

MINORITIES IN
**WESTERN
BALKANS**

HANDBOOK ON

MINORITY INSTITUTIONS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

Transfer of models to the Western Balkans

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The use of country names in the Handbook follows the rules adopted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and do not necessarily reflect the official international denominations or the policy of the partners.

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation and protection of minority rights in the Western Balkans is still a challenge. Despite the significant improvements over the past decades, members of various minority communities throughout the region, especially Roma, remain among the most vulnerable citizens of their countries; exposed to poverty, social exclusion, and various forms of discrimination. Local actors such as social centers and municipalities do not have sufficient capacities in order to provide qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient services to the vulnerable groups. Often however, a significant impediment to their access to public services, education and the labor market, is not only the limited support but also the lack of information and trust in institutions.

The situation is very different in Schleswig-Holstein. Schleswig-Holstein is the most northern federal state in Germany. The state borders Denmark and has a long history with the Danish minority which has lived for decades in German territory, as well as the German minority in Denmark and the Frisian ethnic group. In addition, since 2012 the constitution of Schleswig-Holstein recognizes Sinti and Roma as minority. Today, all four minorities live peacefully together in the German-Danish border region with the local population. Schleswig-Holstein is notorious for its minority policy model in Germany and beyond.

This was the background of the project “Minorities in Western Balkans” on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by the state chancellery Schleswig-Holstein in 2016 and 2017. The project is jointly implemented by GIZ’s Regional Office North (Hamburg) and GIZ Regional Project on Social Rights for Vulnerable Groups (SoRi) and in cooperation with the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), and the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI).

The first phase of the project in 2016 aimed at transferring the experiences from Schleswig-Holstein to partner communities in Western Balkan countries, through workshops and a delegation trip to Schleswig-Holstein. The second phase in 2017 focused on the adaption and implementation of selected good practices from Schleswig-Holstein in communities in Western Balkan countries – the process and the achievements have been presented in details in Part 3 of the current Handbook.

The successful adaptation of the respective models from Schleswig-Holstein – of the Minority Commissioner and of the civic platform DialogForumNorden, proves that despite the major differences between the regions, including political, economic and the social environment, best practices can become an inspiration for stakeholders and can lead to positive developments. Sharing information about the existing institutions of and for minorities in the Danish-German border region and about the process of their adaptation, is expected not only to raise awareness about existing structures and their functions, but also to become a guide for public officials and civil society representatives from the Western Balkans and beyond wishing to bring a positive change in the region.

Starting with the prominent Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations, the Handbook does not provide an exhaustive list but outlines some of the key institutions in Schleswig-Holstein which support minority communities and are devoted to the implementation and protection of minority rights. It also presents the process of the adaption of the two models in the selected municipalities in Western Balkan countries, which could serve as an inspiration to other stakeholders from the region and beyond.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN: THE EUROPEAN MODEL FOR MINORITY PROTECTION

Situated between the North Sea and Baltic Sea, Schleswig-Holstein is the northernmost state of the Federal Republic of Germany, bordering the Kingdom of Denmark. The region is a home to three of the four officially recognized national minorities in Germany – the the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the German Sinti and Roma – as well as of the linguistic community of Low German speakers. The great cultural and linguistic diversity, the historic experience and the systematic efforts of all stakeholders to bring peace to the region, have resulted in the development of the prominent model of European minority policy; of intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

From History of Conflicts to the Model for Minority Protection

More than a hundred years ago, Schleswig-Holstein was divided between the Empires of Prussia and Denmark. Up to the 19th century, the Principalities of Schleswig and Holstein belonged to the Danish State. This question of national affiliation of the Principality of Schleswig resulted into two devastating wars in the 19th century (1848 – 1851 and 1864). The disputes came to an end after the First World War with the referendum of 1920, when, based on the results from the plebiscite, Northern Schleswig became Danish again, while Southern Schleswig remained furthermore a part of Germany.

It needed several generations however for the German-minded and Danish-minded people to overcome the deep-seated hostility and distrust, to pave the way towards a peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, and ultimately today – partnership cooperation. The milestone was the signing of Bonn-Copenhagen declarations in 1955 which officially acknowledged not only the existence of the national minorities but also their right to preserve and maintain their own identities as citizens, equal to the members of the mainstream societies. Launched more than 60 years ago, the process is continuously evolving. With the constitutional amendments of 1990 and of 2012, first the Danes and the Frisians and thereafter the German Sinti and Roma were officially recognised as national minorities. Alongside the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, the two key agreements under international law of the Council of Europe on the protection of minorities, over the years the German Federal State and the State of Schleswig-Holstein have developed stable structures of cooperation between minorities and their organisations, on one hand, plus the government and administration at state, district and municipality levels, on the other.

Principles of Schleswig-Holstein Minority Policy

The positive experience following the implementation and protection of the rights of the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein, show that social cohesion is created by recognising one another's differences and the cultural diversity between them. The current successful model of coexistence and cooperation, however, became possible due to the adherence to the following key principles:

➔ Self-determination

Self-determination is the basis of the minority policy in Schleswig-Holstein – anyone can freely profess to belong to a minority. No coercion is exercised. The profession may not be checked or doubted by the state. No disadvantages are connected with professing to belong to a minority.

➔ Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations (1955) as a confidence-building mechanism

Signing these declarations marked a new chapter in the German-Danish relationship. Both countries committed to equally protect each other's national minorities and the minorities' rights. They played an important role in the general development in Western Europe. The declarations have really affected the everyday life of the people living in the border regions. They are a confidence building measure and laid the foundations for a step by step improvement of the relationship between majorities and minorities on both sides of the border.

➔ Legal and financial frameworks

The most important precondition for the work of the minority organisations is a reliable legal and financial framework. In addition to mentioning the protection of minorities in the state constitution, the concerns of national minorities are regulated in various individual laws, such as the State Electoral Law, the Frisian Law, the School Law, the State Broadcast Law, and the Law on the Advancement of Young People, the Nurseries Law or the Rules of Procedure of the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament.

➔ Institutions

The establishment of stable structures is a crucial element of the minority policy of Schleswig-Holstein. Both at public and at civil society levels, with the aim to; support minorities, foster the cooperation among minorities as well as between minorities and majority, and give voice to people and empower them.

In order to promote the cooperation between minorities and the majority in 1988 the office of the "Commissioner for Borderland and Minority Affairs in Schleswig-Holstein" was created. Today, Johannes Callsen is the **"Commissioner of the Minister-President on the affairs of national minorities and ethnic groups, borderland activities and Low German"**. This function is always allocated to the scope of functions of the State Chancellery. The Minorities Commissioner, reporting directly to the Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein, acts as a connecting link between the government and the organisations of the minorities, thereby contributing to a peaceful coexistence.

