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Taking Action on Social Inclusion of Older People

Newsletter No. 5;
31 May 2017

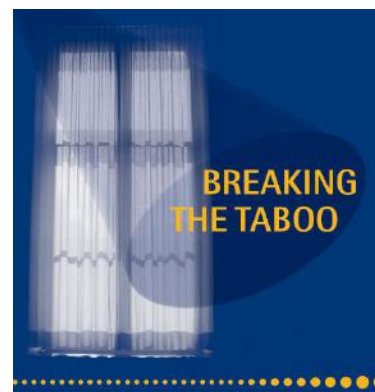
Welcome to the fifth issue of the TASIOP newsletter covering the development in the regional project dedicated to social inclusion of older people financed by European Union, Austrian Development Agency and Austrian Red Cross. In this issue we will talk about the activities of the project partners in the first quarter of the second year of the project, the activities related to the World Health Day, 7 April, as well as new projects our partners are involved with that deal with healthy ageing, empowering older women and building civil society capacity to support older people. We also talk about domestic elder abuse and mental health of older people.

Austria

Breaking the Taboo: Violence against older women within the family – recognizing and acting

Research shows that violence and other forms of abuse often occur in the immediate family. Violence against older women is even more a taboo and there is a lack of awareness of this issue among the public and also a lack of provisions for older women who are victims of violence and abuse. Health and social service professionals who work with older people in their own homes are often the only ones who have access to older victims of violence.

Against this background, two European Projects, funded within the Daphne II-programme of the European Commission were carried out. **“Breaking the Taboo-Empowering Health and Social Service Professionals to combat violence against older women within families”** aimed to raise awareness of these staff members by developing an awareness raising brochure on how to recognize violence against older women and how to act accordingly. Further, a half-day awareness raising workshop was developed for staff of health- and social services as well as recommendations for policy-makers. The follow-up project: **“Breaking the Taboo Two-Developing and testing tools to train the Trainer”** focused on the development of training guidelines for a two-day training course for staff of health- and social services.



Violence against older women in families:
recognizing and acting



The Breaking the Taboo projects were coordinated by the Austrian Red Cross and carried out with partners from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

More information about the project, research results, training handbooks and awareness raising brochures can be found at: www.btt-project.eu



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Istanbul convention - preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which frequently targets older persons

Author: Doc dr Vesna Ratkovic, Law School, University Mediteran; GREVIO member, SE; CSO member „Nase doba“

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the “Istanbul Convention” is considered to be the most comprehensive and binding standard for prevention of violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention is a foundation upon which modern legislation for protection and promotion of human rights is built as it prescribes standards for prevention, processing and sanctioning violence against women and domestic violence. Starting with the existing legislative frameworks the convention obliges the states to come up with a comprehensive answer to violence against women which will encompass amending and correcting the legislative framework in many different areas (criminal law, misdemeanour law, family law, civil code) in order to ensure implementation of this legislation is efficient and consistent. Domestic violence – targeting children, women and older persons – is a hidden phenomenon occurring in many families and should not be ignored.

The need for amending the legislation at national level is a foundation for further changes of policies, research, statistics, education etc. in order to more efficiently combat violence against women and domestic abuse. The standards presented in the Convention stipulate that violence against women and domestic abuse constitute criminal acts that violate basic human rights. This stance has for a number of years been accepted and implemented in the national criminal legislation in many European countries, including Montenegro and other countries in the region who were among the first to sign or ratify the Convention.

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In order to contribute to effective, continuing and long term monitoring of the implementation of the Convention, through mechanisms of evaluation and reporting, the Council of Europe established an expert monitoring body GREVIO that had its first meeting in Strasbourg¹, in September 2015. Based on the contents of the Convention and the Questionnaire² posted on the GREVIO website, the body has evaluated all the states individually and adopted the First (Baseline) Evaluation report that contains recommendations and suggested measures on harmonising legislative frameworks and on effective practices in all the areas covered in the Convention.

