



PROJEKT GRAĐANSKIH PRAVA

Civil Rights Project

Activity Report – April – May 2009

Office activities

In the reporting period, CRP Sisak received **422** clients, out of which there were **111** new clients and **311** old clients revisiting **553** times, both in Sisak and Glina. There were **18** court cases dealt with by the CRP external lawyer before the municipal courts in Sisak and Glina.

Target groups:

New clients by status:

<i>Status</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Domicile	52
Refugee	9
Returnee	12
Bosnian Croat	4
Not defined	34
<u>Total</u>	111

New clients by reception mode:

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Office	29
Field	70
Power of attorney - Kosovo	1
Power of attorney - Serbia	1
Phone	10
<u>Total</u>	111

As it can be seen in the above statistics, CRP continued working in Glina, as a part of the “Citizens’ Centre” in Glina project financed by the EC Delegation and Norwegian Embassy in Zagreb. Namely, the Center in Glina is open every day for citizens to come, ask for information, read newspapers, do something on computers, etc. The CRP lawyer attends the Centre on Wednesday mornings to provide legal aid, and CRP’s partner ADELA provides psychosocial assistance on Wednesday afternoons. An info-point stand has been opened and it provides different types of information

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and materials: new laws and regulations, all types of forms, brochures, documents, newspapers, etc.

TYPE OF CASE	NUMBER OF EVENTS
Citizenship	19
Documents and status	56
Ownership	99
Pension and health and social security	88
Housing care	14
Tenancy rights	16
Labour	4
Misdemeanour	3
Family violence	40
Other: other legal issues, information, courses, etc.	109
TOTAL	448

During the reporting period, there were **217** successfully solved request. They mainly relate to documents, status and establishment of ownership cases.

ASSISTANCE

Appeals/complaints	6
Letters	55
Lawsuits	3
Submissions- institution of proceedings	2
Submissions – other	50
Legal and psychosocial counseling	219
Quick advises	160
TOTAL	495

Legal issues

As reported in previous reports, CRP is by the Law on free legal aid, which came into force on 1 February 2009, limited to the administrative cases. However, the Minister of Justice said that NGOs could implement their legal aid projects financed by foreign donations in accordance with their applications.

However, as the foreign donations for free legal aid are very limited, in March 2009 CRP applied to the Ministry of Justice with the project proposal regarding free legal aid, as in accordance with the Law on free legal aid. CRP applied for HRK 40.000,00, calculating it as a maximum, taking into account the fact that CRP should be dealing only with limited administrative cases, where there is no many submissions, and that the beneficiary criteria is also very limiting. At the begging of May, CRP was informed that its project proposal was approved to the amount of HRK 92.800,00, which is more than double amount requested. The problem is that there are not many administrative cases, i.e. there have been much more court cases, as in Croatia almost all legal matters end up before courts. Also, the tariff for free

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legal aid is very low, e.g. legal advice is 20 points that is equivalent to HRK 40,00 (5,00 Euro.) Therefore, it is very difficult to imagine how many advices and submissions should be provided in order to use the grant. It would be thousands, which is even more problematic regarding the limiting beneficiary criteria. The money, which has not been transferred at the time of writing of this report, should only be spent on legal advices and submissions. No other costs whatsoever, either on the side of legal aid provider nor of the client, would be covered. E.g. no any part of the honoraria of lawyers, no office supplies, no postage, no administrative fees for example on documents needed for case, etc.

CRP has been in contact with other NGOs legal aid providers and they all have the same problem. The unspent money should be returned to the Ministry. CRP is afraid that there will be lots of money unspent and returned to the Ministry and this fact would be used as an argument that there is no need for NGOs.

However, in the meantime, CRP has been approached by a high number of clients and the legal issues remain the same, as it can be seen in the tables above. Also, despite of some changes in proceedings, the problems related to cases remain generally the same: lengthy proceedings, postponing of court hearings, not encouraging the return of refugees, etc. The court and administration do not act impartially when the State is involved in the case, but exactly the opposite, being completely on the side of the State. The laws and regulations, even when they are good, are not being applied well; e.g. convalidation.

Therefore, CRP remained approached by most of its old clients. It is difficult for them to understand that CRP has no projects to cover all the issues. CRP fills in their applications for free legal aid, as they mostly cannot do it themselves. In cases of negative decisions by the County office for free legal aid, CRP writes appeals and pays administrative fees in the amount of HRK 50,00. CRP takes on cases, which are of existential matter for clients, but not considered as such by the County office. CRP, within its possibility, pays other administrative and court fees that are necessary for initiating and/or proceeding of cases. E.g. in the CRP case No. 1186 the client M.N. was rejected for free legal aid in an ownership establishment case, with an explanation that it was not of existential nature and because the opposite party in the case was the local authorities and the client could not prove the ownership? On behalf of the client, CRP filed an appeal. In the appeal procedure, the County office contacted the client and CRP and when they established that all the case related fees were paid (by CRP within previous Norwegian MFA projects), they approved free legal aid.

Other activities

On 3 and 4 April in the Citizens' Centre in Glina, a second part of the workshop for women on painting on glass was organised by CRP, as a part of activities of the project financed by the EC Delegation and Norwegian Embassy in Zagreb. The workshop was attended by 21 women. Three of them are going to school and all others are unemployed. They are of different ethnicities and there are returnees, settlers and domicile citizens among them. Besides enabling women to develop some

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skills and eventually generate small income, the aims of this activity was to get different women together and form some basis for future work.

On 8 April in Petrinja CRP met with HVIDRA (Croatian Homeland war disabled persons) Petrinja, IKS Petrinja and Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Sisak regarding the organisation of celebration of the Day of Europe.

On 15 April CRP was present at the public presentation of the „E-mission“ held at the Sisak City Hall by IKS Petrinja. The presentation gathered 15 NGO representatives from Sisak.

On 17 and 18 April, CRP attended a second part of training for multipliers “Europe for Citizens Programme – new possibilities for civil society organisations”. The training was organised by the LDA Sisak and it was attended by around 10 NGOs.

On 24 April CRP participated at the round table “Discrimination based on sex and ethnicity” organised by the Centre for civil initiatives from Poreč in Istria. Representatives of several national minorities (Bosnian, Serbian, Slovenian and Albanian) discussed the position of woman in different ethnicity groups in local community.

On 24 April in the CRP Sisak premises, IKS, NGO from Petrinja, had a SOS point for NGOs, where the civil society organisations could receive new information and advices.

On 29 April CRP Sisak attended a celebration organised by the Netherlands embassy in Zagreb on the occasion of the Queen’s birthday.

From 4 to 8 May a CRP representative attended a People 2 people study visit to Brussels and Strasbourg, organised by the European Commission’s DG Enlargement.

On 8 May, CRP participated at the celebration of the Day of Europe in Sisak, which was organised by the Sisak-Moslavina county.

On 9 May, CRP participated at the celebration of the Day of Europe in Petrinja, which was organised by the HVIDRA Petrinja, IKS Petrinja, ALD and CRP Sisak.

On 12 May the English language courses for women and children started in the Citizens’ Centre in Glina.

On 15 May CRP attended the celebration of the Norwegian national Day in Zagreb, which was organised by the Norwegian Embassy.

On 27 May, CRP participated at the round table on the consultations of the European Commission Delegation and civil society regarding the democratisation, rule of law and human rights for the 2009 Progress report on the Republic of Croatia accession to the EU.

Sisak, 15 June 2009

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