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INTRODUCTION

There is a geographical zone, in the heart of Europe, that more than any other is characterized by an extremely varied ethnic and cultural composition, which is the Balkans, and more precisely the ex Yugoslavia. The memory of the wars that shed so much blood in the Yugoslavian Republics, is still fresh, and it is an evidence of the extreme difficulty of the coexistence of so many different communities, and how the continuing frictions had grown a latent hostility from one to another, which, at the first spark, burst into massacres that are too recent to be forgotten. Each of the former Yugoslavian Republics still has in its inland a large number of ethnic minorities, whose presence, even if the conditions at the base of the civil wars have ceased to exist, is still a source of tensions.

With this work, we intend to give a panorama of such issue, by exposing the history of the presence of the ethnic minorities in the Balkans and explaining the reasons of the discriminations they have been undergoing, and which remedies are being taken. Because of the slenderness of the space at our disposal, and the wideness of the geographical area, we will focus our essay only on three republics (Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia) and two ethnic minorities (Albanians and Roma). This thesis originated from an internship that we accomplished in Prilep, Macedonia, and in Podgorica, Montenegro, from August 28 to November 28 2010, working for the Italian NGO COSV on a project addressed to the integration of the ethnic minorities in the Republics of ex-Yugoslavia. The motivations at the basis of this essay are linked not only to the internship accomplished, but also to the interest in the complexity of an area like the Balkans, whose inner dynamics have highly affected the European history through the centuries. The ethnic composition and the geographical collocation have made a litmus paper of the face to face between Christian and Islamic world out of the ex-Yugoslavia, as well as a laboratory whose coexistence experiments had, in some cases, good, in others, negative results. Therefore, the chance to do an internship focused on the integration of the ethnic minorities gave us the possibility to get more closely to know a reality, out of which contrasting signals came, that will be exposed through the pages.

In order to better understand the problems taken into consideration, we decided to get back to the past, at the roots of the presence of the two biggest non Slavic minorities in the former Yugoslavia, the Albanians and the Roma. Getting through this history, in the first chapter, we will try to illustrate which relationships have been built with the Slavic populations, and on which basis they have developed. We have considered it the only way we could understand the current situation, and what led to the Kosovo war at the end of the nineties, the biggest factor that, in the last fifteen years, have influenced the history and the current affairs of Europe. Afterwards, in the second chapter, we
will analyze the countries where the problems of the interethnic coexistence is strongest, which are Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. We will attempt to conduct an analysis of each of these countries that could be as much complete and objective as possible, with the aim to put in evidence the major difficulties and the attempts from the local authorities to heal them. The explanation of the work that the NGO, together with the local partners in each country, is doing in the Balkans to give a solution to these problems, which success is achieving and which difficulties is facing, will be the subject of the third chapter. Finally, after having illustrated what the past has been and what the present actually is, we will try to explain what the future might be, and also what it should be, according to our humble thinking. In the light of the history we have studied, and the talks we had with people involved and the work we have done, we believe that the goal of integrating the ethnic minorities in the Balkans is hard, but not impossible to reach. It takes a lot of good will, a high commitment from all the parts involved and a big patience, but it is something that can be made. Our aim is to explain how, and why this mission must be accomplished.

It is not our presumption to clarify all the points of the problem, whose complexity will appear during the reading of our essay also. Like previously said, the limitation imposed to our pages hinders us to deepen our study. Nevertheless, it is our hope to make as understandable as possible those sides of the past that determine the present that the Balkans are living in, and the attempt that the several actors are taking so that the future may be better. Our maximum commitment is headed to the achievement of this goal.
1-HISTORY OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE REGION

1.1. Albanians.

Like we said in the introduction, the history of the ethnic minorities in the Balkans is too complex, and the space at our disposal is too short to conduct a complete essay about it. Nevertheless, going back to the roots and passing through the passages that have followed through the years is not avoidable, in order to understand why things have been going on the way they have. Therefore, we start with this chapter to look at the history of presence of the main ethnic minorities in former Yugoslavia, and in this paragraph we consider the most important one in the area, the Albanians. Let’s start by saying that the ancestors of the contemporary Albanians, the Illyrians, whose territory was called “Illyria”, in the 8th century BC formed a kingdom, the Enchelan Kingdom, that covered the whole Yugoslavia. This means that those who nowadays are a minority, once upon a time were the first inhabitants of the area. The part of the former Yugoslavia that include Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro, constituted the Dardania Kingdom. In the 167 BC, the whole territory was conquered by the Roman Empire. Around the 5th century AD, it became part of the Byzantine Empire. The history began to change in the late 6th century AD, when a tribe coming from a region called Lusatia (a territory included between the east of Germany, the south-west of Poland and the north of Czech Republic) installed in the Balkan Peninsula. This tribe was part of a wider people, whose name was “Slavic”. Since Lusatia was known also by the name of “White Serbia”, the people that arrived in the Balkan Peninsula assumed immediately the name “Serbians”, and in 836 AD gave life to the Serbian Kingdom. Under the pressure of their advancement, the Illyrians shed all around, mainly in the contemporary Albania, Kosovo and the south of Macedonia. From 893 to 1018, Kosovo was under the rule of a Slavic kingdom in the east, the Bulgarian Empire. In 1180, it was conquered by the Empire of Serbia. In 1389, in the famous Battle of Kosovo Polje, the army of the Serbian Prince Lazar Hrebjanovic was defeated by the Ottoman troops, who finally took control of Kosovo in 1455 and Serbia in 1496. Serbia, together with Montenegro, regained independence with the Treaty of San Stefano, signed on March 3 1878, which set end to the Russian-Turkish War, burst one year earlier, whereas Kosovo remained under Turkish rule. The ethnic cleaning conducted by the Turks against the Serbian community in Kosovo, that forced 400,000 Serbs to leave at the end of the nineteenth century, had turned the province into an Albanian one. On October 8 1912, another war erupted, between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan League, a coalition

\[1\] Kosta Nikolić, Nikola Žutić, Momčilo Pavlović, Zorica Špadijer: Историја за трећи разред гимназије, Belgrade, 2002, pg. 63
formed by Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece, which ended on May 30 1913. Kosovo was internationally recognized as a part of Serbia, and northern Metohija as a part of Montenegro by the Treaty of London, signed in the same day of the end of the war. Throughout the centuries, populations of ethnic Serbs and Albanians moved from one territory to the other. Therefore, the new administrations provoked a mixed response from the local population, with the Albanians not satisfied with the new Serbian rule, and the non Albanian population considering this as a liberation. On December 1 1918, the representatives of Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia established a Yugoslavian State, named "The Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs". The Kingdom comprised 12 million of people, 300,000 of whom were Albanians. By 1921, Kosovo Albanians asked the League of Nations to unite Kosovo with Albania. According to their allegations, 12,000 Albanians had been killed and 22,000 imprisoned since 1918. A movement of armed Albanians, called Kacha, seeking union with Albania, developed. As a result, Albanians in Kosovo were increasingly seen by the Serbs as being a threat to the Yugoslavian integrity. In order to remove this supposed threat, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (the denomination adopted on October 3 1929) started a State project bound to colonize Kosovo at the time of the interwar period. During this colonization, between 60,000 and 65,000 colonists were settled in Kosovo. Over 90% of the total number of colonists were Serbs (including Montenegrins). Parallel with the Serbian colonization, a process of forced migration of Albanians from Kosovo was carried out. Several historic sources estimate that during the period 1918-1941, from 90,000 to 150,000 Albanians and other Muslims emigrated from Kosovo. The Yugoslavian authorities tried also to assimilate the Albanians by offering them education only in the Serbian language, and when it became clear that this attempted Serbianization was bound to fail, the government began to prevent the Albanians from attending the public schools, in order to keep them backward. Yugoslavia was conquered by the Axis armies in April 1941, and divided mainly between Italy and Germany. Kosovo was put mainly under the Italian administration in Albania between 1941 and 1943, whereas a smaller eastern part was given to the Bulgarian colluded government. Since the Italian occupation regime in Albania had decided in the Conference of Bujan, held on December 31 1943, that Kosovo would remain a part of Albania, they started expelling the Serbian and the Montenegrin

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2 G. Richard Jansen, *Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo*, in www.colostate.edu, Colorado State University, April 25 1999
6 Memorandum submitted by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FRY/KOSOVO: SERBIAN PLANS FOR ETHNIC CLEANSING, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PRECEDENTS, 7 June 2000
populations. After the surrender of the Kingdom of Italy in September 1943, the German troops took direct control of the region. Kosovo was liberated in summer 1944 by the Yugoslavian partisans, with the help of the Albanian partisans of the COMINTERN, and became a province of Serbia inside the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, born on November 29 1945 in place of the monarchy. The province was first formed in 1945 as the Autonomous Kosovo-Metohija Area, to protect its regional Albanian majority within the People's Republic of Serbia as a member of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, under the leadership of the partisan leaders, Josip Brizo Tito, the future President of Yugoslavia. In the 1974 Constitution, the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo's government was given higher powers, including the highest governmental titles-President and Premier, and a seat in the Federal Presidency, thus becoming a de facto Socialist Republic within the Federation, though formally a Socialist Autonomous Province within the Socialist Republic of Serbia. Albanian and Serbian were defined as the official languages at the provincial level, and the Albanians were given the right to open independent Albanian speaking schools and universities in the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo of Socialist Republic of Serbia. There was also an Albanian television, an Albanian press, and an ethnic Albanian political leadership. The very high birth rate of Albanians, along with the emigration of the Serbs to other parts of Yugoslavia moved the ethnic balance of Kosovo to the side of the Albanians. Their number tripled between 1961 and 1981, gradually rising from almost 75% to over 90% of the population, whereas the Serbs dropped in the full share of the total population, from some 15% to 8%. Nevertheless, the Albanians were unsatisfied, because of the denial of republic status to Kosovo, in spite of their numerical superiority. Consequently, there have been a number of protests, the most important one taking place in March 1981, when Albanian students organized protests claiming for Kosovo to become a republic within Yugoslavia. Those protests escalated into violent riots, involving 20,000 people in six cities, that were hardly contained by the Yugoslav government. During the 1980s, ethnic tensions continued, with frequent violent outbreak against Serbs and Yugoslav state authorities resulting in increased emigration of Kosovo Serbs and other ethnic groups. In March 1989, the President Of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević, drastically reduced Kosovo's special autonomous status within Serbia, with a series of amendments made to the Serbian constitution. The Kosovo Assembly was forced, through various threats, to accept these amendments. The use of the Albanian language at the public level was banned. In the aftermath, after 123,000 ethnic Albanians have been pushed out of their jobs, out of the parliament, schools, TV, hospitals and all other important institutions, Kosovo Albanians organized a non-violent separatist movement.

8 http://albanians-in-kosovo.co.tv/
9 Aydin Babuna, op.cit, 2000
10 One Storm has Passed but Others are Gathering in Yugoslavia, in “New York Times,” 19 April 1981,
11 Kosovo Province Revives Yugoslavia’s Ethnic Nightmare, in “Reuters” 27 May 1986
employing widespread civil disobedience, with the ultimate goal of achieving the independence of Kosovo.\textsuperscript{12} Kosovo Albanians boycotted State institutions and elections, and established separate Albanian schools and political institutions. On July 2 1990, the Kosovo Assembly declared Kosovo’s equality in status to the other republics of Yugoslavia. A referendum, held on 26-30th of September 1991, gave a 99.87\% of the votes in favour of the independence of Kosovo.\textsuperscript{13} On October 19 1991, the Kosovo Republic was declared as an independent State, although this was not recognized by Belgrade or any foreign states, except to Albania. The situation remained tensed, but controlled, until February 1996, when the Albanian terrorist organization UCK (an acronym that stands for Kosovo Liberation Army) began to attack Serbian military and civilian targets. The escalation that followed erupted in the NATO’s war against Serbia, which we are not analyzing here, since it is a too delicate matter to be treated in the short space we have. We will just summarize the events that followed the end of the war up to now. The war ended on June 10 1999, with the Yugoslavian governments signing the Kumanovo Agreement, which transferred governance of the province to the United Nations. A NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered the province, tasked with providing security to the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). On March 17 2004, serious unrest in Kosovo provoked 19 deaths, and the destruction of 35 Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries in the province, as a result of Albanians pogroms against the Serbs and several thousands more Kosovo Serbs have left their homes to seek refuge in Serbia proper and in the north of Kosovo, mostly populated by Serbs.\textsuperscript{14} International negotiations began in 2006 to determine the final status of Kosovo, as foreseen by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 which ended the Kosovo conflict of 1999. Whilst Serbia’s continued sovereignty over Kosovo was recognized by the international community, a clear majority of the province’s population pursued the independence.\textsuperscript{15} The UN-backed talks, led by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari, began in February 2006. Whilst progress was made on technical matters, both parties remained diametrically opposed on the question of status itself.\textsuperscript{16} In February 2007, Ahtisaari delivered a draft status settlement proposal to the Serbian and Kosovar authorities, the basis for a draft UN Security Council Resolution which proposes “supervised independence” for the province.\textsuperscript{17} As of early July 2007, the draft resolution, which is backed by the United States, United Kingdom and other European members of the Security Council, had been rewritten four times to try to accommodate Russian concerns.

