

Intercultural Policies
ZAGREB CASE STUDY
CLIP: Cities for Local Integration Policies

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Foreword

In 2006, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and the City of Stuttgart created a European network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants (CLIP). The project aims at collecting and analyzing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities. The network enables local authorities as well as national and European policymakers to learn from each other and thus to pursue more effective integration policies for migrants.

Starting with module 3 the CLIP network is now supported by six migration research institutes in Bamberg (coordinator), Amsterdam, Wrocław, Turin, Swansea and Vienna. The researchers at the Institute for Urban and Regional Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna are responsible for this report on Zagreb.

In March 2009, a City visit was undertaken to the Capital of Croatia where interesting and insightful interviews with representatives of some national minorities (mainly Bosniak minority) and journalists took place as well as some interviews with City officials or representatives of the Macedonian Orthodox or Islamic community.

We are deeply indebted to Mrs. Elizabetha Knorr, Head of the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development, and especially to her colleague Mrs. Jana Radic. She provided interesting information in large parts and organized the city visit perfectly.

1 Introduction

The topic of this report of the 3rd Module of CLIP has to do with phenomena of urban life that are related to the multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-religious structures of urban populations which challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or keep peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. In present day political discourse, relations between different ethnic and religious groups, immigrants and natives predominantly are discussed in terms of “intercultural dialogue” and/or “interreligious dialogue”.

In this Module of the CLIP Project two dimensions of intergroup relations are of particular interest: conflict between groups and policies to avoid or solve conflict between groups, i.e. conditions of social cohesion in a city. Relevant groups are the city administration, the city council, political parties, churches, labour unions, welfare organizations foundations, local media and anti-immigrant movements in the majority society. On the part of the minorities it includes religious groups and national minorities. Among the religious groups Muslim communities find particular attention. Where Muslims are not the most relevant group another faith – based community is of interest in our research. It is noteworthy that most of the religious groups are organized on an ethnic basis (see Heckmann 2008).

The central topics of this report are intercultural dialogue in general, the dialogue with Islamic communities and the problem of political and religious radicalisation. Intercultural dialogue is a normative frame that spells out certain principles for establishing peaceful relations between different cultural and religious groups. As to the research questions of intergroup relations studies it is evident that this research is also motivated by interests in peaceful relations between groups and individuals. These rather recently in Europe established religious groups are a result of immigration processes. Some of the CLIP cities (e.g. Zagreb, Prague, Budapest) do not yet have much immigration, but have national minorities within their population that originate from the multi-ethnic structure of their country’s population. This means that also “old” ethnic minorities are in the focus of the 3rd Module of CLIP.

Issues concerning intercultural relations and interreligious dialogue in Croatia in general, or in our specific case in its capital Zagreb, cannot be taken out of their younger historical context. The very homogenous population structure as a result of the War of Independence on the one hand and the relatively old tradition of living together with certain national minorities on the other hand shape national policies on intercultural/interreligious issues as well as everyday life.

In Croatia one could distinguish between “old” and “new” national minorities: Jews, Hungarians, Italians, Ukrainians and some other smaller minorities have their specific settlement regions dating back some hundred years while Serbs or Bosniaks can be seen as “new” national minorities due to the War of Independence.

In Croatia the share of “other” foreigners is very low and so it seems reasonable to focus on national minorities in this case study. In this context the probably most important issue on political and diplomatic level is the relation between Croatians and Serbs, the two main protagonists in the War of Independence. Even if 300.000 Serbs left Croatia during the 1990's and only half of them returned to the country after the war, Serbs are still the biggest national minority and their may be some issues that could fit into the context of this Clip module like certain problems concerning restitution questions et cetera. But it seems much more fruitful to focus on the second largest group, the Bosniak minority because of their Islamic denomination.

The term “Bosniak” which goes back to the medieval Bosnian kingdom had its revival after the Yugoslavian War in the 1990's. In former Yugoslavia Muslims were officially distinguished in Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Slovenian Muslims and as a result of Yugoslavia's break up a the “Bosniak” identity emerged again. Nowadays this term is expression for the newly won identity of the Bosnian Muslims not only within BiH but in the whole western Balkan.

2 Background information on the country

2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations

Due to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war, Croatia has been an emigration country in the early 1990s before it became a main destination for immigration (refugees that went abroad, people displaced by war, e.g. Croatians from Bosnia) the last ten years. Compared to some other nations of former Yugoslavia, the young nation's governmental structure can be seen as constantly stable since the Dayton based peace-agreement in 1995. Nevertheless the total population is not growing since immigration equals the negative natural increase (-2.1%) only. Looking back some years, the total number of new immigrants to Croatia per year is on a constant decline (1997: 52.343, 2000: 29.385, 2003: 18.455, 2005: 14.230). In 2005, 94.0% of the total population were Croatian citizens, and, like the years before, people from Bosnia & Herzegovina formed the biggest group of immigrants (58.7%).

As said before Croatia is a relatively homogenous society with more than 90% Croatians but nevertheless in official terms the country is described as a multicultural society. After the War of Independence the share of members of national minorities nearly halved, so at this stage only 7.5% of total population are non Croatian. On constitutional level the Republic of Croatia is defined as nation state for Croatian people and as state for the members of other nations or national minorities. This clear differentiation between Croatians and “others” is expression of a kind of ethnic-based nation building which can be seen as typical for the nation building concepts of the successor states of former Yugoslavia.

According to the last nationwide census in 2001 the ethnic affiliation of 4.481.352 Croatian citizens divides in 89.6% Croatians, 4.5% Serbs, 0.47% Bosniaks, 0.44% Italians, 0.37% Hungarians, 0.34% Albanians, 0.3% Slovenians, 0.24% Czechs, 0.24% Roma. Besides these minorities there is a number of other very small national minorities (between 12.000 and 5.000 members) like Polish, Macedonian, Russian, Austrian, German, Turkish and Bulgarian which

represent about 4% of Croatian population. It is important to mention that belonging to a certain minority is in most of the cases narrowly linked to religious affiliation (e.g. Serbian-orthodox, Macedonian-Orthodox, Russian-Orthodox, Jewish or Bosniaks as Bosnian Muslims).

Most members of many smaller minorities live in relatively small and traditional settlement areas. Some parts of southern and eastern Croatia and of Slavonia are classical settlement areas of the Serbian minority whereas the Bosniak minority doesn't have any specific settlement area and can be found in rural regions as well as in Croatia's cities.

Concerning the level of integration mostly all national minorities can be seen as highly integrated in the Croatian society with the exception of the Roma minority. Even if there are some well integrated families and other individual cases of successful integration, most of the Roma are marginalized. Their situation concerning education, housing, labour and living standard in general is critical in many cases and therefore in 2005 the Croatian government declared the "Decade of Roma Integration", a nationwide action plan in order to find solutions for the most urgent problems the Roma minority is facing. After four years it may be too early to expect final results, but there are critical voices saying that this action plan is underfunded in view of the problems that have to be solved.

2.2 National policy context

Compared to Western European nations the legal condition of national minorities in Croatia is on a high level in the meantime. Guaranteed rights for national minorities have been a condition precedent of being internationally recognized after the Croatian declaration of independence in 1991. The goal of becoming a full member of the European Union also requires an elaborated constitutional basis for minority rights and minority protection.

In 2002 the amended Constitutional Act On The Rights Of National Minorities In The Republic Of Croatia has been passed and all relevant international treaties concerning the protection of national minorities were signed as well as some supplement laws.

The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities gives extensive guarantees concerning specific rights and freedom for members of national minorities (Article 7):

- constitutional parameters of non-discrimination in general
- protection of specific cultural heritage, religion and identity
- usage of the minority language and script in private as well as in official use
- education in the specific minority language and script
- freedom of implementing cultural associations
- freedom of using ethnic insignia or national symbols
- right for a political representation on various levels (local, national) and in administration and judicial bodies
- cultural autonomy by keeping, developing and expressing their own culture and by preserving their cultural heritage
- access to media of mass communication and performing of actions of public information
- implementation of Councils and representatives of national minorities

The protection of national minorities is implemented on three different levels: by international minority laws, by the Croatian Constitution and by specific (supplementary) laws. There is, for example, a quota that guarantees members of national minorities a proportionate representation in administrative and juridical bodies. In reality however there seems to be some backlog in implementing the legislative requirements because national minorities are still underrepresented

in various functions or administrative bodies (for example only 5% of all judges are members of a national minority).

Another important aspect of protecting national minorities are bilateral treaties between a “host country” and those countries where certain minorities have their origin. The so called Osimo-Agreement between Italy and former Yugoslavia still guarantees members of the Italian minority specific protection in Croatia. This agreement was complemented by a bilateral treaty concerning minority rights between Italy and Croatia in 1996. Another bilateral contract was signed in 1995 between Hungary and Croatia which guarantees an similar protected status of Croatians in Hungary and vice versa.

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

The Constitutional Act On The Rights Of National Minorities and the Croatian electoral law guarantee the political representation of national minorities in the Croatian parliament as well on the governmental bodies on local level. The distribution of the eight guaranteed seats in the national parliament follows a fixed proportion: while the Serbian minority is eligible for three of them and Italian and Hungarian do have one fix mandate each, is there a common seat for the Czech and Slovakian minority. All other minorities are divided in two groups delegating one representative each: members of the Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Jewish, Polish, Romanian, Roma, Russian, Ruthenian, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vlach minorities on the one hand, members of the Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian minority on the other.

If the share of total population of a minority exceeds five percent in a city or municipality at least one representative of this minority can be elected in the local parliament, if 15% or more of the local population belong to a national minority this group has to be represented in the local parliament in the respective proportion.

Besides the parliamentary representation on national and local level national minorities have the right to implement so called Councils of National Minorities if their share of total local population exceeds 1.5%. If there are in this case less than 100 members of a minority there will be no election of a whole Council but of a single representative of the respective minority. Those councils and representatives act as intermediators or advisors between their minority and the governmental level when minority related issues have to be negotiated.

The small voter participation in the last minority council elections in 2007 can be interpreted in different ways, either as lacking interest of the members of national minorities or as a result of the unmotivated execution of the elections by the Croatian government.

In addition to the local Council there is also a Board of National Minorities on national level that cooperates with other departments and institutions or with NGOs and local representatives of minorities. Besides its advisory and mediatory functions this Board is responsible for the distribution of the stately funds which are provided for national minorities.

3 Background information on the city

3.1 Brief description of the city

The City of Zagreb is situated on the North-Western part of Croatia beneath the mountain Medvednica by the river Sava. Considering its geographic position, Zagreb is on the path of many migrant flows between the east and west. Today's Zagreb has grown out of two medieval settlements that for centuries developed on neighbouring hills. The first written mention of the city dates from 1094, when a diocese was founded on Kaptol, while in 1242, neighbouring Gradec was proclaimed a free and royal city. Both the settlements were surrounded by high walls and towers, remains of which are still preserved. During the Turkish campaign in Europe, between the

14th and 18th century, Zagreb was an important border fortress. The Baroque reconstruction of the city in the 17th and 18th centuries changed the appearance of the city. The first railroad through Zagreb was opened in 1862, the gas- and waterworks in the following years. The intense development of industry started in the mid-19th century. In 1910 more than one hundred industrial companies, plants or factories in important sectors or branches like machine-building, textile, food and printing had their site in Zagreb. The early 20th century is characterised by a stable expansion of the city in various means, as economical centre as well as its spatial dimension. In the nineteen-twenties the city's population increased by nearly 70%. In times of the socialist regime between 1948 and 1990 the development of the city wasn't that impressive like it was in the 1920's but Zagreb always played an important socio-economic role in Yugoslavia.

