**Response of the Croatian Authorities regarding the Local Government and Human Rights**

The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette “Narodne novine” No. 56/90, 135/97, 08/98, 113/00,124/00, 28/01, 41/01, 55/01, 76/10, 85/10 and 05/14) stipulates in Chapter III. Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Articles 14 and 15, that all persons in the Republic of Croatia shall enjoy rights and freedoms, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, property, birth, education, social status or other characteristics, and it guarantees equality to the members of all national minorities.

As regards the section of human rights which concerns the rights of national minorities, the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities (OG No. 155/02, 47/10, 80/10 and 93/11) stipulates in Articles 20 – 22 the right of the members of national minorities to representation in the representative, executive and administrative bodies of local and regional self-government units.

Furthermore, with a view to improving, preserving and protecting the position of national minorities, the members of national minorities elect their representatives in public life and management of local affairs by electing national minority councils and representatives in self-government units, in line with Article 23 of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities.

Article 24 of the above Act stipulates, inter alia, requirements for the election of national minority councils and representatives, manner of proposing members and number of national minority council members – 10 members are elected to a national minority council of a municipality, 15 members to the council of a town/city, and 25 members to the national minority council of a county. They are elected in direct elections by secret ballot for a period of 4 years.

On 31 May 2015, elections took place for national minority councils and representatives in local and regional self-government units, whereby 285 councils and 169 representatives of national minorities were elected.

The Ministry of Public Administration keeps a Register of Councils, Council Coordination Bodies and National Minority Representatives, and as of 31 December 2018, there were 155 national minority representatives, 276 national minority councils and 12 Coordination Bodies of National Minority Councils and Representatives registered.

It should be noted that the Government of Croatia, at its session of 20 December 2018, adopted a Draft Proposal of the Act on the Election of National Minority Councils and Representatives, whereby it proposed a comprehensive regulation of elections for national minority councils and representatives, and referred it to the parliamentary procedure.

In the period from 9 May 2016 to 9 May 2017, the Ministry of Public Administration implemented the IPA TAIB 2012 project “Support to efficient implementation of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities”, the objectives of which included comprehensive application of the rights of national minorities in Croatia and efficient application of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities.

The project consisted of three components:

1. Established and operational eSystem for monitoring and reporting on the rights of national minorities on national, regional and local level;

2. Strengthened capacities of state administration bodies, local and regional self-government and national minority councils on local level;

3. Raised level of awareness of the public, including the members of national minorities, on the protection of minority rights in Croatia.

The introduction and development of a uniform eSystem ensures efficient monitoring of the situation regarding the application of national minority rights from the scope of the Ministry of Public Administration, exercised at the level of local and regional self-government. The new eSystem enables users to fill out required forms online and to submit them through the eSystem to a state administration office in the county for verification. Data consolidation is done by the eSystem automatically, and state administration offices in counties and the Ministry of Public Administration have the possibility to monitor the progress of the form filling process.

We emphasize that in 2018, in the course of preparation of the 2017 Report on the Implementation of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, data from the scope of the Ministry of Public Administration were collected through the eSystem for the first time.

In addition, an important aspect of the said project was the improvement of the system of training on the Constitutional Act and the eSystem for its monitoring, which will also be a significant contribution to a sustainable and improved implementation of the Constitutional Act itself. The project included training of trainers for the delivery of workshops on the Constitutional Act and its application, and on the use of the new application for monitoring the application of the Constitutional Act. The target groups of the workshops were civil servants employed in state administration bodies (Ministry of Public Administration and Government Office for Human and National Minority Rights) and state administration offices in counties, as well as local civil servants employed in local and regional self-government units.

It was envisaged in the project that the State School of Public Administration would take over and implement the training programme upon completion of the project.

Ten regional presentations of the eSystem were delivered, with the participation of the representatives of state administration offices in counties, national minority associations and associations dealing with the rights of national minorities, national minority councils and representatives in local and regional self-government units, and the representatives of local media.