\textsuperscript{13} Aydin Babuna, \textit{op.cit}, 2000
\textsuperscript{14} http://www.eyeoneurope.org/index.php/country/kosovo-2/
\textsuperscript{15} http://2008-kosovo-declaration-of-independence.co.tv/
\textsuperscript{16} UN frustrated by Kosovo deadlock , in “BBC News”, October 9, 2006.
\textsuperscript{17} http://wn.com/Kosovo_Status_Process
that such a resolution would undermine the principle of state sovereignty. On February 17 2008, Kosovo's Parliament declared independence. On July 22 2010, the International Court of Justice ruled that Kosovo's declaration of independence was not in violation of the international law. More details about the ongoing situation in Kosovo regarding the ethnic minorities will be given in the following chapters. What here can be said is that the whole Kosovo's case is probably the clearest example of how the concept of nation in the Eastern Europe, and particularly in the Balkans, is quite different from the Western’s. Whereas in the West we consider a nation a community, whose members share the same culture, language, history and legislation on the same territory, regardless of their ethnic composition, in the Balkans there is no difference between nation and ethnicity. This means that a State, in the Balkan point of view, must be ethnically homogeneous, and those who are minorities must choose, either to be considered as a sort of stranger, or to go to the country where its ethnic community is prevalent. This is, perhaps, the main factor that set fire to the whole Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the Berlin’s wall fall, after forty six years of communist regime that used to give priority to the ideological linkage between its people, rather than considering the ethnic and cultural diversities. In the specific case of Kosovo, we have seen how the Albanian community has become majority over the years, thanks to the higher fertility rate, and how this modified composition gave them the legitimacy to claim the independence, even if the historic background says that it is a Serbian land. So, whatever opinion we may have, it will have the flaw to be thought up following a logic that is absent in the Balkan perspective. Taking a position in front of such a tricky issue is not easy, and we can understand how big the struggle is for the international diplomacies to solve it. Kosovo was not the only country where a high numbers of Albanians still were, this was the case of Macedonia also. The Conference of London, which ended the 1912-13 Balkan War, gave birth to the Albanian State, whereas Macedonia became part of Serbia. Macedonia included a portion of territory, the western regions, populated by Albanians, which, following the logic we saw above, should have been given to Albania. After the Second World War, the Macedonian population had highly grown, especially the Albanians. Between 1953 and 2001, the Albanians had grown by 31.3%, from 12.4% to 25% of the population. The constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic, adopted in 1945, recognized the right of the Albanian community to be culturally autonomous and use their language, and the Communist Party had tried to integrate the Albanians with educational trainings and professional opportunities. This policy started to change in 1989, when, like in Kosovo, even in Macedonia the Albanians were no longer allowed to express their culture. The writings in their language were removed from the billboards, and the Albanian

given names were forbidden. The prohibition for the Albanians to have more than two children was also introduced. In 1990, a constitutional amendment changed the name of the Macedonian Republic from “State of the Macedonian People and the Turkish and Albanian Nationality” to “National State of the Macedonian People”. On September 8, a referendum for the independence in Macedonia was held. The 95.5% of the population voted in favour of the independence. Contrary to the other Republics, Macedonia separated peacefully. The Albanian community boycotted the referendum, claiming that the new born Macedonian State was going to be considered only as the State of the Macedonians, and the two Albanian parties, the Party for Democratic Prosperity and the National Democratic Party, refused to take part to the special parliamentary session to protest the change of the definition of the Macedonian Republic. In January 1992, a referendum was held among the Albanian community on the creation of an autonomous region the western part of Macedonia that would have been named “Illyridia”, that resulted in a 99.9% of votes in its favour, but the Macedonian authorities declared it unlawful. Two years later, there was an attempt of the Albanian community to establish an Albanian language university in the western town of Tetovo, which is the cultural centre of the Albanians in Macedonia. The government declared this university unconstitutional and closed it. However, in November 1995, the university reopened, and it kept on existing until now, though the authorities still do not recognize it. The tensions between the Albanians and the Macedonian State further increased in 1997, when at the municipal buildings in Tetovo and Gostivar the Albanian flag was lifted up. The police came to remove it, and in the consequent clashes, on July 9, three Albanians were killed. As far as the high public sphere is concerned, until 1998, the left wing party that had been ruling the country, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, had not fought the Serbian and Albanian criminality, made mainly of smuggling. Therefore, at the general elections held in 1998, the majority of the voters turned to the right wing party Democratic Party for the Macedonian National Unity. This new government, on one hand, refused to give major cultural rights and political representation to the Albanian community, but on the other hand, let the UCK terrorist group install bases on the Macedonian territory, and allowed the creation of Albanian armed gangs at the service of the smugglers. In December 2000, these gangs began to act like UCK in Kosovo, conquering one village after the other, and the non Albanian were expelled. In these early stages, the Macedonian authorities did not intervene, because many of their members were corrupted by the bribe. But in January 2001 the situation ran out of control, when a new Albanian organization, the National Liberation Army, began to shoot and
kill the Macedonian policemen. This was the beginning of the civil war in Macedonia, whose culmination was reached on April 28 2001, when eight Macedonian soldiers were killed in Vejce. In the following days, in Skopje, Prilep and Bitola the Macedonian population started a sort of pogrom against the Albanian civilians, heavily beating whoever they could find. On August 10 and 11, in response to an attack to a police station, the Macedonian army killed ten Albanian civilians and arrested and tortured more than a hundred in Ljubaten. On August 13 2001, the Macedonian civil war saw an end with the Ohrid Agreements. These agreements were signed by the two largest Albanian parties (Party for Democratic Prosperity; Democratic Party for Albanians) and the two largest national parties (Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity; Social Democratic Union of Macedonia), and provided: the official languages of the country, with any language spoken by over 20% of the population to be co-official with the Macedonian language at municipal level; the establishment of a Committee for Inter-Community Relation, consisting of seven members from Macedonians and Albanians each, and five members from Turks, Vlachs and Roma, with the role of making appraisals about the issues of the interethnic relations and proposals for their resolutions; a major inclusion in the institutions and the adoption of a federal system, in order to give those municipalities more autonomy, whose laws must be voted by the majority of the representatives claiming to belong to the ethnic minorities. On August 28, a NATO contingent arrived to the country to keep under observation the following of the agreements and to dismantle the Albanian NLA, leaving one month later. The agreements were violated in August 2007, when some Albanian militants attacked a police station near the boundaries with Kosovo, in an area with Albanian prevalence. We will deepen the current situation of the Albanian community in Macedonia in the next chapters. Here, we can conclude by saying that the Albanian uprising in Macedonia, like the one in Kosovo, is based on the ideal of an ethnic homogeneous nation on a territory where the people have lived over the centuries, regardless of which State it has belonged to. In the case of Albanians as a whole, this view lays under the concept of Greater Albania, that refers to an irredentist concept of the lands outside of the borders of Albania that are considered to be part of a greater national homeland by some Albanians, based on the presence of Albanian populations in those areas. The consequences of such a view have partially been seen in this paragraph. As in the case of the Albanians, spending a few words on the Roma people origins can be useful to better understand the issue of our essay. The origins of Roma people, whose root name, Rom, in the Romany language means man, and derives from the Sanskrit “dom” (man), lay in the Northern India, as proved by linguistic research, that showed the similarities between their language and the other indo-aryan languages, and the common biological heritage. The diaspora began because Roma were part of the army in Northern India. In the years between 1000 and 1030, continuous raids by Mahmud of Ghazni, Sultan of the Ghaznavid Empire, that at the time was ruling over the contemporary Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North-Western India, caused the
defeat of the army, and the consequent move to the west of the soldiers with their families into the Byzantine Empire, while half other millions were enslaved. In the meantime, other Roma people had left for Persia some centuries earlier. The social and economic crisis that afflicted India in 400 AD had forced a handful of Indians to become travelling craftsmen and entertainers. They moved along the countryside entertaining villagers at night, and using their skills with wood and/or metal during the day. This subtle start to the nomadic life worked well from this point forward. The handful of wandering people grew in numbers as others embraced the nomadic lifestyle, yet they were still able to stay below the Persian radar until 440-443. In nearly all the books about the history of Roma people there is a mention about a legend transcript by the Persian poet Firdusi, written in 1011, according to which, the Persian Scià Baharam the Fifth asked the Indian King Shangul for 10,000 lute players for entertaining his people. At their arrival, the Scià gave them cows, donkeys and wheat seeds to plant, because he wanted them to install themselves on the uncultivated land of his kingdom. But the lute players, who had never been peasants, ate all the seeds, and one year later went back to the Scià asking for more. The Scià got upset and ordered them to leave and to remain away, as long as they would not accept to work the land. After being expelled from Persia, Roma came to Armenia, but even there have remained for a short time. The Byzantine-Arab wars, ongoing since 634 BC, with the beginning of the Arab siege of Constantinople, and the attack conducted by the Seljuc Empire against Armenia, which ended with the conquest in 1071, forced Roma to escape to the inner of Byzantine Empire, and then, because of the Ottoman expansion, in the Balkans, in the early years of fourteenth century. The first reference to the Roma people in Serbia is contained in a 1348 document, by which Stefan Uroš IV Dušan of Serbia, Emperor of Serbs and Greeks, donated some "Gypsy" slaves to the Monastery of Prizren, in Kosovo. The first province where they settled was Vojvodina, that at the time belonged to the Hungarian monarchy. In the end, when the Balkans, in the mid of fifteenth century, were conquered by the Ottoman Empire, Roma could not escape anymore. Many other Roma, indeed, came to the Balkans together with the Ottomans at the first arrival of the latter in the late fourteenth century, either as soldiers or as camp followers. The Ottoman Empire used to make distinction between Muslims and non Muslims, even if this meant only as fiscal status and in times of census. The Roma of the Balkans lived on

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24 http://www.gypsyadvice.com/gypsy_lore.htm
26 http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/
the border between the two sides. The basic and crucial distinction of ottoman subjects was their religious affiliation. Being either Zimmi (local non Muslim), Harbi (foreigner non Muslims) or Muslims, determined one’s place within Ottoman society and one’s obligation to pay special taxes-the cizye poll tax. In the Ottoman source compiled in the provinces by local agents of the political centre, the “sicil”, they were indicated as “otherness”.

As explained by Professor Leslie Peirce:

“The free sedentary Muslim male adult was portrayed in sicil as the norm; the scribe would register his name, address and occupation, sometimes adding his nickname, thus disclosing his place of origin. All others were registered by noting their address, which could imply different legal or administrative status”.

Because of their nomadic way of life, the Roma population would often avoid to pay taxes. Therefore, they were not connected to any of the regular system of tax collection, but they were subject to a different system, catered only for them, which was centralized in the hands of one person, the “cizyedar”, in order to reduce Roma’s tax evasion. To this aim, the Ottoman authorities introduced a collective tax on the whole Roma community, to make sure that their tributes were raised. Apart from the fiscal controversy, and the definition to apply in the census, Roma community was not discriminated, and certainly lived in better conditions than those who were in other parts of Europe did, where they had been undergoing a sequence of expulsions and various types of discrimination, and this historic heritage from the Ottoman Empire explains why Yugoslavia was the country with the highest percentage of Roma citizens in the world (in 1986, there were 850,000 Roma in Yugoslavia, the 3.7% of the whole population). This quite status continued even after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of Yugoslavian State, until the Second World War, when the nazi-fascist invaders and the local collaborationists committed mass murder against them, the total

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29 Bernard Lewis, The emergence of modern Turkey, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, p.327
31 Eyal Ginio, Neither Muslims nor Zimmi, Gypsies in the Ottoman State, in “The Gypsy Lore Society”, Series 5, Volume 14, Number 2, December 2004
death toll of which is about forty thousand from the whole Yugoslavia. After the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, Roma community enjoyed forty five years of relative peace and inclusion, thanks to the national legislation on which the various communities were classified: nations (the republics forming the federation, that is to say Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians and Bosnians), nationalities (the communities that had kin-States outside the borders, like the Albanians and the Hungarians) and the ethnic groups (the communities that did not have any kin-States, like the Roma and the Vlachs). The new communist regime introduced a series of laws supposed to improve the social, educational and economic standing of Roma, but in practice they were meant to remove them from their culture, as Roma would have been subdued to forced assimilation and hindered to carry on traditional livelihoods, such as livestock trading, animal training and seasonal travel and discouraged to wear national dress. However, like above said, there had been good willed attempts of integration from the Yugoslavian regime. Education for Roma children became compulsory, decreasing the illiteracy to a considerable extent, and positive quotas were set for Roma entering university and seeking public employment. In 1981, Roma were recognized as a nationality. Unfortunately, most of the regime’s efforts were not enough, both for Roma’s guilt (many parents kept on holding their sons at home and made them work, instead of sending them to school; very few Roma people attended university, most of them earning the degree only recently) and because of the persistence of hostile feelings from the people towards them, which at the break up of Yugoslavia erupted in persecutions from all the sides. Apart from the Roma properly said, there are two other ethnic Roma communities also, called Balkan Egyptians and Ashkali. Their existence came to surface in the days of the Kosovo’s war. There are some controversies concerning their origins. Some sources claim that three hundred thousands of the so called Balkan Egyptians escaped from Egypt in 306 AD, because of anti Christian persecutions conducted by the roman emperor Diocleziano, seeking refuge in Macedonia, where the ancient Egyptians used to have bases, and this is why they are known as Balkan Egyptians. According to the most recent scientific researches, on the contrary, the Balkan Egyptians had escaped during the era of Pharaoh Ramsess the Second (1279 BC-1213 BC). The first ever historical source about the Balkan Egyptians is Herodotus, who wrote:


34 http://www.balkanproject.org/roma/history2.shtml

35 Rubin Zemon, *Differences of prejudices and collective blames towards the Balkan Egyptian community*, in “Prejudices and Stereotypes are stimulating the racial discrimination”, Scientific symposium organized by a Balkan Egyptian NGO in Albania “Nefreta”, Tirana, February 24 2006
“In Macedonia, the ancient Phoenician were exploiting the gold from the mines, which was smelted at a special furnace, before the arrival of Egyptian colonists in Hellas”.36

