their complexity as ‘the state’) are a silent but important player since they create the environment and the rules which the actors at the meso and micro levels (have to) comply with.

The models below are analytical constructs, developed upon the examples and data gathered in 2016 and 2017.<sup>5</sup> This approach was chosen so not to question the validity of the findings by emphasising on the relativity of the interpretational perspective. It aims to



provoke a critical reflection on the complexity of the processes of bringing together people, societies and states. It also calls for attention to the need of a comprehensive analytical model, which will allow the identification, at an early stage, of prospects for advancing cohesion of diverse societies as well as potentials risks to the stable development and peace in the respective regions.

## THE ROLES OF THE STATE

Without any claims for providing an exhaustive list of the type of possible roles, the reflection upon the same data, which was used for the 2016-2017 analysis of the bridge-building powers of national minorities, identified the following models of state-involvement:

### THE PROMOTER:

The prominent active role that a state can play is the one of the **PROMOTER (DEFENDER)** of minority communities and of their rights. This role entails not only creation of enabling conditions, within which minorities can enjoy their identities and rights, but also energizing communities and motivating them to be active members of societies. To facilitate these processes, the **PROMOTER** establishes institutions, amends legislation or practices in order to ensure that once established the system will be self-sustainable and that the structures will secure the lasting impact of the investments made. The **PROMOTER** is in active and direct contact with the

stakeholders at all levels who are perceived as partners in the process of building cohesive societies. At the same time, the state also encourages the mainstreaming of minority issues in all areas of life and aims to establish diversity (and the respect to it) as a cultural, social, and political norm.

This role has two specific dimensions – the one of the **BUILDER** and the **PERFORMER**. While the **PROMOTER-BUILDER** genuinely is interested to invest in and support the development of a multicultural society (and, if needed, to work on changing social values, attitudes and practices in order to achieve the desired objective), the **PERFORMER** invests in order to be recognised as a **PROMOTER**. In contrast to the **BUILDER**, the **PERFORMER** would not undertake comprehensive measures to amend structures and status-quo fundamentally. This player would identify the field and/or activity with a potentially major positive impact (at international level) and less ‘harmful’ for the mainstream society, and will concentrate efforts mainly in that direction.

The German state of Schleswig-Holstein is a prominent example for the described type of **PROMOTER-BUILDER**. With its three officially recognised minorities, effective minority governance and active cross-border cooperation, the Schleswig-Holstein model is acknowledged as a leading model in Europe. Apart from the established practices, institutions and structures, the State engages continuously not only in



activities initiated by stakeholders but also in promoting the acquired knowledge, expertise and achievements to other national and/or regional governments. Details about this case are provided in the 2016 Project Report.<sup>6</sup>

The Austrian state<sup>7</sup> can also be qualified as a PROMOTER-BUILDER with respect to the active involvement of national authorities in the support of the minority governance in the regions of Burgenland, Carinthia and Styria, where a significant number of national minorities are concentrated. The State provides structured support to the national minorities,<sup>8</sup> including of a number of Constitutional and legislative arrangements,<sup>9</sup> to ensure that they fully enjoy their minority rights not only in the field of media, education and culture but also in the participation of the public and political life of the country. A particularly positive example is the fact that the national authorities are also providing for the structural development of the minority associations and for scientific research on ethnic groups.<sup>10</sup> Annual funding to support the intercultural development of the three regions is ensured through the Ethnic Groups Act, but over the years the state has been active in the initiation and implementation of cross-border projects (e.g. Austria-Slovakia Interreg project (2007-2013) and bilateral agreements with minority kin-states. In the period 2014-2016, Austria signed such agreements with Croatia – on mother tongue education, and with Hungary – on scientific and educational cooperation.

In contrast to the BUILDER who aims at providing strategic support for the establishment of coherent multicultural societies, the PROMOTER-PERFORMER tends to focus on activities that are likely to have immediate rather than substantial impact on societal development. It might also focus its efforts on substantial issues (communicated widely) but not being able to bring in a positive change. The active support provided to minorities' cultural initiatives (as festivals, singing and dancing performances) is compensating for the failures/lack of willingness to invest in other areas – e.g. as the participation in the public or political life. The PERFORMER differs from the BUILDER not by lack of interest in protection of rights of minorities but by their selective implementation and by bypassing the need to enable their access to the decision-making process at local and national levels. Despite some legislative changes introduced over the past years, the minorities in Ukraine are still not established partners to local and regional governments. The latest Law on Education (of 2017) or even the fact that the claims for minority status of Russinians are ignored, are among the challenges that the state would have to address if there is a genuine political will that the state becomes a PROMOTER (-BUILDER) of a cohesive multicultural society.