For each of the minorities and nationalities, a committee was set up with the Schleswig-Holstein State Parliament, in which the President of the State Parliament is always the Chairman. Additional members are: State Parliament representatives, Schleswig-Holstein German Bundestag representatives, administration employees, the Minorities Commissioner of the Minister-President, and of course; representatives of the respective minority. All questions that relate to the minorities, such as finance, culture or political involvement, are discussed in the meetings. In these committees, the minorities have the opportunity to directly point out current problems at the political level and request concrete assistance.

The **DialogForumNorden** was established in 2004 at the suggestion of the Minorities Commissioner. In this platform, the minorities in the German-Danish borderland join together with representatives of organisations and institutions that are affected by minority issues. The aim of this is to inform one another and jointly take positions where necessary, if minority affairs are affected. The independence and autonomy of the individual organisations remains preserved. The aim is to bundle interests and increase the assertiveness of minority interests through cooperation.

At the level of the civil society, there are a number of organisation and civic initiatives. Some of these are presented in the current Handbook, which aims to put forward the Schleswig-Holstein example that being different together is not a contradiction, but a project in the making – a model for contemporary minorities' policy in 21st century Europe.

PART 1: BONN-COPENHAGEN DECLARATIONS

NOTIFICATION CONCERNING THE GENERAL RIGHTS OF THE GERMAN MINORITY

On behalf of the Government, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister submitted to the Danish Parliament (Folketing) on 1 April 1955 the following declaration on the general rights to which persons belonging to the German minority in South Jutland are entitled:

Desiring to promote peaceful relations between the population on both sides of the Danish-German border and thus also the development of friendly relations between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany and referring to Article 14 of the European Convention on Human rights, pursuant to which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination in respect of association with a national minority. The Royal Danish Government issues the following declaration confirming the legal principles already applicable to this minority – as also set forth in the declaration made by the then Danish Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft to representatives of the German minority in Northern Schleswig on 27 October 1949 (the so-called Copenhagen Note):

I.

Under Danish law the Basic Law of the Kingdom of Denmark of 5 June 1953 and other Legislation – every citizen and thus also every member of the German minority regardless of the language which he uses shall enjoy the following rights and freedoms:

1. The right to inviolability of the liberty of the individual;
2. Equality before the law;
3. Freedom of faith and of conscience;
4. The right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press;
5. Freedom of assembly and association;
6. The right freely to choose his occupation and place of work;
7. Inviolability of the home;
8. The right freely to establish political parties;
9. Equal eligibility for any public office according to his aptitude, qualifications and professional achievements, i.e. in the case of civil servants, employees and workers in the public service no distinction may be made between members of the German minority and other citizens;
10. The right to general, direct, equal, free and secret elections, which shall also apply to local elections;
11. The right to have recourse to the court if he considers that his rights have been violated by public authority;
12. The right to equal treatment, pursuant to which no one may be disadvantaged or favoured because of his parentage, his language, his origin, or his political opinions.

II.

In execution of these legal principles it is herewith stated that:

1. It shall be possible freely to profess one's loyalty to the German people and German culture and such a profession of loyalty shall not be contested or verified by an official authority.

2. Members of the German minority and their organizations may not be hindered from speaking and writing the language of their choice. The use of the German language in courts and administrative agencies shall be governed by the relevant legal provisions.
3. General schools and (also specialist) adult education centres as well as kindergartens may, in line with the relevant legal provisions, be set up by the German minority pursuant to the principle of the freedom of teaching in force in Denmark.
4. Since, under local Legislation, the committees of local representative bodies are set up on the basis of proportional representation, representatives of the German minority shall be involved in committee work in proportion to their numbers.
5. The Danish Government recommends that the German minority be duly taken into consideration within the framework of the rules in force on the use of radio.
6. In respect of assistance and other benefits from public funds on which a discretionary decision is taken, the members of the German minority shall not be treated differently from other citizens.
7. In respect of public notifications, the newspapers of the German minority should be duly taken into consideration.
8. The special interest of the German minority in fostering contacts with Germany in the religious and cultural as well as in specialist fields shall be acknowledged.
9. The Danish Parliament (Folketinget) approved this declaration by decision of 19 April 1955.

STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF THE DANISH MINORITY*

Ministry of Foreign Affairs 7 June 1955, H.C. Hansen

Desiring to promote peaceful relations between the population on both sides of the German-Danish border and thus also the development of friendly relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Denmark and considering the obligation under international law into which the Federal Republic of Germany has entered by virtue of its accession to the European Convention on Human Rights in respect of the obligation not to discriminate against national minorities (Article 14), the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany issues the following declaration in the spirit of the principles, also laid down in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, to which the Government of Schleswig-Holstein referred in its declaration of 26 September 1949:

I.

Like all citizens, the members of the minority shall enjoy the rights guaranteed in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany of 23 May 1949. Within the framework of the Basic Law they shall have the following rights in particular:

1. The right to inviolability of the liberty of the individual;
2. Equality before the law;
3. Freedom of faith and of conscience;
4. The right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press;
5. Freedom of assembly and association;
6. The right freely to choose their occupation and place of work;
7. Inviolability of the home;

8. The right freely to establish political parties;
9. Equal eligibility for any public office according to their aptitude, qualifications and professional achievements; in the case of civil servants, employees and workers in the public service no distinction may be made between members of the Danish minority and other citizens;
10. The right to general, direct, free, equal and secret elections, which shall also apply to regional and local elections;
11. The right to have recourse to the court in the event of their rights being violated by public authority;
12. The right to equal treatment, pursuant to which no one may be disadvantaged because of his parentage, his language, his origin or his political opinions.

II.

In execution of these legal principles it is herewith stated that:

1. It shall be possible to freely to profess one's loyalty to the Danish people and Danish Culture and such a profession of loyalty shall not be contested or verified by an official authority.
2. Members of the Danish minority and their organizations may not be hindered from speaking and writing the language of their choice. The use of the Danish language in courts and administrative agencies shall be governed by the relevant legal provisions.
3. In respect of financial assistance and other benefits from public funds on which a discretionary decision is taken, members of the Danish minority may not be treated differently from other citizens.
4. The special interest of the Danish minority in fostering contacts with Denmark in the religious and cultural as well as in specialist fields shall be acknowledged.

III.

The Federal Government gives notice that the Government of Schleswig-Holstein has informed it of the following:

1. Since, under local legislation, the committees of local representative bodies are set up on the basis of proportional representation, representatives of the Danish minority shall be involved in committee work in proportion to their numbers.
2. The Government of the Federal German state recommends that the Danish minority be duly taken into consideration within the framework of the rules in force on the use of radio.
3. In respect of public notifications the newspapers of the Danish minority should be duly taken into consideration.
4. In Schleswig-Holstein general schools and (also specialist) adult education centres as well as kindergartens may be set up by the Danish minority in line with the relevant legal provisions. At schools where teaching is in Danish adequate teaching shall be given in the German language.
5. Parents and persons legally responsible for a child's education may decide freely whether their children are to attend schools where teaching is in Danish.