The demanding and comprehensive evaluation process started in March 2016 with Austria and Monaco being the first states that GREVIO invited to send their reports and responding within four months. Currently, evaluation process is underway, based on the delivered reports, additional data provided by

¹ Independent representatives from: Albania, Austria, Montenegro, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Serbia, Spain and Turkey are members of the GREVIO team, selected from the first 15 states to ratify the Convention

² www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/grevio, Questionnaire



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civil society organisations (Shadow Report) and discussions with representatives of governmental bodies and institutions in Strasbourg and in the listed countries so it is expected that GREVIO will be sending the first evaluation reports with recommendations and findings to the states in mid-2017. In the meantime Albania and Denmark, as well as Montenegro and Turkey (January 2017) were asked to deliver their reports so the process of evaluating the Convention is going according to plan.

Considering that violence against women and domestic abuse violate essential values on which the Council of Europe bases its work, as well as that research studies show high incidence and differing reactions to incidents of this kind in different European countries, the need to have harmonised legal standards and effective implementation of these standards become apparent. Thus Council of Europe adopted an international paper establishing a number of binding standards on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence including the obligation to categorise eight particular acts as criminal, with particular procedures related to prosecution of perpetrators and protection of affected persons. The Istanbul Convention came into effect on 1 August 2014 and along with it came Executive report, to facilitate understanding of values, goals and duties arising from the Convention.

By 18 April 2017 the Convention was signed by 44 and ratified by 22 Council of Europe member states, Montenegro being in the first ten because of its understanding of the problem and will to immediately work on harmonising legislative framework and implementing the values and standards established by it.

It is important to stress that the Convention applies both to peaceful and times of armed conflict, basing on the principles of International Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Law (article 2, paragraph 3) so it also pertains to migrants and asylum seekers.

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For good mental health of older people

What we need to know

Problems with mental health affect older persons too. According to some data, 7% of older people suffers from depression and 5% from dementia. Alcohol and prescription drugs abuse also affect approximately 1% of older people.

It also happens that some mental health problems remain undetected for a long time. Older people frequently do not want to or do not know how to seek help.



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Depression and dementia are serious diseases that seriously affect individuals, their families and their care providers. As an example, severe depression can even lead to suicide.

Main symptoms

Depression:

Prolonged sadness, low energy level, problems in normal functioning

Dementia:

Forgetfulness, being disoriented in space and time, confusion, mood and behaviour changes, personality changes, difficulties in performing familiar tasks, loss of initiative, difficulties with speaking, difficulties with abstract thinking

Some of the risks related to mental health of older people

Social isolation and financial difficulties are risks for general and mental health of an older individual.

Chronical diseases such as stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure may increase the risk for mental problems for older people. Neglect and abuse are a particular risk as well.

Suggestions for preserving good health

Be physically and mentally active (exercises for good memory)

Eat adequately

Quit smoking

Maintain ties to your family and be active in your local community

Take care of your physical health

Talk to your physician at the local health centre. Inform them if you are concerned about your mental health.

Remember that mental ailments can be treated. Even though there is no cure for dementia as yet, there are treatments that can help the affected person and slow down the development of the disease. Persons with dementia can live many years with only slightly lower quality of life.

Recommendations for family members and care providers

Be respectful and work on building relationships with older people in your family and community.



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Recognise mental issues in older people, encourage them and SUPPORT them in seeking professional assistance.

Look for support and assistance. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness, it is a good sign demonstrating we care for own and older person's wellbeing.

Healthy ageing – training for trainers

In addition to the TASIOP project activities, the project partners also have joint activities on other project supporting and promoting the same goals.

In the period from 17-19 January 2017, Red Cross of Montenegro, in cooperation with International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), organized a Training for Trainers in Healthy Ageing workshop in the Red Cross of Montenegro Training centre in Sutomore.

The whole training was based on the Manual designed by the Federation, with assistance of numerous National Societies recognised for their good programmes and activities dedicated to older people. The lecturers Jelena Sofranac from the Red Cross of Montenegro and Natasa Todorovic and Milutin Vracevic from the Red Cross of Serbia are all also active in TASIOP project in their countries (with Milutin Vracevic also being the overall TASIOP project coordinator) and they promoted the importance of national and regional networks using examples from own work. They also emphasised the importance of exchange and sharing of relevant promotional and educational materials between networks and countries in the



same region. They made a strong point about supporting and motivating older people to actively work for better social inclusion. One session was focused exclusively on social inclusion and how to promote it in policies and services. The training was attended by Red Cross/ Red Crescent staff and volunteers working in social welfare and healthcare from the following countries: Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Iraq,

Mongolia, Georgia, Armenia, Argentina, Slovenia and Montenegro. During the three days training participants had the opportunity to hear more about global trend of rapid ageing, prevention of social



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isolation, non-communicable diseases, significance of physical activity, healthy diet, lifelong learning and change of behaviour.