Nowadays Zagreb is not only the Capital of Croatia but the nations' largest city and the cultural, economical (highest nominal gross domestic product per capita in Croatia \$19,132 in 2005, compared to the Croatian average of \$10,431), political and administrative centre of Croatia. Zagreb is the seat of the central government, administrative bodies and almost all government ministries. According to latest estimation of city administration, the City of Zagreb had 786.200 inhabitants in 2008.

3.2 The city's migrant population and its characteristics/main groups

Looking at the Zagreb's migrant population there may be one astonishing fact: while in Western European cities and metropolitan areas the share of migrant population is usually higher than the national average Zagreb has a lower share of migrants.

According to the latest census of 2001 there are 91.94% Croatians living in Zagreb and this shows the very homogenous structure of the city's population. Members of national minorities are represented with a little bit more than 5% while other foreigners make for a minimal part only. The largest national minority groups are Serbs (2.41%), Bosniaks (0.80%), Albanians (0.43%), Slovenians (0.41%), Roma (0.25%), Macedonians (0.17%), Montenegrins (0.17%), this shows that the main part of is represented by the so called "new" national minorities, people of former Yugoslavia. People with "other" nationality contain so called Muslims by nationality (which was the official designation of the nationality of Slavic Muslims in former Yugoslavia) and a small amount of people that see themselves as Yugoslavians. The group of "unspecified" population means "ethnically uncommitted" which is also a result of the break up of Yugoslavia. For Western or Central European readers it may be very astonishing that there are so small numbers of foreigners from other continents: in 2001 for example only 50 Africans and 292 Asians were counted and even if in the last years their number may have been increased a bit these are still extremely low shares.

In Croatia, religious affiliation is narrowly linked with ethnicity and according to that the distribution is similar homogenous: 87.09% of all citizens are Christian Catholics, Muslims and Orthodox are the two largest "minority religions" (about 2% each).

CENSUS 2001, CITY OF ZAGREB, ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY

Total:	779 145	100%
Croatians	716 344	91,94 %
National minorities	40 066	5,14%
Albanians	3 389	0,43%
Austrians	53	0,01%
Bosniaks	6 204	0,80%
Bulgarians	110	0,01%
Montenegrins	1 313	0,17%
Czechs	813	0,10%
Hungarians	841	0,11%
Macedonians	1 315	0,17%
Germans	288	0,04%
Poles	133	0,02%
Roma	1 946	0,25%
Rumanians	37	0,00%
Russians	250	0,03%
Ruthenians	123	0,02%
Slovaks	171	0,02%
Slovenians	3 225	0,41%
Serbians	18 811	2,41%
Italians	277	0,04%
Turks	65	0,01%
Ukrainians	333	0,04%
Vlachs	1	0,00%
Jews	368	0,05%
Other	4 764	0,61%
Unspecified	15 649	2,01%
Specified according to regional affiliation	39	0,01%
Unknown	2 322	0,30%

CENSUS 2001, CITY OF ZAGREB, ACCORDING TO FAITH

Total:	779 145	100%
Catholic Church	678 538	87,09%
Greek Catholic Church	807	0,10%
Old Catholic Church	39	0,01%
Orthodox Church - general	15 634	2,01%
Bulgarian Orthodox Church	3	0,00%
Montenegrin Orthodox Church	2	0,00%
Greek Orthodox Church	9	0,00%
Macedonian Orthodox Church	72	0,01%
Romanian Orthodox Church	-	-
Russian Orthodox Church	11	0,00%
Serbian Orthodox Church	129	0,02%
Islamic Religious Community	16 215	2,08%
Jewish Religious Community	323	0,04%
Adventist Church	459	0,06%
Baptist Church	310	0,04%
Evangelical Church	569	0,07%
Jehova's Witnesses	1 500	0,19%
Calvinist Church	42	0,01%
Methodist Church	2	0,00%
Christ Pentecostal Church	141	0,02%
Other	1 393	0,18%
Agnostics and unspecified	31 645	4,06%
Non believers	27 617	3,54%
Unknown	3 911	0,50%

tab. 1 Croatia Census 2001

According to the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities the City of Zagreb has councils and representatives of national minorities in second mandate (first elections were held in

2003 and the second elections for national minorities in 2007.) At the elections 2003 nine councils (Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Czech, Hungarian, Macedonian, Roma, Slovenian and Serbian) and 6 representatives (Bulgarian, German, Slovak, Italian, Ukrainian and Jewish) were elected. At the election in 2007 the City of Zagreb gained two more national minority representatives (Polish and Ruthenian).

A council can be elected if it has more than 500 minority members and a representative can be elected there are at least 100 members in the City of Zagreb. In Zagreb there is a broad bandwidth of NGOs dealing with issues of national minorities. These organisations are usually founded by members of the respective minority and if they fulfil certain criteria they can apply for financial support through the City of Zagreb. Candidates for the elections of the national minority councils and representatives are sent by the minority's NGOs. If a member of a national minority is willing to candidate without being involved in a NGO he or she has to get 50 signatures by members of the respective minority. Through the activities of these councils and representatives, citizens of Zagreb can get an insight in minority culture and customs and vice versa. Councils and representatives of national minorities implement their programs which in many ways support the wellbeing of migrant communities that they represent.

Considering the City's approach the main objective is to step up the relations with national minorities of the City of Zagreb with the aim to, according to Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, let them participate in the public life of the City and conduct local affairs through councils and representatives that they have elected. Also, the aim is to promote, preserve and protect their status in society. The Mayor's Office Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development is contact and coordination point for all inquiries or requests concerning the work of the Minority Councils or the work of minority related NGOs.

Many of these ethnic organisations have set themselves the target to preserve their own cultural heritage and identity by organizing various cultural events or by establishing drama groups, traditional orchestras and so on on the one hand. On the other hand many organisations provide supplementary education or private lessons for children (often in their own language). This whole spectrum of activities can be seen as an very important support for the welfare of the respective ethnic groups in the city and for this reason there are various forms of support the City offers to these NGOs (providing accommodation for a symbolic rent, support by organizing intercultural events).

3.3 The city' Muslim population and its characteristics

According to the 2001 Census there are 6.204 (0.80%) Bosniaks in the City of Zagreb and 16.215 (2.08%) members of Islamic Community. Some members of Albanian national minority and most members of the Roma national minority are Muslim. The Chief Imam is Albanian and people of other nationalities are active in the Islamic Community, although most of them are Bosniaks.

At the time of the Census the issue of declaration was still unclear – why “Bosniak” and not “Muslim”? There was a possibility to declare oneself as Bosniak and as a member of Islamic Community. There was no possibility of declaration as a Muslim (by nationality) because people who declared themselves as Muslims (by nationality) were listed under the section “other”.

One of the most important programs of the Council of Bosniak National Minority of Zagreb is a scientific survey of the cultural position of Bosniaks/Muslims (by faith) in the City of Zagreb.

This survey, which will be implemented in 2008 and 2009 will provide a detailed insight into the social and cultural status of Bosniaks/Muslims (by faith) so that they could cooperate with Bosniak associations to formulate programs and provide assistance to the needs of the Bosniak population in the City of Zagreb.

On the basis of data collected in the survey, associations and councils will be able to nominate members of national minorities to certain tenders for work in the state administration and also to

require funding of programs that will help solving specific social, cultural, political, working, educational and other problems that minorities struggle with in everyday life. This survey's main goal is to gather information on social and cultural status of Bosniaks and members of Islamic Community in the City. Questions are about age, gender, home country, Croatian citizenship, education, employment, nationality, computer use, hobbies, housing, cuisine, income. The survey will be implemented in one part of the City after another and the results will be conjoint.

No precise data is available about the structure of other national minorities of Islamic faith. According to some Roma minority members' statements we can assume that most of the Roma population in the City is Muslim. According to the information from the Albanian Catholic Mission in Croatia most of Albanians in the City of Zagreb are Catholic (around 450 families).

The term Muslim in this region can refer to two things: Muslim (by faith) and Muslim (by nationality). By the amendments to the Constitution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1971, Muslims became constitutive nation – also known under informal term Muslims with big “M” that should be distinguished from other citizens of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that are Muslims according to faith, written with little “m” in Slavic languages. The Yugoslav “Muslim by nationality” policy was considered by Bosniak as neglecting and opposing to their Bosniak identity because the term tried to describe Bosniaks as a religious group, not an ethnic one. For the first time in history, in 1993, the term Bosniak was officially recognised in Bosnia and Herzegovina while the term Muslims by nationality was not in use any longer. Bosniaks are Europeans of Slavic origin who took over Islam as their faith to preserve their uniqueness and independence. They have their own history, traditions, cultural heritage that is related to the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Identity of Bosniaks living in the Republic of Croatia is enriched by the fact that they are Croatian citizens who enjoy equal rights as all the other citizens.

When it comes to employment and socio-economic status, there are no significant differences between members of Islamic Community and Croatian population. Among the members of Islamic Community there are also academic professors, distinguished physicians and politicians, people from the working class but also people who live on the edge of material existence (this may mainly be the case concerning members of the Roma community).

In general one can say that the structure of the Islamic Community has been substantially changed: older people aren't in the majority any longer because in the last few years many young people joined the Community. According to the interview partner of the Islamic Community, there is a greater interest of the young people for practising religion in the daily life. This can be seen on weekly prayer on Fridays when 50% of believers are youngsters.

Considering the internal structure and organisation of the Islamic Community in Croatia these are the most important institutions: The Parliament of Islamic Community in Croatia, Meshihat of the Islamic Community in Croatia, Mufti of Zagreb and Zagreb Medresa “Dr. Ahmed Smajlović”. The Parliament of Islamic Community in Croatia is the highest legislative body of the Islamic Community. Meshihat of the Islamic Community in Croatia is the executive organ of the Parliament of the Islamic Community that takes care of the organisation of the Islamic Community religious needs of Muslims and provides conditions for religious service. Head of Meshihat is the President. In this mandate the President is Mufti Ševko Efendi Omerbašić. The Mufti is a person that has according to the Shari'ah rules the right and duty to define the Sahri'ah laws.

Majlis is the basic organisational unit of the Islamic Community. The Executive Board of Majlis is headed by President of Majlis and Chief Imam and takes care of the functioning of Majlis (the Islamic Community in Croatia has 13 Majlises).

Zagreb Medrese “Dr. Ahmed Smajlović” is the Islamic high school in Zagreb. Medrese was verified as a high school by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Croatia as high school with public rights. Medrese started working in the school year 1992/1993. It has four mixed classes with about 100 students.