### **What is the role of the PROMOTER for the bridge-building process?**

Although sometimes it might be difficult to establish whether the state-PROMOTER is



that of a BUILDER or of a PERFORMER, the difference becomes clear as soon as one looks into the type of processes and the relationships between and among groups in a diverse society. By strategically addressing issues and problems and trying to find stable and sustainable solutions, the PROMOTER-BUILDER manages to foster a culture of trust, tolerance, and cooperation not only in the context of the vertical interactions between grass-root level and the public authorities but also at the horizontal level of inter-group communication and coexistence. With no fears of unexpected changes that would limit their rights or would negatively affect their position of equal-to-the-other citizens and their well-being, minorities are not only opened to the majority but also to the other minority groups. Supporting minority activism and the joint inter-community as well as majority-minority initiatives and activities, the BUILDER manages to bring in the diverse communities in a dynamic net of partnership and positive inter-dependence and hence to foster the processes of effective and real cohesion among people from various cultural backgrounds and between the minority groups and the majorities.

At the same time however, with no clear vision and planning for the future whilst being focused on the immediate benefits and not on investments in lasting structures that would bring in fundamental changes to the society, the PERFORMER is not building bridges within societies. Ad-hoc support provided to one minority could easily become the *apple of discord* between the

various communities that would feel discriminated and pushed aside. It could bring in status-rivalry and general mistrust not only among the communities but also to the public authorities. On the other hand, the PERFORMER supporting minorities equally but only as far as their cultural activities are concerned, nurtures civic and political passiveness among the groups and a general understanding among the majorities that tolerance and respect to diversity is nothing more but appreciation of the minorities' cultural activities. It is therefore not surprising that in such states, majority-minority tensions occur as soon as a community demonstrates any aspirations of becoming politically active.

#### **THE MOTHER:**

The triangulated relation *minorities - states of residence - kin-state* outlines another the model – this of the **MOTHER**. The **MOTHER** however is often a two-dimensional role: of a birth/**KIN-MOTHER** (to kin-minorities residing beyond the national borders) and of a **STEPMOTHER** (to non-kin-minorities residing within the national borders). In contrast to the **PROMOTER** that can be either a **BUILDER** or a **PERFORMER**, a state can play simultaneously the role of a **KIN-MOTHER** and of a **STEPMOTHER**. At the same time, the role of the **PROMOTER** and of the **MOTHER** are not necessarily mutually exclusive but often complimentary to each other. The complexity of this role comes also from the fact that a state can be a **KIN-MOTHER** to minorities residing in different



countries, and at the same time a STEPMOTHER to a number of other national minorities residing on its territories. Since in most of the cases neighbouring states have their kin-minorities living just across the national borders, the dynamics with respect to the minorities are usually determined at international level. Therefore, to differentiate between the different models, the analysis suggests looking at this interplay between states being at the same time a KIN-MOTHER and a STEPMOTHER.

Furthermore, the examples, collected during the data gathering process, outlined two different types of motherhood-exchanges: **balanced** (which have two further sub-categories: **regulated balance** and **extreme reciprocity**) and **misbalanced**. The paragraphs below will first introduce the balanced exchanges in their two subtypes; thereafter the misbalanced exchanges will be examined.

**Regulated balance:** The relations between Germany and Denmark with respect to their national minorities are an illustration of the type of the **balanced exchanges of regulated reciprocity**. In their efforts to support the kin-minorities living on the two respective sides of the border and at the same time to avoid interference of the other state in their internal affairs, in the 1950s Germany and Denmark has made an agreement that each country would provide for the well-being of their minorities. The famous Bonn-Copenhagen declarations are a unique example of how the good political

will to cooperate and to commit to the protection of diversity can bring in benefits to both societies.