That means that in the 5th century BC, the workers of metals in Greece were Egyptian colonists. However, the Egyptians were integrated in the Balkans, long before the Roma arrived in the Middle Age. Contrary to them, the Egyptians have always been a settled population, living in central and market parts of the cities and villages. The hostility towards the Egyptians rose up after the arrival of the Roma, because people would tend to make confusion between the two groups, and the Roma would pretend to be put on the same level of Egyptians. During the 1970’s, the Balkan Egyptians began a process of self identification as Egyptians and to distance themselves from the Roma community and the Albanians. This is why at the census held in 1971, many of them self declared as Toskari, since they spoke the homonymous Albanian dialect. However, they have eventually been classified as Albanians, since Albanian was their mother tongue. The movement of Egyptians got new impulses from the new Yugoslavian constitution, heralded in 1974, and from the articles 166 and 170. Those articles guaranteed the right of every citizen to declare his ethnic belonging. But even in the census of 1981, the Egyptians status was not recognized. In this case, they were classified as “others”.37 It became clear that there was the need of a special census entry. In order to obtain it, the Balkan Egyptians began to organize petitions in Macedonia and Kosovo. In the end, their efforts were awarded, and at the census of 1991, the Egyptians were classified as such. The purpose of the Egyptians was to separate from the rest of the country. So, in 1990, the association “Egyptchani” was founded in Ohrid, Macedonia. In 1998, the various associations that had been born ever since, melted into the “Balkan Union of the Egyptians”, putting together associations founded by Albanians and Serbs. In March 2010, there was the foundation of a network with the Community of Croatians in the Republic of Macedonia, Community of Montenegrins in the Republic of Macedonia, Union of Balkans, and others, to achieve the following goals: development of a multicultural society and multiculturalism in Macedonia; storage, preservation development and research of post ethnic and multicultural traditions of Macedonia; protection and information on human and civil rights and liberties.38 The Ashkali, on their own, differentiate themselves from the Balkan Egyptians, stating that they arrived from Persia in the 4th century AD via the nowadays Israeli town of Ashkalon, hence their name. Therefore, according to their telling, they are the second most ancient people to have appeared in the Balkans, after the Illyrians. Nowadays, the Balkan Egyptians and the Ashkali are 50,000, and they live mainly in Albania, in Macedonia and in

36 VVAA, op.cit., 2001, p.20
37 Elena Mariushakova, Vesselin Popov, New ethnic identities in the Balkans, in “Philosophy and Sociology”, N.8, 2001, p.473
38 www.balkaneypter.de
Kosovo, but there are some in Serbia and in Montenegro also. They are Muslim and they speak the language of the specific place where they are settled, with the exception of Greece, where they speak Turkish as mother tongue. They are totally melted with the local populations, and they can be identified only by the exterior appearance. The jobs they have specialized in, over the centuries, are blacksmith, carpenter, street workers. All in all, we can define them as Albanians with Roma origins. The Roma of Kosovo look at them as Roma that speak Albanian. During the Kosovo crisis, their behaviour was contradictory. On one hand, they were fighting on UCK side. But on the other hand, they were politically and officially on the Serb side. Serbs, indeed, have tried to exploit the Balkan Egyptians and Ashkali, with the aim to prove their inclination to multiculturalism and weaken the Albanian arguments. The Serbian authorities had founded a “Temporary Executive Council for Kosovo and Metohija”, which included representatives of ethnic minorities.39 The Yugoslavian delegation in Rambouillet included a representative of Roma from Kosovo and one of Balkan Egyptian from Kosovo, as well. The attempt to prove their openness failed, but, after a decade, the Egyptians and the Ashkali are still two strong and organized communities, that are playing a key role in the civil society life of the former Yugoslavian republics. How the conditions of the Egyptians, the Ashkali and the Roma as a whole are in the former Yugoslavia, will be treated in the next chapter. But in order to better understand the reasons of the social exclusion of the Roma communities, not only in the Balkans, but also in the whole Europe, we can not avoid to give a deeper view to their culture. Roma people divide the world into Roma and non-Roma (“gadzjo”), the latter one belonging to a sphere far away from the Roma’s own social organization, and that makes the internal affairs of the Roma community irrelevant to the surrounding environment.40 Even Ashkali and the Egyptians are considered to be a part of the gadzjo, since their mother tongue is not Romani, but Albanian. But the aspect of the Roma culture, that probably characterizes them more than many others, and that is probably the main explanation of their separateness, is the fact the family is the fulcrum of their life, from which everything starts and where everything ends. The family man holds the authority, and he is the only one who can make the decisions, and state what is right and what is wrong. In this patriarchal view, the only roles that a woman can play are housekeeping and looking after the children. In the Roma culture, the individual, with his load of rights and obligations, does not exist. A Roma person can be considered only as a part of its family, the social life is only inside the family, the only laws that ought to be followed are those established by the family man, and the marriage is arranged between the two families men. Another stronghold of the Roma culture is the concept of “Marime”, whose literal translation is impurity, and that is referred to the

39Elena Mariushakova, Vesselin Popov, op. cit., p.28
expulsion of the one who has violated the purity rules of the group, or had disruptive behaviour. This concept is strictly related to the female conduct, on which the honorability of the family depends. The worst violation of the marime code that a woman could do is getting married with a non-Roma man, since it would bring genetic and moral corruption to Roma community. What herewith exposed tells that for the Roma, preserving their own identity is a priority, and whereas we consider social inclusion as a benefit, and many NGOs are attempting to achieve this goal, Roma perceive it as a threat. The consequence of this mental and physical self segregation is that Roma consider legitimate only what is contemplated in their culture, do not share any moral value with the rest of the world, and do not recognize any law but the one established by their family. Therefore, since any contact with non-Roma is avoided, but that hinders them to have enough money for getting something to eat, activities like begging and theft, that are blamed worldwide, are considered licit. A value like the children rights, which is shared all over the world, in the Roma view is subdued to the need to make them work and beg, instead of sending them to school, though education, in the Balkans and throughout Europe, is free until the age of fourteen. Our consideration will be given in the final chapter, but there is a point that we want to stress hereby. It is not our aim to condemn the Roma people as a whole, much less to justify the discrimination and the violence towards them, but it must be said that the wrong behaviours and the negative aspects of their attitude are at the basis of the vicious circle social stigma-self exclusion- hostility-marginalization, from which they have nothing to gain. There is also a contradiction in their complaint about how the society put them in the margin, while this is exactly what they are tending toward. So, it takes the Roma communities all over Europe to make a serious reflection about themselves and the role they really want to play and which reputation they want to build, before claiming whatever rights.

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41 Maria Koinova, Minorities in Southeast Europe: Roma of Macedonia, Centre for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe-Southeast Europe, Sofia, December 2000, p.17
2-PROBLEMS RELATED TO ETHNIC MINORITIES

2.1. Serbia and Kosovo.

After having passed in review what the historical background of the ethnic minorities in the ex Yugoslavia is, in this chapter we will analyze the contemporary problems, and how all the possible actors, from the local authorities to the national and international authorities and the European Union, are attempting to solve them. We will start by focusing on Serbia and Kosovo, which, because of the brand new and not completely defined yet status quo of the latter, in several moments of our essay will either be considered as one, or one overshadow the other.

The chronicles of the last fifteen years tell that the major bone of contention in the Balkans is the status quo of Kosovo. In the previous chapter, we have examined, though summarily, the seeds sowed through the centuries, that have given life to the late 1990’s conflict and the tensions that continue to exist. What we are interested in is how the two sides are dealing with the minorities set on their respective territories, which policies they are carrying on and how they are adapting to the EU directives and recommendations.

In Serbia, Roma are 108,193 and the 1.44% of the whole population, whereas in Kosovo they are about 100,000 (150,000 before the 1999 war) and constitute the 2%. Even if the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia treated the Roma population better than many other European countries did, they were still the most disadvantaged community. The problems that were there during the socialist era, are still present. Probably, the main cause of their condition is the low level of education. Rather than being conditioned to a sort of apartheid or whatsoever, Roma population have chosen themselves to stay apart from the social life of any country they live, refusing to send their sons to school. There have always been attempts, both from the institutions and from the charitable organization to convince them that giving their sons a proper education was not only the best choice, but also their duty, but the answer from the Roma families has always been that it would have been a waste of time, and that their children would have been more useful if they were sent to work. This attitude has been carried on for centuries, and the biggest effect is the creation of a vicious circle with high unemployment and incomplete enjoyment of civil rights. More broadly, we can identify three core areas concerning the problems of the Roma population: migration, employment, civil rights.

42 http://www.migrationeducation.org/26.1.html?&rid=27&cHash=2f40054a71940688b0a26b7c66285291
43 http://romarights.wordpress.com/from-the-note-to-the-teorie/about/
Core Area 1: Migration

Ethnic cleaning of Roma from Kosovo began following the NATO air campaign of 1999 and the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from the province.\textsuperscript{44} The consequence was that the number of Roma had decreased from 150,000 during the pre-war period to 40,000 in 2003, as registered in a survey conducted by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. The majority of these refugees fled to Serbia, where they face the following problems:

1- Lack of citizenship and/or personal identification documents, which hinders them to exercise basic civil rights;\textsuperscript{45}
2- Frictions with local residents, even with local Roma, who perceive Roma from outside as rivals;\textsuperscript{46}
3- Settlement conditions, times of which did not give them the opportunity to take possessions which might have smoothed the transition into the new place of residence.\textsuperscript{47}

Core Area 2: Employment

One of the clearest examples of how disadvantaged Roma are is their unemployment rate. Whereas official unemployment in the Republic of Serbia, in 2003, was about 30%, a survey showed that among Roma, the percentage was as twice.\textsuperscript{48} In the same year, the poverty rate was found to be at 60%.\textsuperscript{49} The reasons for such high levels are as follows:

1- Level of educational attainment, which is too low for having a proper skill;
2- Lack of information, because of which Roma miss a lot of job opportunities and are not aware of the occupational training and remedial education courses;
3- Discrimination from employers towards Roma;
4- Financial motivations, in the sense that for many Roma it is more convenient to receive aid from the State under the shape of social services than to earn money working.

\textsuperscript{44} Tatjana Peric, \textit{Personal Documents and Threats to the Exercise of Fundamental Rights of Roma in Europe}, in \texttt{www.errc.com}, October 29 2003
\textsuperscript{45} European Center for Minority Issue, \textit{Serbia and Montenegro: Integrated Analysis}, in “Toward Regional Guidelines for the Integration of Roms”, January 2005, p.15
\textsuperscript{46} Ivi
\textsuperscript{47} Ivi, p.16
\textsuperscript{49} \texttt{http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTROMA/Resources/SAM\_chapter2.pdf}
Core Area 3: Civil Rights

1. Contrary to the other European countries, and like others from the Balkans, in Serbia the law previews several actions explicitly in favour of the Roma. For instance, the Art.4, in the second paragraph, says:

“The authorities shall pass legal acts and undertake measures specified in paragraph 1 (which says that the authorities may undertake measures aimed at ensuring full and effective equality between members of minority and members of the majority of the population, author-entry) with the aim of improving the position of persons of the Roma national minority.”

Though the Serbian authorities are officially committed in safeguarding the Roma’s rights, there are a lot of reports that indicate that most of the many abuses that Roma suffer from are not pursued by police. Moreover, the police are more likely to abuse Roma than persons belonging to other ethnic groups. We can, now, list the major impediments to Roma’s enjoyment of civil rights in Serbia:

1- Lack of information about their rights, to which the low level of literacy of the Roma population must be added;
2- Lack of citizenship and/or personal identification documents, which is a huge barrier to the enjoyment of civil rights;
3- Discrimination, particularly under the shapes of violence from private citizens and police, but also expressed by the refusal of the employers to hire Roma applicants
4- Distrust in State institutions, as explained by a Roma participant to a focus group held in Belgrade: “Roma do not believe in fair court trial. They have no trust in the judicial system, don’t believe that someone will be punished for the harm done”.

The case of Kosovo is somewhat different. In this country, the main concern is how to calm down the tensions among the Serbian community, that for the first time in centuries represent a minority, in a land that means so much for the Serbian patriotism. It must be said that the Kosovar constitution, adopted on June 15 2008, is a praiseworthy example of attempt to make each component of the nation feel as a part of a whole, with all equals and none subdued.

31 European Roma Rights Centre and UN OHCHR, Memorandum: The Protection of Roma Rights in Serbia and Montenegro, ERRC and UNOHCHR, Belgrade, 2003, p.20
33 European Centre for Minority Issue, op. cit., p.20
The first chapter states the basic provisions, in which the Article 5 declares that the official languages of the Republic are Albanian and Serbian, whereas Turkish, Bosnian and Romany have the status of official languages at the municipal level. Other important articles state that “Inhabitants belonging to the same national or ethnic, linguistic or religious group traditionally present on the territory of the Republic of Kosovo shall have specific rights as set forth in this Constitution in addition to the human rights and fundamental freedoms provided in chapter 2 of this constitution” (art.57), “The Republic of Kosovo ensures appropriate conditions enabling communities, and their members to preserve their identities; The Republic of Kosovo shall promote a spirit of tolerance among communities; The Republic of Kosovo shall take all necessary measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination” (art.58). The Article 60 bargains for the establishment of a Consultative Council for Communities, composed of representatives form all the communities from all the ethnic groups in Kosovo, that shall afford to the Communities the opportunity to comment at an early stage on legislative or policy initiatives that may be prepared by the Government, to suggest such initiatives, and to seek to have their views incorporated in the relevant projects and programs. Two thirds of the Council members will be representatives of minority communities, and the remaining third composed of representatives of the Kosovo institutions directly involved in issues of special relevance for minorities. In the Assembly, which holds the legislative power, out of 120 seats, 20 must be guaranteed to representatives of minorities. The parties representing the Serbian community must have ten seats, those representing Bosnians three, those representing Turkish two, Roma, Ashkal and the Balkan Egyptian one each, whereas the Gorani can have a seat if the number won by each of the other minorities is less than the number guaranteed. In the government, one minister and two deputy ministers must be Serbs, and one from the other communities. The 15% of the judges in the Supreme Court must be from the minorities. The Kosovo Judicial Council, composed of thirteen members, must include two Serbs representatives and two from other communities.

On the same day the Constitution was adopted, the Law on the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Communities and Their Members in the Republic of Kosovo entered into force. Based on chapter 4, articles 65, item 1, and also of article 81, item 1 and paragraph 2 of the constitution, this law is addressed to promote the rights of the minorities in the social and public life of the country and to guarantee the freedom and the safeguard of cultural expression of each community.

