

Towards Convergence? Anti-discrimination Policies and Minority Rights Protection in the Eastern Partnership Countries and the European Union

CONFERENCE

Budapest, Hungary, 8-9 October 2015

Venue: Mercure Korona Hotel, Budapest 1053, Kecskeméti u. 14.

Organized by the Eastern Partnership Minorities Network and Minority Rights Group Europe

The Visegrád countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) adopted the anti-discrimination legislation in the early 2000s in the framework of the European Union accession process. The Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) are in different stages of building this framework and implementing the law. What can they learn from the experience of the Visegrád countries? How can they better promote the recognition of the anti-discrimination instruments among minorities?

The aim of the conference is to share experiences of and strengthen networking among minority representatives, civil society organizations and decision-makers on effective implementation of the anti-discrimination framework guaranteeing minority rights. Experts and NGO practitioners will share their experiences from both the Eastern Partnership and the Visegrád countries.

REGISTRATION: Please send an email to Bernadett.sebaly@mrgmail.org. There is no need to fill in a registration form but you help our work if you let us know in a simple email about your potential participation. The working language of the event is ENGLISH.

Day 1 (8 October)

9.15-9.30: Opening speech: “The anti-discrimination framework is a tool to effectively protect minority rights in the Eastern Partnership countries.” What is the relevance of this mechanism in the current political reality?

Zsófia FARKAS, Managing Director, Minority Rights Group Europe

9.30-10.45: Section 1: Anti-discrimination legislation as part of Visa Liberalization Action Plan in the Eastern Partnership countries

The European Union started negotiations in 2010 about visa liberalization in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. One key component of these dialogues was strengthening the protection of fundamental rights. The speakers will introduce the negotiations around the Visa Liberalization Action Plan and the process of drafting the anti-discrimination legislation in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Panelists:

- Leo LITRA, Senior Research Fellow at Institute of World Policy, Ukraine
- Giorgi GOTSIRIDZE, Young Lawyers Association of Georgia, Georgia

Moderator: Zsófia FARKAS, Managing Director, Minority Rights Group Europe

10.45-11.00: Break

11.00-12.15: Section 2: Anti-discrimination policy in the European Union and its effect on minority rights protection

The speakers will introduce the standards of the European Union about the implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation.

Panelists:

- Lavinia BANU, Policy Assistant, Non-discrimination Policy and Roma Coordination, DG Justice
- Kalman PETOCZ, Helsinki Committee, Slovakia

Moderator: Elena TONKACHEVA, Lawtrend NGO, Belarus

12.15-13.30: Lunch

13.30-14.45: Section 3: Practices of anti-discrimination bodies and minority discrimination cases

The speakers will highlight the difficulties faced by victims of discrimination in speaking out and bringing their case to equality bodies.

Panelists:

- Katalin SZAJBÉLY, Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, Hungary
- Márton UDVARI, attorney, Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities, Hungary
- Andrei BRIGHIDIN, consultant to anti-discrimination coalition in Moldova and member of Equality Body, Moldova

Moderator: Giorgi GOTSIRIDZE, Young Lawyers Association of Georgia, Georgia

14.45-15.00: Coffee break

15.00-16.15: Section 4: Minority organisations role in anti-discrimination coalitions

The speakers will talk about the challenges of building anti-discrimination coalitions and share their experience on the role of member organizations for the implementation of the legislation.

Panelists:

- Arnold STEPANYAN, Public Movement Multinational Georgia, member of the Georgian anti-discrimination coalition, Georgia
- Šárka DUSKOVA, League of Human Rights, Czech Republic

Moderator: Andrei BRIGHIDIN, consultant to the anti-discrimination coalition in Moldova and member of Equality Body, Moldova

16.15-16.30: Coffee break

16.30-17.00: Closing remarks

Eastern Partnership Minorities Network is funded by the European Commission, the International Visegrad Fund and Swiss Confederation Federal Department of Foreign Affairs



Day 2 (9 October)

9.15-9.30: Opening remarks

Zsófia FARKAS, Managing Director, Minority Rights Group Europe

9.30-10.45: Section 5: Anti-discrimination campaigns to reach minorities: Challenges and success stories

The speakers will share best practices about promoting anti-discrimination legislation and how to raise awareness on cases of discrimination of ethnic and religious minorities among the general public.

Panelists:

- Agnieszka MIKULSKA, project coordinator, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland
- Tetiana PECHONCHYK, Head of Board, Human Rights Information Centre, Ukraine / organisation implementing the anti-discrimination campaign in Ukraine

Moderator: Irene FEDOROVYCH, Social Action Centre/No Borders Project

10.45-11.00: Coffee break

11.00-12.15: Section 6: Anti-discrimination legislation at the gates: Armenia and Belarus

There are ongoing negotiations in Armenia and Belarus about the adoption of the anti-discrimination framework among civil society organizations. The speakers will give an insight into these debates.

Panelists:

- Larisa MINASYAN, Open Society Institute, Armenia
- Elena TONKACHEVA, Lawtrend NGO, Belarus

Moderator: Arnold STEPANYAN, Public Movement Multinational Georgia, member of the Georgian anti-discrimination coalition, Georgia

12.15-13.00: Press conference and sandwich lunch