**Extreme reciprocity:** The example of KIN-MOTHERS (being at the same time STEPMOTHERS to the respective minority living on their territories) in exchanges of **negative reciprocity** is the case Greece-Turkey. By aiming to ensure that the other state will not abuse the offered possibilities for support to their kin-minority and interfere with the domestic politics in one way or another, since 1923<sup>11</sup> Turkey and Greece have entered into a reciprocity-game that has led to political, social and inter-community tensions rather than to positive developments.<sup>12</sup>

**Misbalance:** A situation of misbalanced support to minorities offered by their KINMOTHERS could not necessarily be ill-intentioned and negative. Such dynamics might occur even when states have friendly relationships at the international level but for one or another reason one of the KIN-MOTHERS is not as active in providing support to the kin-minority residing across borders as the other. An example here is the case of Poland and its two neighbours – Lithuania and Slovakia.<sup>13</sup>

The fieldwork research, focused on Poland and two of its neighbouring countries, explored the respective kin-state minorities in the bordering regions and their role in bringing closer societies and states. It established that although the states were engaged in a similar type of support to their



kin-minorities – to maintain their cultures, to develop economic-related activities and projects - in both of the bilateral dynamics, Poland is more active than its neighbours are. An interesting fact that the conducted interviews with the minority organizations from the border regions revealed is that the close contact with the kin-state has resulted in the establishment of active cooperation between the kin-minority organizations, while at the same time their contacts with organizations of other minorities (of the same multicultural society) were very limited.

In contrast to the **friendly misbalance** described above, the region of the Western Balkans provides a number of examples of tense attitudes between kin-states and the neighbouring countries in which their minorities live. Beyond the formally established equality frameworks, a **misbalanced treatment of minorities** might occur as a projection of the type of bilateral relations with a neighbour over the respective kin-minority. When a state has friendly connections with another one, the respective kin-minority quite likely would enjoy an informal (but effective) preferential status to a kin-minority of a neighbouring state which is considered ‘unfriendly’.

### **What is the role of the MOTHER for the bridge-building process?**

As outlined above, in most of the cases (if not all), states are simultaneously KIN-MOTHERS to minorities residing beyond the national borders and STEPMOTHERS to a number of other communities. This role

has therefore two respective dimensions of performance: at the scenes of domestic and international politics. Comparing the impact that the state KIN/STPMOTHER has on the processes of building bridges within and across diverse societies, it becomes obvious that states are more successful when investing efforts to become good STEPMOTHERS (e.g. as in the case Germany-Denmark). The findings reveal that the protection and promotion of intercultural dialogue and cooperation among the minorities living on the territories of the particular state, is more beneficial to the societal cohesion than the provision of exclusive support to kin-minorities across borders. As the case of Poland shows, the good political will for fostering cooperation within a kin-community in another state might result in diverting the focus of interest of the respective minority from establishing inter-community networks for establishing close ties with the ‘motherland’. Hence in this particular case we observe establishment of strong cross-border bridges (which as a number of examples suggests can bring in positive outputs to both states), but weak intra-community bridges.

This conclusion however does not suggest that such contacts present any threat to security and the international order, rather that majority-minority and intercultural cooperation in general should become an integral part of the bilateral politics and the respective agreements. As the example of Greece-Turkey reveals, when minorities become hostages of the political games of their KIN-MOTHERS, this is certainly



neither beneficial for states, nor for the communities. An efficient and productive intercultural communication and cooperation among diverse cultural communities that lead to societal cohesion and stable development of multicultural societies, cannot take place when/if the KINMOTHERS are hostile to each other. In this respect, stable bridges in the Western Balkans within and across societies would be feasible only when states reconcile on a political level and enter into an open and constructive dialogue.

#### **THE NETWORKER:**

Similarly to the PROMOTER, the NETWORKER aims to create a minority-friendly environment. In contrast to the first type however, in this role the state would not necessarily focus on provision of support to *all* minorities residing on its territories but only on the kin-minority of its (established or desired) international partner. The strategic investments are therefore directed in building a team – positive bilateral relations with a particular neighbouring state by promoting and engaging into joint initiatives involving not only the respective kin-minorities across the national borders but also the partnering (team-member) state. Hence, the major difference between the NETWORKER and the PROMOTER is that while the second aims to ensure that all minority groups are provided with the support needed, the NETWORKER tends to prioritise the kin-minorities of the team-members.