The Article 1.4 states as follows:

“For the purpose of this law, communities are defined as national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups traditionally present in the Republic of Kosovo that are not in the majority. These groups are Serb, Turkish, Bosnian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and other communities. Members of the community in the majority in the Republic of Kosovo as a whole who are not in the majority in a given municipality shall also be entitled to enjoy the rights listed in this law”.

The Article 5 recognizes the right of each community to express, maintain and develop its culture and traditions and to administer its own cultural affairs, whereas the Article 6 foresees the obligation for the public broadcast to ensure, both at national and local level, an adequate number of broadcast hours of programming in the languages of communities, and the article 8 grants all the people belonging to communities the right to receive public education at all levels in one of the official languages of Kosovo of their choice, and pre-school primary and secondary public education in their own language, even if it is not an official language.

But in spite of the efforts to create a context of equality among all the communities, there are still some gaps that need to be filled. The Serbian students follow the program previewed by the scholar system in Serbia, and there is not a Serbian curricula. The manual texts in Serbian and Turkish are not present at the secondary school. There are also no apposite scholar programs for the Roma, the Ashkali, the Egyptians, the Croatians, the Montenegrians and the Gorani. The Kosovar curricula is not recognized by the Serbian government. This fact discourages the Serbian students to attend the lessons held in their language at the University of Pristina. The gap is also in the communication, since the Public Television is not discharging the duty to broadcast the 15% of the programs in languages different from Albanian.

The communities that are facing the major problems are Roma, Ashkali and the Egyptians, commonly known as RAE, a definition that many members of each of these communities take offence at. Their unemployment rate is at 58.32%, the illiteracy is at 30%, and the poverty rate is at

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55 Law on the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Communities and Their Members in the Republic of Kosovo, Article 1.4.
57 Ivi., p.17
58 Ivi, p.18
Apart from the social and economical side, the burden concerns the way they are treated. There are several testimonies telling about the abuses suffered from both the Serbs and the Albanians during the war. The Serbian police, in the days of the war, forced Roma civilians to bury the bodies of the Albanians killed and destroy their properties. After the end of the war, the Albanians retaliated against the Roma, on the motivation that they had collaborated with the Serbian police, which they had indeed, but because they were forced to. Roma became the object of physical abuse, murder, rape and looting, both by the UCK and by the Albanian civilians, with registered cases of people buried alive. The only way for the Roma people in Kosovo to escape the persecution put in act by the Albanians was to flee, which, in a few months after the end of the war, 90,000 of them did. Still nowadays, Roma are the most discriminated communities for the same reasons that they are elsewhere: insufficient mobilization and efforts of the government authorities, limited government and donors funds, lack of sufficient awareness raising campaigns on the importance of the education, and lack of initiative for advocating and lobbying on issues pertaining to minority rights. Their possibility to access to public services such as education, health care and social welfare is still limited, and illiteracy is widely spread. In order to remove the obstacles that are hindering the inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians communities in the society, in December 2008 the government adopted the “Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians”, that had been thought up by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. The objectives of this strategy are: significant improvement of access and quality of education for members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities; prevention of discrimination and segregation in the system of education; meaningful and efficient cooperation between relevant institutions and organizations serving for improved education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The measure by which the strategy aims to help Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian to complete at least primary and secondary school is the development of various policies such as scholarship schemes and quota for the children and youth of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian, so that they may continue studies in various fields. Here comes the same point already touched: from the above, the authorities, at least officially, are committed in guaranteeing the equal rights and opportunities between the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and the other ethnic groups, but from the below, obstacles

59 VVAA, Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians Communities, Republic of Kosovo, Pristina, December 2008, p.8
60 http://www.balkanproject.org/roma/reports/HLC-Kosovo_Roma-Targets_of_Abuse_and_Violence.doc
61 http://www.cafod.org.uk/where_we_work/eastern_europe/serbia/the_roma_community_in_serbia
63Ivi, p.17
to the full integration are still persisting, in the shape of both prejudice from the rest of the population, and self segregation from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian themselves. It is toward the removal of these obstacles that the activity of the NGO’s in the Balkans is addressed. In the third chapter, we will see in details how this activity is structured, which goals the NGO’s aim to reach and which results they have actually achieved.

2.2. Macedonia.
In Macedonia, nowadays, the Albanians are the 25% of the total population. In Tetovo (70%), Debar (58%), Struga (56%) and Gostivar (56%), they constitute the absolute majority, whereas in Kicevo (31%), Kumanovo (25%) and Skopje (20%), they are a large part of the citizens. Like we said in the first chapter, in 2001 a civil war erupted in Macedonia, between the national army and the Albanian guerrilla, that saw the end with the Framework Agreements signed in Ohrid on August 13 of the same year. The aim of these agreements was to put the Albanian community on the same level of the rest of the citizens, by recognizing their language as co-official in the municipalities with more than 20% of Albanian population and guaranteeing a major presence in the institutions. In the last years, however, there have been some problem, both arising from the Ohrid Agreements and affecting them. Many Macedonians look at these dispositions as unjustified privileges given to a community that does not consider itself as a part of the nation, and is seen (probably by most of the Albanian community members themselves) as a fifth column of a country, Albania, considered as an enemy by many in the whole Balkans. The fact that many people think that these grants were a result of western pressure, makes the tension rise further. This may be one possible reason why the implementation of the Agreement has been stalled in the last years, whenever ethnic Macedonian deputies set new conditions to be fulfilled before implementation could proceed. Generally speaking, the grants given by the Ohrid Agreements have not created a condition of full equality between Albanians and Macedonians. Albanians, like Roma and Turks, are under represented in the education system. Furthermore, the Albanian children attend separate classes in their mother tongue at the elementary and high school, so that the contacts between students with different mother tongues are nearly not existent, and this does not help to make the youth grow up free from the prejudice they assimilate at home. Whereas at the secondary level, instruction is available in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish, at the university level, education, in most area of study, is available only in Macedonian. Albanians are affected, also, by a level of

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underdevelopment that is high in all the country, but it is mostly in the western regions, which are those populated by the majority of the Albanian community in Macedonia. The reasons are not only the employment discrimination and the low level of education, but also the fact that the collapse of the communist regime in Yugoslavia brought down the system of employment opportunities provided by the government to unskilled and semi-skilled workers, without any other alternative brought on.

It must be pointed out that the Macedonian authorities have not spared their efforts, as proved by the fact that there are eased admission requirements for minorities at the universities in Skopje and Bitola for up to 23% of entering places, although the quota has not always been filled. Another important data is that in 1991, 302 ethnic minority students attended university; while in 1998, the number rose up to 1,073 attendants, representing about 16% of all university students.\(^6^5\) Even the space at their disposal in the media, both public and private, shows that, at least, there is no mean to marginalize Albanians: many TV and radio stations in the Republic broadcast full programming in Albanian, including the state-funded Macedonian Radio and Television Network; the second channel of the state television predominantly broadcasts in the language of the ethnic minorities.

Regarding the political participation, the parties of the Albanian minority have been part of every coalition government. In the governments up until 1998, the Party for Democratic Prosperity represented the ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia. In the current coalition government, the political party of the Macedonian Albanians (PDPA-NDP) holds 5 out of 16 ministerial posts and several deputy minister positions. Currently, there are 25 Albanian MPs in the 120-seat Macedonian Parliament, and in the 1990-1994 and the 1994-1998 terms of legislature, there were about 20 MPs from Albanian political parties. The ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia have four parties, primarily focusing on the rights of the ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, that are either in the opposition, or in the ruling coalition.

There are also many ethnic Albanians at the high sphere of many private enterprises and at the heads of public bodies and institutions. The Macedonian Army (the Deputy Minister of Defense and 2 of a total of 10 general officers are ethnic Albanians) and Police (the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Rifat Elmazi, is an ethnic Albanian) have ethnic Albanian generals and other high-ranking officers. The speaker of the Parliament at the time when the Republic was becoming an independent state was Vulnet Starova, an ethnic Albanian from Macedonia. Currently, the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament is Iliyaz Halimi from the Democratic Party of the Albanians. The Vice Prime Minister is

\(^{65}\) http://www.macedonia.org/crisis/story1.html
Bedredin Ibraimi, also an ethnic Albanian. Republic of Macedonia’s ambassadors to Switzerland (Alaydin Demiri), Denmark (Sami Ibraimi), Qatar (Abdulkadir Mehmeti), and Croatia (Servet Avziu) are also ethnic Albanians.

Though all these grants, and in spite of the not few people at the high sphere of command, it seems that the aimed goal of creating an environment in which all the communities can feel the same sense of belonging and be free to cultivate their culture without being discriminated has not yet been reached, and that the overall effect is that the Macedonians complain about the too many privileges conceded and the Albanians claim that what have been promised have not seen achievement. If the efforts from the authorities have not been lacking, there is still a lot of work to be done on the perception of the citizens towards the minorities, or, to be more correct, on the perception of each ethnic towards the others. So, what we see, nowadays, is a country composed of two virtual parallel societies for ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, that have neither a way, nor intention to communicate and interact with each other, with the end result of a vicious circle misunderstandings-prejudices and an ever high tension.

The problem with Roma community is more social and cultural, than political. In the first chapter, we went through the history of the Roma’s presence in Yugoslavia, and we saw how they were treated relatively well, especially if compared to other East European regimes. Macedonia, in itself, was the Yugoslavian Republic where their conditions were better off than anywhere else. For instance, the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, adopted in 1946, foresaw the right of every national minorities to be protected and freely express their culture. In 1963, there were further guarantees: the right to education in the languages of the nationalities and the ethnic groups; proportional representation of the nationalities and the ethnic groups in the municipal assemblies; the equality of those languages with the Macedonian language in the areas of self-management, and in procedures before State organs and organizations carrying out public duties.66

The settlement of Suto Orizary, built after the earthquake that in 1963 destroyed the ancient Roma quarter in Skopje, can be viewed as the beginning of a gradual process of cultural emancipation, with business and commercial installations.67 The liveliness that had been created over the years made of Suto Orizary, in 1996, the world’s first Roma majority municipality. Nevertheless, the position of Roma was still the most disadvantaged, and their level of inclusion was low. After the independence, Roma have retained this position in Macedonia, with still no policy aimed

67 Ilija Aceski, Skopje: Vision and Reality, Skopje, 1996, p.61
specifically at the Roma population, even if the Constitution recognizes them as a group equal in status the other communities.

Nowadays, the Roma present in Macedonia are 53,879, equal to the 2.66% of the total population.\textsuperscript{68} Like we did examining the Serbian and Kosovar case, we identify four core areas concerning the Roma community in Macedonia: education, health, civil rights, employment.

\textit{Core Area 1: Education}

The indicator that shows more than anything how Macedonia is still too far from achieving a full integration of Roma population is education. The most recent census shows that the 24% of Roma older than fifteen are illiterate, whereas the overall illiteracy rate of the population is 6%, and among the women, the percentage is 36%.\textsuperscript{69} According to a study conducted by the World Bank, the Roma comprising 3% of the youth aged fifteen to nineteen are accounted for 0.6% of secondary school students in the 2001-2002 academic year.\textsuperscript{70} The reasons of such a low attendance resides in the fact that many Roma parents prefer to send their sons to work, or even to steal, rather than to school.

\textit{Core Area 2: Health}

The Roma population suffers from various problems, such as respiratory diseases, high blood pressure, various types of neuroses and teenage pregnancy. These problem are exacerbated by the introduction of a participation fee for medical care in the State health care system, the access to which, for the Roma, is hindered by their poverty.

\textit{Core Area 3: Civil Rights}

What we can define as the biggest example of the failure of the Macedonian State to guarantee full equality among the population is the presence of 4,356 stateless Roma and 7,407 Roma with unknown citizenship.\textsuperscript{71} The main reason is that the law on citizenship, introduced in 1992, requires a source of regular income, fifteen years of legal residence in Macedonia, fluency in the Macedonian language and administrative fees of 50 US Dollars to 250 US Dollars, all requirements that many Roma do not have. These dispositions are particularly disadvantageous for the Roma as

\textsuperscript{68} VVAA, Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Skopje, 2004, p.8
\textsuperscript{69} Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, Book 7, 1997
\textsuperscript{71} VVAA, A Pleasant Fiction: The Human Rights Situation of Roma in Macedonia, European Roma Right Centre, Budapest 1998
well as for the Albanians, since these two communities have always been moving through the years, and their ever high unemployment level can not allow most of them to have the requested permanent source of income, and the consequence is that many of their members are left with no identity documents, could not enjoy civil rights and receive social welfare and medical services.

**Core Area 4: Employment**

In 2001, the unemployment rate among the Roma was 71.8\%,\textsuperscript{72} whereas among the women it was 97.7\%.\textsuperscript{73} This unemployment rate causes an even higher poverty rate among Roma, which is about 90\% of the community.\textsuperscript{74} The mixture of low level of education attainment and racial discrimination is at the base of such high levels of unemployment. The reputation of Roma is so bad, based on the stereotypes, justified or not, that they are cheat and not willing to work, that perhaps a higher level of education would not improve so much their appeal on the labour market.

It must be said that ever since the independence, the Macedonian authorities a certain level of sensitivity towards the Roma community. The preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia states that:

"**Macedonia is established as a national state of the Macedonian people, in which full equality and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people is provided to Albanian, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia**".\textsuperscript{75}

The attempt to integrate and to protect the ethnic the minorities is exemplified also by two interesting articles of the Constitution: the Art.48, that allows the minorities to free expression of their national characteristics, as well the right to education in their own language at school; the previously seen Art.7, that provides to the municipalities where an ethnic group is the majority of the population the official use of their language, as in the case of Roma language in Suto Orizari.\textsuperscript{76}

Probably, the attitude toward Roma is slightly better than it is toward Albanians because they do not have a State that functions as a landmark, and are not as numerous as the other big minorities, so

\textsuperscript{72} European Commission against Racism and Intollerance, Izvestaj za Republika Makedonija, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1999
\textsuperscript{73} Aloui Lazhar, Situation Analysis of Roma Women and Children, Unicef, Skopje, 1999
\textsuperscript{74} VVAA, Advancing Education of Roma in Macedonia: Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund’s Strategic Directions, Roma Education Fund, Budapest, 2007
\textsuperscript{75} Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Preamble, 1991
\textsuperscript{76} Vladimir Ortakovski, Minorities in the Balkans, Stip, Skopje, 1998, è.348
they are not seen as a threat to the social order. The presence of Roma culture at public level is guaranteed also by the space in the media, as the State radio and television broadcast twice a week for half an hour in Romany. Some further positive steps have been taken by the Government towards the improvement of the socio-economic conditions and the enhancement of the social inclusion of Roma, like the adoption of the National Strategy for Roma in 2005.