* The statement is published in „Der Bundesanzeiger“, no. 63, 31 March 1955 and in „Amtsblatt für Schleswig-Holstein“, 23 April 1955.

PART 2: MINORITY INSTITUTIONS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

COMMISSIONER FOR ISSUES PERTAINING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS, THE BORDERLAND, AND LOW GERMAN (MINORITY COMMISSIONER)

The Minority Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein is an advisor to the head of the state's government. They are appointed by the minister president and have the same ranking as a state secretary. The Minority Commissioner is an important link between the minorities and the state government and functions as the central contact point for the minorities in Schleswig-Holstein.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

Since 1988, Schleswig-Holstein has a commissioner who is, in part, responsible for minority issues across the state. Initially, the Commissioner's responsibilities were focused mainly on the Danish national minority and borderland issues. However, over the years, first the Frisian ethnic group and later the German Sinti and Roma communities, were included in the mandate alongside the speakers of the regional language of Low German. The relationship between the minorities and

the respective Commissioners is marked by trust and respect and the Minority Commissioner plays a central role in the state's minority policy. With the increasing importance of minority issues in the international arena throughout the 1990s and the introduction of European minority protection mechanisms, the role of the Minority Commissioner became more relevant and visible in the international arena.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The Commissioner reports to and advises the state's prime minister regarding issues pertaining to the national minorities in the state, the group of speakers of Low German, and the borderland. They are responsible for the maintenance and promotion of contacts and dialogue with the following organizations and institutions:

- German minority in North Schleswig
- Danish minority in the Schleswig region
- Frisian ethnic group and
- Minority of German Sinti and Roma
- Minority council and minority secretariat in Berlin.

They represent the state government in the advisory committees to the Federal Ministry of the Interior on issues of the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the German Sinti and Roma. They advise the minister president in issues regarding the borderland and maintain contact with the border associations. They draft the minority reports and the reports on the implementation on the ECRML together with the state government.

Structure

The Minority Commissioner is a political office, attached to the State Chancellery of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, providing them with the rank of a state secretary. The Commissioner reports to and advises the state's prime minister. This means that they are in direct contact with the top level of administration and government. The office of the

Commissioner is a volunteer position, which means the person holding the office receives an expense allowance but might also have other obligations. While being appointed by the minister president of the state, the Commissioner is not bound by their instructions.

Composition

The office itself consists of one person. The person holding the office of Minority Commissioner should:

- Have a sincere interest in the concerns of minorities
- Show curiosity and interest in continuous learning and training
- Have personal integrity

The Minority Commissioner is supported by several staff of the state chancellery in the department for external affairs and minorities, whose tasks are limited to administrative planning and implementation of activities and projects proposed and carried out by the Commissioner.

Communication

As the Commissioner has the rank of a state secretary, they report directly to the minister president and advise them with regard to minority issues. The Commissioner has fixed office hours for meetings and consultations and participates in a large number of ad hoc meetings with the minorities and representatives of the government. The Commissioner is also the chairperson of the DialogForumNorden, through which there are regular meetings with the minorities and other stakeholders in the region, plus also participates in the contact committees between the Landtag and the minorities.

ROLE & IMPACT

In 1996, the European Centre for Minority Issues was founded upon the initiative of the Commissioner. It has been operating since then as a research centre, researching and analysing minority communities and the implementation of minority protection standards across Europe, documenting successes and shortcomings in this field.

In 2003/2004 the institution of DialogForumNorden was established upon the initiative of the Commissioner, as a forum for exchange and cooperation for the minorities and other actors in the region with an interest in minority issues in the German-Danish border region.

In 2015 the Minority Commissioner initiated and contributed to the development of the Action Plan for Language Policy, which proposes large-scale improvements in minority language education and usability.

The Minority Commissioner is an essential pillar of Schleswig-Holstein's minority policy and a reliable point of contact and dialogue for the minorities in the region. Their role is that of a mediator between the minorities and the government as well as that of an advisor to the government. They keep in close contact with the minorities in the region by attending many of their events and activities in order to understand and communicate their needs and demands to the government.

For further information:

Schleswig-Holstein Government. Minderheiten (in German):

http://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/M/minderheiten/minderheiten_minderheitenbeauftragter.html

DIALOGFORUMNORDEN (DFN)

DialogForumNorden is a platform for exchange and information for and by the four minorities of the German–Danish border region and a number of private and public institutions. It is a tool to pool the voices of minority communities and local actors and find desirable solutions to common problems.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

DialogForumNorden (DFN) was established in early 2004 upon the initiative of the Minority Commissioner at the time. Since then it has developed into one of the central tools for communication and exchange between the four minority communities, as well as between the minorities and the Minority Commissioner.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The main task of the forum is information exchange between the actors and especially between the minorities. The meetings aim to facilitate the information flow between the participants and agreements regarding any relevant issues that might come up.

Structure

The DFN is a non-hierarchical cooperation and communication platform with informal structures. The administration of the DFN is handled by the European Academy Schleswig-Holstein, a local educational institution. The DFN is not a formal organisation or institution and has no institutional rights or obligations. Each member remains independent and sovereign, plus common statements can only be made with the consensus of all members. Meetings are called and chaired by the Minority Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein.

Composition

The DFN currently consists of 16 members, including: the Minority Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein, the permanent representative of the Europe committee in the Schleswig-Holstein parliament, the director of the Schleswig-Holstein parliament, Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger

(Association of Germans in Nordschleswig), Sydslesvigsk Forening (South Schleswig Association), Frasche Råd – Friesenrat Sektion Nord (North Frisian Council), Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma – Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein (Association of German Sinti and Roma Schleswig-Holstein), Südschleswigsher Wählerverband (South Schleswig political party), Jaruplund Højskole (Jarplund educational centre), Nordfriisk Institut (North Frisian Institute), Minority Commissioner of the European University Flensburg, European Academy Schleswig-Holstein, European Centre for Minority Issues, Federal Union of European Nationalities, Region Syddanmark, and Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig. The members include organisations of the minority communities residing in the German-Danish border region as well as other local actors from both sides of the border and regional bodies, such as NGO's and authorities. The Minority Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein is the chair of DFN, while its administration is handled by the European Academy Sankelmark.

Communication

The Minority Commissioner calls the meetings, whilst the minutes of the meetings are circulated to all members by the European Academy Sankelmark. Press releases and official statements are also distributed by the European Academy Sankelmark, while all internal communication is informal. Meetings are occasionally structured along thematic lines; however, the majority of the time is usually dedicated to the reports of the participating institutions and organisations.

ROLE & IMPACT

Since the DFN is a very informal organisation that is focused on exchange and communication, its impact is somewhat indirect. The regular communication between the minorities and other actors in the border region concerned with minority issues is, however, for the mutual understanding of all actors and fosters cooperation between them. Especially for the minorities, the DFN is an important forum to discuss any relevant issues and gather support if needed.