The fieldwork research on the Hungarian minority in Slovakia<sup>14</sup> conducted within the frameworks of the ECMI 2016 project reported a number of Hungarian-Slovak projects and initiatives addressed at the establishment of closer contacts between the two countries through provision of support to the respective national minorities. Thematically, the positive examples of bridges identified range from cultural activities and promotion of multicultural spaces and bilingualism to activities aiming at fostering local economies and tourism. Among some of the most interesting bridge-building cases supported jointly by the two governments are:

- the Roundtable of Hungarians in Slovakia;<sup>15</sup>
- the Hungarian Representation in the Slovak Government's Committees;<sup>16</sup>
- the Inter-governmental Agreement on the mutual support of minority culture and education;<sup>17</sup>
- the website informing and advising minorities of their rights, established in 2010,<sup>18</sup>
- as well as the 2014 Kutika textile manufacture and gastronomy project.<sup>19</sup>

Although all of the presented projects are implemented in Slovakia, they are supported not only by the Slovakian authorities but also by the Hungarian state. These examples reveal that, with respect to their minorities, Hungary and Slovakia have entered into a dynamic and positive cooperation and in a win-win team play. The gathered data however does not provide enough information to assess whether Slovakia has



adopted the role of a NETWORKER by establishing close connections with other states through similar type of bridges. The two additional examples with respect to Hungary however – of the Diákhálózat-Student Network<sup>20</sup> and of the Charter of Reconciliation project<sup>21</sup> - clearly indicate that Hungary is strategically investing in building networks, through which it feels comfortable making investments in the establishment of bridges within and across its borders.

### **What is the role of the NETWORKER for the bridge-building process?**

The NETWORKER is certainly contributing to the establishment of functioning and stable macro-level bridges (at the international level), vertical meso-level bridges within and across borders (between minorities and public authorities and between minorities and their kin-states), as well as micro-level bridges between the majorities and the respective kin-minority (of the partnering state and respectively their own). By mobilizing both governments and kin-minorities to invest into the development of close links and efficient cooperation mechanisms, the NETWORKER creates a net of constructive and positive dependencies. Although all efforts could be interpreted as bilateral, the overall result is a dynamic system of a number of ‘one-to-one’ agreements with neighbouring and other states, which have the same power centre – the NETWORKER. By building a diasporic net of bridges, the NETWORKER successfully connects not only with its kin-minorities but also with the

national governments of the countries where they reside. Besides Hungary, Germany could also be seen as successfully supporting its kin-minority by establishing close bilateral ties with the governments of the countries where these communities reside.

### **THE OBSERVER:**

The fourth role emerging out of the analysed examples of the bridge-building cases, is the one of the OBSERVER. Although the concept used to denote the role invokes associations with passiveness, this role is rather of a ‘trainer’ who monitors the play from a distance but who can immediately interfere if the situation requires. As long as the actors comply with the general frameworks of the plot, the trainer would let them play and even improvise.

A state in such a role is also contributing to the bridge-building process not by providing active support but rather by non-interference with the developments. In these scenarios, the local authorities emerge on the scene as key power-actors. An example is the case of the Municipality of Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, and the number of initiatives undertaken to support, promote and cooperate with the local minority communities. The mere fact that the mayor has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the club of the local minorities,<sup>22</sup> when the state of Bulgaria officially does not recognise minorities as players in the public and political life<sup>23</sup> of the country, shows that the national government has accepted this initiative as



not-in-conflict with the official policy line. At the same time, the example reveals that building of bridges within and across communities does not necessarily need a legal framework that exclusively supports minority rights – when there is a good political will, the democratic system can provide the necessary grounds for making a positive change.

An interesting set of examples is provided with the case of the Russian region of Karelia and a number of initiative implemented in Moscow and in St Petersburg.<sup>24</sup> If projecting the theoretical model presented in the paper through examples such as: the Uzbek café in Moscow, the School of neighbouring languages and the House of Nationalities,<sup>25</sup> or the support provided to different cultural/sport/ linguistic initiatives, the role of the Russian state might be misinterpreted as of a PROMOTER-PERFORMER. The case of Karelia region however changes the perspective and reveals that Russia should be addressed as an OBSERVER instead.