Activities of National Partners on the Project

Serbia

HumanaS Network members at the Spring Health Festival, Serbia

As part of the Spring Health festival this year, two HumanaS network members have organised events in the Belgrade Youth Centre while representatives of other network members participated as audience.

The Red Cross of Serbia organised an intergenerational debate in the Belgrade Youth Centre, as part of the Spring Health Festival programme. The topic for the debate, entitled "Serbia, a society for all generations" was selected due to the fact that the Government of Serbia had announced that 2017 is the year of Intergenerational Solidarity.



The participants of the debate were: Aleksandar Vulin, Serbian Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Issues, Vesna Milenovic, Secretary General of the Red Cross of Serbia, Danica Smic, an older volunteer of the Red Cross of Serbia, Gradimir Zajic, a retired sociologist, Marina Stojadinovic, a journalist working for the National Broadcasting Corporation, Nikola Koruga, Andragogy PhD student at the Belgrade University, Milos Todorovic, Anthropology student at the Belgrade University. The debate was facilitated by Natasa Todorovic, a psychologist working in the Red Cross of Serbia.

All of the participants agreed that development of a society is very much depending on developing understanding, tolerance and solidarity between generations. Minister Vulin emphasised the importance of combating discrimination and abuse and taking good care of all generations. He underlined that every generation has its place in the society and provides priceless contributions to its development. Danica Smic, the Red Cross of Serbia volunteer talked about cooperation between older and younger volunteers in emergency response as well as their shared enthusiasm to assist people in need.

Marina Stojadinovic, a journalist working at Radio Belgrade talked about her professional experience and how rewarding it is to be able to work with older people and for older people, but she also talked about



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her private experiences of providing remote care for her older parents and the frustration of not being able to see them more frequently due to professional and other family commitments.

Gradimir Zajic, a retired sociologist pointed out that solidarity is essential but that one should be mindful and understand that there is a line between providing support and providing charity that should not be crossed. In his opinion it is important for older people to maintain contacts with their pre-retirement profession through intergenerational solidarity.

Nikola Koruga, Andragogy PhD student discussed learning communities supported by UNESCO and talked about Belgrade being a learning community supporting lifelong learning, during the project's duration. Milos Todorovic, Anthropology student focused on cultural issues: how do we go about raising awareness in the society? How do we bridge the generation gap, combat discrimination?

Vesna Milenovic, the Red Cross of Serbia Secretary General pointed out several important facts:

1. **The society will have to become more efficient in using the potential of all generations which means ensuring they all reach their full potential.** In order for this to happen, social policies need to be updated and modernised.
2. **The perception of persons over the age of 50, 60 or 70 needs to be changed.** Ageing is still viewed as a problem because the society fails to see the existing potential in older people. She emphasised that the baby boomer generation members are still largely healthy and active as well as better educated and trained than their predecessors. Societies need to ensure their great potential is used, not lost.
3. **As the society ages, investments in younger generations become even more crucial because successes of younger members of the society ensure that the society can support those older people in need of support.** Therefore the issues such as high unemployment of younger people, their premature dropping out of the education system and job insecurity need to be resolved as quickly as possible.
4. **The middle, “sandwich” generation must not be forgotten.** Its members provide care and support to both younger and older generations and the **burden of this work usually falls on female members.**



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On the same day Amity NGO organised a panel discussion on the importance of creative and recreational activities for older people.

Research shows that effects of ageing can be decreased through constant mental and physical activity – in accordance to one's capacity, of course – as well as through nurturing intellectual curiosity. Our emotional and intellectual capacities can be further developed even at a very old age. Our capacity to change and be flexible can be preserved even in the later years.