In the City of Zagreb there are six Bosniak, 13 Albanian and 42 Roma NGOs. Those NGOs are not necessarily connected to the religion but in many cases and activities the religious topics are contained. As said before the Head Muslim organisation is the Islamic Community of Croatia and

the Islamic Centre in the City of Zagreb. What are the most important activities and goals of these institutions? They care about the everyday religious life in many aspects and organize religious and educational panels, the organisation of Islamic religious instructions for children, youth and senior citizens, humanitarian work in beneficial society Merhamet, activities of Women's Council which operates within the Islamic Community, organisation of European competition of melodious Quran teaching, organisation of professional symposium and round tables, organisation of Islamic Youth Conference in Croatia. Many of these activities have been organized for more than forty years, an important indicator for the well developed structures of the Islamic Community in Croatia.

Looking at the Islamic Centre in Zagreb a broad spectrum of activities is offered: Children attend religious classes in over 60 schools all over town but many children also attend religious classes in the Centre during the weekend (some Roma children also). The Islamic Centre has many cultural, religious, sport and educational activities. Except the activities that were mentioned above, the Centre takes care that people of all ages are included in its work. Islamic Centre provided space for Islamic kindergarten, the City recognized the need and provided with 570.000 kn for equipping. The kindergarten was opened by the Mayor in September 2008.

Members of the Islamic Centre earning more than 10.000 kn per year pay 2.5% of their salary as membership-fee, a free amount can be paid voluntarily by those who earn less than 10.000 kn per year. These fees are used to finance the community work of the Centre in general. The Centre is mainly funded by national subsidies, but in order to collect money for special events or needs there are often appeals for funds after the Friday evening prayer. Except the secretary all other members of the Centre are working on voluntary basis there. About 50 members are working regularly for the Islamic Centre but there is a great number of unregistered people playing a part in the Centre's everyday work as volunteers.

The Muslim Youth Club is a very important institution within the Islamic Centre. Its main goal is to attract as many young Muslim boys and girls as possible in order to offer them a useful alternative programme to their sometimes not easy everyday life in their neighbourhoods characterized by ignorance, crime or drug abuse. The Muslim Youth Club wants to help young Muslims developing their religious view upon their life and wants to show them the "cool" aspects of Islam. Young people should be educated to practising Muslims not only as a result of their sense of duty but of their deeper insight that it is a religion which can help to lead a good and useful life. Spoken literally, kids and teenagers shouldn't be educated on the streets of their quarters but rather by their society.

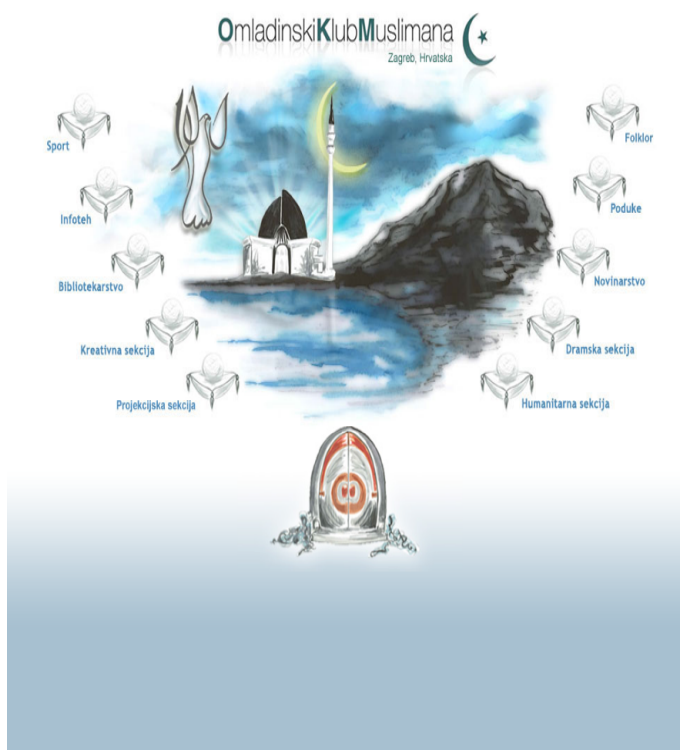


fig. 1 screenshot of www.ok.com.hr



fig. 1 screenshot of www.ok.com.hr

Considering these overall goals, the Muslim Youth Club offers manifold equipment and programme to interested teenagers (Darts, tabletop football, own rooms for meetings). Besides that often movies are shown which shall contribute to a better understanding of Islam. The Youth Club maintains a site with many useful links which offer many different opportunities such as gathering, sports, creative section, tuition, section for computer science and technology, media and journalism, humanitarian section, religious education and folklore. Besides that the Club offers supplementary education which is free for members of the Islamic Centre, other people have to pay a small fee for this offer (see screenshots of the webpage www.ok.com.hr). And even other social events are organised regularly like soccer tournaments, blood donation or round tables where ecological issues are discussed.

The youth work is not limited to the Islamic Centre itself: three times a year big Islamic Youth conferences are organized (two in Zagreb, one on the Isle of Krk) and there are 20 "main cities" with a higher share of Muslim population and out of these cities each year ten teenagers are invited to Zagreb for one week in order to give them the possibilities to deepen their beliefs and to take part in the various activities of the Youth Club. Another project that will be realized soon wants to be a more unusual kind of promotion work for the Islam: All over town flyers with short and easily to understand information about the Islam shall be distributed in order to reach people of other religions and to maximize the understanding for Islam in the whole society.

Five volunteers are in charge of the Youth Club, everyone of them has his or her own projects. Before a project can be realized it has to pass the council of elders of the Islamic Centre itself.

Few years ago, the football club NUR was founded which competes in the 2nd Zagreb league. Until last year, members of NUR were renting training fields but now days they practice on the terrain of the Islamic Centre that was built with the financial support of the City. The Minister of Education and Sports as well as the Mayor attended the opening.

The successful and popular choir Arabeske represents the Islamic Centre and the Mosque. The choir was founded in 1993. It released 3 albums and performs at relevant multicultural events.

4 Local intercultural policies in general

4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations to ethnic and religious organisations in the city

Through the institution of councils and representatives national minorities participate in the public life of the City and they conduct the local work. Through that they preserve and protect their status in society. Every issue of the City that has influence on the national minority issues has to be considered by the Committee of the City Assembly for National Minorities before the final decision is made. The principle of equality and political participation of national minorities has been implemented in the City life.

The the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development at the Mayor's Office is responsible and also many other City offices depending on the subject. Every City office has a contact person in charge of national minority issues. If a minority organisation applies for some financial support by the City this application is usually sent to the Mayor or the Mayor's office and in some cases directly to the respective department. The request is forwarded from the Mayor's Office to the Department for Promoting Humans Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities where it will be considered and checked. The Department also asks the respective Council or Representative of that national minority for his or her estimation. If there aren't any objections the application will be solved either in the Department itself or it will be forwarded to another responsible Department. In most of the cases issues and applies concern the City Office for Health and the City Office for Culture, Education and Sports.

The Mayor takes active interest in relations with minority organisations. He participates in pursuit of minority programs and plays an active role in minority events as well as religious ones such as celebration of religious holidays of City minorities (e.g. Islamic, Jewish and Orthodox)

There are no elected representatives of national minorities in the City Assembly because according to the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, on the local level a minority has to have over 5% of involvement of inhabitants in the population of the City to be represented in the City Assembly. Since none of the mentioned minorities have that percentage they have no representatives at the Assembly. According to the Statute of the City of Zagreb, councils and representatives have the right to recommend measures for promotion of the status of national minority to working bodies of the City including nomination of general acts that promote issues of significance for national minorities. Councils and representatives can set off candidates for duties in working bodies in the City of Zagreb They need to be informed of every issue that will be discussed on Assembly Session and working bodies of the City Assembly that concerns national minority issues.

In the City Assembly there is the Committee for National Minorities which, according to the Assembly's Rule of Procedure, considers issues that are important for implementing rights of national minorities in the City of Zagreb. It measures the development of national minorities' status in the City that is proposed by councils and representatives of national minorities and other entitled applicants. Committee for National Minorities gives its suggestions and opinions to the City Assembly.

4.2 Issues, demands and interests

The City is making a great effort to give equal importance to all of this issues. Mostly all national minorities in the City of Zagreb are integrated with local population because most of them speak Croatian language so they are beyond language barriers what made it more easily to become a part of the Croatian society. Roma population is the only one that still has urgent social needs as well as educational. The City pays special attention to the Roma minority considering its difficult status. The City implements activities on the conduct of National Programme for Roma that was

promoted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia. That program includes all segments important for integration of Roma population and especially the segment of physical planning. Also, the City has made great efforts to improve the educational measures for Roma children especially pre-school education in the area where there's a great amount of Roma inhabitants and where it is very important to implement a special program that stimulates the integration of Roma children into the pre-school program. Most of those efforts are made thanks to the cooperation of the City and Roma NGOs. There are 42 Roma NGOs in the city that are based on various areas of interests.

Members of national minorities, their NGOs and councils/representatives of national minorities freely maintain connections with the people with whom they share same ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious characteristics as well as with legal persons that are situated in their county of origin that perform educational, scientific, cultural, publishing and humanitarian activities. There aren't any specific demands by specific groups or ethnic organisations, they mostly all apply for the same things (mostly financial aid for cultural or religious based NGOs or events).

For 2008 a report will be written informing about the realisation of the working plan of certain minorities in the last year, the structure of this report resembles the general demands and interests of national minorities and their organisations: Information (web page, bulletins, cooperation with media); manifestations (various events like the Council day or other holidays of their home countries, memorials etc.); education (organised workshops on various subjects, often computer teaching, sometimes tradition, customs and language); activities of the minority in cooperation with the home country and other associations in the country or abroad (relations and often organised trips to the home country); culture (movies, exhibitions, music); joint programmes (coordination of national minorities); implementation of political rights, legal aid, use of language and script and representation in the executive bodies of regional selfgovernment.

Councils and representatives of national minorities in the City include various religious communities of certain minority (e.g. members of Bosniak national minority are mostly members of Islamic Community, members of Serbian national minority are mostly members of Orthodox Church as well as some members of Montenegrin, Macedonian and Bulgarian national minority).

The City provides financial support for programs and projects of various NGOs of national minorities. In the City of Zagreb there are 13 Albanian, 6 Bosniak, 1 Bulgarian, 7 Montenegrin, 2 Czech, 6 Hungarian, 7 Macedonian, 5 German, 2 Polish, 42 Roma, 1 Ruthenian, 7 Russian, 2 Slovak, 3 Slovenian, 10 Serbian, 4 Italian, 5 Ukrainian and 10 Jewish NGOs. The City doesn't provide assets for everyday work of those organisations but it finances or co-finances the implementation of their working plans. The assets are given from the responsible City Office depending on the subject of the organisation's program. Councils and representatives can have national minority's organisations as partners in pursuit of certain activities. Therefore, the City can provide assets both ways (for councils and representatives and for minority NGOs).