But, still, it is too little, as a report, in 2007, stated that:

“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is third from the bottom of comparative performance ranks in terms of implementation which reflects the lack of continued political efforts to allocate resources for the proper implementation of the decade’s Action Plans”.  

Another aspect showing the high level of inequality is the treatment they receive from police. Statistics collected by NGO’s prove that 12.5% of the victims of police violence are Roma people. The violence against Roma are common, as it is the lack of investigation from the Police, as if it was not a plague of the society to heal, and in the few cases that the hate crimes against Roma are brought to courts, the racist motivation is never recognized. A shadow cast on the policy followed by the Macedonian authorities was the already cited Citizenship Act also, adopted in 1992. Only in 2004, the strictness of this law was reduced, with the residence length required lowered to eight years. Suto Orizari itself has gaps in fundamental aspects of a community life: there is only one policlinic, the only two schools operate with a 30 years inventory, the unemployment rate is 65%, and many people live on social welfare.

Some interesting data, that explains how the possible good will of the institutions is made vain, are presented by a poll conducted by Gallup International during a 1994 survey. This survey showed that the level of hostility of the ethnic Macedonia against the ethnic minorities was as follows: 87%

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79 Nezdet Mustafa-Mayor of the Suto Orizari Municipality, CEDIME-Se Interviews, February 10-18, Skopje, 1999
against the Albanians, 78% against the Bulgarians, 62% against the Turks, 60% against the Jews, 59% against the Roma, 47% against the Serbs, 44% against the Vlachs. 80

So, in summary, Macedonia is in a sort of ambivalence in the way it faces the Roma question. On one hand, there have been many official steps from the institutions to reduce the gaps between Roma and the rest of the country, be it the inclusion of apposite articles in the constitutions or the herald of laws straight directed to their situations. On the other hand, it seems that those organs in charge of put in practices the laws and the government decisions are not willing to do so. The maximum part of the inclusion effort is, definitely, accomplished by the international NGO’s, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

2.3. Montenegro

Montenegro became independent from Serbia on June 3 2006, following a referendum held on May 21 of the same year. Due to its young life, the situation of the ethnic minorities are, more or less, similar to the Serbia’s. Montenegro is one of the countries with the lowest presence of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, as they are only 2,601, equal to the 0.42% of the total population, less than the refugees came from Kosovo (3,105 Roma; 1,539 Egyptians; 79 Ashkali). 81 Like in the other Balkan countries, most of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians households live in a very difficult social and economic context. The official data included in the 2006-2007 Montenegrin Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy shows that the poverty rate among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population in Montenegro is 52.3%, 82 4.5 times higher than the national poverty rate. 83 The unemployment rate is 80%, and only 10.8% of Roma are officially working. 84 Some sources claim that the illiteracy rate is around 70%. 85 Poverty is not the only problem afflicting Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Montenegro. Probably, more than anywhere else, Roma community in Montenegro suffers from violence and discrimination. Just the fact that the Constitution explicitly refers to Croatians, Serbs, Bosni ans and Albanians as national minorities, but not the Roma, gives the idea of how low they are rated. Women, in particular, suffer from this condition, as there is an abundance of reports denouncing cases of domestic violence and degrading treatment towards them, without any attempts to protect the victims from the police. The conditions

83 www.gov.me/eng/search.php
84 Gianni Rosas, op.cit, p.22
of women victims of violence are worsened further by their low levels of instruction and high level of poverty, that hinders them to go out of home and find alternatives. Women are not the only ones suffering more than the others because of their ethnic belonging. Another category victim of the prejudice and discrimination are children. According to a 2006 UNDP survey, only 38% of eligible Roma children attend primary schools.\textsuperscript{86} The most important cause of the early dropout rates among Roma children is the lack of economic opportunities and social rights, as many Roma parents can not afford the costs for sending their sons to school, which is not free of charges in Montenegro, and providing them the adequate dress. In fact, in addition to school fees, there are proper clothing, shoes and school equipment required, but that are out of the parents financial possibilities. This problem is present from the moment it takes to enrol kids in the kindergarten. And if a child does not attend kindergarten, then the chance to integrate in primary school is heavily reduced. But the children lucky enough to go to school have to face a reality made of various types of abuses, both from the classmates and the teachers. Many Roma mothers denounced cases of racial discrimination at school against their sons, including verbal and physical harassment by non Roma children and neglect or verbal abuse by non Roma teachers, which discourage the parents to keep on sending their sons to school.\textsuperscript{87} One effect of this misuse is that the Roma child suffering from the abuses retreats on him/herself, thus heavily and negatively affecting the evolvement of his/her personality and the role latterly played as adult in the society. This hard condition is certainly not improved by the language barriers, since for many Roma children the mother tongue is Romany. Because of this obstacle, many schools found, as a solution, to place this children in special school, with others afflicted with mental disabilities. This is a sensational case of segregation, that unfortunately is in common with other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and that proves how what officially may be stated, is rarely followed by concrete acts, with preference given to the easiest remedies, without taking the consequences in account. A testimony by a Roma school assistant at an elementary school reports that Roma children were referred to enrolment to school for adults or to “Roma classes” at an elementary school:

\textit{“There were big problems when 70 Roma children started school as external students; local non-Roma rose up against it by saying they did not want their school to be a Gypsy’s school. The locals forbade their children from attending regular lessons. Later, the direction and Parent’s Council}

\textsuperscript{86} http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show
\textsuperscript{87} European Roma Rights Centre-Centre for Roma Initiative, Concerning Montenegro for Consideration, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its 74\textsuperscript{th} Session, 2009
decided that the Roma children should attend school during the weekend. When the Centre for Roma Initiative reacted, a decision was reached that the Roma children should go to school during the week, but only after 17:00, after the children of majority population had left. There was no other way to solve the problem”. 88

A survey, titled “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma”, reported that there is a strong correlation between residential segregation and school segregation, since many Roma children live in refugee camps and residentially segregated settings, and the school that they attend is in that area. 89 These problems are worsened by the fact that there are no qualified teachers of Roma origin and no Roma employed in key institutions of the education system, that might do cultural intermediation, and the proper attention into Roma cultural heritage as an integral part of the history of Montenegro is absent in general education program and teacher training curricula. 90

Like in the case of Macedonia, at official level Montenegro appears to be committed in the promotion of equality among all the citizens and ethnic groups. In February 2005, nearly one year and half before becoming independent, Montenegro joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion, for the implementation of which, one month earlier, it had adopted the National Action Plan. The Government of Montenegro has also adopted a number of strategies and action plans that are central to the exercise and protection of child rights, like the National Plan of Action for Children in Montenegro 2004–2010, which is the framework document that guides the activities and programs fulfilling the rights of Montenegrin children, among whom the Roma’s are those who are living under the worst conditions, as we have seen. On May 10 2006, the Montenegrin authorities adopted the Law on National Minorities, which contains a citizenship-based definition. 91 On 23 October 2006, the Government of Montenegro submitted a statement on accession to a set of United Nations conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, becoming, one month later, the 193rd, State party to the Convention and committing to submit periodic reports to the Committee on the Child Rights. The Government of Montenegro prepared the initial report for the period 2006–2008, in addition to reports on the implementation of the Convention for the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The reports demonstrate that much attention is dedicated to the inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian

88 Ivi
89 www.eumap.org/topics/Minority/reports/roma_education/reports/national/montenegro/romeduc_montenegro.pdf
90 VVAA, Advancing Education of Roma in Montenegro in “2009 Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund’s Strategic Directions”, Roma Education Fund, p.9
population, and to children from internally displaced and refugee families. Programs that provide education, foster care and health services to these communities are taking root throughout Montenegro, and the national government has provided grants enabling municipal governments to undertake projects as specific as providing relocation and funding for two families from Niksic to contributing free textbooks for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students.\textsuperscript{92} On October 22 2007, the Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro was introduced, with the Article 8 stating that “Direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds shall be prohibited”, a general prohibition supplemented by provisions guaranteeing “equality in law”, “equality before the law” (Arts. 17, 19) and gender equality (Art. 18).\textsuperscript{93} In November 2007, the Montenegrin Government adopted the new Roma Strategy 2008-2012,\textsuperscript{94} which recognizes the unsustainable socio-economic situation of the Roma population in Montenegro, and that the Government intends to use as a base from which undertake measures in the following areas:

1. Official statistics, database on the number, position, living conditions and principal problems of the Roma population;
2. Legal status, prohibition of discrimination, registration, personal documents;
3. Education, preservation of culture and tradition of Roma minority;
4. Employment and labour relations rights;
5. Health and healthcare;
6. Social and children’s protection;
7. Housing conditions and lifestyle;
8. Political representation of the Roma population.

Among the various commitments included in the Strategy, there are: collection of data desegregated by age, gender, education structure, life conditions, problems and all other relevant data necessary for the improvement of their position; adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law by 2010; establishment of a special Commission to oversee the implementation of the Strategy; establishment of a special office to provide free legal aid to Roma citizens.\textsuperscript{95} The Strategy focuses its action on four areas: education, employment, health, housing. In the area of education, the Strategy intends to achieve the result of a 10% increase per year of the number of children enrolled in preschool and to provide them with education free of charge. Regarding the employment, the

\textsuperscript{93} Ivi
\textsuperscript{94} www.vlada.cg.yu/munmanj/vijesti=rubrika&rubrika=304
\textsuperscript{95} Ivi
Strategy aims to solve the problems related to this area by the legalization of the grey economy sectors and fiscal incentives both to enterprises led by Roma and to enterprises that hire Roma employees. For the health situation, the Strategy proposes comprehensive researches on the sanitary conditions of the Roma community and the inclusion of all Roma into the system of mandatory health insurance. Roma people are effectively allowed access to public health care institutions, but they wait longer for the service, and the health care staff treat them differently than the patients belonging to other ethnic groups.\(^96\) So, the intervention of the Strategy would certainly be helpful. As far as the housing is concerned, the Strategy advances the proposal to legalize the irregular settlements, provide drinking water and their connection to the water supply and sewage system, construct residential facilities of solid material for all Roma that live in substandard housing, implement programs to suppress any form of segregation of the Roma population and secure a number of social housing units each year for those most vulnerable within the Roma community. Roma, in fact, mostly live in suburban settlements with poor sanitation, with no sewage system or access to potable water. The publication “Contributions to the Social Inclusion of Roma in Montenegro”, co-authored by Sabahudin Delic, deputy minister for protection of human rights and rights of national minorities and Aleksandar Zekovic, human rights researcher, states that more than 30% of Roma homes is not connected to waterworks system, and 86% lives in slums (barracks).\(^97\) The overall problem of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians underwent an exacerbation after the Kosovo’s war in 1999, that brought 17,947 of various belongings refugees. Although Montenegro adopted an ambitious national Strategy for Durable Solution to the Problems of Refugees and IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in 2005, with a view to securing optimum solutions to these two categories by early 2008, enjoyment of their rights remained limited in 2008, because the legal framework prevented them from registering permanent residence, which was an essential requirement for being accepted into Montenegrin citizenship.\(^98\) Without citizenship and ID documents, many refugees and IDPs had problems in registering with the local employment offices and accessing to higher education, social welfare and property rights.\(^99\) As a consequence, most of them, who are about the 80% of the Roma people living in Montenegro, face difficult living conditions which gave rise to serious concerns from the European Commission over their status.\(^100\)

On a positive note, the new Montenegrin Citizenship Law makes the naturalization requirements

\(^{96}\) http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/HRAMontenegro_74.pdf
\(^{97}\) Sabahudin Delic, Contributions to the Social Inclusion of Roma in Montenegro, Podgorica, 2009
\(^{98}\) Ivi
\(^{100}\) VVAA, Montenegro 2007 Progress Report, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 6/11/2007
less stringent by insisting on “lawful and habitual residence” instead of “permanent residence”, as envisaged by the 1999 Citizenship Law.  

The most recent news is that the municipality of Podgorica, at the end of September of 2010 decided to demolish the Konyk refugee settlements outside the town, where 2500 refugees, arrived from Kosovo, in 1999 are settled. This camp is infamous for being the place in which a multinational racket catches the children, preferably orphans, for exploiting them in beggary activities. It happens very often to see, in the streets of Podgorica, people bringing Roma children, controlling them while they beg, and some hours later picking them back. In the past, at the peak of this phenomenon, there would be four or five children at nearly all the semaphores of the Montenegrin capital begging all day long, raising twenty Euro each. The Montenegrin law considers a crime exploiting children for begging, but the police seldom intervenes, only in case of numerous solicitations, or too sensational examples to be ignored. When it happens, the number of children begging significantly lowers, as there is one head responsible for more or less ten children, so when one is arrested, the victims of the exploitation disappear from the streets. The problem is that there is no rescue program for these children, and when the policemen bring them to the police station, then they put them out of the door, without even bringing them back to the refugee camp. So, even if dismantling the racket responsible of the exploitation is certainly a good thing, it ends up being substantially useless, since no whatsoever help for the children is foreseen, nor the social assistance is involved. In the end, the Roma children of the Konyk camp are left to their destiny.

