



PROJEKT GRAĐANSKIH PRAVA Civil Rights Project

Activity Report – June 2010

Office activities

In the reporting period, CRP Sisak received **326** clients, out of which there were **69** new clients, both in the CRP Sisak office and the Civil Centre Hrvatska Kostajnica.

Target groups:

NEW clients by status:

<i>Status</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Domicile	27
Returnee	33
Bosnian Croat	2
Refugee	4
Settlers	2
Not defined	1
<u>Total</u>	69

NEW clients by reception mode:

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Office	55
Field	12
Letter	1
Phone	1
<u>Total</u>	69

TYPE OF CASE	NUMBER OF EVENTS
Citizenship	15
Documents and status	49
Ownership	56
Pension and health and social security	54
Housing care	27
Tenancy rights	7

PGP CRP Sisak, Rimska 6, 44000 Sisak
Tel: + 385 44 571 752; Fax: +385 44 521 292
e-mail: pgp-sisak@crpsisak.hr
www.crpsisak.hr

Labour	6
Family violence	8
Free legal aid	12
Other: other legal issues, information, courses, etc.	119
TOTAL	353

During the reporting period, there were **142** successfully solved request. They mainly relate to documents, establishment of ownership and other cases.

ASSISTANCE

Personal documents issued	7
Appeals/complaints	15
Lawsuits	2
Administrative lawsuits	2
Constitutional complaint	1
Letters	50
Requests	14
Submissions	35
Legal and psychosocial and other types of counseling	144
Quick advises	88
TOTAL	358

Legal issues

The legal issues that CRP has been dealing with remain the same, as it can be seen in the table above (type of case.) 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 courts 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, even when they are good, are not being applied well, etc.

CRP would hereby like to tackle the **issues regarding the houses and flats** in relation to the return of refugees. Namely, there are still obstacles to return of refugees related to housing solutions. **The obstacles include housing care, repossession of property, reconstruction, unsolicited investments of temporary users, illegal sales of houses, etc.** The following cases shall demonstrate the above said.

The client S.B. (CRP 679) was tenancy/occupancy right holder over the flat in Sisak, which he lost after he was forced to fled Sisak in 1991. He and his family returned to Croatia in 1998 and ever since they cannot solve their housing solution problem. Namely, the client applied for the **housing care** programme, but has been rejected based on the explanation that he is owner/co-owner (!?) of a house. The client has a proof that he is not owner/co-owner of the house, which he provided to relevant institutions, but the case has been pending at the Administrative court.

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The client Z.G. (CRP 9726) has been trying to **repossess his house** in Sisak since 2003 in the court proceedings. The temporary user has been living in the house since 1997.

The client M.G. (CRP 10287) has been trying to get her house in Hrvatska Kostajnica **reconstructed** for over 10 years. She has been rejected based on the explanation that there was no war damage? The client filed an administrative lawsuit on 2 July 2010 and it may take three years. She has been living with relatives.

The client N.P. (CRP 7383) cannot solve problems related to his house in Petrinja for years. The house is devastated and the client is supposed to pay for **unsolicited investments** of the temporary users. Though in April 2010 the Ministry of regional development, forestry and water management promised to solve the case, by trilateral agreement between the Ministry, temporary user and owner and reconstruct the house, nothing has happened and now they told the client that they could not help him. For over a month, CRP has been trying to contact the Ministry, but it is not possible.

The client N.M. (CRP 4332) cannot repossess his house since 1998, when it was sold to the State agency for real estates (**APN**) based on false power of attorney. The court proceedings has been ongoing and the case is before the Supreme court since 2009, and it may take years.

Therefore, still there are obstacles to return of refugees related to the property.

Other activities

On 8 and 9 June, CRP participated at the study visit to Sisak, Hrvatska Kostajnica and Dvor that was organized by the Local Democracy Agency. The first day included discussions on multilateral decentralized cooperation, IPA and other bilateral programs, town twinning, etc. The second day included visits to Hrvatska Kostajnica and Dvor, where there were meetings with local authorities.

On 16 June, CRP participated at the meeting of NGOs and the Town of Sisak authorities. The needs of local NGOs and bad economical situation in Sisak were discussed.

On 16 June 2010 CRP Sisak organised a meeting between the Mayor of Hrvatska Kostajnica Tomislav Paunovic and citizens, as part of the activities of the Civil Centre. 10 citizens were present and they raised the questions of importance for the Town and the citizens, such as housing care, pollution, water supply system problems, roads infrastructure, railway and bus station, etc. The Mayor was very cooperative and the meeting took 1 hour 45 minutes, instead of 45 minutes planned. The Mayor gave some answers at the spot and he noted down the others promising that he would try to solve the issues. At least, one case was solved after the meeting.

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On 21 and 22 June 2010, CRP Sisak was visited by Mr. Paal Nesse from the Norwegian Refugee Council Oslo and Norwegian national TV. The aim of the visit was to follow up the work of NRC in Croatia from 1999 to 2004. Firstly, the CRP office was visited, where CRP staff and clients gave interviews on present situation and continuation of the NRC's work in Croatia. CRP also organised visiting of the NRC clients regarding both legal aid and reconstruction of houses. The clients were visited in the villages of Knezovljani, Josavica and Begovici. The visits and client stories were shot by the TV in order to be used in one of the Norwegian biggest TV shows for collecting of money in Norway for humanitarian purposes.

On 28 and 29 June in the Civil Centre Hrvatska Kostajnica, a workshop on painting on silk was organised. There were around 15 women. They showed great interest and expressed wish to continue with such work and gathering. The women also are interested to use gained skills to produce more art pieces and to exhibit them and participate at some public events.

The English language course continues in the Civil Centre Hrvatska Kostajnica with even more students and great enthusiasm for continuation of learning.

Though CRP signed the contract on **free legal aid** with the Ministry of Justice to the amount of HRK 15.000,00 for the year of 2010 on 18 May, CRP has **not** received any payment. Also, the County office for free legal aid has introduced some new rules, such as not approving free legal aid for legal counseling in matters that can be covered by the state bodies and institutions, e.g. registry office, pension fund and similar. Therefore, they sent beneficiaries to those offices to get legal advice, which can be contradictory, because if the beneficiary has a problem with the pension fund, the question is how in that case the same institution can advise the beneficiary. Therefore, also taking into account other issues related to the free legal aid system, it might be concluded that the system is not functioning.

Milana Kreca

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