In order to illustrate interests and demands of minority organisations structure and work of three different Bosniak NGOs will be described on the following pages.

ORGANISATION OF BOSNIAK VETERANS IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE OF CROATIA

The Bosniak minority is the only minority group living in Croatia that has an own organisation for its former soldiers in the War of Independence, the so called "homeland army". This NGO counts 4.200 members, about 1.000 of them are living in Zagreb where also the central office is located. This central office stands in close contact to regional offices of the organisation which are situated in all other provinces of Croatia, only in areas with few members there aren't any office structures but single local contact persons.

An elected President (Mr. Hamdija Malic) is heading the organisation, beside him a governing body (3 persons) has controlling function as well as administrative tasks. Two or three times a year a central meeting is held where future programmes are discussed and decided and strategies how to cooperate with the respective ministries in the best way are discussed and

updated. The organisation is financed by national funds, the City of Zagreb provides accommodation.

What are the main goals of the Bosniak Veterans? First of all the organisation wants to be a meeting point for all people that took active part in the homeland army, it offers juridical aid and provides information concerning for example questions of disability pensions and other war-related problems.

But there is some other very interesting planning for the near future: A huge memorial will be realized in front of the Islamic Centre in honour of the Bosniak victims in the War of Independence. In return for the 1.100 killed Bosniaks that fought on the side of the Croatian Army the Ministry of Defence and the City of Zagreb provided the property in front of the Islamic Centre free of any charge. The memorial will be finished in the next two or three years, its final size will be around 11.000 square metres. In its structure it resembles an “U” which is the Islamic symbol for “water”. In the last months many reports and newspaper articles have been written about this deeply symbolic monument.

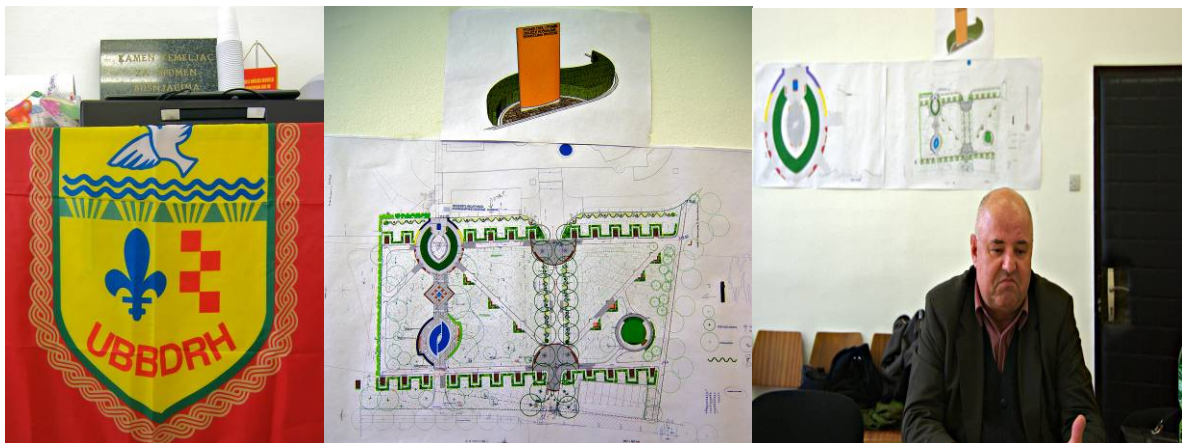


fig. 3 Bosniak Veterans: logo – draft of the memorial – president Mr. Malic

Besides this “big” project of the organisation there are various other regular activities like a round table where veterans from Bosnia and Croatia can meet, trips to cities which had to suffer a lot under the War of Independence (Sarajevo, Vukovar), some sporting events are organized as well as meetings to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of the Croatian army. Last year a book was published telling the history of the Bosnian Defenders and their role in the War of Independence.

The organisation collaborates with over 25 other NGOs in Croatia, their work may have a clear focus on coming to terms with the younger history but there are certain events or activities where nearly all other national minorities are involved. As described before this NGO also works together with the respective departments of the City of Zagreb, in most of the cases with the Department for Health Care (financial aid for veterans etc.).

Another interesting financial support is given by the Croatian government that shows how widespread the national integration strategy is: every year one member of the Bosniak Veterans has the possibility to pilgrimage to Mecca, all costs are paid by the state.

For Western European readers a organisation like the Bosnian Defenders may seem a little bit overrated but it is much more than a simple community of veterans. One has to keep in mind that the War of Independence is not long ago and that the culture of remembrance as it is understood by the veterans is an important part of the Bosniak identity construction.

“PREPOROD” - CULTURAL COMMUNITY OF BOSNIAKS IN CROATIA

Preporod is the second largest cultural community in Croatia, according to her president, Mr. Senad Nanic, a typical “classical cultural minority association”. Preporod offers and organizes a lot of different activities and events, the main target group are the Bosniak people living in Zagreb or in the other parts of Croatia. Related to their programmes and events information and education are very important for Preporod, especially children of the third and fourth minority generation seem to be threatened to forget about their Bosniak roots. A very desirable aim would also be to interest Croatians in the work of the organisation or for Bosniak culture in general. Even if Bosniaks are part of the Croatian society since many decades, so the estimation of the president, they still are in cultural aspects a self-contained minority with only few touch points with the main culture.

Another important aspect of Preporod's work is preservation and cultivation of the specific Bosnian language. In order to reach that goal there are different publications that are edited by Preporod, a Drama Studio playing Bosnian literature and various music groups. The work of Preporod is not focused on Zagreb but on whole Croatia and especially people in smaller towns are very interested in the events Preporod is organising there because of the lack of regular cultural programmes in the periphery. Contrary to their events which take place in Zagreb many Croatians can be found in the audience when Preporod organizes concerts or theatre plays in rural areas. Besides that the organisation tries to implement some projects together with Serbian minority organisations what can be seen as a very important contribution to good interethnic and intercultural relations.



fig. 4 Preporod – inside Preporod office

Especially in terms of publishing Preporod is very active: every year two or three books are published (dealing with issues of the Bosniak history or identity), YASMIN a journal for teenagers (with contents like short stories with religious background, lyrics of famous Bosniak songs, games and comics or quizzes) and a kind of Bosniak newspaper are published once a month. BEHAR, what means “spring”, is probably the most notable magazine published by Preporod, mainly professional authors and journalists write for it: since more than 17 years this journal contains a huge spectrum of articles and reports concerning the Bosniak culture. In nearly all issues of the years 1992 – 1994 the War of Independence dominates is the subject matter, many articles describe the success of Bosnian and Croatian army, but one can also find some diary-like articles written by victims of the war. In this time there is a clear religious impetus and terms like “war”, “tolerance”, “belief” or “Djihad” are discussed in many articles and columns. At this time the editorial board emphasized often that BEHAR is one of the independent magazines where one can find the uncensored “truth about the war”. Positioning of the Islam in the “new” Europe, the rise of new states after the War of Independence and many religious or philosophical based articles about the way to find a “new” identity are the main topics in the issues of BEHAR in the years between 1995 and 1998. The latest issues of BEHAR (87 pages!) are dealing with less political topics than the years before: one can find interviews with prominent representatives of the Islamic community, there are columns discussing the position of women in modern Islam and there are lots of articles touching subjects of Bosniak culture in general like interpretations of old

Bosnian literature, prints of important Bosnian paintings of old and new artists, some articles about Bosnian history, lyrics, poems and so on. As one can see BEHAR is a thematically widespread and ambitious magazine that can be kind of a speaking tube for the Bosniaks. It also has opinion forming qualities because there are regular columns commenting politics of the day out of a Bosnian point of view. Unfortunately there aren't with exception of the Islamic Centre any regular places where BEHAR can be purchased but there are changing shops where it is offered. In the context of this study it is important to mention that there were no articles or reports dealing with problems that would emerge of being a "minority" in the Croatian society.

This goes hand in hand with the estimation of the president, Mr. Nanic, that in Croatia despite of the global discussions about Islamic culture and Islamist terror no hate, prejudice or turning-away against Bosniaks arose. He puts forward the opinion that in Western or Central Europe there are many more prejudices versus Islam than there are in Croatia or the Western Balkan in general. During the war some Arab fundamentalist fighters came to Bosnia and people like those evoked some fears within the society but people always differentiated between fundamentalists and Bosniaks.

Considering the organisational structure of Preporod three vice-presidents hold several meetings each month in order to discuss financial and programmatic questions, also future projects are discussed and planned by them. Only the secretary of Preporod is employed all other members of the NGO are working on voluntary basis. Authors, directors, musicians are paid by service contracts in order to motivate professionals to work for Preporod.

The funding of all minority organisations is regulated by national law, the City of Zagreb provides accommodation charging a symbolic rent only. The City usually doesn't finance any events but due to increased national governmental subsidies in the last few years Preporod was able to realize more and more programmes. But the NGO is dependent from these official financial aids because the Bosniak minority is poor in an economic point of view which means that there are only very few private donations and even the national finances of the homecountry BiH are poor so that means that this national minority can't expect money from abroad (on contrast to the Italian minority, for example). The organisation tried to gain some Bosniak businessmen for cooperation but they weren't interested at all in advertising in Preporod's magazines and newspapers.



SEVDAH – CULTURAL ARTISTIC ASSOCIATION

Founded in January 2006 this NGO has a clear statement to communicate and promote Bosnian culture and not a certain religion. The approach of Sevdah can be seen as an interethnic one because they want to show that Bosnia despite it consists of three part-nations is *one* country. They try to promote an overall Bosnian culture independent of being a Bosnian of Muslim, Serbian or Croatian origin. Just like the other mentioned Bosnian NGOs one of the main goals of Sevdah is to preserve Bosnian culture and identity because they are convinced that Bosnians of all origins tend to forget about their own history and tradition.

Just like other minority based organisations Sevdah is funded by national subsidies, some of the courses they offer have to be paid, private donations play a minimal role only. Contrary to some other organisations they don't have their own accommodation provided by the City, the respective application is currently under examination. As long as this problematic situation is unsolved Sevdah has to cooperate with many other Bosniak NGOs, the Islamic Centre is nearly all time open for them if they need room for rehearsals etc. One person is employed as accountant and secretary at the same time all other members are working on voluntary basis.

Sevdah concentrates on programmes and activities like drama groups, dancing, folkloric dancing, exhibitions and music; there aren't any publications because according to Mr. Alicehajic, one of the leading members of Sevdah, many other Bosniak NGOs like Preporod are publishing more than enough.

80% of all members are younger than 20 years, which shows the target group of the organisation: young people. Sevdah has an own drama group for children where 70 to 80 kids are involved (28 of them regularly). Other regular members are 24 musicians in the Sevdah orchestra, 10 singers, 40 singers in the choir, 5 assistants and 30 members without specific functions. In 2008 they organized 16 events all across Croatia and there have been three documentaries about them in the national minority TV Prizma.