For further information:

Schleswig-Holstein Government. Minderheiten (in German):
http://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/M/minderheiten/minderheiten_minderheitenbeauftragter.html

HOUSE OF MINORITIES IN FLENSBURG/ FLENSBURG

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The "House of Minorities" is a project led by the European minorities' umbrella organisation FUEN and its partners Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger and Sydslesvigsk Forening. The aim of the project is to establish a contact place and information centre of minorities issues in Flensburg/Flensborg, at the very heart of the German-Danish border region. In 2013, the Committee for Minority Issues in the Danish parliament – Sydslesvigudvalget – has provided the financial means to conduct a feasibility study and to develop the concept: "House of Minorities – a European information and documentation centre". A grant received from an INTERREG- programme followed and kick-started the project; the initial renovations were made and the idea took shape by establishing a House of Minorities office ("Kontor") in Norderstraße 78, Flensburg.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The House of Minorities (HoM) regards itself as a contact point for everyone who seeks information on the minorities in the German-Danish border region and in Europe. The aim of the HoM is furthermore to use the existing expertise and European commitment of the minorities from this region, which can serve as a role model or success story for other European regions.

Structure

The HoM is run by the FUEN together with its partners and member organisations. For the time being, only the House of Minorities' office ("Kontor") has been renovated. Negotiations regarding further renovations of the HoM and utilising its entire capacity are on-going.

Activities

It is the aim of the HoM project to provide space for many different projects, meetings and activities each year. So far, various events such as the Caucasus Project, the YEN movie contest and a visit by the German President have taken place in the House of Minorities office. Within the framework of the Western Balkan project, the House of Minorities office hosted several of the project's meetings and workshops. During the study tours 2016 and 2017, the participants from the Western Balkans were able to experience the atmosphere of the HoM while participating in the trainings and discussions that took place at the HoM office. For some of the participants it could become an inspiration to create a similar future HoM project somewhere in the Balkans.

ROLE & IMPACT

The HoM is a meeting and contact point for minorities in the German-Danish border region and for all the European guests it hosts. However, in its full capacity, the HoM could be much more than that. Minorities are often only noticed when they are spotlighted as a result of crises and conflicts (Balkans, Basque Country, Northern Ireland) or through quaint posing (folklore, traditions). The HoM draws the attention to the cultural, economical, scientific, media and intellectual potential of Europe's minorities and promotes their potential.

However, regarding their own future, the minorities in Europe need support which the HoM can offer. While some minorities are large, strong, well organised and fit for the future, there are many who still have to face massive problems. Some autochthonous minorities are even in acute danger of extinction.

The HoM cannot save minorities from extinction, but it can and should be a contact point for advice, best practice, and inspiration; providing the support minorities need to help themselves. The HoM is run by the minorities – for the minorities.

For further information:

<https://www.fuen.org/key-topics/forum-of-the-european-minorities-house-of-minorities/>

MINORITY COMMITTEES WITH THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN PARLIAMENT

The Committee for Issues Pertaining to the Frisian Ethnic Group in Schleswig-Holstein (Frisian Committee), the Committee for Issues Pertaining to the German Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein (Sinti and Roma Committee), and the Committee for Issues Pertaining to the German Minority in Denmark (Nordschleswig Committee) are contact points between the minority communities and the parliament.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

Since their establishment the Nordschleswig Committee (1975), the Frisian committee (1988) and the Sinti and Roma committee (2013) have been important tools to support the German minority in Denmark and to fill the constitutional protection of the Frisian and of Sinti and Roma communities with life. Over the years of their existence, the committees have developed to be among the most important communication and exchange channels between the minority communities and the Schleswig-Holstein parliament and government. They intensified and institutionalised communication that was previously rather informal and the impact of which was highly dependent on political moods and attitudes.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The committees are fora of exchange and democratic debate in which the minorities can air any grievances and issues and participate in decision-making processes. The members of the parliamentary fractions and ministries should bring forward all issues about which decisions need to be made that might affect the minorities, as well as any questions regarding the implementation of decisions in order to include the minorities knowledge and expertise and hear their objections or input.

Structure

The committees are headed by the president of the state parliament of Schleswig-Holstein and meet twice per year. All members discuss issues on eye level, there is no hierarchy between them. The meetings of both committees are chaired by the president of the Schleswig-Holstein parliament, whose office invites the members to meetings, prepares the agendas and coordinates communication between the members.

Composition

Members of the committees include members of all parties represented in the state parliament, the Minority Commissioner, and representatives of the respective community. The Sinti and Roma Committee additionally consists of representatives of various ministries, a representative of the association of municipal districts, and Ms. Linda Pieper (head of division for minority issues in the state chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein) as a permanent guest. The Frisian Committee includes Schleswig-Holstein representatives to the federal parliament, a representative of the ministry for education, and Ms Gyde Köster (minority commissioner of the Europa-University Flensburg) as a permanent guest.

Communication

The Committees meet twice per year. The office of the president of the parliament coordinates the invitations as well as the agenda for the meetings. Every member has the right to add points to the agenda, which is also coordinated by the president's office. The meetings are being documented and the minutes circulated and archived.

ROLE & IMPACT

The Committee for the German Minority in Denmark is a very important mechanism to maintain their contacts with the kin-state at political level and it is a key element for the development and implementation of the cross-border policy. Various important initiatives have been set up by this body, which have great influence on the work of the German minority, for example, the grant contract with a four-year term between the Land Schleswig-Holstein and the minority. The representatives of the minority also use this body to establish contacts with deputies who are not from

the German–Danish border region and thus spread the knowledge about this region and the German minority.

The Frisian Committee is seen by the community members as the most direct channel of communication with politicians of all parties, including members of the regional and federal governments. The fact that the community can put their issues on the agenda and discuss them as equals has had a significant impact on how the community feels it is taken seriously in society. Especially for issues related to the promotion of Frisian language education and the increased access to Frisian-speaking media, this has proven a valuable channel. Additionally, the archiving of meeting minutes is important, as it ensures a certain degree of professionalization and sustainability of the work.

For the Sinti and Roma community, the Committee with the state parliament plays a central role in communication and coordination with the government and parliament. It is an important institutionalisation of communication channels that existed rather informally before. Additionally, it provides the community and its issues more visibility in regional politics, leading to a situation in which the affairs of the Sinti and Roma are considered, any time political decisions have to be made.