There have been some actions in 2008, addressed to the implementation of the Strategy, like the establishment of the Commission for the Implementation of the Strategy, composed of relevant ministry representatives, whereas the Statistical Office of the Republic of Montenegro started collecting data about Roma in the country. Still in 2008, the Montenegrin Government established National Councils referring to each ethnic group, with the purpose to create an intermediation activity between the institutions and the single community. In the case of Roma, their National Council makes instances for the community and implements the activity itself of the government, especially through surveys conducted in the field, like monitoring the begging activities of the children and signalling the number plate of the cars in which they are picked up to the police. Apart from contrasting the exploitation of the children, the Roma National Council is

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102 Mustafa Canka, [http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/ita/aree/Montenegro/Montenegro-fuori-i-rom](http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/ita/aree/Montenegro/Montenegro-fuori-i-rom)
103 [www.monstat.cg.yu/EngPrva.htm](http://www.monstat.cg.yu/EngPrva.htm)
committed in programs addressed to spreading and guaranteeing the education to the young Roma until the age of eighteen, and in providing documents to those who do not have.

Anyway, as we have seen, and like has already come up from the analysis of the Macedonian case, there is a wide gap between what officially enunciated, probably even in good faith, and the measures actually taken and the effects on the life conditions of Roma people, or what has not been done to improve them, even if it had been promised. Our feeling is that in Montenegro there is a double tendency: on one hand, the authorities, in spite of the official commitments, seems to be not interested enough in solving the problems of the Roma community, that is proving to be an overall social problem; on the other hand, there is an important activism, from below, not only from the Roma organizations, but also from the ethnic Montenegrins, like FSR, an acronym that in the Montenegrin language stands for Roma Scholarship Foundation.

All in all, we can say that the charge to heal the sufferings and the problems of the Roma communities in Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia is mainly on the international institutions and NGO’s. How they are actually acting in order to decrease the level of exclusion from the rest of the societies, will be the subject of chapter number three, which is specifically focused on the project led by the organization we have worked with.
3-DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

The experience in the Balkans, on which this essay is based, has been accomplished with the Italian NGO COSV. This NGO arrived in the Balkans in 1997, first working on emergencies projects in Serbia and Montenegro. The work on the ethnic minorities related problems was started by another Italian NGO, Intersos, which had been working with the Roma community in Macedonia since 2004. Intersos had done an important work in the fields of socio-cultural integration and dialogue among minorities, with projects focused on exchange process between citizens of different communities. The activity led by Intersos has achieved an important result, the creation of the Multi Cultural Centre in Prilep, Southern Macedonia, which over the years has turned into being one of the main aggregate spaces and landmarks, for both any age local citizens and the organizations representing the civil society. COSV got involved in 2009, when Intersos proposed to subdivide the work: Intersos would have continued to work in Kosovo, while COSV would have become responsible for Montenegro and Macedonia, jointly developing an interregional project in the area. So, on April 30 2009, the current project addressed to the integration of the ethnic minorities in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro started off, with the end foreseen for April 29 2012. The budget previewed is 2,418,887 Euro, provided mainly by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The targets of the joint action COSV-Intersos in the Balkans are: inner division between the various ethnic groups, the high level of illiteracy among the Roma, the unemployment rate, the alienation of the Roma children at school from the other ethnic groups children. In order to heal these problem, COSV-Intersos aim to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and relations between different communities living in Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia, by enhancing the integration and dialogue process on the socio-cultural and educational level. At the global level, COSV-Intersos have thought up a total of 72 courses and 47 dialogue and multicultural integration events. In every country theatre of the action, the courses consist in 9 of traditional cooking, 9 of drama and 9 of traditional dances, in all the three cases one in each country per year and for 20 participants each, whereas the events are taking place only in Kosovo. The number and the distribution of the beneficiaries are exposed in a table at the end of the paragraph. The socio-cultural side of the action is taken mostly on Intersos in Kosovo, where it aims to launch multi-cultural integration of minorities and facilitate cultural exchanges and activities of dialogue between different communities, especially the main ones, the Serbs and the Albanians, whose relations are currently the biggest source of tensions. In the work in Kosovo, Intersos has been receiving an important
support by a network of 14 local NGOs called Mosaic, representing the several communities in the region of Peja, that plays a central role in building bonds and relationships between the different identities. The main task for Intersos in Kosovo is the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, as a way to achieve intercultural dialogue and reconciliation in a country that is still torn by interethnic hate. Another hoped consequence would be the return of the refugees fled at time of war. This point is crucial for the balance of the Balkan area, because only careful preparation for the returnees can avoid new conflicts. This project is inspired by a previous program led by Intersos, called “Safeguard of the artistic and cultural heritage as an instrument to support the development and dialogue between the peoples of Kosovo”, concluded in February 2007. The area where Intersos is working is the region of Peja and the inner towns Peja, Decan and Klin, populated by a large number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, toward whom there is a high level of hostility, both from the Albanians, who accuse them to have collaborated with the Serbs during the late ninety’s conflict, and the Serbs, who consider them to be pro Albanians. The activities through which Intersos intends to reach these goals are the following courses and events led in the multicultural centres of Old Bath in Peja and Old Shabanaj Mill in Decan: 3 sessions of intercultural dialogue between 10 scholars from Albanian schools and scholars from the Serbian’s, held with the purpose to teach the youth the importance of having a common cultural heritage and the need to protect it; the accomplishment of 10 “Communitarian Days” aimed to mobilize groups of at least 50 members from different communities in activities bound to promote the pacific coexistence in Kosovo; the organization of 6 other photo story courses for twenty participants; eleven round tables and debates, consisting of thematic panels with the participation of the communities members, experts from different cultural heritage related fields, the civil society’s and local institutions representatives, both rural and urban, as well as local experts that converse about the value of acceptance, involving at least 10 participants; the respect and the understanding of the cultural heritage; lecturing sessions held by cultural experts, in order increase the awareness of the general public about the cultural heritage promotion and protection; cultural tours to relevant cultural heritage sites such as Mosques, Catholic and Orthodox churches, Museum and Natural heritage, to increase intercultural awareness and appreciation of the common cultural heritage in Kosovo. Hopefully, this project will create the conditions for setting up a multicultural integration lasting the three years of school cycle, with the purpose to involve the adults that have not earned an educational qualification, and make the participants from each community assimilate something of

the others, so that, at least on a little scale, the barriers may fall. So far, we can say that the signs are encouraging. The intercultural tours have seen the participation of 303 people, 429 people have taken part to the intercultural dialogue sessions, and 75 people joined the communitarian days. During the holding of the courses, there was an atmosphere of harmony among the participants of the various communities, that has eased the achievement, so much that the end, foreseen for November 2009, was postponed by one month. During the visits to the cultural and natural sites and the intercultural dialogue sessions, a notable curiosity and mind openness emerged from the participants, who proved to be wishful to learn the cultures of those with whom there had been nothing but conflicts in the previous years.

As far as the missions of COSV in Macedonia and Montenegro are concerned, the job is focused on the integration of the members of the Roma community, especially children and women. COSV is responsible for the educational side of the project in Prilep, Macedonia, and in Podgorica, Montenegro. The results that the organization intends to achieve are: access to primary school for at least 90 Roma youth in the two mentioned towns, through the establishment of parallel classes created to guarantee the gradual inclusion of the students in the scholar system and the support to the families so that they can send their sons to schools, after having sensitized them about how crucial is for the future of their sons to receive a proper education; alphabetization of 54 youth aged between 14 and 30, through an awareness campaign conducted in the areas mostly populated by Roma in Podgorica, addressed to sensitize the residents about the importance of being educated and inform them about the possibilities to receive free education at three apposite courses, in strict collaboration with the already cited local NGO FSR; access to work for 54 vulnerable Roma youth through vocational trainings in Prilep and Podgorica, a step that follows the accomplishment of the literacy courses and that will be achieved by three training courses, involving those that have passed the previous ones, with the purpose to find the best skills of each participant and further improve them; the guarantee of access to extra scholar activities for 40 Roma children in Prilep, supporting the continuation of their activities at the Multicultural Centre. The intervention on the educational side has enjoyed the participation of the Macedonian authorities, in particular the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the local schools, the National Employment Agencies and the Social Services of the Municipalities, and has also been made possible thanks to the participation of the local NGO AHP (Aid for Handicapped and Poor). In Macedonia, education is not the only field COSV is working in. Another target is employment, especially for Roma women in Prilep. Generally speaking, unemployment is one of the biggest problems affecting Macedonia, as the post socialism transition period saw a considerable fall of the
employment rate. Because of their low skills levels, as well as discrimination in the labour market, Roma were frequently among the first to be laid off, and they have limited opportunities to re-enter the workforce, so unemployment rates, and particularly long term unemployment, for Roma are often exceptional high. According to a 2003 statistical data from the Employment Agency, 4.3% of the unemployed are Roma (who are the 2.66% of the whole Macedonian population), and half of them have incomplete elementary education. In Prilep, the official unemployment rate among the Roma population is 85.2%, in a relevant measure caused by the 15% illiteracy rate. There is also a disproportion in the Roma employment in low quality jobs in the seasonal works in the field of agriculture, collecting recyclable materials, markets selling of underwear. The component of Roma community that suffers most is the women’s. Apart from the problems afflicting the community as a whole, such as high poverty rates, mass unemployment, low level of education, racial discrimination and inadequate levels of political and public participation, the Roma women suffer from a sort of imprisonment in the Roma’s culture and traditions. Roma, in fact, have a patriarchal view of family, in which women are subdued, and whose only roles are being a good mother, an obedient wife, an efficient housekeeper, and getting married to a man chosen by the family. Outside of such environment, it is almost impossible for Roma women to survive, not only for the lack of cultural means for living in a liberal democrat society, in which any single individual enjoys both negative and positive freedom, and is responsible for his/her action, but also because of the low levels of education and skills. The way authorities, through the Employment Service Agency, conduct labour market measures and provide services to employers and the unemployed is certainly not an aid to Roma women, as they are addressed towards more active unemployed people with higher education. Thus, it takes to reach this target through alternative employment services and training programs aligned with the individual needs and circumstances, and this is what COSV is committed in. The project of COSV aims to promote inclusive labour market for those women, by creating a sort of network between social services providers, local self-government and the industrial sector, specifically in the Pelagonia region and in Prilep, where 10,000 citizens out of the total 71,899 are Roma. In order to include Roma women in the labour market, COSV intends to increase key competences with training courses, and develop specific services, like the local Mediation Offices empowered with job advisors. The local authorities are collaborating in the implementation of employment program, that includes active

105 www.prilep.gov.mk
that includes active labour market policies, local infrastructure development, promotion of and support for entrepreneurship, and development of small and medium enterprises. This action will hopefully improve the integration of Roma women excluded from the labour market, by providing the Mediation Office with trained job advisors. Then, the Mediation Office shall become a job centre, providing Roma women with assistance and training, so that they may gain the necessary skills to find job. The increase of skills and competences shall, on its side, enhance the role that Roma women can play in the society, and therefore reduce their level of exclusion. The method consists in identifying those women most suitable for being the target of the project, who preferably are: unemployed over forty; long term unemployment (more than one year); inactive Roma women receiving social benefits or not; single mothers, inactive or unemployed for more than one year, at the least basic literacy level. Once identified the target, the job advisers elaborate a personal dossier for each woman, basing on the personal background: name, age, civil status, family circumstances, skills and preferences, whether the person is the only support for the family. The dossier is inserted in a data bank enrolment, for elaborating specific training needs and facilitating the job matching. The personal dossier is the base for the individual action plane outlined for each of the Roma woman. In order to bring Roma women knowledge about the labour market, three informative sessions are organized to explain them the legal framework at employment, the job opportunities, the information on employment following the needs for season work. Another way to make sure Roma women involvement increases is to enhance joint cooperation among key actors involved in increasing job opportunities, by raising awareness campaign focused on employers through round tables, the use of media for delivering advertisements on the issue and regular meetings with relevant stakeholders. The specific aim of the campaign is to generate a new perception about the Roma people and their capabilities as workforce in the community; the campaign stresses the damage caused by the presence of un-registered workers and different contracting possibilities. A core part of the campaign is focused on promoting the employment service facility among employers and private sector of the targeted region, taking into consideration especially the agricultural sector, considered as the most potential source of job opportunities. In the end, a common database of public and private employers will be created, for establishing a pool of potential employers for Roma women. Those employers will be first informed of the job matching activities of the new services, and of the procedure to accede. Then, they will have the chance to get to the potential employees, represented by the target group. The project’s expected results and the related activities are deployed in a set of three areas of intervention: training of job advisors tailored on specific needs to Roma population; strengthening of the potentiality of Roma women;
integration of the different services deputed to facilitate job integration. By implementing an approach from below, working closely with Roma community and local employment offices, the project aims to link all relevant actors and ensure a stable flow of communication between all layers, to foster knowledge at the grassroots level and influencing policies at the local level. The remedy thought up for the multi discrimination towards the Roma population is a multi levelled participatory approach, since each activity includes elements to facilitate Roma integration, participatory and recognition. The project intends to stimulate and motivate the involvement and participation of beneficiaries, the target group and stakeholders. The COSV evaluation process, implemented to guarantee the effectiveness and the transparency of the project, is shown in two different versions: evaluation of the workflow, made of monthly monitoring format compiled by the actors involved with the description of the progress of every single activity, the coherence to chronogram and the possible reasons for delay, and the questionnaires to assess the knowledge after the training sessions in order to measure the level of improvement of participants skills and the effective quality of the training; evaluation of the results of the project, composed of a final Project Impact Survey delivered within the penultimate month.

As far as the results so far actually achieved are concerned, up to 2010, we can say that in Montenegro, the work in the parallel classes has received an important input by the funds given by the donors, that made possible the purchase of modern computers and equipments, useful for registering the reports of the progress and deliver the programs and the data concerning the activities. The young Roma selected for the literacy courses have showed a high level of interest, and the results of their studies are so good that nearly all of them are expected to pass the year. In Macedonia, 23 children out of the 24 enrolled have gained the certificate, and next year will attend the upper class, and 40 children have benefited from the extra scholastic activities. More broadly, 300 people have taken part to the course in the three countries, 45 children have been enrolled in the parallel classes and 10 other children in the kindergarten, with a frequency rate of 70% in the first case, and 30% in the second. Seventeen young Roma out of twenty have gained the diploma, and eight literate have found a job.