The panel organisers made a point of inviting the very seniors who have through personal example and knowledge demonstrated the importance of being active in the older age. They have emphasised that being active very much improves the quality and contents of living in the older age also pointing out that healthy life styles can prevent some of the diseases in all ages. Therefore, a lot of importance is put today on hobbies, recreational activities and other physical activities taken in moderation. The panel participants

included: Danica Smic, retired mathematics and physics lecturer, Branka Ribar Brajic, M. Sc, retired engineer and translator, Minja Subota, famous composer, musician and TV personality, as well as Dr Gabrijela Kragujevic, retired physical education professor. They discussed physical and mental activity as a powerful factor that helps one establish a degree of control over the process of ageing.



Both events had Ms. Danica Smic as a participant. Ms Smic is a Red Cross of Serbia volunteer and an example of an active older person who is well socially included – something for everyone to look up to.

World health Day, 7 April

The conference “Depression: let's talk” was the Red Cross of Serbia's main activity related to the World Health Day 2017. This year's conference was focusing predominantly on the depression in older people and was a part of the global Age Demands Action campaign (ADA) coordinated by HelpAge International.



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The following speakers participated in the conference: Dr Meho Mahmutovic, State Secretary in the Ministry of Health of the Government of Serbia, Vesna Milenovic, Secretary General of the red Cross of Serbia, Prof Dr Aleksandra Milicevic Kalasic, Faculty for Media and Communications, Paulina Firicaski, psychologist in the Gerontological Centre Belgrade, Natasa Todorovic, Red Cross of Serbia and Prof Dr Wenche Malmedal of the Medical School of the Norwegian University for Science and technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway.

The conference was opened by Ms. Vesna Milenovic, Secretary General of the Red Cross of Serbia emphasising that through public powers bestowed on the Red Cross by Serbian government the organisation can devote a lot of its time and resources to preventive health and raising public awareness on the importance of healthy life styles. World Health Day is a date when all the Red Cross branches in Serbia focus on the public health issue chosen to be highlighted by World health Organisation and make concentrated efforts to improve health and wellbeing of people in Serbia. Vesna Milenovic also underlined that research results show volunteering improves physical and mental health, lowers the risk of depression and improves self-confidence. People who volunteer are more satisfied with their lives and are happier so, the Red Cross of Serbia as the largest national volunteering organisation has a great positive influence in health prevention and protection of mental health.

Dr Meho Mahmutovic, State Secretary in the Ministry of Health of the Government of Serbia talked about the Ministry making a decision to improve prevention of various depressive disorders in older people. The result of this decision is that early screening for depression will soon be introduced in primary healthcare but that the Ministry also makes other efforts related to positive medication lists and National Strategy on Mental Health. The Red Cross of Serbia and HumanaS network have for the past four years been advocating – particularly through ADA campaigns – for introduction of early screening for depression for older people.



Prof Dr Aleksandra Milicevic Kalasic talked in more detail about the medical aspects of depression. Depression is an illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks. In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following symptoms: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.



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One out of ten persons in the world is affected by a serious depressive disorder and one out of five has had a serious depressive episode during their lifetime. It is estimated that by 2020 depression will be the second most frequent cause of disability worldwide.

Natasa Todorovic of the Red Cross of Serbia presented results of a research study done in 2016 in the following Serbian cities: Jagodina, Kragujevac, Loznica, Negotin, Pirot, Pozarevac, Velika Plana, Vladimirci and Vrbas. The research tool used was 9 PHQ (The Patient Health Questionnaire) and the research covered two population groups of people over the age of 60: persons living in their own household, receiving some form of home care service and not involved in the work of the Red Cross or other civil society organisations and persons living in their own household, not receiving home care services and being active in the Red Cross or other civil society organisations through work of self-help groups. The total number of interviewees covered is 616.

The research results show the following distribution of depressive symptoms in the interviewed population: 22% of the interviewees have no depressive symptoms, subclinical forms of depression account for 55% of the interviewees, milder forms of depression (dysthymia and milder forms of major depression) are found in 17% of the population and 6% of the interviewed group displayed symptoms of major clinical depression. Depression in older people is a serious public health problem. Considering the serious impact depression has on health and quality of life in the older age and that it negatively influences the outcomes of other chronic diseases, it is necessary to have as early diagnosis as possible and adequate response not only by the healthcare system but also the social welfare protection system. The research results indicate some of the risk factors that influence development of depression in

older people. The level of social activity is identified as one of the factors and this underlines the importance of creating a supportive environment to include older people in the social sphere of their communities.