For further information:

- Schleswig–Holstein Parliament. Gremium für Fragen der friesischen Volksgruppe im Lande Schleswig–Holstein (in German): <http://www.landtag.ltsh.de/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/gremium-friesen.html>
- Schleswig–Holstein Parliament. Gremium für Fragen der Minderheit der deutschen Sinti und Roma in Schleswig–Holstein (in German): <http://www.landtag.ltsh.de/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/gremium-sinti-roma.html>
- Nordschleswig Gremium (Nordschleswig Committee)
- <http://www.landtag.ltsh.de/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/gremium-nordschleswiger.html>

ADS GRENZFRIEDENSBUND

The ADS Grenzfriedensbund is a borderland association, concerned with the provision of social services to people in the border region. Services offered include child care facilities with bilingual profiles, primary schools, youth centres, family centres, senior citizen centres, and several more. Depending on local needs, Low German, Frisian, or Danish are used in addition to German in the facilities.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

The ADS was founded in 2006 as the result of the merger of two other borderland associations, which had been active in the German-Danish border region since after the Second World War. Both these associations had developed a large number of social support facilities over the years, addressing family support, care, education, and poverty alleviation needs. These structures were taken over and developed further by the ADS. Additionally, the association took over and developed the journalistic and information activities of the two predecessor associations. Today, the ADS consists of over 40 institutions and facilities, plus works together with several affiliated organisations to fulfil its role as a social support mechanism.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The ADS takes on social tasks such as providing financial and material support to individuals and families in need, as well as counselling, child-care, elderly care, educational activities and other forms of support in Frisian, German, and Danish. The association also provides information about developments in the border region, regarding social and cultural issues, as well as minority issues.

Structure

The ADS is a not-for-profit association consisting of over 40 institutions and facilities, including over 30 child-care facilities, four school youth hostels, a seminar building, the house of families, two youth centres,

and three senior citizen centres, offering a wide variety of services to the population of the border region. Elderly care in the home is offered through an affiliated organisation, as well as support for people with disabilities. Additionally, the ADS publishes a journal to inform its members of developments in the border region, including minority issues. The association has members and benefactors, who pay an annual membership fee. It is headed by an executive board, which is elected for a term of four years. The executive board is elected and monitored by the General Assembly, which meets annually for ordinary sessions. The executive board appoints a director, who manages the association's daily business.

Composition

The association consists of its members, who form the General Assembly, the executive board, a director, and benefactors. Any person over the age of 18 and any organisation may become a member.

Communication

The ADS communicates with its members and the interested public through its website and its journal, Grenzfriedenshefte. The annual general meeting (as well as any extraordinary members' meeting) is convened by the executive board through an official invitation to all members.

ROLE & IMPACT

The ADS and its predecessor associations have been an important provider of social services and support in the border region, for members of minority and majority communities equally. Especially for those in need of financial and material assistance and with regard to counselling on family issues, youth work and education, the ADS takes a central role in the border region.

For further information:

ADS Grenzfriedensbund, Über die ADS (in German):
<http://www.ads-flensburg.de/ueber-die-ads.html>

SINTI AND ROMA SCHOOL MEDIATORS & EDUCATION CONSULTANTS

The School Mediators and Education Consultants are Sinti and Roma, it is their task to facilitate communication between the schools and Sinti and Roma parents of school children, as well as to ease the children into the school and day care system. They are trained especially for these tasks and are employees of the state.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

The Sinti and Roma School Mediators have been established as a project in the 1990s, as cooperation between the regional association of German Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein and a school in the city of Kiel. Initially, three mothers of Sinti children took on the role of School Mediators, in order to make sure Sinti and Roma children were safe and received support if they needed it. Since then, the service has been extended to include more schools and has professionalised increasingly. With the beginning of the school year 2014/2015, the project was been extended to include 12 especially trained Sinti and Roma Education Councillors, who work across Schleswig-Holstein to support children of Sinti and Roma families in school and function as a contact point for their parents.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The School Mediators and Education Consultants are meant to provide language assistance and support to Sinti and Roma children and offer assistance with homework where needed. Additionally, they function as contact persons for parents and teachers in case a child has problems in school or needs special attention. They also function as conflict mediators, educate about Sinti and Roma culture, and support parents in their contact with the schools or education ministry. The Mediators and Consultants also accompany classes with Sinti and Roma children on school trips. The overall aim is to reassure parents and children that schools are safe.

Structure

The Mediators and Consultants are employed with part time contracts with the Sinti and Roma association. The positions are funded by the ministry of

education. The training was funded by the local job centres, the ministry of education of Schleswig-Holstein, and the vocational training centre in Schleswig. The Mediators are mainly involved in public schools in the city of Kiel and are involved in the normal school day structure. The Education Councillors, meanwhile, work in schools all over Schleswig-Holstein, where they accompany Sinti and Roma children during their school day and provide office hours for teachers, parents, and children.

Composition

There are currently 3 School Mediators and 12 Education Councillors.

Communication

Through their daily activities and office hours in the schools, the Mediators and Councillors are immediately available to children, parents, and teachers at the schools. Additionally, they can be contacted via the Sinti and Roma association. The Mediators and Councillors meet every 1-2 months for team meetings in which any difficulties and problems, as well as achievements and developments are discussed. Communication lines are very short and rather informal to provide the most immediate and direct support to all beneficiaries.

ROLE & IMPACT

The School Mediators and Education Councillors play an important role in the life of the Sinti and Roma community in Schleswig-Holstein. Their work enables Sinti and Roma children to go to school and feel comfortable and safe there, while receiving the support they might need. At the same time, they alleviate any worries and stress that Sinti and Roma parents might perceive over their children's school visit (as rooted in the history of oppression and persecution), as well as being the contact point for any questions the parents might have. Finally, they ease communication between teachers and students as well as parents and educate non-Sinti and Roma (teachers and students) about their culture.

For further information:

Verband deutscher Sinti & Roma, Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein.
Bildungsförderung (in German):

<http://www.sinti-roma-sh.de/bildungsfoerderung/>

MARO TEMM

Maro Temm is a housing cooperative founded by Sinti and Roma and supported by the Land government and other public and private partners in order to address the specific housing needs of the Sinti community. Currently, the cooperative owns 13 houses in a settlement in Kiel which was designed according to the needs and wishes of the community.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

Maro Temm was established as a project in 1997, when the chairman of the Schleswig-Holstein association of the German Sinti and Roma started gathering support for his idea. After a Machbarkeitsstudie, commissioned by the then minister president of Schleswig-Holstein, the cooperative Maro Temm was founded in 2003. Several more years were spent scouting real estates for a possible settlement and into the planning of the buildings, selecting inhabitants, etc. before in 2007 the first Sinti could move in. Today, 65-70 people live in 13 houses owned by the Maro Temm cooperative.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

Maro Temm fulfils the classical tasks of housing cooperatives. It is the leaseholder of the land on which the houses are built and owns the houses, which it rents out to Sinti. It is also responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and the land.

Structure

The cooperative consists of an executive board, which is elected by the General Assembly. The executive board is supervised by an advisory body, consisting of four persons. Maro Temm received loans from the city of Kiel and Schleswig-Holstein in order to rent the land and build the houses. Tenants have to buy cooperative shares when renting a house from Maro Temm. This structure allows the creation of additional housing projects in other cities of Schleswig-Holstein.