The fieldwork revealed that local authorities of the Republic of Karelia are actively engaged in supporting not only the preservation of minorities' cultures<sup>26</sup>, but that the interaction between civil society organizations representing national minorities and public authorities has a format of open dialogue and consultations. The annual meetings that take place with the Head of the Republic of Karelia, and joint working bodies of state-civil society cooperation are among the examples of the

mechanisms in use. Expert and public councils allocate financial support to minority initiatives through a special public fund, while the Ministry on National Politics<sup>27</sup> provides media coverage for NGOs' projects and financially supports the publishing house "Periodicals" providing informational materials for national minorities.<sup>28</sup> Another interesting element in the case of Karelia is that officially registered NGOs representing national minorities are directly involved as members of the working groups for preparation of national political legislation in the Republic of Karelia. Both the Council under the Head of the Republic of Karelia on Ethnic Relations and The Advisory Council on Interaction with National-Cultural NGOs and National-Cultural Autonomies include representatives of national-cultural NGOs, associations, and autonomies.<sup>29</sup> Not taking an active and direct part in this play and in the establishment of the bridges within the diverse society of Karelia, but staying behind and allowing the processes to develop, the Russian state can be seen therefore as an OBSERVER.

### **What is the role of the OBSERVER for the bridge-building process?**

The OBSERVER has ostensibly a passive role in the bridge-building process but in fact, it can be a powerful player behind the scenes. The OBSERVER supports the processes by not interfering with the play and as mentioned above. By staying aside, the state allows local level authorities to lead the processes and to implement their initiatives, given that the regional



governments and other public institutions and officials respect the established rules of the game. Due to its non-appearance during the processes, the state remains quite often invisible. When bridges however are analysed, one should never forget that all initiatives that take place at micro or meso level cannot take place unless there is a good political will to allow their development.

## CONCLUSION

The current discussion does not claim to provide a comprehensive and detailed typology of all possible roles that states can play in the process of bridging people, communities and governments within and across national borders within the context of the increasing diversity. It provides however a model for analytical and critical reflection on the complexity of processes and phenomena.

The four general role-models outlined here: the PERFORMER, the MOTHER, the NETWORKER, and the OBSERVER, are

not exclusive. A state can simultaneously play several roles with respect to different states or minorities. The purpose of this analytical exercise is to draw attention to the contexts in which initiatives are implemented and bridges across diversity emerge.

Although the analysis has taken the *states* as ‘players per-se’, the fact is that behind states there are governments and people who make decisions and choices – to allow, to ban, to support, to build or to destroy bridges. The good political will, which also includes implementation of the international standards and commitments made, is the key power-factor to make the grass-root initiatives thrive and change realities for both minorities and majorities to the better.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>OSCE 2016, Renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust, restoring security. The priorities of the German OSCE Chairmanship in 2016, p.11 / <https://www.osce.org/cio/215791?download=true>

