

workshop



The Women's Center

minority
rights
group
international

Gender and Minority Issues in Albania

Awareness-Raising Regional Seminar (Tirana, 12–13 September 2003)

Background

The fall of communism and the transition to a free-market system has had a significant impact on gender relations and the position of women in South-East Europe. However, these issues have largely been ignored in the transition period, and in many countries they have been exacerbated by war. National and ethnic minorities in South-East Europe are often faced with discrimination, prejudice and other forms of abuse. Thus, the position of minority women in South-East Europe is particularly precarious; they are subject to double discrimination – as minorities and as women.

This awareness-raising seminar, co-organized by the Women's Center in Tirana, Albania and Minority Rights Group International (MRG), was held in Tirana on 12–13 September 2003. It is probably the first event of its kind, in seeking to focus on the interplay between gender and minority rights.

The seminar brought minority-focused groups and women and gender-focused groups together, in order to bring gender equality and minority rights issues together. Participants included activists and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and from women's, minority and human rights groups, as well as representatives from the international community, research centres and from the Albanian government, with both female and male participants. Participants came from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and the United Kingdom (UK).

The seminar aimed to:

- introduce women's issues and perspectives to the minority rights discourse and vice versa;
- analyse how international and national instruments protecting women's and minority rights can be better implemented;
- provide an opportunity for participants to discuss the major women's rights and minority rights issues in South-East Europe;
- develop strategies to address practical problems faced by minority women and share good practice; and

- encourage cooperation among different bodies (NGOs, governments, international organizations, etc.) working on minority and women's rights.

The discussions largely centred on issues facing women and minorities, rather than issues facing women and men within minority communities. As the seminar was held in Albania and most participants were from Albania, much of the discussion focused on Albania, while also often pertaining to other regions of South-East Europe.

On the first day, a minute's silence was held for Anna Lindh, the Swedish Foreign Minister who had been murdered in Stockholm, Sweden.

The following pages document the discussions over the two days.

Introduction

Over the past 12 years, Albanians have been discussing ways of democratizing Albania, and incorporating human rights. There is respect for, and commitment to, human rights both regionally and internationally. However, minority issues are not often discussed in the processes of democratization and economic change, and members of minority communities are often not included in the discussion.

Gender rights do not receive sufficient attention in Albania. Further, around 25 per cent of the Albanian population live in poverty.¹ This, coupled with poor educational opportunities, results in the trafficking of women and girls, which is a huge issue in Albania. Participants called for gender-based work on economic opportunities for women, stressing that action on poverty would lower trafficking levels.

An MRG representative acknowledged that MRG had not yet fully mainstreamed gender within its work, and had therefore decided to hold this seminar. MRG hoped to gain a better understanding of the issues, and to form a strategy for change on gender equality and minority rights. It was hoped that the seminar would strengthen alliances on these issues, and would lead to a greater crossover between gender and minority rights issues.

The issue of discrimination, and of minority women's double discrimination, was stressed by several of the participants from the start of the seminar, with Roma women's experiences emphasized.

International instruments on minorities and women's rights

There is no universally accepted definition of a minority, but it is generally agreed that national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities: (1) have a common national or ethnic origin, culture, language and/or religion; (2) usually constitute less than half of the population, are non-dominant and have trouble gaining acceptance in a state; (3) have had a long-term presence on the territory concerned and (4) self-identify as minorities. Minorities do not need to be defined or recognized by the state to exist, but they do need state recognition as a precondition for participation and equality. Lack of recognition has been a particular problem for minorities in South-East Europe, such as Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria, and Turks in Greece. Lack of recognition has been combined with citizenship problems for groups that became minorities as a result of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Citizenship is a key concern for many minorities.

Relevant minority rights instruments have emanated from the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These include the 1992 Declaration on Minorities (UNDM) and the 1998 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).² All states in South-East Europe, with the exception of Greece, have ratified the FCNM and are legally bound to implement its provisions. Also, general human rights instruments, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights have been ratified by all countries in South-East Europe. All these Conventions contain provisions which are relevant for minorities. A central gender-based instrument relating to women's human rights is the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is a binding international instrument, promoting the principle of women's and men's equality.

All the above-mentioned Conventions are monitored by committees of experts. States that have ratified CEDAW (including most states in the Balkan region) have to submit regular reports to explain how they are implementing the Convention. Other relevant instru-

ments include the 1953 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

International legislation can be used where there is no relevant national legislation. One participant described how legal groups have successfully used European legislation to pursue cases of domestic violence in Bulgaria, where there is no national legislation on the issue.