Paulina Firicaski of the Gerontological Centre Belgrade talked about the incidence of depression disorders among the beneficiaries of the centre and confirmed that in their sample women tend to be more frequently suffering from depression than men.



Prof Dr Wenche Malmedal of the Medical School of the Norwegian University for Science and technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway talked about the research recently done in Norwegian nursing homes that looked into violation of human rights in these institutions. The research focused on three aspects of universal human rights: the right to be protected from abuse, inhuman, and degrading treatment, the right to respect for the individual's personal integrity and the right to necessary and adequate health services. The results show that despite generally high



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standards of service in Norwegian nursing homes, there are also repeated instances of violation of human rights of older people that demand adequate response. The most frequent violation of these rights is related to the personal integrity as it pertains to beneficiaries being provided medical treatment without their explicit consent.

One of the significant pieces of data from the Professor Malmedal's presentation is related to statistics showing that only 14% of the Norwegian population over the age of 80 is living in nursing homes with only 30% of the population over the age of 90 living in these institutions. This demonstrates the generally high average quality of health and functionality among older people in Norway but also indicates the quality of available community and home care services that enable older people to live independent lives.

The conference was attended by more than 60 participants, representatives of Social Welfare and Health Centres as well as the older volunteers of the Red Cross of Serbia.

International Day of Families: Intergenerational Solidarity and Social Inclusion

An expert conference entitled „Intergenerational Solidarity: importance and perspectives“ was organised in Palata Srbije building on 15 May, the International Day of Families. The event was organised by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and it represents yet another step in promoting intergenerational solidarity and complementary relationships between generations, as well as in combating stereotypes and prejudices that jeopardise intergenerational solidarity.

The event was attended by the representatives of the Red Cross of Serbia as well as the member organisations of HumanaS network. In addition, young volunteers of the Red Cross branch Savski Venac spoke about their experiences in intergenerational cooperation.

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The event was opened by Minister Aleksandar Vulin, Natasa Todorovic of the Red Cross of Serbia and Nikola Rajcic of the Office for Youth and Cooperation with Associations of the City of Belgrade. In their speeches they all emphasised intergenerational solidarity as one of the key assets in developing cohesive society and that intergenerational equality and responsibility

matters in how it helps reduce the generation gap. Natasa Todorovic pointed out that people today live longer in good health and remain active for longer but that on the other hand, family structure is changing



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– people have fewer children later in their lives and more is invested in education and personal development. Therefore, the issue of ageing is not isolated; we need to be aware that demographic ageing affects all walks of life: labour, employment, pension system, personal finances, access to health and social services, transport services, expenditure, participation, intergenerational solidarity and economic growth. Of course, the image of older people needs to be changed as well, it should be made clear that they are not a burden to society and national budget, that they are rather a potential that needs to be recognised and that a society needs to use the potential of all generations and allow them their full development.

Secretary General of the Red Cross of Serbia Vesna Milenovic talked about the activities of the Red Cross of Serbia related to intergenerational solidarity emphasising that the majority of the organisation's programmes have such a component. All the activities involve the work of young and older volunteers including the most challenging ones such as disaster management. Vesna Milenovic provided several examples of good practice such as the Red Cross branch of Indjija where older women, members of the "Corner for happy moments" were invited by local schools to lecture primary school students in handicrafts as part of the course on household management.

In the television statements related to the event Natasa Todorovic of the Red Cross of Serbia, Nadezda Sataric of Amity NGO and Danica Smic, representative of older volunteers spoke about intergenerational solidarity as an important component of social inclusion which is the focus of the Taking Action on Social Inclusion of Older People project.

National Broadcasting Corporation covered the event: <https://youtu.be/CIm9ppLLzTA>, <https://youtu.be/CIm9ppLLzTA>

Focus group interviews with older women on discrimination and human rights

During February the Red Cross of Serbia organised four focus group interviews with older women as part of the global research organised by HelpAge International in 19 countries with 250 participants. The goal of the research was to ensure that discussion on human rights of older people, and especially older women reflects their actual attitudes and their experiences with discrimination, violence, abuse, and neglect.