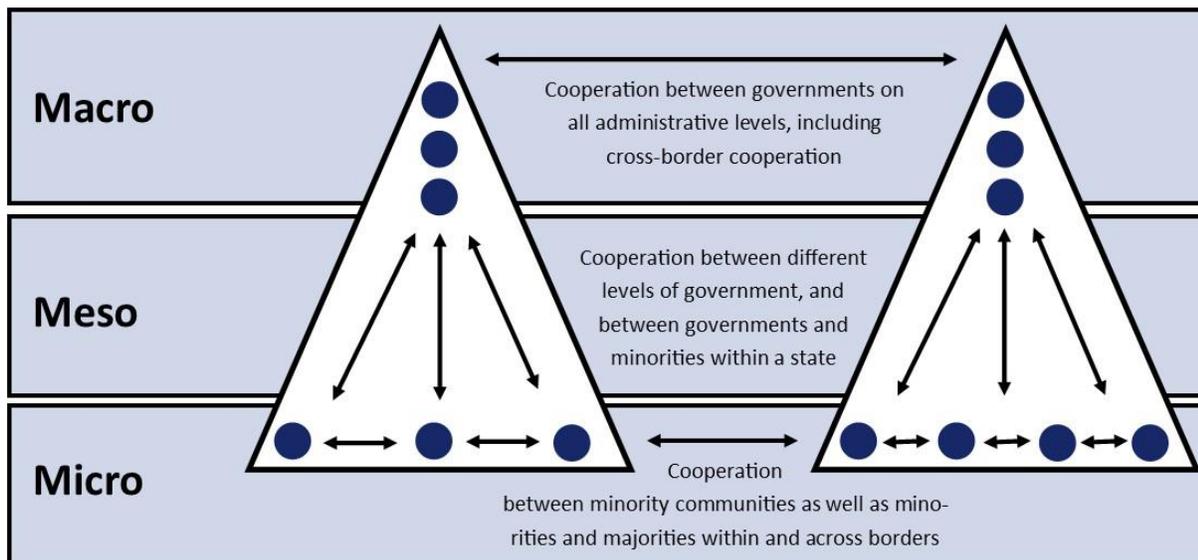
<sup>2</sup> To identify the capabilities of national minority groups (broadly defined along national, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or cultural lines) throughout the OSCE area to participate in bridge building and reconciliation initiatives between and within states, the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in partnership with EURAC Research and the individual expert Nina Badgasarova joined efforts in a research project. More information about the project can be found at: Bridge Building and Integration in Diverse Societies, ECMI 2016-2017, <https://www.ecmi.de/projects/bridge-building-and-integration-in-diverse-societies/>. The research team identified a number of positive examples of national minorities and their institutions working productively in collaboration with national and local authorities. The analytical findings based on the collected and processed data were presented and published in a final project report. The report is available through the following link: ECMI Report, 2016, Dynamics of Integration in the OSCE Area: National Minorities And Bridge Building [https://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx\\_lfpubdb/FINAL\\_OSCE\\_REPORT.pdf](https://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/FINAL_OSCE_REPORT.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> ECMI Documentary video 2017, Dynamics of Integration In The OSCE Area: National Minorities And Bridge Building, <https://youtu.be/bQSGCYw3X08>

<sup>4</sup> The framework was elaborated with respect to the guiding questions for the study, which aimed to ascertain whether the national can minorities contribute to the cohesion of diverse societies:

- 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?

ECMI Report, 2016, Dynamics of Integration in the OSCE Area: National Minorities and Bridge Building [https://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx\\_lfpubdb/FINAL\\_OSCE\\_REPORT.pdf](https://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/FINAL_OSCE_REPORT.pdf)



Source: ECMI Report, 2016, Dynamics of Integration in the OSCE Area: National Minorities and Bridge Building



<sup>5</sup> Non-resident junior researchers supported the ECMI data collection and research in 2016. The current paper refers to cases described in the fieldwork reports of Ms Anna Javorka, Ms Ekaterina Effimenko, Ms Yulia Halikova, Ms Ala Sabanovic, and Ms Isabel Lasch.

<sup>6</sup> ECMI 2016, *ibidem*

<sup>7</sup> Fieldwork data, see note 7

<sup>8</sup> The 1976 Ethnic Groups Act (Volksgruppenesetz) officially recognizes the Slovenes, Croats, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks and Roma as ethnic minority groups

<sup>9</sup> Among the legislative acts that establish the minority governance as a norm in the country are: • Article 66 to 68 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye of 10 September 1919, State Law Gazette No. 303/1920; according to Article 149 para. 1 of the B-VG • Article 7 of the State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria (State Treaty of Vienna), Fed. Law Gazette No. 152/1955; • Article 8 of the Federal Constitutional Act (B-VG), Federal Law Gazette No. 1/1920 • Article I of the Minorities School Act for Carinthia (Minderheiten-Schulgesetz für Kärnten), Fed. Law Gazette No. 101/1959 • Section 1 of the Minorities School Act for Burgenland (Minderheiten-Schulgesetz für Burgenland), Fed. Law Gazette No. 641/1994 • Ethnic Groups Act (July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1976) • The Burgenland state Kindergarten Act (LBGL.35/1995)

<sup>10</sup> Since 1993, Austria has been engaged in a scientific Romani-project focused on research and conservation of Romanes.