Looking at those three Bosniak NGOs they have some goals, demands or interests in common like the preservation of Bosnian identity, language and heritage. But according to Mr. Ekrem Becirovic, the President of the Council of the Bosniak Minority of the City of Zagreb, most of these organisations are going their own separate ways and as a consequence of this there is a quite significant overlapping of contents. One of the main goals for him is to bundle some of the activities in a more or less united Bosniak NGO.

4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue

COMMUNICATION WITH ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND FUNDING

The City has contacts mainly if it comes to solve some particular questions and demands that would help preserve and improve relations with religious communities in the City. With the aim to promote ecumenical dialogue and interreligious cooperation direct contact has been established with representatives of religious communities and many of their activities have been financially supported at their request.

In the year 2007 one of the City locations was given for temporary use to Jewish Religious Community Bet Israel and in the year 2008 the new synagogue was founded and its renovation was co-financed also by the City of Zagreb.

Also in the year 2007 the Macedonian Orthodox delegation arranged with the City that the City will provide a location suitable for construction of Macedonian Orthodox Church since it does not have own space for practising of its religious rites. Before they practised their faith in a small Roman Catholic Church in the centre of the City.

The City provides funding for ethnic and religious organisations through various City departments, depending on the subject of demands. Most of the demands are asked from the Mayor directly but then they are distributed according to the subject. Those demands are mostly under jurisdiction of

City Office for Education, Culture and Sports, City Office for Legal-Property Relations and the City's Assets and City Office for Health, Labour, Social Protection and War Veterans. As for religious minorities, there's no legal obligation from the local authority to finance religious communities. Still, the City provides with new locations for certain religious communities for faith practice (Synagogue, Macedonian Orthodox Church).

In 2008 the Department for Culture, Education and Sports of the City of Zagreb provided financial support, for example, for following projects:

Pre-school education: Minority related NGOs offer continuously programmes for pre-school education which are financed or co-financed by the City of Zagreb, for example a half-day kindergarten for Roma children realized by the "Union of Croatian Roma" or different pre-school activities for little Roma children as a supplementary preparation for school realized by the association "Golden Heart for Roma". Even religious activities are financially supported by the Department (in agreement with the children's parents) and so there are specific programmes in 16 kindergartens for every persuasion. In Zagreb there are 45 religious based or private kindergartens (for over 3.000 children) where pre-school education is offered. This educational programme costs about 1.000kn per month and the City supports Roma families in order to make it possible for these children to take part in pre-school education.

Support of Roma minority: The kindergarten "Zrno" offers specific programmes for integration of Roma children and is working together with many Roma organisations, in order to keep these activities going on, the Department for Culture, Education and Sports provides financial aid. The already mentioned "Union of Croatian Roma" provides translators even in kindergartens which can be seen as an important part of integration activities and is thus also funded by the Department. In 2008 the association "Golden Heart for Roma" received 120.000kn in order to realize the mentioned pre-school project, including warm lunch for the children and salaries for educators. Besides that the Department also gives financial support to Roma families with critical socio-economic background.

Hungarian minority: The Department for Culture, Education and Sports is financing a bilingual kindergarten with 450.000kn per year where educators take care of 13 children.

Jewish minority: A specific pre-school programme for 25 children is supported with 300.000kn.

Bilingual education in school: Every national minority has access to bilingual classes, the education for 521 Roma children, 15 Hungarians, 33 Jewish children, 58 Serbs and 72 children in an Islamic private school is supported by the Department.

Other supported projects: There is an ongoing study/project that examines the social position of Roma young girls and women that is funded by the Department, writers with minority background are financially supported in certain projects dealing with the identity and heritage of their national minority.

In general the City provides assets for intercultural dialogue through the assets for common activities of national minorities in the City. They are given to the Coordination of national minorities within the Municipality. In the year 2008 697.000,00 HRK and in 2009 1.127.000,00 HRK were provided. Those assets have to be spent for defined purposes and activities, but minority NGOs can also be funded through these assets. Minority NGOs can obtain funds from various City departments depending on the subject of their request. Usually those demands are directed to the health department, welfare, culture and also demands on minority youth NGOs. Beyond that there is a possibility to ask for certain assets from the City for things that have not been planned in advance and if funding is approved for such a specific case the assets go out of City's funds from current reserves.

MEASURES AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND MEASURES FOR IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS

The City Assembly has passed the Decision on conditions for achievement of financial support of health, social and humanitarian programs and project of interest for the City of Zagreb. That decision includes programs of social significance that include, among others, national minority issues. The City Office for Health, Labour, Social Protection and War Veterans invites tender for nomination of programmes and projects of social significance. NGOs of national minorities can apply to this tender, as well as other NGOs that are registered for pursuit of programmes of social and humanitarian significance in the City of Zagreb.

Also, the City is obligated to implement National programme for Roma and Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 what means including them in social and public life. The Action Plan of the Republic of Croatia is complementary to the 2003 National Programme for Roma. It undertakes to tackle the problems that the Roma population faces in four areas: education, health care, employment and housing. The measures proposed by the Action Plan will help to eliminate the marginalisation and discrimination of the Roma minority, eradicate poverty and improve their living standards as a result of faster economic development. In all four areas special attention has been devoted to the rights of children and women, their education, health care, and inclusion of Roma in all forms of work.

These measures are an important part to prevent or diminish social exclusion of groups with a critical socio-economic background, due to their position and daily business the representatives and Councils of the national minorities are involved in these issues.

As mentioned before relations to ethnic based organisations are maintained on voluntary bases and always with good cooperation. The City of Zagreb provides locations (work spaces) for minority's NGOs. Those locations are given on their request, outside of priority list.

Minority NGOs get financial support by the City for the realization of cultural, informational and publishing programs which articulate most activities of minority communities and express the need to preserve the ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity.

The City's contact with ethnic and religious minorities is institutionalised through councils and representatives of national minorities in the City. NGOs contact the City directly with special demands or through councils and representatives of national minorities.

Ethnic organisations (minority NGOs) nominate candidates for the election of councils and representatives of national minorities. There are 9 councils (each has 25 members) and 8 representatives of national minorities in the City. The applicant (in this case the minority NGO) can nominate no more than the number of candidates that are elected in the minority council (25). Members of councils and representatives of national minorities are elected directly by secret ballot vote for the period of four years.

Besides the institutionalised structures like the mentioned councils and representatives of national minorities of the City of Zagreb, national minority NGOs function through the councils and representatives, various City Offices deal with specific minority issues, the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development at the Mayor's Office coordinates these issues.

Legal framework consists of the Decisions of the City Assembly on giving financial support to NGOs in the areas of interest to the City (health, social and humanitarian programs and projects). Programs of public cultural needs can finance minority organisations in the field of culture and education.

FORMS OF INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

There are forms of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue that are mediated by the City. Those are mostly events of cultural and religious nature which are attended by the Mayor himself, his deputies and representatives of the City as well as the representatives of ethnic and religious communities which cooperate with councils and representatives of national minorities.

Each ethnic minority that is represented by councils and representatives in the City celebrates dates which are important for their home country and organises events that connects their home and host county. Those events are visited by members of other ethnic minorities on regular bases and also by City representatives.

There is the Coordination of Councils and Representatives of National Minorities whose function is to familiarise minorities among themselves, to work on better cooperation and to extend the atmosphere of confidence.

The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities stipulates that two or more councils of national minorities established in the same or different units of self-government can establish a coordination of councils and representatives of national minorities to coordinate and promote a common interest. Using this legal option all the councils and representatives in the City of Zagreb established the coordination of national minorities accepting the Agreement on the Establishment of Coordination. By the Agreement of all its members (consensus) Coordination is allowed to make statutes, rules of procedure, working programmes, financial plans, final accounts and other important decisions for national minorities of Zagreb. Councils and representatives of national minorities can enable the Coordination to take action in their jurisdiction. The Coordination of National Minorities gathers all councils and representatives of national minorities of the City of Zagreb. Few NGOs gather members of different national minorities: Union of Associations for Promotion of Cultural Heritage of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia and the International Association of Russians, Ukrainians, Belarus, Armenians, Moldovans, Croatians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Slovenians and of other nationality. They have the same status as all the other Minority NGOs.

Presidents of councils and representatives are brought together as well as representatives of the City. It depends what is the purpose of the event. E.g. if it's an event organised by the Council of Bosniak National Minority then the members of the Islamic community will be present also. Since the City is often the one who finances or co-finances most of activities and events of ethnic and religious minorities, the Mayor is always a dear guest and so are his deputies and representatives.

A "street-level" form of mediation in terms of interethnic dialogue, for example street workers in problematic multiethnic neighbourhoods, is not provided by the City of Zagreb. Representatives of the City as well as representatives of ethnic NGOs don't see needs for actions like this.

SUPPORT OF CELEBRATION DAYS AND ETHNIC HERITAGE

The City supports all the activities that are organised to preserve the ethnic, cultural and religious identity of ethnic and religious minorities. E.g. last few years for the occasion of the Jewish holiday Hanukkah, on the main City square, 1st candle on Menorah was lit by the ambassador of Israel and the Mayor of the City.

Every year, national television broadcasts live the feast of Muslim community Bairam from the Zagreb Mosque which was attended by high state and city officials. Islamic population can freely celebrate their religious holidays with a day off from work for Bairam.

The Coordination of national minorities has established the day of national minorities in the City of Zagreb which is celebrated in April every year. Besides City representatives of national minorities, the Mayor, representatives of Government Offices and representatives of City Offices attend this event. National television (HRT) regularly reports of this celebrated day.

Councils and representatives of national minorities as well as their NGOs participate in other minority's activities on regular bases through pursuit of their working programs and also a successful dialogue among ethnic communities.

EXAMPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICES OF COOPERATION

Education: Examples of preschool education: In the neighbourhood Kozari bok where a large number of Roma population lives there is a special program in the kindergarten "Zrno" which is set up to encourage the integration of Roma children in the preschool program. In cooperation with Roma NGOs and the Centre for social care kindergarten "Cefferino Jimanez Malla" of the Union of Roma of Croatia is implementing short programmes of preschool education as well as Roma NGO "Golden Roma Heart" does. In kindergartens of Zagreb there are integrated children of the Roma national minority who get special attention towards preparation for school.

The NGO "Children first" is implementing the multinational program of workshops for children and their mothers from socially deprived areas. In kindergarten "Potočnica" a full day bilingual Croatian Hungarian programme of preschool education is offered for 13 children. Religious kindergarten of Jewish community "Mirjam Weiller" is implementing full day preschool program for 12 children.

In the field of education, inclusion of greater number of Roma children was encouraged in regular primary education as well as in free, extra curricular school activities. Pupils of Roma nationality of lower financial situation are provided with food during the class and extended stay.

For pupils of Hungarian national minority bilingual education has been organised at the primary school Ivan Gundulić where 2 combined classes in Hungarian language have been financed. The school gets monthly assets for the realisation of this program.

There is a new Jewish primary school Lauder – Hugo Kon in the Cultural centre Pešćenica that has 26 pupils in 5 classes.