Serbia contributed to the research through discussion with 35 women in four focus group interviews in two urban (Belgrade, Velika Plana) and two rural communities (Ramaca and Dobraca villages near Kragujevac). The interviewees agreed that the women at biggest risk of discrimination and violence are those who live in rural areas, have low level of literacy, and those who never got married. They agree that discrimination happens both within the family and in public life. Also, they all agree that to ensure better protection of older women from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect, legal framework needs to be updated but also perpetrators need to be punished more quickly and with harsher sanctions.



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Albania

A Coffee with Grandpa or Grandma in Tirana

In February the city of Tirana started a new initiative targeting older people. Supported by the mayor Mr. Erion Veliaj, this is an effort to encourage better integration and social inclusion of older people by supporting them in having affordable morning coffee in one of the public bars and coffee shops in the Albanian capital.

More than 100 establishments immediately responded to the invitation by the city to be part of the initiative, with many others expressing interest to participate. Those establishments that join the initiative put up a logo at the storefront bar which says 'Coffee with grandpa/grandma' and invite older people to have the coffee in the morning hours for only 20 lek (1 Euro = 138 ALL) while a normal price for a cup of coffee would be at least four times higher.



The initiative aims to encourage some categories of older people to get out of their homes and socialise with friends and acquaintances thus contributing to combating loneliness and supporting active ageing. Tirana Mayor has declared that if during the first year of his administration the focus has been on children, this, second year more attention will be given to older age. In his words: 'Third age is one of the most active categories of the society today, one of the most responsible groups in the society and the one with plenty of experience. What the Tirana City is doing with the initiative is a way to show them respect as well as the need for their advice on how to make the City work better'. This is yet another welcome demonstration that the voice of older people – through their network of associations – and their calls for a more supportive environment, are being heard in Tirana.



National MOSHA Network Meetings 6-7 of April 2017

On 6 and 7 April 2017 two meetings of MOSHA network were organized. The first meeting was focused mainly on the ideas, coordination and preparations for activities to be carried out this year by all organisations.

28 participants represented 12 organizations at the meeting. A new organisation, present for the first time at a MOSHA meeting was



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SANUS, an association focusing on promotion of services for older people. Relevant organizations other than the five members of the boarding committee were Albanian Society for all Ages (ASAG) and Association of Journalists for Social Issues.

Each member organization was invited to present its ideas for interventions or other activities to be supported by sub-granting component of the TASIOP project planned for later this year. Among the proposed ideas were: competitions of the most 'skilled hands' and 'best writing' for older people; several special issues of the newspaper 'Pensioners' with information about advocacy and communication; analysis of poverty among older people and organising public events to distribute the findings; setting up and supporting the national council for ageing; evaluation of needs and capacities in the field of services for older people in the country; training sessions for older people on using modern communication techniques for maintaining social networks; innovative advocacy initiatives for older people focusing on defining a minimum amount of welfare assistance provided by the government as to ensure dignified living; a magazine focusing on active ageing publicising cases of healthy life styles of older people in Albania and promoting positive cases of active older women in the society; activities with older people visiting daily centres in Tirana; a National Conference on the 1st of October etc. Members of the network and Albanian Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology (AAGG) promised to continue to discuss and negotiate about as well as assist with those ideas during the process of delivering the sub granted mini projects later during the year.

The second day of the meeting was organised in two formats: first part of the day was a national event of the network MOSHA discussing challenges and potential policies to address related to increasingly critical issue for older people in Albania: depression and mental health. In addition to the representatives of organisations from the first day the Deputy Minister of Health Mr. Klodian Rjepaj and Director of the Tirana City Social centre for Older People Mrs. Alma Lleshi also joined the meeting.



In the meeting the TASIOP project coordinator in Albania, AAGG's Alban Ylli presented results from a recent follow-up survey (2014-2016) about depression among older people in Tirana, its determinants as well as the problems older people face when asking for assistance and using the health care services. Results showed that 1 in 4 Albanian people over the age of 65 had symptoms of some form of clinical depression in the week previous to the survey. Risk among older women was twice as high as among men (32% vs 16%). Some other findings from recent monitoring data of National



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Health Check-Up program In Albania demonstrate that screening for depression is very often skipped, mostly because of stigma or lack of awareness. The Deputy Minister, who is responsible for the National Mental Health Committee and Health National Check-Up Program, talked about the need to make the Albanian healthcare system more responsive to those problems, by raising awareness and disseminating relevant information among professionals and public in the same time.