<sup>11</sup> Lausanne Peace Treaty, 1923, Section Three/ Article 45: “The rights conferred by the provision of the present Section on the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Moslem minority in her territory”

<sup>12</sup> Dayioğlu, Ali and Aslım, İlksoy (2015) Reciprocity Problem between Greece and Turkey: The Case of Muslim-Turkish and Greek Minorities, Athens Journal of History, Volume 1, Issue 1, Pages 37-50  
<https://www.atiner.gr/journals/history/2015-1-1-3-Dayioglu.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Fieldwork data, see note 7

<sup>14</sup> Fieldwork data, see note 7

<sup>15</sup> The 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, supports the Roundtable. Since 2012, the organisation has been maintaining a website [www.madari.sk](http://www.madari.sk) aiming to eradicate misconceptions about the Hungarian minority and hence to foster better intercultural dialogue with the Slovakian majority.

<sup>16</sup> The Representation provides active advisory service with aims to promote the interests of the minority before the public authorities. The Roundtable of the Hungarian civic associations nominates members into the committees on behalf of the Hungarian National Minority

<sup>17</sup> The initiative has been implemented since 2003 by the Government of Slovakia, Government of Hungary, and the Local Organisation Pazmany Peter Fund. It aims to providing mutual support to minority cultures and education. The initiative has involved the Hungarians in Slovakia and the Slovaks in Hungary and it has been supported financially by the Slovak and Hungarian Government Funding schemes.

<sup>18</sup> The website <http://www.jogsegely.sk/> was established in 2010 as a joint initiative of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic, Department of Human rights and Equal treatment; Hungarian Ministry of Public Administration and Justice (Department of National Strategy Hungary). Founded after the introduction of strict national language laws in Slovakia, the projects aims to provide legal advice and consulting to the Hungarian minority on their language rights, minority rights and citizenship rights so to strengthen the full and active citizenship of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.

<sup>19</sup> The project Kutika textile manufacture and gastronomy was initiated by the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. It has been implemented since 2014 in a partnership with the organisation Minorma and the Hungarian Romani Design supported by the Cultural Centre Dunaj Bratislava and the Art-Eco Civic Association and has received funding as a European Union Cross-border Project. As a social project, it strives to provide a new perspective for underdeveloped regions, encourage entrepreneurship and improve the perception of the Hungarian community. In 2014 the “Manufactory KUTIKA” was established in the village Gemer (Middle-South Slovakia) as a tailoring and sawing manufactory employing local peoples. Today, the brand has expanded into agriculture, with herbs, healing plants and mushrooms.



<sup>20</sup> The DIÁKHÁLÓZAT- STUDENT NETWORK has been established as an initiative of the Hungarian Students in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary with the support of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic SK and Bethlen Gábor Fund HUN and the further support from a number of organisations from all the interested countries. One of the initiatives implemented by the network is the HDTK- National Student Networks' Conference Without Frontiers - Bi-annual nation-wide meetings of the Student Networks SK, HUN, RO, SRB. It has been implemented thanks to the significant support from Hungarian side: Sapientae Hungariae Foundation, Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources Ministry, Bethlen Gabor Fund HUN, National Cooperation Fund HUN, Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources. The conference strives to establish a Hungarian-wide network of students transcending national frontiers, establishing a not only and active student but also an active scientific student community. The bi-annual meetings bring together representatives of Students' Associations from all countries with Hungarian minorities. Talent support and management - students' scientific works are also evaluated and excellence is awarded.

<sup>21</sup> Since 2010 the Charter of Reconciliation project (<http://chartaxxi.eu>), involving the Hungarian minorities from the neighbouring countries and supported by the Hungarian National Cultural Fund, has been encouraging civil collaboration in support of a Movement of reconciliation and rapprochement between nations.

<sup>22</sup> ECMI Report 2016

<sup>23</sup> The Bulgarian Constitution recognizes the existence of ethnic groups but not of minorities. All public/political activities based on ethnic lines (apart from the right to mother tongue and culture) are prohibited.

<sup>24</sup> Fieldwork data, (see note 7). Out of the total of 32 identified organisations representing minorities, 20 are from the region of Karelia, 8 are based in Saint Petersburg and 4 in Moscow.