Unfortunately, there are also darker sides that are causing some difficulties to the work of COSV in the two countries. Regarding the literacy courses, in some periods the attendance was low, because the participants thought that there would have been an economical gain, and the fact that it was not, discouraged some of them to keep on attending, since they would have to give up on working full time. The biggest problem concerns the children. Many parents do not send them to school, as we already saw. Their excuse is that the school and the Multicultural Centre are too far from their
homes. Some of these parents openly admit that they do not see any utility in making their sons study, and that they find making them work more convenient. Another problem is that the action is often made harder by the insufficient financial availabilities and the too short time given by the European Union Call for Proposal, which often hinders to present good projects. Anyway, it is in the interest of all the components concerned that the expected results shall be achieved. Some things still need to be done, other have been accomplished, legitimizing a reasonable optimism. What has been done, and what must be, will be the matter of the conclusive chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>N. Direct beneficiaries in Kosovo</th>
<th>N. Non direct beneficiaries in Kosovo</th>
<th>N. Direct beneficiaries in Macedonia</th>
<th>N. Non direct beneficiaries in Macedonia</th>
<th>N. Direct beneficiaries in Montenegro</th>
<th>N. Non direct beneficiaries in Montenegro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural dialogue activities</td>
<td>2,360</td>
<td>113,750</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>5,721</td>
<td>840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional intercultural exchange activities</td>
<td>18,298</td>
<td>The citizens and the institutions of the country (minorities set in Peja region)</td>
<td>9,398</td>
<td>The citizens and the institutions of the country (minorities set in Prilep region)</td>
<td>17,392</td>
<td>The citizens and the institutions of the country (minorities set in Podgorica region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarization and literacy activities</td>
<td>220; the school “Dobre Jovanoski” in Prilep and the Ministry of Science and Education</td>
<td>15,239</td>
<td>1,497; the school “Marko Milijanov” in Podgorica</td>
<td>17,391 (minorities set in Podgorica); 830 students from “Marko Milijanov” school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training courses for literate Roma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrascholar educational activities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Social services in Prilep and the whole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 formative sessions for the partners (4 regional, 13 local)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>minority population (9,398)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,801</td>
<td>113,750</td>
<td>10,752</td>
<td>39,846</td>
<td>19,925</td>
<td>18,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4-CONCLUSION

We came to the end of our essay, and now we have to draw some conclusions, and stress what has been done, what has not, and what needs to, in order to solve the problem of the ethnic minorities integration in the Balkans. We have gone over the actions taken by the institutions and COSV-Intersos in the previous chapters. We have seen also that in the Constitutions of Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro, clear references to the ethnic minorities containing guarantees for their full equalities in before the law and the safeguard of each cultural identity are certainly non missing. Such dispositions are further strengthened by the laws approved by the Assemblies of each of these countries. In Macedonia, the Albanian community is represented by the Democratic Party of Albanians and the Party for Democratic People, both often part of the coalitional governments, and the current Minister of Economy, Fatimir Besimi, belongs to the Albanian community; the university system foresees the right to follow lessons in Albanian language, and the municipalities with more than 20% of its citizens being Albanian have the language as co-official. Also in Montenegro, the government provides Albanian language education in the primary and secondary schools, and there are some university-level courses in Podgorica offered in Albanian.

Regarding the Roma community in Macedonia, in February 2010, a 1,6 million of Euro investment to the Government-funded secondary school in Suto Orizari was disposed. As the Macedonian Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, said at the inauguration:

"The Roma community was often marginalized in the past, subject to prejudices, which has resulted in large poverty. However, education is one of the crucial factors that determine poverty, living quality and unemployment rate. This is an investment in the future of young Roma generations and the future of Suto Orizari municipality."

On the other hand, in Macedonia there are also gaps to plug, like the slowness in the application of the directives included in the document of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, an initiative of 12 European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain), whose declaration was adopted in Sofia on February 2 2005, to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of the Roma minority across the region. So, the whole picture is dark and light.

\[106\] Cornerstone of Suto Orizari secondary school laid, in http://www.vlada.mk/?q=node/2306, February 10 2010
The same can be said for Montenegro. There are five Albanians ministers and one party, the Democratic Union of Albanians, in the government. Moreover, at the moment of the independence, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights Protection was also set. Though, this institution has not been well integrated in the decision making process. The government actively cooperates with the international NGO’s for improving the Roma’s life conditions, and there have been progresses in the integration in the educational system, thanks to the action of the Ministry of Education and Sciences, that has introduced the affirmative action, in order to fight segregation.\textsuperscript{107} But, like several other times already said, the effort from the institution is not enough, as the unemployment rate among the Roma population is 80\%, and the illiteracy’s is 70\%.\textsuperscript{108} These gaps are partially filled by the activities led by the intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. In Montenegro, Red Cross, in cooperation with UNHCR, maintains an active presence in two camps in Podgorica inhabited mainly by Roma fled from Kosovo, where activities like preschool education, health care focused on women and children, and professional training for adults are conducted, and, along with UNICEF, is responsible also for a center for mothers and children in the Montenegrin capital. The World Bank, together with the Foundation for an Open Society, an US NGO, took responsibility for the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, for which the Roma Educational Fund has been established. The Foundation for an Open Society, on its own, is managing projects on building the capacity of Roma NGOs in Serbia, fighting discrimination, improving the availability of healthcare services to the inhabitants of Roma settlements and supporting initiatives by and for Roma through various programs, focusing on preschool and primary education. Still in Serbia, the German NGO CARE is carrying on the Community Advocates Program, with which it trains Roma Community Advocates in general, and female Roma activists in particular, to aid members of Roma communities in navigating bureaucracy and making use of the legal system, whereas Oxfam GB, from 1994 to 2004, has provided humanitarian aid to settled and displaced Roma populations, and supported the establishment of the Romany Development Network, consisting of five Roma NGOs from Serbia and one from Macedonia. Through this network, Oxfam has provided support for projects in several domains, like education, health and employment. In Macedonia, an important job has been done by The Nansen Dialogue Center (NDC), a Norwegian NGO that functions essentially as a local organization, although it is part of a regional network, and is a multiethnic organization that facilitates dialogue projects and conflict analysis and resolution training for young people and

\textsuperscript{107} Council of the European Union, EU Annual Reports on Human Rights, European Communities, Brussels, 2005, p.18
\textsuperscript{108} Montenegro- Combined Forces on the Labor Market, in http://www.iiz-dvv.de/index.php?article_id=897&clang=1
There are local NGOs too in Macedonia committed in the support of the integration of the ethnic minorities, like CIVIL, a multiethnic group working in Macedonia, that promotes human rights and peaceful coexistence, conducts community dialogue sessions and debates, and runs media campaigns for peace, and the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), that is considered the most stable and well established local NGO in Macedonia. MCIC bridges the gap between the NGOs that specifically focus on interethnic relations, and those that positively influence interethnic relations while working toward other goals. MCIC mainly focuses on development issues, such as support for rural infrastructure and capacity building. It is also committed in direct humanitarian aid to refugees, or others in need. MCIC’s evenhanded and inclusive approach fosters interethnic cooperation as a by-product. In addition, MCIC designed a public service campaign using the slogan “Something is complete when it has everything”, that intends to encourage tolerance and support for a multicultural and multiethnic society. In Gostivar, an ethnically Macedonian-Albanian mixed city in the western part of the country, the Interethnic Program Gostivar (IPG) works specifically on interethnic cooperative projects. IPG attempts to cope with the separatist trend in the NGO community by devising activities between organizations such as women's groups or sport clubs, which tend to be ethnically homogeneous. Among the other organizations, there are also: Center for Civic Initiative (CCI), based in Prilep, founded to promote democracy and citizens involvement in creating positive social change, and whose projects include education for Roma children, both local and refugee, and the creation of resource centers and training programs for other NGOs; Multikultura and the Youth Information Center, both in Tetovo, that work on building tolerance and awareness of interethnic issues among high school students of different ethnic backgrounds; and ANTIKO, a network of women from across the Macedonia, whose mission is to empower women, especially young women, through seminars on economic integration, health issues, fighting prejudices, and other issues relevant to women in Macedonian society. ANTIKO's leadership represents Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Bosnians, and Roma women, and tries to reach women of all the communities, and that contributes, with its work, to increase the understanding and the unity among women of different ethnic backgrounds. UNICEF, on its own, in cooperation with several local NGOs, is building up a project called Babylon, that brings children from different ethnic backgrounds

110 Ivi
111 Ivi
112 Ivi
together for educational and social activities, with the aim to decrease children's prejudices and mutual fear, while encouraging their communication and friendship.\textsuperscript{113}

Notwithstanding the meritorious and important jobs done by the NGOs and the International Organizations, there is still a long road to walk on. The governments should be more committed, providing social policies to the most vulnerable sides of their populations, of which Roma are the most visible, in order to give incentives to the Roma parents for sending their sons to schools, though there is the risk that an inalienable right, such as education, might become too subject to utilitarian consideration, instead of installing into Roma mentality.

What has been noticed during the journey in the Balkans is a considerable lack of participation to the social and public life from the various ethnic minorities, with a few exceptions, and a high level of hostility, both from one to another and towards the State. The main reasons lay in the history of the region and the Balkan conception of State and nation. Both of these aspects have been taken into consideration in the first chapter, and should need a further deepening, that the space at our disposal does not allow. However, some considerations can be elaborated, in order to complete our essay and make the problems herewith treated more understandable. The national and cultural identity of the Balkan peoples is extremely problematic, due to a basic contradiction. On one side, they are peoples with strong peculiarities and important historic heritages, that made a considerable centre of Christianity out of a country like Serbia. Moreover, Serbia has been also the cradle of an Empire that, at the time of the greatest strength, during the rule of Stefan Uros Dusan the Fourth, from 1346 to 1371, was extended to the current territories of Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia, Albania, Southern Croatia and Northern Greece, and that at the time was one of the most advanced and culturally evolved nations in Europe. The historic heritage of the Serbian Empire gave inspiration to the birth of Greater Serbia myth, occurred with the theory formulated in a document called “Nacertanje”, written by the Serbian Minister Ilija Garasanin in 1844, according to which:

“A plan must be constructed, which does not limit Serbia to her present borders, but endeavors to absorb all the Serbian people around her”.\textsuperscript{114}

According to this document, the current territories populated by Bulgarians, Macedonians, Albanians, Montenegrin, Bosnians, Hungarians and Croatians are all part of the Greater Serbia, and


the Serbian cultural influence must be spread into these lands. This plan had been kept secret until 1967, and was interpreted as a blueprint for Serbian national unification, with the purpose to strengthen the Serbian position inside the Yugoslav Federation, inculcating Serbian and pro-Serbian national ideology in all surrounding peoples.\textsuperscript{115} Considering all the given differences, we can compare this project to the Pan Germanism plan pursued by the Nazi regime, and the consequences of both are not so dissimilar. But on the other hand, the Ottoman rule that the Balkan countries had undergone from the fifteenth century to 1878, in the case of Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia, 1913 in the case of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, had been a suffocating repression and frustration of the strong identitarian sensitivity, and the fact the popular cultures of these countries present several and deep Levantine features, frustrates further the feelings of the many that look back at times when there were autochthonous and powerful Empires, with distinctive and prestigious cultures. Many analysts share the idea that over four centuries of Turkish oppression in the region had created, and increased through the years, a massive load of hatred that, once the independence was regained, had to be let off. Between the end of the Turkish presence in the region, in 1913, and the burst of the civil war, in 1991, there are 78 years, during which there had been 27 of Unitarian kingdom (1918-1945) and 46 of communist regime (1945-1991). When the Berlin’s wall fell, the reason to hold the various Yugoslav Republics together also fell, because the main unifying reason, the communist ideology, ceased to exist. As happened in the other East European countries, where the nationalisms had been subordinated to the ideology and the Soviet imperialism, in Yugoslavia the national peculiarities and the claims of each Republic took over, but contrary to the other countries, there was also this cumulated hatred that had to be let off. Since the Turks were no longer there, it took to find those that were most similar to them, and those were the Bosnians and the Albanians. Among the various reasons at the base of the Yugoslavian civil wars of the 1990s, this is one of the main. Few years earlier, in September 1986, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts had produced a draft document entitled “The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts”. This document was composed of two parts: one on the "Crisis in the Yugoslav Economy and Society", which focused on the economic and political fragmentation of Yugoslavia that followed the promulgation of the 1974 Constitution; the other on the “Status of Serbia and the Serb Nation”, which was dedicated to what the authors saw as Serbia's inferior status in Yugoslavia, and used the status of Serbs in the province of Kosovo and in Croatia to make its point.\textsuperscript{116} The Memorandum stated that at the end the Second World War, Tito deliberately

\textsuperscript{116} Richard Fucht, Eastern Europe, Library of Congress Cataloging, Santa Barbara, 2005, pp.556
Weakened Serbia by dividing up the majority of what was perceived by Serb nationalists as Serb territory, namely present day Serbia, Montenegro, the Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Croatia with Serb majority populations. The memorandum points are as follows:

- Albanians are committing genocide against Serbs in Kosovo (pages 41 and 56 of memorandum)
- Slovenia and Croatia are taking control of the Serbian economy. Yugoslavia is taking industry out of Serbia (page 42)
- There is need for constitutional changes of Yugoslavia because of its unfair mistreating and weakening of Serbia. (page 46)
- There is great discrimination against Serbs that it is very similar to genocide (page 50)
- Serbia has given 2,500,000 victims for Yugoslavia (in World War I and II) and now is victim of this state (page 52)
- Between 1690 and 1912, 500,000 Serbs have escaped from Kosovo where Albanians are committing genocide (page 56)
- There is great discrimination of Serbs living in Kosovo and in Croatia (page 58)
- Serbs in Croatia are now in danger like never before (page 62)
- All writers of Serb nationality from Bosnia are Serbs and not Bosnian writers (page 65)
- Serbs' question won't be solved before creation of full national and cultural unity of Serb people without importance where they live (pages 70 – 73)
- During the last 50 years Serbs have been two time victims of destruction, assimilation, changing of religion, cultural genocide, ideological indoctrination and saying that they do not have any importance. (pages 70 – 73)
- If Yugoslavia falls, Serbia must look for its national interest (page 73). What may appear as a divagation, is indeed a conditio sine qua non for understanding the problems that have been affecting the last twenty years of Balkan’s history, as well as the issue this essay is focused on, that is to say the exclusion of the ethnic minorities from the public and social life. As far as the concept of nation is concerned, we saw that in the Balkans it is based on an ethnical, above from cultural homogeneous community ideal, and that the territories taken as the homeland of the nation are all those that have seen, even many centuries earlier, the presence of that community. There are many consequences out of this way of thinking: the first one is that a presence of an ethnic and cultural minority is not accepted by the population, regardless of its sense of belonging and loyalty to the State; the other one is that, regardless of the level of tolerance and inclusive policies carried on by the authorities, a minority either feels to belong more to its community, and looks at its kin State as the true homeland, or seek for the independence of the regions where they are majority. Therefore, in Kosovo the Albanians

claimed the independence, basing on the motivations that they were the majority of the population, above from being the descendants of the first inhabitants, the Illyrians, while the Serbian authorities, but most especially the Serbian people, claimed the sovereignty over the land on the base of the historical and cultural heritage (we saw that Kosovo was the stage of the famous Kosovo Polje Battle, fought between the Serbian Empire and the Ottoman Empire on June 28 1389, whose Serbian defeat started the beginning of the Ottoman dominance, that lasted five hundred years; Kosovo is also the land that saw the birth of the Serbian Orthodox Church).