Below is a concise proposal of statements submitted by municipalities, towns/cities and counties (hereafter: *units*), grouped by counties:

1. **ZAGREB COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Zagreb County indicates that social, spatial, natural, ethnic, cultural and other characteristics of inhabitants (local stakeholders) are promoted on the territory of this county, and conditions for improvement and cultivation, free expression and promotion of historical and cultural traditions and customs are encouraged and guaranteed. Special attention is devoted to the organisation and implementation of physical planning activities, as a way of spatial protection and management for the purpose of creating conditions for social and economic development, environmental protection and rational use and protection of natural and historical heritage.

There is a particular focus on securing organisational, material and other conditions for the best possible fulfilment of public needs, which include the personal needs of citizens (local stakeholders), in the areas of healthcare, education, science, culture, technical culture, sport and other activities of significance for local and regional self-government.

Through their decisions, public needs programmes and development programmes, the units indirectly promote and protect human rights.

1. **KRAPINA-ZAGORJE COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Krapina-Zagorje County indicates that the development strategies of units are key documents for the implementation of development policies and decision-making on sustainable development of all sectors and activities.

When adopting general legal acts which establish individual rights, it is taken into account that they should not be discriminatory with regard to gender, religion or ethnicity.

Local governments and local stakeholders cooperate through public debates, citizens’ assemblies and meetings with the representatives of civic associations in the course of adopting a zoning plan and amendments thereof, the budget, development programmes, development strategies and other programmes which contribute to the development of local communities.

Consultations and lectures are organised on the territories of units with a view to raising awareness on sustainable development and protection of human health.

1. **SISAK-MOSLAVINA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Sisak-Moslavina County indicates that the work of national minority councils (Albanian NMC, Bosniak NMC, Czech NMC, Roma NMC and Serbian NMC) and national minority representatives (representatives of the Hungarian, Macedonian, Slovak and Ukrainian national minority) is financed in this county. It also indicates that commissions and coordination bodies have been established, dealing with the topic of human rights promotion and protection.

To promote human rights, units adopt individual and general legal acts, within their respective scope of competence, in accordance with the law.

Human rights are also promoted through support to civil society programmes which provide support in the exercise and protection of individual rights, through the legal aid programme, private duty home care programmes and programmes for preserving the cultural heritage of ethnic groups.

1. **KARLOVAC COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Karlovac County indicates that two consultative working bodies have been established on the territory of this county – the Human Rights Protection Committee and the Human Rights Coordination Body – which monitor the application of regulations governing the protection and exercise of human rights and freedoms, and the exercise of the rights of national minorities. Regular functioning of national minority councils is secured through budgetary allocations.

The units follow regulations on implementation and protection of human rights, encourage the work of civil society organisations (through financing), with a special emphasis on vulnerable groups (elderly, disabled, national minorities etc.), and assist socially disadvantaged persons through supports from the social programme.

1. **VARAŽDIN COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Varaždin County indicates that a Human Rights Coordination Body is active on the territory of the county, its functioning being based on the National Programme of Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Croatia. In addition to the Coordination Body above, other working bodies have been established, such as the Gender Equality Commission, the Retired and Elderly Council, the Youth Council, the Commission for Roma Issues.

Based on laws aimed at protection and promotion of human rights and measures adopted at national level, the adoption of the Public Works Employment Programme enabled employment of the long-term unemployed, disabled and unskilled persons. It is also visible that units are engaged in elderly care programmes.

1. **KOPRIVNICA-KRIŽEVCI COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Koprivnica-Križevci County indicates that there is an active Gender Equality Commission on the territory of the county, which encourages involvement in numerous activities and programmes promoting protection of human rights, notably women's rights and the rights of the victims of violence.

Units from this territory grant various kinds of support to their inhabitants, including support for the education of children and youth, promotion of a healthy lifestyle, and empowering disabled persons and children with developmental disabilities, thus contributing to reducing other risks of social exclusion of vulnerable groups.

1. **BJELOVAR-BILOGORA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Bjelovar-Bilogora County indicates that there is an active Coordination Body of National Minority Councils and Representatives on the territory of the county, which includes the representatives of the Hungarian and the Serbian Councils, and a Roma representative. Also, there is a Gender Equality Commission established and functioning. In cooperation with youth associations, a 2018-2020 Youth Programme has been developed. There is an active Youth Council in the county, which was established to promote cooperation and protection of the rights of young people.