Private school Serbian Orthodox Comprehensive School "Kantakuzina" Katarina Branković with public rights educates 22 pupils in 2 classes. This school gets monthly assets for realisation of the program according to the Conclusion on financial support to private schools with public rights.

Zagrebačka MEDRESA "Dr. Ahmet Smajlović" is a private school with public rights that educates 94 pupils of the Islamic community in 4 classes.

Employment: The City is obligated to act according to the laws that regulate the employment of migrants. Employment in public institutions is available to everyone under equal conditions which are prescribed by the law. There are no differences in wages, conditions and promotion. According to the Labour Law discrimination is prohibited.

NATIONAL MINORITY	Gender		professional qualification				status (clerk, employee)		total
	M	F	university	college	high school	primary school	clerk	employee	
ALBANIANS									
AUSTRIANS									
BOSNIACS	2	13	7	1	4	3	11	4	15
BULGARIANS		1	1				1		1
MONTENEGRINS		2	1		1		2		2
CZECHS	2	1	3				3		3
HUNGARIANS	2	3	2		3		4	1	5
MACEDONIANS	2	3		2	3		5		5
GERMANS	1	1	1	1			2		2
POLES		1	1				1		1
ROMA									0
ROMANIANS									0
RUSSIANS									0
RUTHENIANS									0
SLOVAKS	1		1				1		1
SLOVENIANS	4	4	2		6		7	1	8
SERBIANS	20	45	25	3	30	7	53	12	65
ITALIANS									0
TURKS									0
UKRAINIANS									0
VLASI									0
JEWS									0
UNKNOWN	1	3	1	1	2		3	1	4
OTHER		3	2			1	2	1	3
NATIONAL MINORITY	35	80	47	8	49	11	95	20	115
TOTAL	115		115				115		115

tab. 2: THE STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYED MEMBERS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNING BODIES OF THE CITY OF ZAGREB

According to the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, state administration bodies and juridical bodies ensure representation to the members of

national minorities with the provisions of special laws and in accordance to the number of members of the national minorities in total population. Under the same conditions, national minority members have preferences in employment.

In December 5th 2008 the first Migration Information Centre (MIC) in Croatia was officially opened in Zagreb. Centre is part of the regional project “Capacity building, information and raising awareness level in order to promote legal migration in Western Balkans”, financed through the European Commission AENEAS in 2006 and co-financed by the Government of Switzerland, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Italy and the Principality of Liechtenstein. The project is implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) whose main partner is Croatian Employment Service.

The Centre does not mediate in employment and does not provide consular services. It gives clear and complete information, instructs and indicates to competent services for potential migrants (immigrants and emigrants). The purpose is not encouraging Croatian nationals to leave but to possibly prevent the illegal migration and trafficking through promotion of legal migration. Since the project start in June 2008 406 requests were handled, 33 of them concerned immigration the others emigration. In the last few months the Centre intensified its public relation measures and as a consequence of this a significant increase of requests is expected.



fig. 6 Migration Information Centre Zagreb

Housing: A great number of refugees from other parts of Croatia left Zagreb soon after the war mostly because the Government was providing measures to renovate their

houses destroyed in the war. One part of migrants solved their housing problems by themselves – buying or renting apartments from the City housing market. In the past few years the number of building apartments for the market is increasing. The possibility of renting apartments has also increased.

In the City area there are many agencies that intervene in buying and selling apartments on the market. One part of migrants is permanently settled in Zagreb by exchanging their houses and apartments with the ones in countries of former Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, very often those exchanged houses were built without necessary permits. Migrants expected help from the City with solving legalisation problems. Other part of migrants built new houses with their own financial assets, but unfortunately in places where building was not allowed. That kind of terrain, mostly in agricultural region, is much cheaper. Illegal building is more convenient because no money is spent on documentation for building permits and other expenses.

The City has tried to solve this problem by providing the basic communal infrastructure – water, drainage, gas and electricity. The City constantly includes newly built streets in its annual maintenance program which includes asphaltting, drainage and traffic signalisation. The City also provides bus transportation and organises waste disposal.

In the past two years, the City legalised objects, according to the new town-planning scheme, wherever it was possible. The City provided the building of other housing contents and following infrastructure such as kindergartens, schools and other cultural and commercial facilities. Other citizens (with no migration background) can also buy apartments and lots for building family houses. In that way, segregation can be avoided in order to improve the integration of migrants. The Legal frameworks for these measures are The Rent Act and City Rent Regulation.

The City owns apartments in the city area that are given for rent according to the City's rent regulation. Apartments are given based on previously announced competitions published in daily newspaper and also based on the list of priority.

The right to apply for renting City apartments have: people who have a domicile in the City area not less than 10 years, who have no housing solution and cannot resolve it any other way, who do not own a house or an apartment and whose monthly income per family member does not exceed 75% of the average monthly salary in the City.

The criteria for renting City apartments are: housing status, social-health status, the period of living in the City and participation in War of Independence.

As an exception, an apartment can be rented outside of the list of priority to the people who live in City objects that need to be tearred down and to the ones who live in extremely difficult social – health conditions. Those people need to prove their difficult position with the resolution of the competent authority and the documentation of the social welfare system.

The price of renting City apartments is protected and it is far below the rent prices on the free housing market.



fig. 7 Informal housing in Zagreb

Experts from the City of Zagreb and representatives of minority NGOs agree about the success of all measures implemented by the Municipality. This pleasing estimation can be seen as a result of the good communication and cooperation between the involved partners.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

In contrast to the governmental approaches and efforts concerning intercultural policies there aren't many activities or political strategies worth mentioning when it comes to social partners like chambers of commerce or labour unions. For example activities of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce are definitely focused on relations with (Croatian) companies and related economical issues. As a consequence of this the Chamber doesn't interact with any kind of minority or immigration organizations.

Integration of foreign workers also can't be found in the "mission statement" of the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH), which is one of the most important labour unions of the nation although "gender equality" or "inter-generational solidarity" are mentioned in it.

4.4 Relationship between different ethnic groups in the city

Migration processes in Zagreb are still characterised by the effects of the War of Independence in the 1990's. Zagreb had been one of the main destinations for refugees during the war, but there isn't any reliable statistical information how many of them tried to stay in Zagreb. After the war many people who emigrated (at the beginning of the war, due to their nationality mostly Serbs) returned to the city. Since there are issues that are hardly solved, some tense situations still might appear because of these burdened relations from the past. Emotions are expressed through emphasizing the symbols from World War II (often rightist symbols that concern Serbs and Croats) at performances or concerts of certain artists and sometimes at sport events. Usually national consciousness rises on a higher level due to emotions and alcohol. These are not common situations but they sometimes appear. These situations are regulated by the Act on Combating Discrimination and by the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Law.

Concerning cooperation between different ethnic groups and organisations the Law on Associations has to be mentioned first which gives right to all legal and physical persons to form an association on voluntary bases. An association obtains a qualification of a legal person once it enters the Register of Associations. There are three already mentioned NGOs that represent certain national minorities in the City in order to preserve their culture and customs. Coordination of National Minorities is not an NGO but it is a Coordination of councils (9) and representatives (8) of the City of Zagreb. On that legal basis the City of Zagreb tries to support the cooperation between ethnic groups and organisations. Besides this official approach there are certain annual events that include participation of most important religious communities in the City:

Interreligious meeting where Catholics, together with believers of other Christian churches and communities as well as Jews and Muslims pray for peace to celebrate the Day of Saint Francis of Assisi. The meeting was attended by representatives of Islamic Community, Evangelical Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Catholic Church, Macedonian Orthodox Church, Serbian Orthodox Church and Jewish Community.

Interreligious meeting that includes ecumenical journey in the churches of Zagreb with the purpose to pray for Christian unity. Central ecumenical celebration in Zagreb was held in Baptist Church. Next destination was Serbian Orthodox Church, after that Greek Catholic Church and then the Evangelical Church. The event ended with group prayer of all participants at the Shrine in Marija Bistrica.

International Scientific Symposium of professors of theology is organised by Catholic Faculty of Theology of Zagreb, every year in a different place. XXXI International Symposium took place in April 2007 in Sarajevo on the topic "Christianity and Islam". The host was Bosnian Catholic Theology in Sarajevo, Franciscan Theology in Sarajevo and Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo. Current issues were discussed by Catholic and Islamic theologians. The Symposium brought together more than 90 professors of theology and other participants. That was the first time in history that the organisers of the Symposium were the oldest and largest higher-educational theological institution of the Church in Croatia (Catholic Faculty of Theology of Zagreb) and the most important Islamic theological institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond (Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo) who collaborated in the realisation of the Symposium on the basis of balanced representation of Catholic and Muslim theologians.

Conflicts like the mentioned ones with nationalistic background can be seen as "traditional" conflict lines but they are not organised or planned and are often connected with soccer games of a Zagreb Football Club. In the last few years few assaults by right wing Neo-Nazis or right-wing Skinheads were reported. But these attacks had no organised political background and were obviously not planned. Besides that there are no ethnic/religious groups that the City regards as problematic for social cohesion and integration. If conflicts appear, solving them is under jurisdiction of the police, there is no City policy for such conflicts.

Another aspect that has to be mentioned if one talks about relations between different ethnic or religious groups in Croatia is the important role of the Roman Catholic Church in the country. According to several surveys more than 80% of all Catholics in Croatia characterize themselves as very religious. Contrary to socialist times the Catholic Church is important part of the Croatian identity (again). On national level the Catholic Church is promoting integration and openness for interreligious tolerance. This approach is supported by many clerics of other religions, especially between Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church communication seems to be well established.

4.5 Public communication

The City's communication strategy towards national minorities is the communication with them through their councils and representatives. There aren't any regular bulletins or journals which would be published by the City itself.

According to the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, radio and television stations on national, regional and local level have to promote comprehension for minority members, they have to produce or broadcast TV shows intended for informing minority members in their own languages, create and broadcast programs that encourage and promote maintenance, development and displays of cultural, religious and other identity of national minorities. The aim is to preserve and protect the cultural resources and traditions as well as to create and broadcast emissions that would provide information for the national minorities about the work of their councils and representatives.

In the State budget and budgets of local governments there are funds that provide co-financing of radio and television stations in their property for the national minorities on the proposal of the Council for National Minorities and the competent bodies of local self-government on the proposal of councils of national minorities. In order to implement national minority rights, minority members can publish their newspapers, produce and broadcast radio and television programs. Most of the councils and representatives of national minorities in the City have their own web sites and they publish limited edition of minority newspapers (see the publications of the Bosniak organisation Preporod which are described in 4.2).

Minority members work in media organs and also all the other public institutions under same conditions as Croatian citizens. There's no difference in employing since minority members are

integrated and speak Croatian language. Minority members work in other programs as well, not only in minority related editorial offices.

“Multikultura” is a multicultural emission on the radio that talks about life and activities of national minorities in Croatia and “Prizma” is a multinational magazine on the television. Both emissions are broadcasted on HRT (Hrvatska Radio Televizija – Croatian Radio Television). Week after week those emissions inform about activities of minority communities, work of government bodies related to minorities, about minority parliamentarians but also about everyday life in order to preserve their traditional, cultural and other heritage.