After the meeting, the participants, joined by a large number of older activists from Tirana and other regions of the country gathered in the main city park in an arranged event with media representatives. Journalists were briefed about the data on depression among older people and were presented with the model of active and healthy ageing piloted by MOSHA network activists who fight depression by mutually supporting each other and maintaining their contribution to their communities and the society. The event received large coverage in national newspapers and television, including prime time news. Some examples:

<http://www.gsh.al/2017/04/10/alban-ylli-shenjat-qe-tregojne-se-te-moshuarit-kane-depresion/>

<https://youtu.be/BhOF1gJD0nc>

<https://rtsh.al/lajme/depresioni-tek-te-moshuarit/>

<http://www.channel-one.al/grate-me-te-prekura-1-ne-4-te-moshuar-vuan-nga-depresioni/>

<https://lgsh-group.com/2017/04/07/depresioni-tek-te-moshuarit-1-ne-4-me-shenja-te-pastra-klinike/>

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Bosnia and Herzegovina

Marking 7 April, World health Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina



On 7 April 2017, the representatives of older people from Gracanica, coordinated by Association OSMIJEH took part in the global awareness raising action to draw attention to the problem of depression among older people.

The Gracanica activists have joined the global campaign Age Demands Action (ADA on health) and thousands of people from more than 40 countries ensuring the voice of older people is heard on World Health Day.

ADA is a global platform of older people participating in a campaign on matters that affect their lives. Every year on

7 April, World Health Day thousands of people participate in actions aiming to raise awareness on health issues of importance to older people and suggest to governments how to act and bring about changes.



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OSMIJEH-Gračanica, as HelpAge International affiliate in Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the CSO Network for Ageing with Dignity has participated in ADA campaigns regularly 2-3 times per year since 2007 and has pointed out the relevant issues for older people, suggesting changes to be made.

On World Health Day, 7 April 2017 the volunteers coordinated by OSMIJEH spoke on depression, especially among older people – a topic almost never discussed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They made efforts to get public's attention and especially the attention of decision makers as well as to offer recommended measures to be taken so that the problems with depression are prevented or alleviated. The volunteers organised a special radio-programme where they had experts from the local Centre for Mental health join OSMIJEH representatives and representatives of older people. They also organised public lectures for older but also younger people. Young volunteers contributed by distributing information on depression and ways to help depressed people at public spots.



Older people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are generally one of the most vulnerable and at risk population groups. They face risks of poverty, insufficient and inadequate access to services in the community, prejudice, social exclusion and other related issues. The programmes aiming to preserve health, improve the quality of life in the older age, reduce prejudice and “add life to years” are infrequent and usually unsustainable.

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Public consultations on the Draft Strategy on Improving the Position of Older People in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2027

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and relevant institutions of all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina have prepared Draft Strategy on Improving the Position of Older People in FBiH 2018-2027 (hereinafter: Draft Strategy).



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In line with this and aiming to include as many as possible governmental and non-governmental actors in finalising the Strategy this Ministry will organise consultative meetings at several locations across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry invited interested governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations to join the process of public consultation and contribute with their comments and suggestions.

The Network For Ageing with Dignity in Bosnia and Herzegovina will, together with representatives of older people actively join and contribute to working on the Strategy so the final document can be as adequate as possible with acknowledgement of diversity in the older age and with adequate, well budgeted action plans.

Macedonia

Initial meeting of the project “Creation of new employment opportunities for women”

The initial meeting of the “Creation of new employment opportunities for women” project was organised on 21 February 2017 at the premises of the Macedonian Red Cross. The project is implemented in the framework of the Operational Program for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 (IPA Component 4) financed by the European Union which and in partnership between the Red Cross, the Association Humanost, Skopje and the Austrian Red Cross.



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The meeting was opened by the Secretary General of the Macedonian Red Cross, Mr. Sait Saiti and Mr.



Sasko Jovanov, representative of the Association Humanost, who in his speech stressed that the project contributes towards the implementation of the National Employment Strategy as well as the National Strategy on Alleviation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia. It also works in line with the development of social programs to support the vulnerable target groups to improve their competitiveness in the labour market.

This project will increase the integration of long-term unemployed women over 40 years of age in the labour market. Importantly, the project will contribute to development of the training and licensing programme for



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Home Care Assistants where long-term unemployed women will be given knowledge and skills that will enable them to provide licensed mobile social services for older people in their homes.