It is visible from the received statement that units from this territory systematically and continuously promote civil society development and the work of associations, and it is through their functioning that the units engage in promotion and protection of human rights, notably through social and humanitarian policy programmes which ensure the protection and promotion of equality, create preconditions for equal opportunities, ensure protection from discrimination based on social origin, financial situation, education, social status, disability or belief.

1. **PRIMORJE-GORSKI KOTAR COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County indicates that programmes and projects are implemented in this county which aim to help inhabitants exercise their rights, which are limited by the geographic, demographic and economic characteristics of the territory they live on. In addition, activities promoting human rights are implemented through various events, programmes and activities on local and national level. Units organise calls for proposals for financing projects of associations and organisations active in the field of human rights protection within the scope of competence of the respective unit.

1. **LIKA-SENJ COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Lika-Senj County indicates that there is an active Human Rights Coordination Body on the territory of the county, as a professional and consultative body for human rights issues. Moreover, a Gender Equality Commission has been established for the purpose of promoting gender equality. The information received shows that minorities are looked after on the territory of this county through the programme of the Serbian National Minority Council.

Units from this territory support and promote human rights through public needs programmes in healthcare, social welfare, sport and education. Agricultural development is encouraged through supports granted to farms, and there are systematic efforts in the field of environmental protection.

1. **VIROVITICA-PODRAVINA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Virovitica-Podravina County indicates that a Human Rights Coordination Body, a Gender Equality Commission and a Serbian National Minority Council are active on the territory of the county.

It also indicates that units from this territory respect and promote human rights in accordance with the law, especially through civil society associations, providing services for all citizens, and making sure that no possibly disadvantaged group is discriminated against.

1. **POŽEGA-SLAVONIA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Požega-Slavonia County indicates that national minority councils have been established on the territory of the county, in particular the Serbian, the Italian and the Czech National Minority Councils, which are entitled to propose to the representative body the adoption of individual legal acts aimed at improving the position of a national minority on a specific territory.

Furthermore, the Human Rights Coordination, the Gender Equality Commission, the Anti-Corruption Council and the Commission for Patients' Rights are active on the territory of the county.

It is also worth noting that units from this territory promote human rights protection through public needs programmes, in particular, by granting financial support for newborns, preschool subsidies, subsidies for school textbooks, private duty care and home health care, public transportation subsidies, etc.

1. **BROD-POSAVINA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Brod-Posavina County indicates that a 2017-2019 Action Plan has been adopted for the purpose of efficient promotion and protection of human rights. The Action Plan encourages intersectoral partnerships between Roma organisations and public institutions, raises awareness and provides assistance to the members of the Roma community in the field of education, employment, healthcare and social welfare, and inclusion of Roma in social, cultural and economic life of the local community.

The received statement shows that units from this territory are making efforts to satisfy the needs of their inhabitants through general legal acts aimed at meeting the basic needs and standards of citizens, and at developing the social system so as to acknowledge specific material rights while respecting the principle of equality (preschool subsidies, scholarships for students, public needs programmes in the field of sport, culture, education and social welfare).

1. **ZADAR COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Zadar County indicates that there is an active Human Rights Coordination Body on the territory of this county, which monitors, analyses and encourages measures for the protection and promotion of human rights, as well as a Gender Equality Commission, which encourages and analyses the implementation of the Gender Equality Act and the National Gender Equality Policy.

Within their respective scope of competence based on the Local and Regional Self-Government Act, units from this territory, inter alia, implement policies and programmes related to the promotion and protection of human rights. In particular, the rights they have established through their general legal acts include the right to financial housing aid, right to financial aid for newborn baby equipment, right to a preschool subsidy, right to a public transportation subsidy, right to the service of early intervention for children with developmental disabilities, right to support to cover funeral costs, scholarships for students (secondary and higher education), support to associations dealing with social and health matters, protection of national minorities, environmental protection, energy efficiency, infrastructural development, and creating preconditions for economic development.

1. **OSIJEK-BARANJA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Osijek-Baranya County indicates that units on the territory of this county, within their respective scope of competence, implement programmes aimed at promoting and protecting human rights, inter alia (public needs programme in the fields of culture, social welfare, healthcare, preschool education, sport, technical culture, programme of protection of the population from infectious diseases, programme of financing associations, etc.) The submitted statement shows that units from this territory are making efforts to ensure better opportunities of their inhabitants through a number of infrastructural and other projects.