<sup>25</sup> Fieldwork data, (see note 7): **Cafe as a place of integration** (Uzbek cafe) – project implemented by the organisation Dialogues about integration (Ethnic minorities of Central Asian origin), Moscow. Celebration of various traditional festivals • **School of Neighbouring languages** – project of the organisation bearing the same name (ethnic minorities from the former Soviet region – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Armenia, etc) – provision of free language classes • **House of Nationalities** is one of the main platforms for ethnic-minorities oriented organisations. It acts as a platform for discussion, informational exchange, hosting events of national-cultural organisations in Saint-Petersburg, regional- and city-level conferences. Currently it unites around 100 NGOs in the area. The annual events hosted by the House of Nationalities are: a cultural-sport project 'We are together' (Sport competitions with people involved in the work of the House and participating organisations); Project 'National holidays: past, present' (National holidays – Christmas, Navruz and others); Project 'Brotherhood of nations – brotherhood of literature' (Readings of books, meetings with writers); Project 'Legal education of youth on the matters of fighting against extremism in multinational Petersburg community' (meetings with youth in schools, hosted by representatives of ethnic minorities)

<sup>26</sup> Republic of Karelia is a multinational region of Russia: there are more than 130 different nationalities living there. By the length of residence and economic development of the territory, the indigenous peoples of Karelia are Russians, Karelians, and Vepsians (included into the List of all Indigenous National Minorities of the Russian Federation). Today, the ethnic profile of the Republic of Karelia can be presented in 4 major categories: •traditional (autochthonous) minorities: Karelians, Vepsians, Finns, and Northern Russians • ethnic groups from other regions of Russian Federation: Tatars, Roma, Mordvins, Chuvash, Chechens, Mari • nationalities from the countries of ex-Soviet influence: e.g. Belarusians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians •nationalities from other countries: Germans, Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Greeks, etc.

<sup>27</sup> Fieldwork data (see note 7): The Ministry of the Republic of Karelia on National Politics has two Departments that are directly engaged with the minority politics in the region: the Department of the state support for Indigenous people and the Department of national development and interaction with NGOs and religious associations

<sup>28</sup> Fieldwork data (see note 7): The Ministry of the Republic of Karelia for National Politics, Relations with Public and Religious Associations and Mass Media organizes annually contests for financial subsidies for specific grants among NGOs representing national minorities. These subsidies are funded by federal state program "Development of civil society institutions, development of local self-governance, and protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens" (2014-2010) • The Ministry on National Politics can also distribute among socially oriented non-profit organizations the financial support from the federal budget, more specifically, from the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, but it has to do so in the cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Karelia and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Karelia.



<sup>29</sup> Fieldwork data (see note 7): In 2004, the Ministry adopted the law on state support of Karelian, Vepsian and Finnish languages in the Republic of Karelia and representatives of the national-cultural autonomies and NGOs were the drafters of this law. The Council of Karelians, Vepsians, and Finns of the Republic of Karelia is another structure, which is under the Head of the Republic of Karelia (5 representatives from the Vepsian and Finnish non-governmental organizations and 10 representatives of Karelian public organizations). This Council brings to the board meeting various issues: from language culture to socio-economic development of the areas of compact residence of indigenous people. In addition, the Ministry of Education has a coordinating Council for the Karelian, Vepsian and Finnish languages, and members of social organizations are also members of this Council. There are several coordinating and consulting councils at the Ministry and at the office of the governor of Karelia, such as Council under the Head of the Republic of Karelia on Ethnic Relations, The Advisory Council on Interaction with National-Cultural NGOs and National-Cultural Autonomies, and The Working Group on Issues Related to the Russian Cossacks in the Republic of Karelia.



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Since 2012, as an ECMI researcher and analyst, Dr Popova has been working on topics related to Culture and Diversity, such as minority rights in education, media, language policies and use of languages, and Roma issues. She is the author of the ECMI educational cartoon “What are minority rights?” ([www.ecmi.de/home/what-are-minority-rights/](http://www.ecmi.de/home/what-are-minority-rights/)). In 2016-2017, Dr Popova was actively involved in the research project on the ECMI Bridge building role of national minorities, implemented with the support of the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship.

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