The meeting participants included Lence Kocavska, State Councillor of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Pavlina Kostovska - Grujoska, adviser at the Center for Employment of the City of Skopje. The meeting was attended by representatives of several members of the civil society network for social inclusion of older people InkluzivaM, as well as media representatives.

The discussion at the meeting highlighted the importance of improving the competitiveness on the labour market for long-term unemployed women while at the same time underlining the benefits of creating a workforce of well trained staff to deliver adequate and much needed services in the community for older people in need.

Montenegro

Healthy ageing in seven Municipalities in Montenegro

The Red Cross of Montenegro started the implementation of the new project – “Healthy ageing in 7 Municipalities in Montenegro”. The project will span six months (until the end of July of 2017) and it is financially supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The main goal of this project is to provide contribution to enhancing quality of life of older people in Montenegro, with special focus on healthy ageing and raising the awareness of general public on the importance of this concept. Due to many advances and improvements in medicine and the decrease of birth rate, it is expected that the number of older people in the society will constantly increase but longer life span does not automatically mean that the quality of life in the older age is improved. Chronic non-communicable diseases, discrimination, substance abuse, low pensions and allowances, social isolation, unavailability of services etc. are all factors that can negatively affect the quality of life of older people and health is very much a cross-cutting element. This is the reason that the main objective of the Red Cross of Montenegro in the project is to provide support and through different activities enable older people to improve the quality of their life and feel healthier and better.



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The base of the project is formed by a Healthy Ageing toolkit and a set of guides aimed at facilitators and volunteers engaging with older people in different activities created by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 2016. These tools and guidelines will form the base of the work in the seven local Red Cross branches included in the project. Some of the topics to be covered during project implementation: prevention of social isolation, physical activity, change of behaviour, preventing falls, lifelong learning, etc. All these topics will be adjusted for the work with beneficiaries who will receive instructions for exercises they can do at home, but also with volunteers. They will also receive advice on healthy eating, what habits to avoid, etc.

Red Cross of Montenegro, in cooperation with network members, applied for a new EU funded project

During the months of February and March, the Red Cross of Montenegro prepared a new project



proposal for EU funds, in cooperation with the Austrian Red Cross, NGO Humanitarac, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Agency for Social and Child protection. The main goal of the project is to strengthen the capacities of CSOs in order to provide sustainable and quality services based on the needs of older people, in cooperation with local and national institutions. During the preparatory phase, the Red Cross of Montenegro held two meetings with project partners in order to agree on project activities but also to exchange information on current situation related to provision of social services.

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Home Care service provision training

On 10 February 2017 the Institute for Social and Child Protection organised a training for Home care service for older people provision at the premises of the “Bijelo Polje” retirement home in Bijelo Polje. The training involved 30 participants and the lecturers were: Zoran Vukicevic, Head of the Grabovac retirement home, Biljana Gubernic, psychologist in the Grabovac retirement home as well as Dr Damir Adrovic, a physician in the same retirement home. Also present were representatives of the Institute for Social and Child Protection and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

In this training the trainees familiarised themselves with basic gerontology, communication skills with special focus on older persons, practical provision of Home Care services and developing basic care skills.

The Institute for Social and Child Protection provided certificates on completed training to the trainees.



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Also, a manual for taking the expert exam was created and is freely available on the Institute's website. The Institute also formed a Training Programme Accreditation Board and adopted the rulebook for its work.

Announcements:

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will be marked on 15 June and the Red Cross of Serbia will be organising a conference entitled "Elder abuse – what should we do, how can we prevent it?" The conference will feature speakers from the office of Commissioner for Protection of Equality, the Republic Institute for Social Protection, the Institute for Forensic medicine of the Medical School at Belgrade University the Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and World Health Organisation.

Later in June, between 18 and 21 the partners on TASIOP project will have their annual partners meeting in Sarajevo. The meeting will also feature a three day workshop for partners and their allies from national civil society networks focusing on preparation of project proposals for future EU calls. Austrian red Cross experts will be facilitating the workshop.

Eighth working session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing will be held between 5 and 7 July at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union through the CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITY AND MEDIA PROGRAMME 2014-2015. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Taking Action on Social Inclusion of Older People project partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



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