1. **ŠIBENIK-KNIN COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Šibenik-Knin County indicates that a Human Rights Coordination Body has been established on the territory of the county.

In addition, it indicates that units from this territory adopt general and individual acts which contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, and which are aimed at improving the living conditions of the population.

1. **VUKOVAR-SYRMIA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Vukovar-Syrmia County indicates that they encourage programmes and projects of associations active in the field of promotion and protection of human rights. There are continuous efforts, through programmes and activities, to provide support to the most vulnerable social groups. The documentation received suggests that members of national minorities have the opportunity to participate in public life and management of local affairs through the national minority councils.

1. **SPLIT-DALMATIA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Split-Dalmatia County indicates that they are striving to raise citizens' awareness of the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development through various programmes and educational campaigns. In addition, they allocate resources from the budget for co-financing public needs in social welfare and civil society development, which contributes to increasing the quality of life.

1. **ISTRIA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Istria County indicates that they use their social and socioeconomic programmes to promote and protect human rights.

They co-finance healthcare programmes, support education through scholarships for students in secondary and higher education, financing extended care in primary schools, implementing utilities infrastructure programmes to regularly improve the living standard in rural areas, and supporting economic development by establishing new enterprise zones.

Members of national minorities are guaranteed cultural autonomy, right to education in their native languages, and establishment of associations which strive to promote the culture and customs of ethnic and national communities.

1. **DUBROVNIK-NERETVA COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County indicates that a Human Rights Coordination Body has been established on the territory of the county.

The submitted statement shows that there is an active Gender Equality Commission on the territory of the county, which has been established for the purpose of preventing domestic violence and protecting human rights.

Measures of the social programme guarantee sustainability of all existing social benefits for citizens for the purpose of preserving social security and ensuring that the needs of the most disadvantaged categories of citizens are met.

1. **MEĐIMURJE COUNTY**

The statement of units from the territory of the Međimurje County indicates that they encourage various programmes aimed at helping disabled and elderly persons, promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical activity, ensuring quality education, and contributing to the preservation and protection of the environment.

1. **CITY OF ZAGREB**

The statement of units from the territory of the City of Zagreb indicates that the City, in accordance with the objectives set out in national strategic documents on human rights protection and promotion, uses its capacities to raise public awareness of the importance of being familiar with and exercising human rights, women's rights and gender equality, of fighting racial and any other type of discrimination, of national minority rights, religious rights and freedoms, sexual minority rights, and of encouraging civil society development and the exercise of the freedom of association.

It encourages cooperation with associations by developing partnerships and providing financial support to projects and programmes raising awareness of women’s rights. It uses calls for proposals to provide financial support to projects and programmes in the field of human rights and fight against racial and other types of discrimination.

III. Considering all of the above, based on the information submitted by self-government units to state administration offices in counties, we can generally conclude that units respect human rights and make efforts to promote them in accordance with the law, notably through civil society associations, and that they provide services to all citizens, making sure that none of the possibly disadvantaged groups is discriminated against.

Taking into account the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, units are involved in their fulfilment in accordance with their possibilities. For that purpose, they have adopted a number of programmes and decisions designed to make life easier for citizens in any way possible. The submitted statements indicate that units have for this purpose adopted decisions on housing subsidies, subsidies for family farm businesses, implementing measures of protecting citizens from infectious diseases, scholarships for students in secondary and higher education, public transportation subsidies, financial aid for newborns, preschool subsidies, right to free school textbooks etc. It can be concluded that units are making continuous efforts, through various programmes and educational campaigns, to raise citizens’ awareness of the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development. Numerous reconstruction and construction projects are improving the availability of infrastructure and creating conditions for comfortable living and good opportunities of local populations.

The methods used to encourage cooperation between local authorities and local stakeholders include direct contact with citizens and publication of information on the websites of units, in official gazettes, on notice boards and in the media.

The general acts adoption procedure of self-government units includes the procedure of consultation with the interested public. This gives all citizens the opportunity to get actively involved in the process of drafting general acts, and thus to influence the promotion and protection of human rights through their comments.