As part of the accession process to the European Union (EU), countries are obliged to adopt new legislation on women's human rights protection, and fulfil the Copenhagen criteria for accession, including protection of minorities. Bulgaria has adopted a comprehensive non-discrimination law which covers all aspects of public life and all kinds of discrimination, including racial and sexual discrimination. Monitoring implementation will be key. However, Bulgaria lacks sex-disaggregated data, and specific human rights and gender education programmes. The women's movement and women's NGOs could play a big role in Bulgaria and in other states to fill this gap.

Current issues in Albania

Three minorities are officially recognized in Albania as national minorities – Greeks, Macedonians and Montenegrins. Roma and Vlachs/Aromanians are recognized as linguistic (sometimes called cultural) minorities. Both linguistic and national minorities have protection under the FCNM in Albania. Some members of the Roma and Vlach/Aromanian minorities would like to be considered national rather than linguistic minorities. Egyptians are not recognized as either a national or linguistic minority, and some members of this group, which faces poverty and marginalization, would like to be recognized as a national minority. Laws regarding minority rights are in place in Albania, yet much remains to be done in practice.

The Albanian government has recently sent a report to CEDAW's monitoring body, and an Opinion on the implementation of the FCNM in Albania was issued by the Advisory Committee in September 2002, on the basis of a state report submitted earlier.³ Participants were pleased that the government was meeting its reporting obligations, but concerned that minority activists were not consulted in the preparation of the report. A participant said that the Albanian government should acknowledge all minorities, because they all wanted to make a positive contribution to the country.

The government's approach to minority rights was discussed. The Albanian Constitution establishes the fundamental principle of equality before the law (Article 18) and guarantees freedom from discrimination on the basis of, *inter alia*, race, religion, ethnicity, language, social status or ancestry.

A participant stressed that minority women – particularly Roma – faced double discrimination, and that they experienced problems from men both inside and outside their communities.

The government is drafting a National Strategy for the Roma, working with Roma organizations and international actors. This strategy will include steps to fight the trafficking of Roma women and to recognize the role that Roma women play in society. It was reported at the seminar that the government is open to considering positive discrimination for minority women, and believes that minority women's inclusion is important for Albania's continuing democratization.

Participants stressed the need to take issues of discrimination as seriously as economic issues. There was concern that, despite all the changes under way in Albania – including the Stabilisation and Association Process with the EU – these processes paid little attention to minority rights or gender equality issues.

A discussion ensued around the Egyptian minority in Albania. A participant said that he felt that 'Egyptians do not officially exist in Albania', and questioned why the government would not recognize Egyptians as a minority. Other participants agreed on the need for state recognition for the Egyptian community, otherwise attitudes and policies towards the community – and Egyptian women – will not change. One participant called for the Egyptian community to cooperate with groups such as the Roma. Others disagreed.

Employment and education

Many participants spoke about minority girls' and women's unequal access to education and employment, linking this to their vulnerability to trafficking. Participants acknowledged these problems, particularly for Roma women. Some stressed that the mentality of some members of the majority community was problematic.

There is a need for accurate information, which is disaggregated by gender and by minority community. A participant cited the inadequate information on the number of Roma enrolled at schools and said that many Roma children did not have access to first-language education. In one community in Albania, a participant reported that of 142 Roma children of school age, only 36 are attending school. She stressed that Roma women want education for their children but need assistance.

Under the FCNM, states are obliged to ensure that minority children have adequate opportunities to be taught their first language or to receive instruction in their first language. The education system should enable minorities to preserve their cultures, while ensuring that they have equal access to jobs, further education, etc.

Participants stated that many Roma children did not yet have access to instruction in Romani.

Participants agreed that the root cause of the difficulties facing the Roma and Egyptian communities is poverty. Sometimes men's unemployment leads to alcoholism and domestic violence, as it does in the dominant community. There was a discussion as to why few Roma children – particularly girls – go to school. Roma parents do not always have enough money for textbooks and girls are not always sent to school because their parents believe that they will soon marry. One participant said that Roma women and girls are not thought to be safe outside of the home. Another said that Egyptian children had been prevented from registering at an Albanian school due to corruption and prejudice.

