

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BULLETIN 3/2009

1. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to Acquire 40 mln Euro Loan for Social Inclusion

The Labour and Social Policy Minister announced a 40 mln euro loan from the World Bank, which will be spent on social inclusion projects as of 2010. NGOs and local authorities will be able to apply for the funds. The Ministry and the World Bank are currently preparing the application criteria. Half of the funds will be spent on social inclusion policies and the rest will be spent on kindergartens and day care centres for children.

<http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/news/news.asp?newsid=1042&catid=1>

Seminar on Immigrants Integration Education

On 20-21.08.2009 *Фондация С.Е.Г.А.* [C.E.G.A. Foundation] organised a seminar entitled *Лаборатория: Време и пространство* [Laboratory: Time and Space]. A total of 28 participants of different ethnic and religious origin took part in the seminar, held under the project Adult Learning for Integration of Immigrants. The participants joined role games and interactive activities which aimed at putting them into a culture shock situation and thus developing methods for education and integration of immigrants.

<http://www.cega.bg/news.php?lang=bulgarian&year=2009&cp=0&newsid=175>

Roundtable 'Realities and Perspectives in Roma Integration Policies'

The *Национален съвет за сътрудничество по етническите и демографските въпроси (НССЕДИ)* [National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCCEDI)] together with the Open Society Institute and the U.S. National Democratic Institute organised a roundtable *'Реалности и перспективи в политиките за интеграция на ромите'* [Realities and Perspectives in Roma Integration Policies], in which the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, who is the new head of the NCCEDI, and the new coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion presented the policy of the institutions they represent to the leading Roma NGOs and to the state institutions involved in the Roma integration process.

<http://amalipe.com/?nav=news&id=197>

2. LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AND AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

Government Decree Transfers the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Decree No 229 of 23 September 2009 for the Interior Regulations of the Council of Ministers' Administration transfers the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues from the Council of Ministers to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The council will consist of 11 members. The position of director of NCCEDI is renamed to 'councilor or expert at the political cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister'.

<http://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/broeveList.faces>

3. RESEARCH

Bulgarian Academy of Science Survey for Impact of the Financial Crisis

The *Българска академия на науките* [Bulgarian Academy of Science] made a survey about the impact of the financial crisis on the debt burden of different groups of Bulgarians. The survey shows that the Bulgarians with lower income are most affected by high unemployment rate and the higher interest rates. The survey shows that 19 per cent of the Roma surveyed owe overdue installments to credit institutions. The share of debtors among the members of the Turkish minority is 16.7 per cent. A total of 1.0 per cent of the Bulgarians fail to pay their installments on time.

<http://www.segabg.com/online/new/articlenew.asp?issueid=4301§ionid=5&id=0001101>

Report ‘Discrimination and Protection against Discrimination in the Attitudes among the Majority and among the Vulnerable Groups in Bulgaria’

The *Български Хелзински Комитет (БХК)* [Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC)] report researches the discrimination practices, the discrimination attitudes among the majority as well as the attitudes among the vulnerable groups towards discrimination. It concludes that the Bulgarian society holds a significant potential for developing discrimination practices. The protection system’s low effectiveness is due to the poor confidence in it by the representatives of the most vulnerable groups. The report recommends the discrimination watchdog – the Commission for Protection against Discrimination - to file its presence among the representatives of the vulnerable groups – in the ghettos or in the refugee camps.

http://www.bghelsinki.org/upload/resources/Discrimination_EffectivenessADregime.pdf

Publication of ‘Jurisprudence of the civil courts under the Law on Protection against Discrimination’

In September 2009 the *Български Хелзински Комитет (БХК)* [Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC)] published ‘*Практика на гражданските съдилища по Закона за защита от дискриминация*’ [Jurisprudence of the civil courts under the Law on Protection against Discrimination] which is the second book in the series ‘Anti-Discrimination Law in Bulgaria: Standards and Practice’. The author of the book is the BHC Legal Programme Director. The study looks into several hundred court rulings in Bulgaria as the analysis is based on the jurisprudence of the EC Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights as well as domestic courts in EU jurisdictions.

<http://www.bghelsinki.org/index.php?module=resources&lg=bg&id=853>

4. Official / unofficial statistical data

Bulgarian Muslims Found New Party

A new party named *Мюсюлмански демократичен съюз* [Muslim Democratic Union] was founded on 26.09.2009 in the village of Slavyanovo, which is located in an area largely populated by ethnic Turks. The party was founded by 680 written declarations. The organiser of the event, who was also elected as party leader, declared that the party is not an ethnic one and membership is open for everyone who adheres to the ethical Muslim norms. The party's leader, however, has been involved in a storm of controversy being also the founder of the 'Club for Friendship and Brotherhood' in Slavyanovo as well as founder and leader of the 'Bulgarian Red Crescent' - an organisation that the Bulgarian Red Cross described as illegal according to the Geneva Convention. The Red Cross says the existence of the Crescent in Bulgaria is a precedent because a country can only have either a Red Cross or a Red Crescent, but never both. The Red Crescent headquarters are in Slavyanovo as well with the building housing it and the Club having a cross and a crescent painted on its walls. Another controversy involved the monument of the 'Unknown Turkish Soldier', also located in Slavyanovo and financed by the new party's leader. The Regional Directorate for Construction Control has declared the monument illegal and ordered its dismantling.

http://www.novinite.com/search_news.php?tag=Muslim+Democratic+Union