*The rights of the Roma national minority*

Croatian Government considers national minorities as richness and, with a view that *˝ethnic and multicultural diversity, the spirit of understanding, mutual respect and tolerance contribute to the enhanced development of Croatia*˝, the Government continues to implement the commitments, ensuring rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The legal basis for regulating the rights and protection of national minorities, 22 of them, is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (CLRNM). In this respect the Government in 2017. adopted Operational Programs for National Minorities 2017-2020, in order to further improve the position of national minorities in Croatia.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia pays particular attention to the rights of the Roma national minority, and continuously undertakes measures in order to enable them to enjoy the same rights as other citizens of Croatia. Support for this policy comes from the highest levels of government, since a Deputy Prime Minister is also the president of the Commission for the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy 2013-2020.

All these policies and measures are conducted with the participation of the Roma community, in accordance with the principles enshrined in numerous documents, such as the EU Framework for National Roma integration Strategies by 2020.

In April 2013, Government has adopted Action Plan 2013-2015 (AP), accompanying the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013 – 2020 (NRIS). NRIS and AP replaced the National Program for Roma (2003-2012), and the Action Plan of the Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, adopted in 2005. *Since then, several counties (e.g. Zagreb, Varaždin, Međimurje, Osijek-Baranja, Sisak) and cities (e.g. Crikvenica) have revised (Osijek-Baranja County has adopted its first AP in 2006) or adopted their own Action Plans for Roma Inclusion.* Assistance to the local level has been provided also by other organisations through several programs targeting Roma. Important contributions in this respect were provided by UNDP (through MtM and Norway and EEA grants funded activities), including a piloting of an Atlas of Roma communities in Međimurje (2014-2015). Three municipalities from Croatia (Kutina, Petlovac and Pribislavec) are members of The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, while several others, such as Koprivnica and Orehovica, participated in the cross-border projects targeting Roma.

In regard to *Effective methods to foster cooperation between local government and local stakeholders for the promotion and protection of human rights , including reference to local government programs*

Regional and local authorities and local Roma representatives were also targeted through activities addressing all national minorities in Croatia: GOHRRNM, in the framework of the implementation of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities (CARNM), has continued to organise, with the support of the National Council for National Minorities (NCNM) and cooperation of the Ministry of Public Administration, regular seminars on the role and improvement of work of councils and representatives of national minorities Special focus is put on strengthening the role of councils and representatives and fostering better coordination with representatives of local/regional self-government units.

*Projects*

In addition, we may mention a few most recent examples where support was provided to the local authorities and their enhanced cooperation with other local stakeholders:

***A Platform for the Successful Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy*** (June-Dec 2016) has been implemented with the support of the UNICEF Office for Croatia. The overall objective of this project was to create a new Action Plan (AP) for the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) implementation for the period 2018-2020, in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders that will make a qualitative improvement in comparison to the previous document. We would particularly like to note that building up on the gender position in NRIS, GOHRRNM conducted focus groups with Roma women in order to gain better insight into lives of (young) Roma women in marginalised communities and feed results into development of the new Action Plan 2018-2020. In order to overcome barriers to rural Roma women participation, GOHRNNM brought activities to the Romani women instead of bringing Romani women to the place of activity and conducted two focus groups in Romani settlements.

With the support of EC DG JUST grant, GOHRRNM has also successfully implemented a project ***National Platform for Roma Integration*** (May 2016-May 2017) in order to improve involvement of all relevant stakeholders in National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS) implementation, particularly on the local level, to strengthen and deepen local and regional stakeholder accountability, including Roma and their ownership of the results and commitment to the outcomes of the process of Roma integration, to raise awareness on gaps and challenges of local/regional/national NRIS implementation and to address them. Again, there were activities designed to empower Roma youth and women for active participation in NRIS implementation and to upgrade cooperation between Roma and non-Roma youth and women as well as to establish national stakeholder network in NRIS implementation and to agree upon operating mechanisms for stakeholders role in NRIS monitoring.