Another participant noted that Roma women and girls generally marry very early, and are expected to have many children. Often these marriages end in divorce, leaving women with few options to support themselves and their children. Often, single parent Roma families live in poverty.

Health

Institutional discrimination against Roma women is a real problem. A participant gave an example of a Roma woman in Romania who was separated from all the other patients in hospital because she was Roma.

Several participants stressed the lack of primary health care for Roma women and children. Roma women in Albania have little information on family planning or their own health. Another participant highlighted the issue of Roma women dying from backstreet abortions, even though abortions are available free in Albanian hospitals. Participants said that corruption is to blame for Roma women's poor access to these services.

Discrimination against the Roma, and their exclusion from health provision, is common across South-East Europe. Participants called for an improvement in the family planning, health and other services available to Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania; health planners should do more to include these women in their services. Roma and Egyptian women should also be involved in the planning of these services.

Gender, minorities and participation

Obstacles facing minority women in public participation were stressed. No figures are available, but one participant said that she was concerned that many Roma women are not registered and therefore would not be able to vote. Participants suggested that the Albanian government should offer free registration for the poorest.⁴

One participant said that while Roma and Egyptian communities (especially women) face particular difficulties, they have taken steps to set up NGOs and forums.

There was a discussion on the need to educate the majority regarding the Roma, to change their views on minorities and minority women. Women and minority women should have an active part in the decision-making on these strategies, but this is not happening.

Decentralization in Albania has brought opportunities at the local government level to raise gender and minority-based issues. Participants urged each other to get involved in decision-making, and not to wait to be asked.

One participant said that she was surprised at the talk of the Roma needing to 'integrate', with some of the discourse seeming to blame the Roma for the discrimination they face. It was generally agreed that this was not the way to look at the problem. It was clarified that integration had to be purely voluntary, and that there was a big difference between assimilation and integration.

Participants stressed that Albania needed to understand that it was a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. The Roma did not want to be isolated. Participants urged the government to do more, saying that it tended to act only as a result of EU or intergovernmental pressure.

A quota system for women is under discussion in Albania.⁵ It is important to increase the number of women, including minority women, in all decision-making posts, not just in government. In addition to raising awareness of the need for quotas, bodies such as the Stability Pact for South-East Europe have called for a greater respect for women's human rights. Representatives of the Stability Pact in Albania have also met with media workers to counter their stereotyping of women.

Roma women in South-East Europe

Issues facing Roma women and men were mentioned throughout the seminar, but it was thought important to have a specific discussion on issues facing Roma women in South-East Europe. It was noted that Roma groups are diverse, according to whether they live in rural or urban areas, the social group or religion they belong to, and the specificities of the majority culture.

Roma families generally live in poverty. In Albania they earn less than half of the national average wage. Further, it was reported at the seminar that Roma families have on average 6.4 members compared with an average of 4.2 in Albania as a whole.

Unemployment is a fundamental problem for the Roma – for women and men. Participants at the seminar said that in 2002, 71 per cent of Roma in Albania were unemployed and around 64 per cent of Roma in Albania were illiterate.

Poverty can lead to violence in the household, and Roma women are often scared and unable to fight for their rights. As with other communities, domestic violence is rarely discussed within the Roma community. Roma women also face violence from the majority society.

Roma women face difficulties if they move outside traditional roles. Single Roma women often are not respected within their communities. Roma women often see their lives as a conflict between traditional and modern values. It can be hard for Roma women to challenge patriarchal values among both the majority population and male Roma activists.

Male Roma activists' power was discussed. Participants stated that some male activists said that the time was not right for Roma women's rights to be raised. Many see this as a delaying tactic.

Roma women lack access to information, to legal instruments and to cooperation from majority women's organizations. A participant said that a Roma woman-to-woman approach was the best method for Roma women's empowerment, whether through mentoring or through training women to become politically active.

There had traditionally been a lack of cooperation between women's organizations and Roma organizations. There was a lack of trust between Roma and women's organizations. Majority-based NGOs sometimes attract funding for Roma-based work, but are patronizing towards Roma women. It was agreed that the donor community must state the need for minority involvement – both women's and men's involvement – in projects. Donors and intergovernmental organizations should call for a percentage of Roma women to be in decision-making positions in any projects that concern the community.

The 'Roma Women Can Do It' project, which aims to train Roma women to become activists on gender equality and to become active in economic and political life, is an example of positive cooperation between Roma women and women's NGOs working together.