In the meantime the minority programme “Prizma” was broadcast more than 800 times (including special broadcasts and special documentaries). Regarding its contents the focus lies on cultural policies and their effects on everyday life of members of national minorities as well as on reports national minority culture, heritage and customs. Prizma has a fix broadcast slot on every Saturday at 13.30h (45 minutes). The target group is the whole Croatian TV public, not only the members of the national minorities. Compared to the situation in other European countries Prizma has a relatively high viewing rate and another important fact is that the financial situation is stable whereas other European public broadcasting services try to reduce costs especially in this field.

Every show is broadcasted nationwide in the language of the national minority the reportage are about including Croatian subtitles. Minorities which have a vivid cultural life like Jews or Serbs have the largest share of shows, on the other hand there are only few subject matters about the relatively large community of the Bosniaks what can be seen as a sign of their high level of integration. As a result of their often problematic socio-economic situation there are also many broadcasts dealing with the specific situation of the Roma.



4.6 Summary and lessons learnt

The City provides funding for ethnic and religious organisations through various City departments, depending on the subject of demands. Most of the demands are asked from the Mayor directly but then they are distributed according to the subject. Those demands are mostly under jurisdiction of City Office for Education, Culture and Sports, City Office for Legal-Property Relations and the City's Assets and City Office for Health, Labour, Social Protection and War Veterans.

As for religious minorities, there's no legal obligation from the local authority to finance religious communities. Still, the City provides with new locations for certain religious communities for faith practice (Synagogue, Macedonian Orthodox Church).

Most of ethnic/religious minorities in the City of Zagreb are well integrated in the urban society. The majority of minority members speaks Croatian language as their mother tongue since most of minority members live in Croatia for a long period of time or moved into Croatia from parts of ex Yugoslavia what means that language differences are minor.

When it comes to integration, Roma minority gets special attention considering its difficult status. The City implements activities on the conduct of National Programme for Roma that was promoted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia. That program includes all segments important for the integration of Roma population. The City of Zagreb has established its own City program of activities and measures for improvement of the area and its environment of locations inhabited by Roma population. When it comes to housing, difference is conditioned by one's financial assets and not by one's origin. In the City of Zagreb there are no separate settlements where only people from same country of origin live. Even Roma population who are traditionally

an enclosed community, live, with some exceptions, in mixed settlements with other inhabitants of the same financial status.

The local government and administration expect good inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, mutual familiarizing, regular and successful cooperation and expanding of the atmosphere of trust.

The Croatian media landscape in general seems to be more modest than it was some years ago. Grabbing the readers' or viewers' attention by stressing ethnical or religious stereotypes isn't a problem anymore, maybe this can be seen as good sign for the overall development towards a real pluralistic society.

5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

In this chapter the most relevant issues in relation to Zagreb's Muslim population and groups will be described. One should always keep in mind that in Croatia as well as in the whole Western Balkan religion and nationality are narrowly linked. Thus talking about the Muslim community in Zagreb means primarily talking about Bosniaks, Turkish people, a certain amount of Albanians and Roma are Muslims, too, but in quantitative Bosniaks are the most important group.

5.1 Major issues, demands and interests

What are the major issues, demands and interests when talking about the Muslim community in Zagreb? As we will see there aren't any big differences compared to the issues and demands in other European cities.

Mosque building

In 1916 an Imam was situated in the military garrison in Zagreb and he occasionally performed also civil affairs. That same year Muslim devotional municipality was founded and was raised to the mufti level which subordinated all the Muslim municipalities in Croatia. Since the Ramadan 1920 Muslims were renting halls for temporary Mesjids.

Zagreb in 1934 got the first Islamic religious commune. Municipality ceded a residence in Tomašičeva street 12 where the first Zagreb Mesjid was located as a permanent devotional place. At the same address today is the seat of Mesihat the Islamic community in Croatia.

The decision on the construction of the Zagreb Mosque was made in 1941 when the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia decided to use the House of Fine Arts building and to readjust it into a mosque. The construction of three reinforced minarets, 45 meters high and external fountains was completed in the spring of 1943. Readjustments were made also inside the building so the mosque would have all important spaces for office of Imam, two apartments, a classroom for religious classes and two mahlifs (spaces for women), library, Abdesthana (space in which the Muslim ritually wash their faces before prayer).

Unfortunately, the believers could not enjoy their mosque long enough. It opened its doors in 1944 but in the year 1948 it had to close the doors forever. The "new authorities" closed its doors and teared down the minarets because it was "the ideological symbol of the past" because of the fact that it was opened during the ruling of Independent State of Croatia.

In 1948 the Mosque was closed and Mejlis was back in the old place in Tomašičeva street 12.

Cornerstone of today's Zagreb Mosque was set in 1981 and the opening of the Mosque was in 1987. The Mosque is completely opened, it can accommodate more than two thousand people, it was imagined as a modern construction of classical Islamic architecture, it is a combination of traditional and modern, the functional needs of the Mosque and modern needs of its believers.

The area of the Mosque is 10 000 square meters big and can be divided into 3 sections. The first and most important one is for praying, except the minarets there is a sanitation area for women and men. In the central part are the library and a reading room that keep a significant number of

books mostly in Arabic language. Along the classrooms for religious education there is also space for discussions and socializing which is decorated in the style of Muslim houses.



fig. 9 Islamic Centre Zagreb

There is also a restaurant and despite of the fact that it is adapted to the believers so that it serves all except pork meat and alcohol, it is open for all visitors – believers, tourists and random passers by. A museum dedicated to the first Zagreb Mosque is located in the central part. Apart from the preserved remains of the Mosque there are photos and reminiscences from her short but rich history. Next to the museum is a conference hall for lectures, seminars, forums and it is opened to all who want to organise an event. The third part is of the official character. It consists of the guest rooms and accommodation for religious officials. A small town for young people is situated below the Mosque with secondary religious school and general high school, headquarters of the football club NUR and the Muslim Youth Club.



fig. 10 Islamic Centre Zagreb - Restaurant

For the whole Croatian Islamic community the Mosque and the Islamic Centre are some of the central points of their religious lives. In the time of Ramasan many visitors from other parts of the country meet in the Centre in order to do the act of fasting together there. Every year a big conference is held there where all Croatian Muslims can meet and take part in discussions, round tables and to have the chance of “mental growing” in the community.



fig. 11 Islamic Centre Zagreb – on the way to the Mosque

In view of the very importance of the Islamic Centre for the Muslim community the members of the Centre have the goal to put the Centre in the official Zagreb Tourist Guide which is published by the City of Zagreb. Due to the fact that the Centre is open for everyone the Community wants to advise the broader public of the Centre's existence and various offers. The City of Zagreb seems to be willing to mention the Islamic Centre in the next Tourist Guide run.

Cemetery/burial rules

At present the City of Zagreb has three joint cemeteries and few smaller ones in the suburbs. The first joint cemetery was set up of few relocated smaller ones because the City was growing and the need for the joint cemetery was huge. One new joint cemetery was built 1952 and the other one in 1993. Many small cemeteries in the City were cemeteries of members of certain religion but already in 19 century when the 1st joint cemetery was built, conditions were made so the old cemeteries could be closed down. In accordance with the Statute of the 1st joint cemetery, members of different religions wanted their separated spaces. Soon it was shown that the confessional separation brings difficulties primarily of technical nature. Administration of the cemetery received the Interconfessional Act in 1879 which turned church property into city property which made convenient possibilities of confessional separation. The administration then abolished separate spaces for certain religions. Members of religious groups still demanded to be buried in separate spaces of their religion but that demands were fading away with time and the same cemetery became a real joint cemetery for people of many religions. Even back then when

religious separation existed, the Statute guaranteed “complete and absolute practice of religious rites at the funeral”.

Halal food

In the year 2006 first Halal butcher’s shop was opened in Zagreb. Products were prepared in accordance to Shari’ah law with traditional customs and practices of Muslim believers. When Halal is mentioned in the context of food and drinks it indicates to what Muslims are allowed to consume. Allowed food requires strict procedure of treatment.

Halal butcher’s shop was opened within the Islamic centre in Zagreb in cooperation with the food industry Podravka. Podravka’s meat industry has Halal certificate, which indicates that the production process is adjusted to food standards that the certificate requires, from selecting animals to slaughter and placing the final product on the shop shelves.

Many Croatian food companies have a certificate that enables the sale of their products in countries in which only Halal food is allowed to be consumed. Over 20 companies in Croatia have the certificate and currently there are more stores in the City where Halal food can be found.

Companies that are interested in getting the Halal certificate wish to export their products to Arabic countries but these products are also placed on the shop shelves in Croatia. Muslims can get information about Halal food and about stores where it can be bought at the Islamic Centre in Zagreb.

Islamic community has established an Agency dealing with Halal certifications. Head office of the Agency that covers certification for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia is in Tuzla. Steering committee that is deciding about certification is composed of representatives of all mentioned countries. The procedure of certification starts with company’s request to the Meshihat of Islamic Community. The Meshihat considers the request and forwards it to the Agency which arranges the first meeting. Halal standards will be explained to the company which will study it and decide whether or not it wants to certify certain products or the entire drive. When a company wants to certify the entire drive, the process is detailed, especially when it comes to meat industry. The goal of Halal standards is the monitoring of products from the field to the table. After that the company chooses internal auditors who attend special training sessions. Their knowledge is not examined, their work has to bring the company to the point of getting the Halal certificate. Official documents have special sections on additives and emulsifiers of final products. There is a huge list of their status in Islam: are they Halal or are they suspicious and do they need further examination? Finally follows the certification audit, after which the commission that examines auditors’ reports gives its opinion. If the opinion is positive, the company gets Halal certificate in three languages: Croatian, Arabic and English which is valid in all countries of the world. The Agency is a member of World’s Halal Forum which has its headquarters in Malaysia.

Dress code and gender roles

According to the information from the Islamic Centre in Zagreb, the position of Muslim women and the integration of Muslim women into Croatian society are not different from the position of any other woman. In Croatia, a small number of women decide to dress according to the strict Islamic regulations (covering the whole body except the face, hands and feet). Women are not discriminated or unemployed because of their way of dressing but according to the president of the Women's Council of the Islamic Centre many women are lacking courage to dress like their religion would request it because they fear the reactions in the public.

Last year the Women's Council of the Islamic Centre was founded, this young association is still in its initial phase but the main goals are already framed: On the one hand there are issues and topics with a specific gender basis or concerning women (breast cancer prevention), on the other the Council wants to throw light on an issue where in the Croatian society still many prejudices exist: Women in Islam. By various activities the Women's Council tries to inform about the “real” role of women in this context – by now some meetings with representatives of other religious

communities have taken place, the big goal is an ecumenical event where “Women in different Religions” is discussed.

Besides that they offer courses like “successful parenting” or a telephone hotline for single parents.