And in Macedonia, more than one representative of the Albanian community has threatened the secession of the western regions, whereas the Macedonian people look at them as a sort of inner enemy. It often happens that in the institutional buildings and at the universities, some lift up the Albanian flag, for then being removed by Macedonians and destroyed. The picture here exposed is a little gloomy, and it makes us realize how a pacific coexistence is hard to achieve. As we have seen, efforts from the authorities have not lacked, but they are not enough. In order to give a substantial cut to the past, and start to build a new era, it takes the governments of the Balkan countries to adopt educational projects, addressed to the students of all ethnic groups, teaching a new concept of nation and community, in which there is a common cultural and values share, and diversity is considered a richness, and no longer a threat. The authorities, especially in Serbia and Kosovo, must also persecute the authors of the crimes committed at the times of the civil wars, letting alone any factiousness and complicity, and avoiding to leave this charge to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Indeed, the Serbia authorities established the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor, born on 1 July 2003. As written in the official website:

“The Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor was founded with the intention to detect and prosecute perpetrators of criminal offences against humanity and international law, as defined in Chapter XVI of the Basic Penal Code, as well as grave breaches of the International Humanitarian Law, committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1 January 1991, as recognized by the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).”\(^{119}\)

So far, 383 persons have been prosecuted, and 103 individuals are under investigation; 48 persons have been convicted to 635 total number of years. It is certainly a good sign the fact that

the Serbian authorities are attempting to accomplish justice on their own, apart from collaborating with the Hague Court, though the whole process is too slow, and many important personalities responsible for the crimes are still free circulating throughout the Serbian territory. Kosovo must follow the Serbian example, establishing a tribunal in charge of investigating and punish the crimes committed not only by the Serbs, but also by the Albanians, in particular by the UCK terrorist group, that set fire to Kosovo in 1996, starting to commit terrorist attack against Serbian policemen and civilians. If the governments inflict strict convictions to the major authors of the crimes committed, an important message will be delivered to the whole populations, for which, in the new Balkans, there will be no more place for the fanatic nationalism and racial hatred, but only for the coexistence of different peoples, belonging to the same nation and loyal to the same State. Only in this case, the laws and the constitutional dispositions will effectively be made concrete. There is the risk that such a turning point would provoke violent reactions from the most extremist sectors of the Balkan societies, but for the stability of the region, it would be riskier to be stuck in the shifting sands of the past.

In sum, the integration of the ethnic minorities in the Balkans is a reachable goal, but also a result hard to achieve, that requires an action from the below as well as from the above. But, perhaps more than anything else, it takes for the ordinary people to cooperate. If the citizens representing the majority (the Slavic, to be more precise) can be educated by the institutions, the people belonging to the ethnic minorities must be oriented by the respective parties and movements to a major sense of citizenship, and sensitized toward a deeper public spirit. Parties like the Democratic Party of Albanians, the Party for Democratic Prosperity, the United Party of Roma in Macedonia, the Albanian Alternative and the Democratic Union of Albanians in Montenegro should push their voters and militants to attenuate their particularistic pretensions and abandon their ethnic nationalisms, to turn to a wider national consciousness, to feel more as a citizen of the country, rather than a member of whatever ethnic group. Only this way, the members of the majority, as well as the minority groups, can give up on their antagonism towards each other, and start feeling as a part of the same community. The question that, at this point, we may ask is: is this all possible? The answer can be only contradictory. During the journey in the Balkans, we have found that the commitment of the authorities and the civil society is sincere, and in some cases effective, and that there are numbers of good willed people, from all the ethnic groups, attempting to tear down the walls dividing the communities with their own actions. At the same time, we have realized also that the prejudices
and the obsessions still die hard. The historical testimonials, like the ruins of the mosque in the centre of Prilep, destroyed during the Macedonian civil war in 2001, are utilized by the majority of the population as a warning not to violate the Christianity of the land. So, the feelings drawn are mixed: on one side, positive signals of attempts to cut the past off; on the other, persistence to cling to cultural stylemes that make the Balkans live in a suspended and undefined temporal dimension, with a past that does not want to pass by, and a future that is still not glimpsed. Anyway, whatever the chances that the social and civic progress is achieved may be, it is necessary that all the concerned parts address their efforts to this goal, and that, above all, decide to reach it. It won’t be us saying that this is a comfortable work, and that the results are easily achievable. But leaving the Balkans to their destiny, and letting their problem deteriorate, means preparing the ground for another bloodshed season. It is in the interest of all, not only of the potential, innocent victims, but of the local authorities and the European Union also, that this risk shall be warded off. As far as we are concerned, we can not find better words for concluding this essay than the ones included in Karl Jaspers classic book, “The Question of Guilt”:

“If we learn to dialogue, we will foster non only a bond among us. We will create also an essential condition for dialoguing with other peoples.”
ANNEX 1

ETHNIC MAP OF MACEDONIA IN 2002

Macedonia - 2002 census
- Macedonian majority  - Albanian majority  - Turkish majority  - Mixed
M - Relative Macedonian majority
ANNEX 2

ETHNIC MAP OF KOSOVO IN 2005

Ethnic composition of Kosovo (2005)

- Albanians
- Serbs
- Turks
- Bosniaks
- Gorani
- Roma
- Others

Percentage of minority populations:
- ≥ 50%
- 15 - 49%
- 5 - 14%
- < 0 - 4%
ANNEX 3

ETHNIC MAP OF MONTENEGRO IN 2003
# ANNEX 4

## LOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT LED BY COSV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Logic</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall objective</strong></td>
<td>Contribute to the improvement of the life’s quality and the relationship among the different communities in Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Fostering processes of integration and dialogue between the various communities in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro, through the following components:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non worsening of the current geopolitical situation of the area; absence of new conflicts in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Socio-cultural integration component</td>
<td>Quantity and quality of courses and events focused on intercultural dialogue accomplished, and quantity and appreciation from the participants</td>
<td>Intermediate and final reports of the project; annual report from the NGOs partners; data on the annual use of the multicultural centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Educational component</td>
<td>Number of Roma young literate; Number of Roma young that will have access to the labour market in Macedonia and Montenegro; Number of children enrolled in primary school and relative drop out</td>
<td>Annual report from the Macedonian Education Ministry; annual report from the Montenegrin Scholastic Institute; report from the</td>
<td>Receptiveness of the final beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Formative component</td>
<td>Number of people trained and quality of the formative intervention during the project</td>
<td>Three-monthly reports of the project; survey on the results the trainings</td>
<td>Receptiveness of the final beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td><strong>Result A.1.</strong> Launch of the multicultural integration of the minorities in Kosovo, Montenegro and Macedonia at the end of the third year</td>
<td>Quality and quantity of the intercultural dialogue courses and events conducted and appreciation from the participants</td>
<td>Non worsening of the current geopolitical situation of the area; absence of new conflicts in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Result A.2.</strong> Facilitation of the cultural exchanges and the dialogue activities between different communities at regional level</td>
<td>Quality, quantity and efficiency of the six-monthly meetings of the Regional Operative Coordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Result B.1.</strong> Access to the primary school guaranteed to at least 90 Roma children by the end of the third year in Prilep and Podgorica</td>
<td>Number of children enrolled in the parallel classes and included in kindergarten and drop out percentage</td>
<td>Respect of the commitment on the five-year plans of development from the local and national Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Result B.2.</strong> 54 young Roma between the ages of 14 and 30 expected to be literate by the end of the project in Podgorica</td>
<td>Number of young adults literate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Result B.3.</strong> Access to the labour market facilitated for 54 vulnerable young Roma through training in</td>
<td>Number of young literate entered in the labour market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Montenegrin employment agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reports of the Regional Operative Coordination meetings; intermediate and final reports of the project</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual report from the Macedonian Sciences and Education Ministry</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual report from the Montenegrin Scholastic Institute</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report from the Montenegrin employment agency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance of the current economic grow trends of</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Costs foreseen in the financial plan (in Euro)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity A.1.1. Establishment of three Country Coordination within the first trimester of the first year</td>
<td>1.2. Selection and training of the co-operators</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity A.1.2. Coordination of three-monthly meetings for the whole three years</td>
<td>2. Economic treatment and management of the volunteers and the co-operators</td>
<td>379,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity A.1.3. Implementation of 72 courses and 47 events focused on multicultural dialogue, from the second trimester of the first year</td>
<td>3.2. More Italian workforce</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3. Local workforce</td>
<td>575,280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4. Training of the local</td>
<td>581,685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Macedonia and Montenegro

Result B.4. Guaranteed access to educational and extracurricular activities for 40 children from the vulnerable population of Prilep

Number of Roma children that will get access to the extra scholar educational activities

Annual report from the social services in Prilep

Result C.1. 40 trainers from all the NGOs partners well prepared, through courses on project cycle, monitoring and conflict management

Quantity and quality of the formative actions achieved and appreciation from the participants; results of the follow up of the formative actions

Three-monthly reports of the project; survey on the appreciation of the trainings

Result C.2. Increased management capacity of at least 24 local NGOs in the three years of the project

Annual report from the social services in Prilep

Result C.3. Incremented monitoring capacity of the social services in Prilep in managing the educational services for the Roma children

Respect of the commitment on the five-year plans of development from the local Institutions

Activities

Result B.4.
Guaranteed access to educational and extracurricular activities for 40 children from the vulnerable population of Prilep

Number of Roma children that will get access to the extra scholar educational activities

Annual report from the social services in Prilep

Result C.1. 40 trainers from all the NGOs partners well prepared, through courses on project cycle, monitoring and conflict management

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Annual report from the social services in Prilep

Result C.3. Incremented monitoring capacity of the social services in Prilep in managing the educational services for the Roma children

Respect of the commitment on the five-year plans of development from the local Institutions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity A.2.1</th>
<th>Organization of regional coordination between COSV-Intersos and all NGOs partners, within the first semester of the first year</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity A.2.2</td>
<td>Regional Coordination biannual meetings throughout the three years</td>
<td>3.6. Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity A.2.3</td>
<td>Regional event for cultural exchange by the end of the third year</td>
<td>3.7. Constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.1</td>
<td>Coordination with the Ministry of Education for establishing two new parallel classes in Prilep, and including 30 Roma in the last year of kindergarten, within the first trimester of the first year</td>
<td>3.9. Accessory financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.2</td>
<td>Information and sensitization about the new parallel classes and the inclusion of the nursery school age children in Prilep, in the first year</td>
<td>3.10. Monitoring and verification mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.3</td>
<td>Support to families, so that they may guarantee the children the attendance of the parallel classes in Prilep, during the three years</td>
<td>3.11. General expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.4</td>
<td>Support for schools, to improve the facilities and the services in Prilep and Podgorica, in the first and in the second year</td>
<td>3.6. Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.5</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation activities of the scholastic attendance in Prilep and in Podgorica, in</td>
<td>3.7. Constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>workforce</td>
<td>3.9. Accessory financial resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.10. Monitoring and verification mission</td>
<td>3.11. General expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.6.</td>
<td>Introduction of 30 children in pre-school age in schools in Prilep within the three years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity B.1.7.</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation activities of the school attendance for the beneficiaries of the Activity B.1.6. within the three years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.2.1.</td>
<td>Organization and implementation of three literacy courses for 18 young Roma, between the ages of 14 and 30, each in Podgorica, from the first trimester of the first year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.2.2.</td>
<td>Information and sensitization of the Roma community in Podgorica and selection of beneficiaries to access the literacy course in the first two years of the project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity B.2.3.</td>
<td>Monitoring activities and assessing of literacy course attendance in Podgorica, in the three years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity B.3.1.</td>
<td>Selection and organization of three vocational training courses for the young Roma literate in Podgorica in the three years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity B.3.2.</td>
<td>Monitoring and Follow up on the results of the professional courses in Podgorica, in the three years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity B.4.1. Coordination with the social services of Prilep for selecting the young beneficiaries of the extra scholar activities, within the first quarter of the first year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity B.4.2. Support to the continuation of the extra scholar, multicultural and educational activities for 40 vulnerable Roma children in Prilep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity C.1.1. Organization and making of 4 training sessions on management, project cycle, monitoring and conflict management addressed to NGOs partners, in the first two years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity C.1.2. Organization and making of 4 participatory evaluations of training sessions conducted in the first two years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity C.2.1. Organization and making of 4 training sessions per country, addressed to the local NGOs partners, in the third year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity C.3.1. Organization and making of a formative session for the joint partners and social services of Prilep (20 beneficiaries), and the use of the educational tools for the children, in the first semester of the first year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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