A participant discussed another project: Roma and non-Roma women staying in each other's homes. This had helped break down barriers; and it had helped women's groups understand the issues facing Roma women and to include these issues in their campaigns.

Minority women and trafficking

Trafficking – of women, children or men – is categorized by the UN as a human rights violation.⁶ Trafficking is when a person travelling to seek work or residence elsewhere is forced, threatened or otherwise controlled by another person. Up to 4 million women and children are trafficked annually worldwide and this is a growing problem in South-East Europe.⁷ Women and children tend to

be trafficked for sexual exploitation, whereas men might be trafficked to work in sweatshops. Lack of opportunities can force people to migrate, and to rely on brokers who charge very high fees. People accept work they would not choose to do in order to pay these fees.

Factors favouring trafficking include: economic decline, the fall of communism, the fall in women's status, the growth of the internet, government corruption, and even the complicity of some governments.

The trafficking of women is a gender-specific form of exploitation. The 'mail order brides' industry is also part of this trade: women from the Balkans are promoted as being different to women from the 'feminist West'. A participant argued that advertising, TV and pornography upheld male dominance and supported the trade.

Recruitment is usually via adverts for dancers etc., offering good money, via word of mouth or via men who offer marriage. However, the girl or woman is subsequently beaten and/or raped, her children or family threatened, and she is forced into prostitution. Many are young, aged from 15 to 25, with Roma girls being very young, aged 10 and up. They tend to have little education, are often members of a minority group and often have no family. The traffickers are both male and female (with the percentage of female traffickers rising), and are often from the girl or woman's own community. Trafficked girls and women fear being expelled from the country they have been moved to because they have no papers.

Trafficking combines both slavery and human rights abuses, including violence against the child, as most of those trafficked are under 18.

The government, media and NGOs should promote awareness of the problem and trafficking prevention centres should be set up. Governments should also provide witness protection programmes, phone hotlines, special police units, and improve the training of police officers, as well as bringing more women into police forces. Embassy and immigration officials should receive training on trafficking. Further, governments should provide stays of deportation for witnesses and increase the penalties for traffickers. Traffickers' funds should be confiscated and used to provide counselling and housing for those who have survived trafficking.

Impunity must be addressed. Governments should stop treating trafficked women as illegal migrants. Participants said that the EU should create a multi-disciplinary procedure and share information on traffickers. Balkan states should cooperate with the EU on this.

Albania is one of the main countries of origin and of transit for trafficking. The International Organization on Migration (IOM) in Albania, for example, has acknowledged the impact of trafficking on minority communities in Albania, and is working on prevention and awareness-

raising, sensitizing teachers and running school information campaigns. It also trains the police and judiciary, and has run TV, radio and poster campaigns.

The IOM helps Albanian and foreign survivors of trafficking, offering shelter, health care and legal assistance. It helps with vocational training and tries to reunite the girls or women and their families, or arranges foster care where needed. It started the 'Genesis' project, to provide jobs in safe working environments for survivors. The IOM is also working with the new anti-trafficking police units in Albania, setting up 'comfort suites' for trafficked women and girls. Long term, the IOM is seeking to avoid women and girls being re-trafficked.

However, the root causes of trafficking are not being tackled, so the risk of re-trafficking remains. Domestic violence in families causes girls and women to flee, and trafficking can be the result. Poverty has to be addressed, with jobs and educational opportunities being improved for women – particularly minority women. Further, the legal framework to tackle trafficking needs to be in place.

The discussion raised issues about the need for IOM and others campaigning on trafficking to carry out education campaigns with men, so that they understand the human rights abuses involved, to try to stop men trafficking women and using women who have been trafficked. Participants also felt that education campaigns on trafficking in schools and elsewhere need to be in minority languages. One participant questioned why trafficking was so big a problem in Albania and called for more research on the situation. Another participant said that a female police force in prostitution areas would be a step forward.

Participants felt that more work was needed to help reintegrate women who had been trafficked into their communities. Projects should be set up and implemented with the involvement of survivors of trafficking. Further, Albania's National Strategy for Poverty Reduction should look at education, training and work opportunities for these women, to avoid women returning to prostitution because they are rejected by their community and have no other job prospects.

Trafficked women and girls need assistance to act as witnesses so that impunity cannot continue. Despite trafficking having been criminalized in 2002 in Bulgaria, for example, witnesses often withdraw their testimonies. It was reported that the Bulgarian government is considering legalizing prostitution, saying that this would make it easier to investigate trafficking. One participant questioned the motives of the government in this respect.