Through a project ***Support to National Minorities at Local Level*** (Nov 2015-Aug 2017) funded through the IPA 2012 program, extensive trainings for members of national minority councils, local and regional authorities, local development groups and other stakeholders were provided and an in-depth research and analysis conducted on capacities of councils and representatives of national minorities to realize their role on local and regional level, identify gaps in the implementation of the Constitutional Act on Rights of National Minorities (CARNM) and related legislation, particularly in regard to the monitoring of the CARNM implementation, to promote active participation in creation of local development policies and policies related to human (and minority) rights, and networking with key stakeholders and participation in local community development. In addition, local councils were provided with the computer equipment enabling them direct involvement in relevant networks, including the one on monitoring on the implementation of the CLRNM. Therefore, in addition to information on implementation of policies related to the national minorities provided by regional and local authorities, it will be possible to gather also information from national minorities on their perception of the implementation on all levels (local, regional, national), including shortfalls to be addressed. The finalised integrated GAP analysis was approved, printed and widely distributed to all stakeholders as the most valuable research ever conducted on the position of institutions established in the framework of the implementation of the Constitutional Law on Rights of National Minorities. In the course of research 356 questionnaires filled and used for analysis (152 CNMs, 91 IRs, e.g. 53 % of all elected CNMs and IRs (64) L/RSGs (6 counties, 32 cities, 26 municipalities, 16 LAGs and 33 NGOs (minorities or development related)). Final document has 260 pages; it has been printed in 400 copies in Croatian and 100 copies in English. A total of 101 national minority participants were involved in trainings on monitoring and evaluation, and 202 minority participants in trainings on local development and networking, while 1000 handbooks on monitoring CARNM implementation were printed and distributed to all stakeholders.

Component III of the same IPA 2012 project, ***Collection and monitoring of base line data for efficient implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy*** (Feb 2017-Aug 2018), included among activities a base-line data research for NRIS and monitoring and evaluation of the accompanying AP 2018-2020 that will enable efficient implementation of Roma inclusion policy in Croatia on all levels. The main objective of the research is to provide base-line data for measuring the efficiency of NRIS and AP Plan implementation on national/regional and local level. Base-line data research includes background research activities, quantitative sample research and qualitative research on the needs of the Roma, as well as obstacles for integration. A flexible approach to the local level has been ensured in order to enable different policy approaches on county level with a particular focus on Roma women and youth. There was also a development of a comprehensive and efficient (web based) set of e-monitoring tools for monitoring implementation of NRIS, accompanying AP, which is aligned with the EC monitoring tools. In addition there are trainings for employees and Roma activists on local, regional and national level that will feed the monitoring process (participants will come from the national, regional and local administrative bodies that already provide GOHRRNM the data on implementation of Roma Inclusion Strategy as well as from Roma NGOs and Roma National Minority Councils on local level that will be (for the first time) given the opportunity to report on local/regional and national implementation of the NRIS). At 5 regional and 1 national presentation, research results were presented to 300 participants, while 700 copies in Croatian, 250 in English and 200 in Romani Chib of publication on base-line data results has been printed and distributed widely both in Croatia and abroad, published and disseminated to 371 address in Croatia, and 63 abroad (EU MS, EU agencies and EC, candidate countries, CoE). The quality of this research, both in design and conduct of survey itself, has been confirmed by two independent academic reviews of the final publication on research, deeming it products of a rigorous scientific work***.*** Six focus groups (instead of five planned) gathered 162 participants, i.e. more than 150 as envisaged by the project, and resulted in more than 50 priorities across all areas of NRIS. The web interface has been finalised, web domain provided for the next ten years, three trainings of 76 representatives of stakeholders took place according to the plan, and the handbook on monitoring has been printed: 700 copies in Croatian, 250 in English and 200 in Romani Chib were published and disseminated to 272 beneficiaries, out of which 12 are outside of Croatia (EU MS, EU agencies and EC, candidate countries, CoE).

Overall, the project has been confirmed as quite successful by all stakeholders, and it is already echoing abroad: Council of Europe has asked Croatia to present the research and its results to interested members states in a thematic meeting in May 2019.