Composition

Currently, Maro Temm owns thirteen houses in one settlement in the city of Kiel. It houses around 65 to 70 people.

Communication

The General Assembly meets once per year, while the executive board meets every 3-4 months to discuss current issues and developments. The communication with the tenants is informal and usually is channelled through the Sinti and Roma association.

ROLE & IMPACT

The housing cooperative Maro Temm is a highly important tool of self-empowerment for the Sinti community. Being the driving force behind the initial idea, involved in the planning from the beginning, and carrying the responsibility for the implementation, increased the self-esteem of the involved individuals and the sense of agency within the community. The tenants of Maro Temm enjoy the ability to live their language, culture, and traditions, without clashing with the ideas and privacy of their neighbours. At the same time, they do not feel isolated in their settlement, since it is well connected to other parts of the city and many of the children bring home their friends from school.

For further information:

Verband deutscher Sinti & Roma, Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein.
Wohnprojekt Maro Temm:

<http://www.sinti-roma-sh.de/wohnprojekt-maro-temm/>

UNTER NACHBARN (AMONG NEIGHBOURS)

Unter Nachbarn is a media cooperation between newspapers of the minorities and mainstream newspapers across the border in Denmark. It aims at cooperative use of resources by exchanging articles and pictures for the news outlets as well as improving cross-border relations by providing stories from across the border.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

The project was developed in 2008 between three newspapers on both sides of the border; Der Nordschleswiger on the Danish side and SHZ publishing house and Flensburg Avis on the German side. They decided to produce one page per week together, to be published in all three newspapers, featuring stories and individuals from the border region. The page would feature the same stories and pictures on the same page in all three newspapers. In 2009, the project received INTERREG funding under the condition that a second mainstream paper would be included. The fourth paper in the project was the Danish newspaper Jydske Vestkysten. Over time, an events calendar was added to the page. The INTERREG project ran from 2009 to 2014. After this period the papers continued to cooperate, however, with a change in management in all four newspapers, a new approach to working together was found. Today, the four papers share access to their editorial systems, through which daily news and corresponding photographs are being made available for use among them all.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The newspaper cooperation aims to provide the readership with information about current issues in both Germany and Denmark and to increase the mutual communication and understanding. By sharing individual stories about commonly agreed themes, the respective “other” should become more relatable and less alien.

Structure

All four newspapers are equal partners in the cooperation. During the INTERREG period, the partners took turns providing the texts and photos for the agreed theme and all materials were collected by an employee of

the SHZ publishing house. From this central point, the materials were distributed to all partners, where they would be translated as needed. Today, the newspapers share access to their editorial system among each other.

Composition

The cooperation includes the newspaper of the German minority in Denmark "Der Nordschleswiger", the newspaper of the Danish minority in Germany "Flensburg Avis", the regional German newspaper "Flensburger Tageblatt", and the regional Danish newspaper "Jydske Vestkysten". The initial cooperation of the common newspaper page was funded through the INTERREG scheme.

Communication

The themes of the common page were agreed in advance for the whole year and the contents collected by an employee of one of the partnering newspapers, who forwarded the data to all partners. Additionally, all articles in the project were published on a project website, which was linked to from the newspapers' websites. At the end of the INTERREG period, the partners published a collection of the best articles together.

ROLE & IMPACT

The project is a reflection of the changing role of the newspapers in the border region. While they used to report along national lines, clearly differentiating between German and Danish, today, they cooperate and share resources. This cooperation thus works to normalize cross-border cooperation and communication, providing regular information to the readers about current issues across the border, to improve the understanding between the inhabitants of the region on both sides of the border.

For further information:

Bandtnaboer.de (in German and Danish):

<http://blandtnaboer.de/index.php?id=themen&L=0>

FÆLLESLANDBOFORENINGEN FOR SYDSLESVIG (AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION)

The Fælleslandboforeningen is an association of agricultural companies and actors. The tasks of the association include agricultural consultancy as well as cultural and community tasks.

HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

The association was founded in 1950 as the result of a merger of several farmers' unions which had been operating in the region since 1866 and is today an important forum for the Danish farmers in Schleswig-Holstein. Since 2004, the association also runs a museum, located in an old farmhouse and exhibiting household items that document local rural life of the region.

FUNCTIONING

Tasks

The association provides advisory services on animal husbandry, cultivation, machinery, and buildings, as well as environmental protection. It organises lectures and workshops on different topics in Germany and Denmark and organises study visits. The association also runs a small museum concerned with local rural family life, as well as a cultural programme for its members. Additionally, the association owns a piece of moorland which is being maintained as a nature preservation area, through which the association organises study tours.

Structure

The association is run by an executive board, which is supported by an advisory board as well as two consultants and a secretariat. The executive board is elected by the General Assembly. The association is funded through the cultural ministry of Denmark, as well as its membership fees.

Composition

The association currently has around 300 members. The members include local farmers, as well as other interested individuals.

Communication

The members are informed of news and developments via a regular newsletter. The annual general assembly is called by the executive board. External communication is directed via the website of the association.

ROLE & IMPACT

The association functions as a forum for education, training, and exchange for local farmers and those interested in farming and environmental issues. It provides consultation for politicians and farmers from within and outside of the minority. The needs and organisational capacity of its members formed the basis for the creation of several other minority institutions, including a newspaper and a bank in the past.

For further information:

Fælleslandboforeningen for Sydslesvig (Agricultural Association):
<http://faelleslandboforeningen.de/>

PART 3: TRANSFER OF MODELS TO THE WESTERN BALKANS

MINORITY COMMISSIONER - BIJELJINA

**Implementing Partner: NGO OTAHARIN and Municipality of
Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Association of Citizens for Promotion of Roma Education – OTAHARIN was formed in early 2005 by the parents of the Roma students and other citizens interested in the issue of education of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Association “Otaharin” was registered at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Otaharin aims to increase the level of educational, social and economic integration and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, through professional, dedicated and innovative work, accountability and credibility.

From Inspiration to Implementation

The project, Minorities in Western Balkans, was designed by its partners with the clear aim to transfer the knowledge and best practices to partners in the Western Balkans. Through different stages and activities during the project, bit by bit, the local partners could learn about the minority protection model in the state Schleswig-Holstein. The real “break-through” followed the study visit to Schleswig-Holstein in October 2016, where the representatives of the Municipality of Bijeljina, the

NGO Otaharin and the social centre Bijeljina, learned different models and instruments for minority protection. The direct contact with many relevant stakeholders during their stay in the region was very important to understand that the German–Danish border region is as unique as it is the Western Balkans region. Demonstrating that no model can be simply copied and implemented in any other place.