Participants agreed that prostitution is a human rights abuse and that trafficking should be seen as an issue within migration policy. Some participants cited cases of Roma having sold their daughters into trafficking; others said that Roma are abducted and forced into prostitution.

All were angry that the girls and women are blamed rather than the traffickers.

A participant said that rural, traditional Roma families have very little to do with trafficking in Romania, but in urban areas Roma girls are at greater risk of trafficking.

Gender equality, conflict prevention, democratization and peace building

The OSCE's gender programme in Serbia and Montenegro aims to promote equality between men and women, and international standards to ensure that democratization reaches women and men, including minority communities.

Women's full participation is essential for democracy. However, when the OSCE Mission was established in Serbia and Montenegro there were no mechanisms for gender equality and no budget for it. What is required is: bodies at local and national level on gender, national plans of action on gender, anti-discrimination and gender equality laws, an ombudsperson, a quota for election systems, disaggregated statistics, women's gender studies and a strong women's movement.

The OSCE could only advise and assist where it was invited to do so. It worked with a group established by local activists on gender equality, alongside the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government. A Council for Gender Equality was established in Serbia to review legal drafts; however, this has yet to function. Work on gender in Serbia and Montenegro to date remains at the local level.

Where the OSCE has been welcomed in municipalities – particularly in multi-ethnic border areas – they have worked together on gender equality. The OSCE began by finding allies in the women's movement and political parties, and getting their advice. It held a media campaign on gender equality and publicized international documents on gender. Domestic violence remains an important area and several municipalities are working to counter it. Some now have a budget for their gender work.

A quota system was used in the local elections in Serbia for the first time and although the 30 per cent quota of women was not filled, it is doubtful whether women would have been elected in southern Serbia without it.

A participant gave a gender analysis of international interventions for peaceful reconstruction in Kosovo/a and Albania. She said that sometimes these interventions could make matters worse. Gender equality needs to be included in all reconstruction work. It is important for women to be able to help the reintegration process. In Kosovo/a women wanted to talk about security issues, and were generally able to listen to each other across ethnic boundaries. If genuine equality is ignored in a post-

conflict situation then international organizations are unlikely to achieve their goals.

The UN has drawn attention to women's role in peace and security work, and conducted a study⁸ which points out that while women are often the shapers of peace, they still do not attend the peace talks. Consequently, the root causes of conflict, and women's rights, are often ignored.

A participant discussed the hierarchical systems of patriarchy, based on militarist rules, which rate physical strength and aggression, and control women's sexuality. Minority women's exploitation is exacerbated during 'ethnic' wars, usually via rape as a tool of war, alongside strict nationalist focuses on masculinity and femininity. During conflicts, there is a huge rise in trafficking and prostitution.

Sustainable peace needs support at all levels. The end of a war offers an opportunity to assess and promote gendered changes, with opportunities for new analyses and gender-specific interventions.

It was stressed that international interventions should base their work around the UN Beijing Platform for Action and key minority rights instruments, and use gender and minority disaggregated statistics. The staff of international missions also need gender awareness and minority rights training. Further, all of these organizations' materials should be translated into minority languages.

Some participants felt that international organizations are not doing enough to promote local people and ideas; some said there was a patronizing approach with international organizations feeling that they knew best.

Political participation

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), the OSCE 'Women in Politics' programme, which began in 1997, promoted a 30 per cent quota system to ensure that women were included on political party lists, as a form of positive discrimination. It worked with female politicians and facilitated forums with women's organizations, which worked across party lines. The idea was to motivate women as politicians so that the number of women standing would grow; the public would become used to seeing women politicians and would take them seriously.

The project made a TV documentary *In Her Own Name*, interviewing female politicians, the project also surveyed elected female officials to find out about their needs and what obstacles were in their paths. The OSCE sponsored a visit for women politicians to Edinburgh, Scotland, which also has a new parliament. Politicians from both Scotland and B&H shared experiences and good practice. Female politicians were encouraged to hold public meetings in B&H, and worked on domestic violence and trafficking issues.

In 1996, only 2 per cent of politicians at the state and entity level in B&H were women. By 2000 the figure had risen to 18–20 per cent, it was reported. At the local level, the figure was higher and public confidence in female politicians had grown. The project was not expensive. Further, a law on gender equality has recently been adopted in B&H.