Significant support has been also provided through grant schemes implemented by the Government Office for the Cooperation with NGOs, including those from IPA and ESF 2007-2013, related to the strengthening the capacity of CSOs for monitoring the good management and transparency of the public administration, support to innovative activities of small CSOs for local development or capacity building of CSOs for provision of social services, are also expected to increase the capacities of NGOs, their cooperation with local and national administration, and involvement of other relevant local stakeholders.

Recognizing the particular vulnerability of migrants, especially persons who have been granted international protection, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the *Action plan for integration of persons who have been granted international protection for the period from 2017 to 2019.* The *Action plan*, in part, focuses also on the key role of local government in the integration of persons who have been granted international protection, through establishment of a network of contact persons for promoting the rights of persons who have been granted international protection on a local level. GOHRRNM, as the national coordinative body for integration, strives to promote, strengthen and advise in the development of the local policies and programs aiming at promoting the rights of persons who have been granted international protection.

Through a project ***Supporting the Integration of Third Country Nationals in Need of International Protection***(Sep 2017 – Jan 2019) co-financed by Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, GOHRRNM conducted trainings and networking events for local and regional authorities, as well as civil society organizations in 8 cities where persons who have been granted international protection will be accommodated. In addition, GOHRRNM conducted a mixed method study on the capacities of local and regional governments for integration, in 30 self-government units with over 200 key stakeholders. The study resulted with a series of recommendations on fostering the cooperation between the local and national governments, as well as with checklists for self-assessment of integration capacities to be used by local governments in order to foster the development of local policies.

In close collaboration with key stakeholders from local and regional governments, through IPA 2012 funded project ***Support to the Implementation of Policies for Integration of Migrants*** (Oct 2016 - May 2018)**,** GOHHRNM developed *The Framework for the Integration of Persons who have been granted International Protection at the Local Level. The* *Framework* is the result of a series of local participative meetings carried out with the representatives of competent national level bodies, as well as representatives of the local self-government and civil society organizations in 4 cities. *The Framework* defines the general and specific objectives, measures and performance indicators, and proposed activities for achieving them in key areas of integration, and aims to support local and regional self-government units in the Republic of Croatia in the design of their local strategies and action plans for the integration of persons who have been granted international protection.

GOHHRNM also actively supports programs for integration of third country nationals that are developed by local stakeholders. Among these, the recent example is the ***INTEGRA Project*** (<https://www.integra-eu.net/>)**,** funded by Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, that aims to contribute to capacities of local authorities in 5 EU member states in the development and implementation of initiatives of increased participation of third country nationals in the social and cultural life. In Croatia, the project is managed by a civil society organization, with the active involvement of the local government. So far, the project resulted in development of a toolkit for conducting the city integration capacities audit and a local integration agenda.

In the field cooperation with regional authorities on human rights protection and promotion, the county coordinating bodies for human rights in the Republic of Croatia are established for gathering data and monitoring the human rights situation and the rights of national communities or minorities within their counties.

The county coordinating bodies for human rights propose solving certain cases of human rights violations in the county and cooperate with the competent county authorities. For solving specific issues, county coordination can define a narrow working group for drafting a proposal of resolving a specific issue.

The obligation of county coordinating bodies for human rights is to report to the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities on the county human rights situation, to cooperate with NGOs dealing with human rights issues and to open up cooperation with human rights counseling centers.

The representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the representatives of the administration, education, labor, social welfare, health and culture, are included in the composition of the county coordinating bodies for human rights.

The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities further encourages and expects continuous active co-operation of the county coordinating bodies for human rights with regard to reporting on the human rights situation in the county, as well as cooperation with non-governmental organizations dealing with human rights issues.

As part of the implementation of the Action Plan for Implementation of the National Plan for Fighting Discrimination 2017-2018, within the Priority Area 5 - Administration and Judiciary, among others, includes 2 measures related to Objective 2. - Increased awareness of public on prohibition of discrimination of groups protected by the Anti-Discrimination Act:

- Measure 2.1. Campaigns directed at fighting discrimination and hate crimes,

- Measure 2.2. Organization of seminars and public discussions in local communities

regarding the Anti-Discrimination Act

The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities is the leader and the county coordinating bodies for human rights are co-leaders for implementation of these measures.

Currently, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities and the county coordinating bodies for human rights are providing activities to organize these seminars in local communities during 2019, all in order to protect and promote human rights at the local area.