With that knowledge and experiences, the representatives of the Municipality of Bijeljina and Otaharin prepared the first concept note, until the end of 2016, of the model that they believe could suit the current local situation in Bijeljina. With around 2500 citizens, Roma is the biggest minority community in Bijeljina, experiencing challenges regarding social protection, citizenship status, reintegration of returnees, school drop outs, etc. It was identified that the model of the Minority Commissioner and its Office could be the most suitable model for Bijeljina to cover the needs of minorities and local communities.

Attending the 62nd FUEN Congress in Cluj-Napoca, the representatives of Otaharin had the chance to network with many other minorities and relevant stakeholders. At the congress, Otaharin also decided to join the FUEN and applied for supportive membership, which was confirmed in September 2017. Through several bilateral meetings, the role of the Minority Commissioner in the German–Danish border region, especially the role of the NGOs, was discussed.

The implementation kick off meeting took place in Bijeljina in July 2017, with all the respected stakeholders present: GIZ, FUEN, ECMI, Otaharin, Municipality of Bijeljina and Bijeljina Social Centre. At the meeting the current local situation was addressed and the concept with the timeframe for its implementation was adopted. The Commissioner's Office shall be the meeting point for minorities in the Municipality, with concrete tasks that include: providing information, increasing Roma participation, collecting data, developing minority related projects and providing funding for them, drafting new suggestions to the Municipality, developing further contacts on local, national and international levels. It shall also open an internship position which would ideally be taken a member of a minority community. Among the tasks defined until the next stage were: networking with all the minority NGOs in the Municipality; awareness raising; contact with the respected ministries and state institutions; defining the legal base for the position. After the project partner meeting, a meeting with the Mayor of Bijeljina Mr.Mičo Mičić took place. Mr.Mičo gave positive feedback and his

trust in the local partners to implement the project. He proposed that the Municipality transform a working position within the Social Department to accommodate the new Minority Commissioner.

In the subsequent study tour to Schleswig-Holstein in September 2017, organized by FUEN, eight participants from Bijeljina took part – four representing the Municipality, two for the NGO Otaharin, and another two for the Social Centre Bijeljina. Among them were: Mr. Ljubiša Stanišić – the appointed future Minority Commissioner, and Ms Sanita Smajić, the first Roma university student in Bijeljina, who could be the next intern at the Commissioner's Office.

Within the frameworks of the programme, training with the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein was organized, along with the visit to the small Frisian municipality of Bräist/Bredstedt, and the visit of the State Chancellery in Kiel. In the training, the "to do list" was checked and the focus was placed on the development of the future action plan. Mrs. Linda Pieper provided the participants with many insights on the work of the Commissioner in Schleswig-Holstein. It was underlined several times that the most important aspect is the trust and the cooperation between the civil society and the authorities. In Schleswig-Holstein, the authorities trust the NGOs and their work and often even ask for advice from them. That is also the reason that the Minority Commissioner, whilst not having a minority background, can still enjoy the full support from the minority communities. It has also been decided that the "official opening" of the Minority Commissioner's Office shall be on the 16th November 2017.

At the inauguration event on 16th November 2017, the international day of Tolerance, many relevant stakeholders were present in Bijeljina. The innaguration event was attended by many local, national and international stakeholders, among which were the Deputy Minister for Human Rights of Bosnian and Herzegovina, the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo, and the Vice-President of Youth of European Nationalities. The Mayor Mr.Mićo Mičić opened the ceremony by expressing his support to the Minority Comissioner in Bijeljina, whilst the FUEN President Mr Loránt Vincze encouraged the local partners to continue working on minority rights issues. Mr. Boyken from the State of Schleswig-Holstein and Ms. Djurdjević from ECMI, together with Mr. Samec from the GIZ also officially approved of the initiative.

The Adapted Model

The Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs – Municipality of Bijelina

The Office has been established:

- after the model of the Schleswig-Holstein Minority Commissioner (Germany)
- within the frameworks of the Project „Minorities in the Western Balkans“ – „Regional Project on Social Rights for Vulnerable Groups (SoRi)“, GIZ
- with the support of the GIZ project partners FUEN, ECMI and the Administration of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein
- as a part of the Administration of the City of Bijeljina – Social Services Department
- as a permanent structure headed by an Independent Associate for National Minorities and Diaspora
- with a mission to support the members of the minority communities present at the City of Bijelina to enjoy their rights and to interact effectively with the public authorities
- with a vision to inspire other local administrations in the country to establish similar structures and to set a positive example
- to contribute to the inter-ethnic dialogue and to the social cohesion in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Independent Associate for National Minorities and Diaspora

The Minority Commissioner in Bijelina:

- will cooperate with the relevant departments at the state level, with entities, municipalities and cities dealing with national minority issues

- will monitor and inform the national minorities on the open competitions for reconstruction of housing facilities
- will cooperate and provide the necessary assistance to donors who implement their projects in the City of Bijeljina
- will work for the improvement of the status of the national minorities in the City of Bijeljina
- will facilitate the dialogue between the minority communities and the public authorities
- will foster the inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation
- will work for ensuring equality and non-discrimination
- will support the vulnerable groups in their access to social services
- provide information and raise awareness among the stakeholders about their rights

FORUM FOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION – TETOVO

Implementing Partner: NGO SONCE and Municipality of Tetovo, Macedonia

SONCE is an established organization on the international and national levels, which actively contributes to civic integration and equal practice of Roma democratic rights and opportunities. SONCE was established in 1996 as an informal group for self-help in the Roma community in Tetovo. The group functioned by collecting charity from the Roma families, which was later used for urgent necessities for the Roma community. Since its establishment until the end of 2011, SONCE has realized a total of 55 projects, among which many were outside projects, plus it has also cooperated as a partner organization on projects run by other organizations.

From Inspiration to Implementation

In October 2016, within the frameworks of the project “Minority in the Western Balkans”, representatives from the non-governmental organization SONCE and from the Municipality of Tetovo visited the region of Schleswig-Holstein. During the one-week of intensive study visit, organized and hosted by FUEN, the participants had the possibility to meet with minorities from the region and with public official organizations, to learn about their experience, to share views and opinions, and to discuss issues of their interest.

The subsequent workshop session in December 2016 allowed the participants to discuss the lessons learned during the study visit, as well as to brainstorm together with the project partners over which of the models, if any, could be adapted to the needs of their own communities. Reflecting on the situation and the needs of the various local stakeholders, the team from Tetovo concluded that fostering cooperation among minorities as well as establishing a structure for dialogue and cooperation with the public authorities, is of a primary importance. Inspired by the model of DialogForumNorden, the participants developed a plan for action for its adaptation.