NGOs are now building on the OSCE's work. It has been important to involve men in this process, to counter discrimination and misconceptions. Ultimately, however, it is important to have more female politicians as the majority of people in B&H are women, and they need to be properly represented.

Economic and social exclusion

Employment is of strategic importance in the fight against social exclusion. Participants stressed that unemployment is not due to an unwillingness to work – it is often the result of exclusion, because of: being female; being over 35; having children; a poor education and/or coming from a marginalized minority group; living in an under-developed region, which is often where minorities in South-East Europe live; having a disability; having no social capital. Direct or indirect discrimination also can be a factor.

Given that these factors affect minorities and minority women in particular, Femina Creativa, a network of businesswomen in Serbia and Montenegro believe that starting a business is a good option for women. Those excluded from the mainstream job market are likely to have to work in the informal sector, where there is little or no regulation and women predominate.

Products made by minority women can find a market niche. The Bunjevac ethnic group, near Subotica in Serbia and Montenegro, make straw-based goods. Working with Femina Creativa they developed a market-based approach to their work that has led to social and economic advancements for these women. A successful exhibition of their work was held in Belgrade. These women do work that they have chosen, which enables them to make a living and which promotes their community's cultural values.

Participants noted that minority women could be exploited through craft-based businesses, particularly when outsiders became involved. However, several participants described positive examples, including one from Romania, where a Roma fashion house is setting up to make and sell traditional Roma women's clothing.

Many participants stressed the need for both political and economic empowerment for minority women. This is particularly important given that privatization is underway throughout the region. Privatization has generally

excluded minorities and women because they were not in a position of power before privatization took place. Women and minorities are left with little economic power, and fewer women are involved in decision-making processes. Participants stressed that women and minorities needed to be in positions of power to participate in decisions on spending, to monitor how these decisions affect minorities and women, and to ensure that a state's budget has a gendered dimension.

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working to secure the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples

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Recommendations

1. National and local governments should collect disaggregated data on gender and minorities. This data must be collected and used in ways that respect the right to privacy.
2. A full assessment of a community's needs is necessary before any intervention can begin; needs assessments should be done by the community concerned, or at least with their meaningful involvement, and with minority women's full involvement. Projects should be owned, designed, implemented and evaluated by minorities and gender-based groups.
3. Women's groups should incorporate minority issues in their work and minority-based groups should incorporate gender issues in their work. Staff in intergovernmental organizations, all levels of government and NGOs should be trained in gender equality and minority rights, and should incorporate minority and gender-based issues in their work. These bodies should also employ minority staff and work with minority and gender-based organizations. MRG should analyse its work from a gender perspective as a key to achieving minority rights.
4. Intergovernmental bodies, governments and NGOs should have clear, long-term strategies when working on gender equality and minority rights. These strategies, including country assistance strategies, should be developed with the participation of minorities, to include men and women.
5. The police should receive training on gender equality, minority rights and working with trafficking survivors. Special suites should be set up for trafficking survivors.
6. Governments should review their practices towards trafficked women and girls. They should be treated sensitively and not considered as illegal immigrants.
7. Development actors should prioritize work on economic participation of marginalized groups, as this would be likely to lower trafficking levels.
8. Donors should aim to fund minority-led projects directly. This is particularly important for Roma projects, where too often donors fund non-Roma NGOs to do work which Roma NGOs would do better.

Notes

- 1 Council of Ministers, *National Strategy for Socio-economic Development*, Tirana, Republic of Albania, November 2001, table 2. Found in www.imf.org/External/NP/prsp/2001/alb/01/, viewed on 15 January 2004.
- 2 See Alfredsson, G. and Ferrer, E., *Minority Rights: A Guide to United Nations Procedures and Institutions*, London, MRG, 1998; and Barnes, C. and Olsthoorn, M., *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: A Guide for Non-Governmental Organizations*, London, MRG, 1999.
- 3 See http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/ for all Opinions of the Advisory Committee on the FCNM, including on Albania.
- 4 According to the Women's Center in Tirana, it costs approximately US \$56 per family to register.
- 5 This would apply to women in government and elected representatives (Women's Center, Tirana).
- 6 The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children received its 40th ratification in September 2003 and came into force on 26 December 2003.
- 7 Human Rights Club, Bulgaria.
- 8 UNIFEM study on women, war and peace, 2002.

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Minority Rights Group International is a non-governmental organization (NGO) working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding

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