Official Muslim organisations are the Councils of the City of Zagreb with members of national minorities (Bosniak, Roma and partially Albanian) as also already mentioned NGOs. Like all other Councils (and representatives) in the City who all get equal treatment, they establish their working program, financial plan and final account. The City provides assets for their needs and also assets for pursuit of certain activities based on their working program. All relevant demands the Muslim Community has are communicated by the Councils or the mentioned NGOs.

The City finances and co-finances the implementation of the working program of Bosniak, Roma and Albanian NGOs just like any other national minority NGO, on their request.

Another interesting question is how the majority population reacts on the demands, interests and work of the Islamic Community. There are no available opinion surveys on the subject and in local media no kind of criticism on concrete projects realized by the Islamic Community can be found. In terms of cooperation with the City of Zagreb all national minority councils and representatives in the city get exactly the same treatment, also all minority NGOs get the same treatment so there is no discontent or tension, at least not connected to faith or nationality.

In the 1980's in context with planning and building the new Mosque and Islamic Centre in Borovje (the name of the neighbourhood where the Centre is located today) some opposition erupted. Leading this opposition was the AA – organisation (anonymous alcoholics) that had their meetings near by. This protest was of religious nature because people didn't want to have a Muezzin “yelling few times per day” (like the secretary of the Islamic Centre describes their protests). This protest delayed the realisation of the Islamic Centre for about one year. Nowadays the members of the AA are regular guests in the Centre's restaurant – where no alcohol is served...

In the 1980's and early 1990's some not closer specified political problems had to be solved, but according to members of the Islamic Community these problems had their origin on political level and not on neighbourhood level.

During the War of Independence several anonymous calls were received in the Centre telling the people there to leave the place and threatening the members of the Centre. Concerning the relationship with the surrounding neighbours the war had also a positive effect: The fall-out shelter of the newly built Centre was open to everyone living around and this was an important contribution to improve the relationship among each other.

Even if there aren't any surveys or scientific studies examining the relationship between these “unlike neighbours” a feature of the Slovenian TV was made some months ago which touched on that subject. They tried to find out the attitudes towards the Mosque of the people living near by and nobody of the interviewed persons told something bad or negative about it. Since Borovje is not the most attractive place in Zagreb, many of them are even happy about “having something important” like the Islamic Centre there.

The City wants to step up the relations with national minorities through their participation in the public life with the aim to promote and preserve their culture and tradition and present them to the majority population through their activities. Due to the relatively high level of integration of Bosniaks on the one hand and a kind of “customisation” of the majority population towards the Islam the City doesn't see any urgent need for another strategy.

Unfortunately no surveys were carried out on such attitudes in the City. Surveys were not necessary because Muslim groups were never considered as problematic a similar estimation exists on university and research level.

5.2 General approaches and policies improving the relations with Muslim groups

There is no explicit policy towards Muslims because the relations are maintained with good operation: On the request of Muslim community (Islamic Centre in the City) the City provides with moral and financial support for various activities whether they are of cultural, religious or educational nature. Another reason why there isn't an explicit policy towards Muslims was already mentioned before: within the organisations and Councils of the national minorities, especially the Bosniak, Roma and Albanian ones, religious issues are also represented and communicated.

And so several kinds of contacts are institutionalised through those councils of national minorities whose members are Muslim. The City provides support for the council and through that has contact with the Islamic Centre. The City takes part in council's activities and finances various manifestations according to the council's working plan. E.g. Bosnian council celebrates memorials, various national and religious holidays in which the City also participates: Festival of Sacrifice, Ramadan, Celebration of the new Hijri year, Memorial of suffering of Bosniaks in Srebrenica, Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Which departments have contact with national minority organisations or religious groups? First of all the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development at the Mayor's Office as the coordinating department and also many other City offices depending on the subject. Every City office has a contact person in charge of national minority issues. Also the Mayor takes active interest in relations with minority and religious organisations. He participates in pursuit of minority programs and plays an active role in minority and religious events.

As a positive consequence of this organisational structure the City of Zagreb has contact with all relevant minority and religious organisations. In the register of NGOs at the State Administration Office ("Sredisnji drzavni ured za upravu") for example six Bosniak NGOs are registered and all of them do cooperate with the Bosniak Council and through that with the City. Even if these are organisations of national minorities they also deal with religious issues. Besides the Islamic Centre only one other Muslim organisation exists in Zagreb – the City holds contact to both of them.

Councils of national minorities of the City represent their Muslim members as well as the Coordination of National Minorities. City representatives are not elected as religious minority representatives but as members of the political party elected to the City Assembly. Muslims are included in all segments of public life as well as government and administration.

Besides that the City gives financial and moral support to Muslim organisations as well as to other religious organisations at their request. In previous chapters plenty is written about the nature of the support.

Another interesting question is if the City has some explicit policies or strategies to improve the intergroup relations. Due to the high level of integration policies like that are not an issue regarding majority population and Muslim organisations. Muslim community members speak Croatian language and they are integrated in Croatian society and they get the same treatment as other Croatian citizens. But nevertheless the City is encouraging and supporting all activities that would help to improve intergroup relations in the city and also that would improve understanding and tolerance among citizens.

The City of Zagreb is not responsible for the local police. Local police is under jurisdiction of Ministry of Internal Affairs. The relation of the police towards Muslim organisations is the same as with any other such organisation.

5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Muslim groups

As mentioned several times before there aren't any explicit measures or policies targeting Muslim population. Neither the official policy by the City of Zagreb nor the representatives of the Islamic Community or of the national minority groups do see an urgent need in activities like that.

5.4 Public communication

Due to the high level of integration and no language or cultural barriers the City doesn't need any public communication especially towards Muslims.

According to the Islamic Centre, the media is very interested in the work of the community and there is a great progress in perception of Islam and Muslims because of media. Islamic community cooperates with Croatian television. Several religious officials cooperate as expert assistants and are frequent guests in numerous emissions of religious and ecumenical character.

There are printed publications (bulletin) at the Islamic Centre. Religious television and radio programs are not local as well as web site, but several national minority organisations like Preporod have various publications which often deal with religious or Islamic issues.

5.5 Summary and lessons learnt

First of all it is important to mention that there aren't any urgent needs for intercultural policies towards the Muslim population. Due to the high degree of integration religious life with all its demands and interests is not "new" to the majority population. The long tradition of living together is the basis for a functioning social life.

Although the City has no legal obligation from the local authority to finance religious communities, it provides funding for religious organisations through various City departments, depending on the subject of demands. Demands are often of cultural, religious and educational character which are important for integration and therefore supported by the City.

There are some preconditions for positive relations between good interethnic as well as interreligious relations: cooperation, dialogue, respect and good will on both sides. The urban civil society seems to be open and developed enough to respect other religious beliefs. This is not only the estimation of the City officials but also of the representatives of the Islamic community and of the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

The City has only good experiences with Muslim groups in the City and there's a high level of integration. Hopefully when Croatia enters the European Union, potential Muslim migrants will find a good friendly base in the Islamic Centre in the City.

6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation

Fortunately, there isn't much to report concerning intergroup relations and possible radicalisation. Neither officials of the City of Zagreb nor representatives of the various national minorities organisations are of the opinion that there are serious radicalisation tendencies within the majority population or in any minority group. Like in any other city some right wing or skinhead groups exist, in Zagreb often connected with certain supporter groups of the Football Club Dinamo Zagreb. But the few violent attacks are condemned by the vast majority of the population and in most cases successfully persecuted by the executive organs. Looking at Croatian media, including its tabloid press, one can say that within the last years press coverage became more and more modest, articles basing on stereotypes (often in connection with Roma or Serbs) can't be as often found as in the years after the War of Independence.

Therefore the City doesn't have any specific policies or strategies versus radicalisation tendencies and this is the same on national level.

7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

Looking at Zagreb and the situation of national minorities there, it seems that there isn't much one could complain about. Facing the EU accession the Croatian government has implemented laws and policies concerning minority issues which are definitely European standard. National minorities have elected representatives on every political level and preserving their cultural identities and heritages is assured and (financially) supported by the state. The implementation of minority rights on local level worked well in the Zagreb case, maybe it is a little more difficult in the rural parts of the Country but all in all one can subscribe to the view of Dunja Melcic that Croatia is probably the "most pluralistic" of all post Yugoslavia nations (Melcic 2008, p. 110).

Melcic's estimation seems to be confirmed when we look at the situation in the Capital. On the one hand there are certain governmental and administrative structures giving national minorities the possibility to be represented and to be supported by the City: the Council of National Minorities and the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development as the coordinating Department should be mentioned in this context. The collaboration between City, Councils and related minority NGOs adds up to a mixed structure of "top down" and "bottom up" representation of minorities that seems to work very well.

On the other hand civil society in Zagreb seems to be open-minded and tolerant enough to accept the existence of "other" cultural or religious minorities. But this has to be regarded against the background that the city has an extremely homogenous structured population and the share of national minorities or other foreigners is very low (about five percent only). Many of the "old" minorities like Jews, Italians, Hungarians etc. seem to be very well integrated in the Croatian society. Serbs or Bosniaks who became a "new" minority as an effect of the War of Independence also have a very high level of integration – one of the key challenges was (and still is in some aspects) to interact and to integrate members of those national minorities that were involved in that war. A future key challenge will be to find suitable integration strategies if the numbers of people of "brand new" minorities like Chinese or Africans will increase. Croatia is still not an immigration state and in economical aspects not one of the main destinations of potential immigrants. Besides that the few foreigners could not establish ethnically based network structures which would promote immigration on individual level. But all of this may change in the near future and another challenge will be to find suitable integration measures if international migration flows will affect Croatia sometimes more intense than they do today.

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9 Contacts and informants

Friday, 20th March 2009

Mrs. Mirjana Turudic, International Relations Department of the Croatian Chamber of Economy

Monday, 23rd March 2009

President of the Council of Bosniak National Minority of the City of Zagreb, Mr. Ekrem Bećirović

Secretary of the Islamic Centre, Zagreb, Mr. Ahmed Ikanovic

Responsible Officer for the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Gender Equality, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development at the Mayor's Office, Mrs. Elizabetha Knorr

Tuesday, 24th March 2009

Representatives of Croatian Employment Service, Zagreb Regional Office and Migration-information Centre, Mrs. Marica Jelić, provisional chief, Mrs. Dubravka Klarić, head of Department for mediation and preparation for job-finding, Mrs. Patricija Kezele, head of the Migration information Centre

President of the Organisation of Bosniaks Veterans in the War of Independence of Croatia, Mr. Hamdija Malić

Representative of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in Croatia, Archpriest Kirko Velinski

Representative of the Muslim Youth Club Mr. Salih Demirović

President of the Women's Council of the Islamic Centre in Zagreb, Mrs. Azra Omanović

Wednesday, 25th March 2009

Journalist of the television emission for minorities Prizma (HRT), Mrs. Hanna Gelb
President of the Cultural Community of Bosniaks in Croatia "PREPOROD", Mr. Senad Nanic
Representative of the Cultural Artistic Association "SEVDAH", Mr. Muhidin Aličehajić

Tuesday, 14th July 2009

Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia Croatia

http://www.sssh.hr/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=46