In the summer of 2017, the project partners from ECMI and FUEN attended a planning meeting in Tetovo with an extended team from SONCE. The idea around the adaptation of the positive practice from the region or Schleswig-Holstein was further clarified based on the detailed information provided by SONCE, regarding the challenges that the implementation of the minority rights in the country and the region in particular. An agreement was reached that the structure that would be established in Tetovo and should aim at fostering the better provision of social support to the vulnerable groups in the municipality, by creating a space for a regular dialogue with the local authorities and by promoting cooperation among minorities and their organization. Acknowledging that the support of the Municipality was crucial for the success of the future Forum in Tetovo, all partners agreed that the next steps should take place after the local elections in the autumn 2017.

On 1st December 2017, a coordination meeting between the representatives of the Municipality of Tetovo, NGO SONCE, GIZ and ECMI, took place, during which all of the details concerning the implementation of the initiative was agreed. Receiving the full support from the Mayor of Tetovo and the Municipality, the initiative of NGO SONCE to establish a **Forum for Social Dialogue and Cooperation in Tetovo** was successfully launched with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on 13th December 2017.

The Adapted Model

The FORUM is a joint initiative of the civil society and the local government of Tetovo.

Following the model of DFN, the FORUM in Tetovo is envisaged to function for the benefit of every citizen of the municipality of Tetovo, of all groups in need for social support, of all vulnerable groups, of all ethnic communities, and of the society at large.

Membership to the FORUM will be open to all citizens and their associations regardless of their gender, ethnic background, socio-economic status, professional activities, political affiliation or any other grounds.

The local government will be represented in the FORUM by officials from the municipalities, officers from the Centre for Social Services, and other public servants.

The Mayor of Tetovo will act as a Chair of the FORUM. To ensure continuity and stability of the structure, the NGO SONCE will act as a Secretary of the FORUM

The civil society will be represented by members of political parties, business, media, education, non-governmental organizations and other civil society structures. All ethnic communities present in Tetovo will be invited to appoint their representatives.

Upon acceptance to the FORUM, all members, representing various ethnic, social, professional and other groups, shall present the key priorities for their constituency. Upon these priorities the initial agenda of the FORUM will be developed.

As a Secretary of the FORUM, SONCE will maintain communication with the FORUM members, the structures of the municipality, and the civil society. SONCE will provide an email-address for contact with the public and a phone number. Additionally, a post box with the logo of the FORUM will be installed in front of the municipality. SONCE, supported by the Municipality members, will be responsible for processing the signals coming via the announced channels for communication and for presenting them at the regular FORUM meetings.

Quarterly (minimum 1 month before the scheduled regular meeting), the FORUM will hold open days at the municipality where citizens will be able to address the FORUM face-to-face with their concerns and suggestions.

The FORUM serves not only as a platform for dialogue and cooperation but it will also initiate projects and function as a centre for non-formal education, organize trainings in practical skills, raising awareness, and promote minority rights, equality and non-discrimination.

At the end of every year the FORUM will produce a report for its activity and will make it available to the public via the respective channels for communication.

Every first FORUM meeting for the next calendar year will start with a discussion of the report and the received feedback, followed by the acceptance of the report and the respective recommendations for the next year. The annual agenda of the FORUM will integrate the approved recommendations and measures for their achievement.

PART 4: ANNEXES

LIST OF MINORITY INSTITUTIONS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

Regional Government

- Minderheitenbeauftragter des Landes Schleswig-Holstein
(Minority Commissioner Schleswig-Holstein)
http://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/M/minderheiten/minderheiten_minderheitenbeauftragter.html
- Landesbeauftragte für Friesischunterricht
(State representative for Frisian educational issues)
- Friesengremium
(Frisian Committee)
<http://www.landtag.ltsh.de/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/gremium-friesen.html>
- Sinti & Roma Gremium
(Sinti & Roma Committee)
<http://www.landtag.ltsh.de/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/gremium-sinti-roma.html>
- Nordschleswig Gremium
(Nordschleswig Committee)
<http://www.landtag.ltsh.de/parlament/minderheitenpolitik/gremium-nordschleswiger.html>

Independent Institutions

- Dialog Forum Norden
(Civic Forum of Schleswig-Holstein Minorities) http://www.eash.de/fileadmin/Download/UEber_Uns/Europaeische_Akademie/BookletDialogforum.pdf
- ADS Grenzfriedensbund
(ADS Border Association)
<http://www.ads-flensburg.de/>

Danish Minority

- Det Sydslesvigske Samraad
(Southern Schleswig Council)
<http://www.samraadet.info/samarbejdsaftale/>
- Sydslesvigsk Forening – SSF
(South Schleswig Association)
<http://syfo.de/>
- Südschleswigscher Wählerverband – SSW
(South Schleswig Party)
<http://www.ssw.de/de/die-partei.html>
- Dansk Sundhedstjenesten for Sydslesvig
(Danish Health Service in South Schleswig)
<http://www.dksund.de/>
- Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig
(Danish School Association for South Schleswig)
<http://www.skoleforeningen.org/>
- Sydslesvigs Danske Ungdomsforeninger
(South Schleswig Danish Youth Associations)
<http://www.sdu.de/>
- Dansk Centrallibrotæk for Sydslesvig
(Danish Central Library for South Schleswig)
<https://www.dcbib.dk/>
- Flensborg Avis
(Danish minority newspaper)
<https://www fla.de/wp/>
- Fælleslandboforeningen for Sydslesvig
(Agricultural Association for South Schleswig)
<http://faelleslandboforeningen.de/>
- Jaruplund Højskole
(The Danish folk high school in Jaruplund)
<https://jaruplund.com>

North Frisians

- Frasche Rädj, Nordfriislon
(Frisian Council North)
<http://www.friesenrat.de/>
- Friisk Foriining
(Frisian Association)
<http://friiske.de/>

- Ferring Stiftung
(Frisian foundation on the island of Föhr)
<http://www.ferring-stiftung.net/>
- Frisian Broadcasting (Friisk Funk)
- Nordfriisk Instituut
(North Frisian Institute)
<http://www.nordfriiskinstituut.de/>
- Nordfrisischer Verein
(North Frisian Association)
<http://nf-verein.de/>
- Rökefloose
(Frisian Youth Organisation)
<http://en.roekefloose.de/>

Sinti & Roma

- Zentralverband der deutschen Sinti und Roma – Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein e.V.
(Central Association of the German Sinti and Roma – National Association Schleswig Holstein)
<http://www.sinti-roma-sh.de/>
- Maro Temm Wohngenossenschaft der Sinti
(Maro Temm Housing Cooperative of the Sinti)

German Minority in Denmark

- Bund deutscher Nordschleswiger
(Main German association in Denmark)
www.bdn.dk
- JungeSPitzen
(Youth Political Party of „Schleswigschen Partei“)
<http://www.jungespitzen.dk>
- Der Nordschleswiger
(German Newspaper in Denmark)
<http://www.nordschleswiger.dk>

MINORITIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

PROJECT PARTNERS

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and with financial support from the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has implemented the project “Minorities in Western Balkans” in cooperation with the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN).

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